



Vancouver School District School Plan Sir William Macdonald Elementary (2017-2018)

General School Story:

The 2016/2017 school year was the fifth year of the Aboriginal Focus School within Sir William Macdonald Elementary. The school is located at the corner of Hastings Street and Victoria Drive in Vancouver's east end. There are two streams housed within the school -- the Aboriginal Focus stream, which includes kindergarten to grade 5 and the regular stream includes grade 5 to grade 7. The school is inclusive of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. All elementary students are welcome and may register at the school. The school's enrollment fluctuates between 75 and 85 students. There is a Strong Start program housed within the school for preschool children from birth to 5 years old. The school continues to work in partnership with many external agencies and community individuals who have contributed to the academic and social/emotional success of our students.

The goal of the school includes a strong emphasis on academic, competencies of reading, writing, numeracy, thinking skills and competencies in the social and emotional domains. The goal of the school is also for our students to have a positive perception of self as capable learners and an honest pride in each of their ancestries.

Our vision is to have the Aboriginal Focus School strive for educational excellence and an environment where students are confident, respectful, critical thinkers and engaged learners.

What did we see?

Literacy

- To increase oral competencies students engaged in the following activities: Language for Learning, Thinking Basics, Div. 3 Morning Report, Weekly Sharing Circles, Talking Stick, Class Meetings, Poetry, Monday Morning Meeting, Reading Mastery, Show and Tell, Calendar, daily Aboriginal Language instruction, direct instruction of First Languages, language of choice, Traditional Story Telling, Class Discussions, 2x week choir (grs. 2-7), traditional Oral Language Singing, debating unit with grs. 4/5/ 6/7, NoDramaDrama, Aboriginal Alphabet Rap, colleague observation consultation
- To increase reading performance -- Decoding, ReadWell, Reading Mastery, Reading Recovery, Readers Theatre, Guided Reading, Class Novel studies, daily read aloud, reading buddies, book buddies, 1:1 reading program; Kindergarten Protocol, Strong Nations leveled readers, 0.1 Library and 0.1 Library prep, Scholastic Literacy Place, independent reading, Reading Power, Non-Fiction Reading Power (Adrienne Gear), school choir
- To increase students writing performance – 3 Part Write, Leveled Literacy Intervention (embedded writing), enhanced writing group, Expressive Writing 1&2, Adrienne Geer – reading power/writing power, ReadWell (embedded writing), ReadingMastery (embedded writing), Writers' Exchange
- To enhance students' cognitive readiness for learning – Thinking Basics Tier 2 grs. 3,4,5
- Formative assessments included program assessments (Reading Recovery, Reading Mastery, ReadWell), standardized assessments (Fountas and Pinnell), observational surveys (e.g. K protocols), school wide writes, and formal oral language assessments (OLA, Language for Learning).

Cultural Awareness

- to create opportunities for all students to learn and be involved in the cultures of the First Peoples of Canada
- students will learn to be respectful in the acknowledgement of the local First Nations
- students will learn to be respectful of the shared values, experiences and histories of all Aboriginal peoples as well as the aspects that make each nation unique
- students will learn to be respectful of the shared history between the Aboriginal peoples and Canada

Were we successful?

Outline results

Literacy

Given the transiency of our student population whole or part school data does not reflect the accomplishments of programs and student learning. The school began the year with 84 students and in May 2017 the population is 85. During this time 14 students left the school and 15 students have arrived from other schools (16% turnover). This means that the students represented in year-end scores are not the same students who performed in baseline testing in fall. Test scores by grade cohort are not valid for analysis given this transiency.

Given the small size of the school we are unable to publish data without a direct risk to privacy and confidentiality of students. The resource team has been keeping data on literacy and numeracy and tracking individual students and cohorts. These were shared out in monthly intervals at primary and intermediate teacher meetings where learning across divisions is coordinated.

