



# Vancouver School District

## School Plan for General Wolfe Elementary

### Year 3 (2017)

## 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

General Wolfe Elementary is a neighbourhood school that is committed to educating and engaging all students. Wolfe has a culturally diverse student population of around 400 students. At General Wolfe, Social Responsibility is an integral part of the school's philosophy and Wolfe's culture is built upon the ideals of respect for people, safety, and the environment. Our School Code of Conduct is PAWS, which reminds students to be **P**olite, **A**ccountable, **W**elcoming and **S**afe.

Wolfe School is committed to creating an inclusive community that celebrates diversity. The majority of students at General Wolfe speak English as their first language. There are currently there are just over 50 students who are English Language Learners, who speak a range of first languages. There are approximately 30 fully integrated students with a variety of Low and High Incidence special needs. Overall, our students are creative and engaged learners who are exposed to a wide variety of experiences and opportunities, both at home and at school.

Staff members are extremely committed to teaching and supporting students in all areas of the curriculum. They are passionate about providing relevant and experiential learning opportunities. Wolfe students are enriched by their teachers' willingness to volunteer their time to provide extra-curricular activities. Coaching is provided for intermediate students in volleyball, soccer, basketball, badminton, track and field, and intramural floor hockey. Cross country running is offered to students in grades 3-7 and all the children are encouraged to join and strive for improvements in their own ability level. In the Arts, General Wolfe provides grade 6-7 students with the opportunity to join the Junior or Senior Band, grade 6-7 students may join our Pop Choir, and grade 2-7 students have the opportunity to join our school choir. Our Senior Band traditionally participates in the district wide Night of Bands. There are also staff sponsored, parent developed and led clubs. Student led assemblies, as well as Spring and Winter concerts, give students further opportunities to share their talents with the school community.

Students at General Wolfe are encouraged to take on leadership roles in the school by volunteering to serve our school and community in a variety of ways including: Humanitarian Club, Spirit Team, KinderCare Buddies, PA Announcers, Equipment Monitors, School Safety Patrol, and Office Monitors.

The parent community at General Wolfe is strongly supportive of the school and of their children's learning. We have a very active, involved, and generous PAC which is committed to supporting our school goals and the beautification of our school grounds. Parents have formed a variety of different committees to support the school, including a gardening committee as well as a social emotional learning committee. Through a variety of community fundraising events they are just about to build a new playground. They have provided our school with technology (i.e. Smart Boards in every classroom) as well as have sponsored events such as school wide skating, trips to the Vancouver Symphony, school-wide performances and arts instruction as well as supporting our grade 6/7 camp experience. Wolfe staff is very thankful for the involvement and support of our parents.

In addition to parent support, General Wolfe is also supported by the Community Schools Team, and Sparetime before and after school care. Through these groups we have been able to provide many extracurricular opportunities for our students.

Math has been our goal since the 2013-2014 school year-this year we added inquiry and critical thinking as areas of focus. We are also involved in the Early Intervention Literacy Project, which includes the provision of Reading Recovery to students who are struggling with developing Reading skills in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

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## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

- Outline indicators and targets
- Outline support and activities throughout the year

This is our second year with a focus on fact fluency. As of March 2016, out of 209 Intermediate students, 5 students were achieving a C- or lower on their report cards (aside from students with IEP's related to math or global academic achievement). We re-focussed the goal at the end of last year, and this year we have focused on developing number sense (patterns such as doubles, more and less, skip counting) with the primary students, and with intermediate students used a structured system of flashcards to develop basic math fact abilities, as teacher observations noted that slow fact recall was slowing the acquisition and application of new math algorithms. Teachers grouped basic facts into levels and families, introduced them in a sequential manner. Students wrote mastered facts onto flashcards on rings, and added new facts to master each week. 'Mad minutes' based on the facts were given each week, with student progress tracked.