Qualitatively the results that we see are an increased focus on academics in individuals throughout the school year. Students are increasingly choosing to read for pleasure when given options of activities. Our library is well used and we will be increasing our library portion of non-enrolling teaching time to meet more of this need.

Cultural Awareness

The 2016-2017 school year was filled with opportunities and events for students to participate in and learn about the culture of the first peoples on Turtle Island. Some, but not all, of these were

- solstice celebrations for the students and the community as a whole
- Canada Aboriginal Day event at Trout Lake
- weekly assemblies with Aboriginal content
- Hə́nqə́mihəm language instruction in grades K-3
- classroom visits from Elders, storytellers, artists
- Native Urban Rec programming for physical education K-7
- Aboriginal lens on all subjects as taught by classroom teachers

In addition to these events the school has made specific efforts to use learning materials with Aboriginal content and authorship to teach the curriculum. Aboriginal content and authored books are also prioritized in purchasing materials for the library.

How have we shared?

How will we make parents, students and other members of the community aware and involved?

The school has worked hard at celebrating the successes of students both in academic and cultural realms. We have shared our successes by newsletters, solstice feast, rotating (monthly) displays in hallway, assemblies. This year the school has increased its social media presence – the result is that many of our social media posts have a reach of over 150 people.

What are our next steps?

The 2017-2018 year will be the final year of Macdonald elementary being a dual track school (Aboriginal Focus and Community School). The school will be transitioning to being the Aboriginal Focus School. As part of this there will be a new name and the hiring of more teachers with Aboriginal heritage. The name will reflect the Coast Salish lands on which the school is built. In continuing with the Aboriginal Focus the school looks forward to partnering with UBC NITEP and UBC Farms in the first year of the Intergenerational Landed Learning Program where students deepen their connection to the local lands as a source of medicine and nourishment.

In the field of Literacy the school has decided to continue with ReadWell, Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading and Language for Learning. The staff have decided to discontinue the Corrective Reading program, but will continue using the Levelled Literacy Intervention provided by the Early Intervention Initiative by the province and school board.



District-wide Aboriginal Goal: To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students.

1. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE ABORIGINAL LEARNERS IN OUR SCHOOL?

The school consists of over 75% students with Aboriginal heritage. Our students come from a Nations and language groups from across Canada. The school's population reflects the urban Aboriginal population of Vancouver in that the city draws from a rich variety of cultures from across Turtle Island. Besides participating in cultural activities here at school, many of our families are deeply involved in activities at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Native Education College (NEC), Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), as well as the various Aboriginal Daycares in the area.

2. WHAT HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ALL LEARNERS IN REGARDS TO THIS GOAL?

Our school continues to teach the BC curriculum with an Aboriginal lens. All students participate. The 2016-2017 school year was filled with opportunities and events for students to participate in and learn about the culture of the first peoples on Turtle Island. Some, but not all, of these were

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3. WHAT WILL WE CONTINUE TO DO IN THIS AREA?

The students will continue to acquire the skills and knowledge to become Stewards of the Land and Waters of British Columbia. The school will continue to equip itself with a wide range of Aboriginal learning resources. In the hiring of teachers the school will continue to seek candidates who self-identify as having Aboriginal heritage.

4. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE BEING SUCCESSFUL IN THIS AREA?

Our school has too small of a population to publish data without risking breaches of privacy and confidentiality. The resource team has been keeping data on literacy and numeracy and tracking individual students and cohorts. These will be shared out in regular intervals at primary and intermediate teacher meeting where learning across divisions is coordinated.

Our students, staff and parents have a collective voice in the education provided at this school. Given that this is the Aboriginal Focus School local knowledge is greatly valued and as such we include parents, elders and community in much of our decision making. This past year we have had numerous community forums in regards to the future of the school where parents, students, and staff had their voices heard.

The PAC has been active, not only in the school, but also in the district; members of our PAC have represented the school community at DPAC, Board and Committee meeting throughout the year.

We look forward to continuing this great work of community involved education at the Aboriginal Focus School in the 2017-2018 school year.