In the primary grades the focus was removed on mastering facts and spent on number sense activities-patterns, doubles, strategies for more and less were integrated into activities outside of math time, and practiced and re-inforced over the year.

As part of the new curriculum, we also wanted to start to explore the idea of inquiry. Intermediate classes completed a variety of inquiry projects, from the development of strong inquiry questions through to the presentation of final projects. This process was new in some classes, and well established in others.

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## 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

- Outline results

We were somewhat successful with our math goal. We realized that it was hard to track progress when the criteria for meeting expectations was higher in term 3 than term 1, as students may have made good progress but still not be meeting expectations.

The inquiry process was a much more engaging process. It allowed students to follow their passions and to engage with topics as deeply as their interests and abilities allowed. With a lot of teaching and support students were able to develop big questions to direct and focus ideas, and small questions to add details. It encouraged the thoughtful use of technology, and students learned a great deal about what reliable sources of information were, and developed judgements about that they found, developing critical thinking skills. This process was particularly successful at the upper intermediate level.

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## 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

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

We have shared student progress through weekly tracking of their achievement and through the sharing of progress on report cards with parents. Strategies were discussed and individual goals were set with parents at goal setting conferences. Students worked both at home with the support of their families and at school to increase their fluency.

The student inquiry projects were shared within and between classes, and with parents. Office 360 was used to facilitate student and parent sharing as well.

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## 5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

- What will we be doing as we begin to plan for next year and the next multi-year goal?
- What discussions have we had as a staff around what we see in our students, where we see areas of need, etc.
- Will we continue with the same goal or will we move to another area and why?

As the math fact practice in class and the inquiry approach to learning have become part of the school wide practice, we are looking at moving toward a new goal for next year. In a survey done at the end of term two, the area noted by most staff as an area of student need is social emotional learning, especially the building of resilience skills. There seems to be an increase in the number of students experiencing anxiety about many aspects of life, and supporting all students in becoming confident young learners and citizens is seen as a priority.



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

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

- Include numbers of students, grade levels, etc.

We have no aboriginal learners in our school this year.

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

- List examples of pro-d, special events, speakers, curricular integration, routines and customs, etc.

These are a few of the activities we have undertaken : The school has worked to increase our novel collection with a focus on fiction that shares stories of aboriginal life in Canada. The grade 6/7 students completed a unit on Residential Schools, studied the history of the Potlach and representaions of wealth, and discussed language groups and traditional territories, as well as an inquiry project into the impact of colonization. Some classes attended the First Nations Dance Festival at the Museaum of Anthropology. Each class was provided with a map of the traditional territories. Most intermediate classes read aloud or did a novel study on fiction related to the Residential Schools experience, and followed up with discussion related to findings of the Truth and Reconsiliation recommendations. Resources were purchased for the libray, and one class adapted the book 'Animals of the Salish Sea' for a year end dance performance. Aboriginal picture books and stories where shared in primary classrooms. In music, many classes learned a Cree-Dene song that the music teacher learned and was given permission to perform in a professional development session with Sherryl Sewepagham, a Cree-Dene educator. This song was sung 'in the round' at the end of our Spring Concert by over half the school. All assemblies are started with the Aboriginal acknowledgement.

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## 8. WHAT WILL WE CONTINUE TO DO IN THIS AREA?

- List continuing and new initiatives

We will continue to seek out Professional Development oppotunites for staff to build awareness and confidence in teaching to support this goal. We will continue to purchasematerials and resources to support learning in this area. We will continue to pursue opportunities for students to participate in activities in the school and community to build understandings related to this goal. The has been a considerable growth in the knowledge and skills of many of the staff in the past year, and this has shown in the increased embedding of Aboriginal world views in daily class life.

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

- Include both data-driven and anecdotal examples
- Give opportunities for student, staff and parent voice

There has been great increase in staff and student awareness of the story of colonialism in Canada. All intermediate students now read and discuss at least one Aboriginal focused novel a year. We feel this is a still an area of growth for our school.