



# Vancouver School District

## School Plan for Lord Nelson Elementary

### Year 3 (2017)

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## 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

- Update school context if necessary
- Review inquiry question and where the need for this goal came from (evidence, etc.)

Lord Nelson Elementary School was built in 1911 in a diverse community in the Northeastern section of Vancouver near Nanaimo Street and East 1st Avenue. Together, with our regular enrolling Kindergarten to Grade 7 classrooms and 1 district special education program for students with Autism, we have a total of 430 students. We are host to both Out of School Care and Strong Start Programs. With the Vancouver School Board, McFarland Marceau Architects and our General Contactor ProCan Construction, we are in the process of seismic renewal. We are slated to move into our new building September 2018.

Although most of our students (77%) are from English speaking homes, 15% of our students are designated as English Language Learners (ELL). The most common additional languages spoken in our community are Cantonese (10%), Vietnamese (3%), and Mandarin. Other languages represented in our community include: Italian, Portuguese, Tagalog, Kurdish, Persian, Spanish, Korean, Punjabi, Hindi, Greek, Japanese, Arabic and Tagalog.

Adults and children at Lord Nelson care about each other. In addition, teachers overwhelmingly identify that they are proud of students' accomplishments, both in academics and in the area of social-emotional learning. Within our Code of Conduct we strive to emphasize "R.O.A.R." ... "Respect Others, Act Responsibly" in all aspects of our school life.

The strengths of our school are: home-school relationships, our ability to meet the needs of diverse learners and our ability to provide opportunities and programs that enrich student learning. Although we have a strong common language in instructional reading and writing strategies we are focusing on the re-designed curriculum, with a focus on inquiry learning. It is the hope of our staff members that students identify themselves as global learners who view education in a positive way.

We are committed to continuing our assessment practices in the three core areas of learning, reading, writing and numeracy to ensure growth and development for our students.

For the 2017-2018 School Plan, we will continue to focus on Inquiry Based Learning and Aboriginal Education. This will be considered the third year for this Growth Plan.

## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

- Outline indicators and targets
  - Outline support and activities throughout the year
- KWL
  - school wide testing
  - group discussions
  - observations
  - October goal setting conferences (talking to parents)
  - reading and writing conferences within the classroom
  - student files/file review with resource teachers
  - talking to last year's teacher
  - lots of observation and way more listening and reflecting before interjecting
  - have the students write assessments for peers
  - self-assessment written, scores, picture, and provide accountability
  - three stars and a wish - parents, students and school community
  - brainstorm questions
  - teaching of open-ended vs. closed-ended questions
  - assess student strengths and challenges as a learner
  - "kid watching" - watching carefully and taking notes
  - children brainstorming
  - pre-test (accessing prior knowledge)
  - formal written and oral assessments (DRA, words their way, woodcock)
  - through games...ex. Categories
  - 'show me your learning' then revisit
  - reflections /journaling
  - Kindergarten intake interviews with parents in Sept.
  - acting as scribe for those who have difficulty writing
  - asking parents verbally during first conferences
  - conferring with past teachers
  - looking at past report cards
  - meeting with resource teacher
  - curriculum leadership team looking at new BC Education Plan
  - provided Pro-D opportunities for teachers to learn strategies to incorporate into the curriculum
  - staff mentoring
  - Changing directions in the educational curriculum
  - Students need to be better critical thinkers
  - Self-assessment and accountability
  - Trying to engage all learners
  - Facilitating discussions around frustration and confusion about the purpose and meaning of inquiry
  - Lots of support was needed to develop effective and meaningful questions
  - Hands on tangible tasks (i.e. sticky note sharing)
  - Students Forming close-ended questions rather than open-ended ones
  - Teaching difference between thick or thin questions (open and closed ended questions)
  - Outline support and activities throughout the year
  - Inquiry groups for Pro-D
  - Purchased resources to support classroom instruction

- Guided children through process of developing questions (thick vs thin, scaffolding learning etc.)
- Facilitated students in exploration (project, topics, etc.)
- iPad project time
- Librarian support
- Lots of classroom time and planning
- Supply examples to students
- Lots of scaffolding
- Independent study and activities such as PIP, Box Projects and Play Days

**How can we teach students to formulate powerful inquiry questions?**

**How can we provide strategies and supports for students throughout the process of developing questions for inquiry?**

### 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

- Outline results

#### **How can we teach students to formulate powerful inquiry questions?**

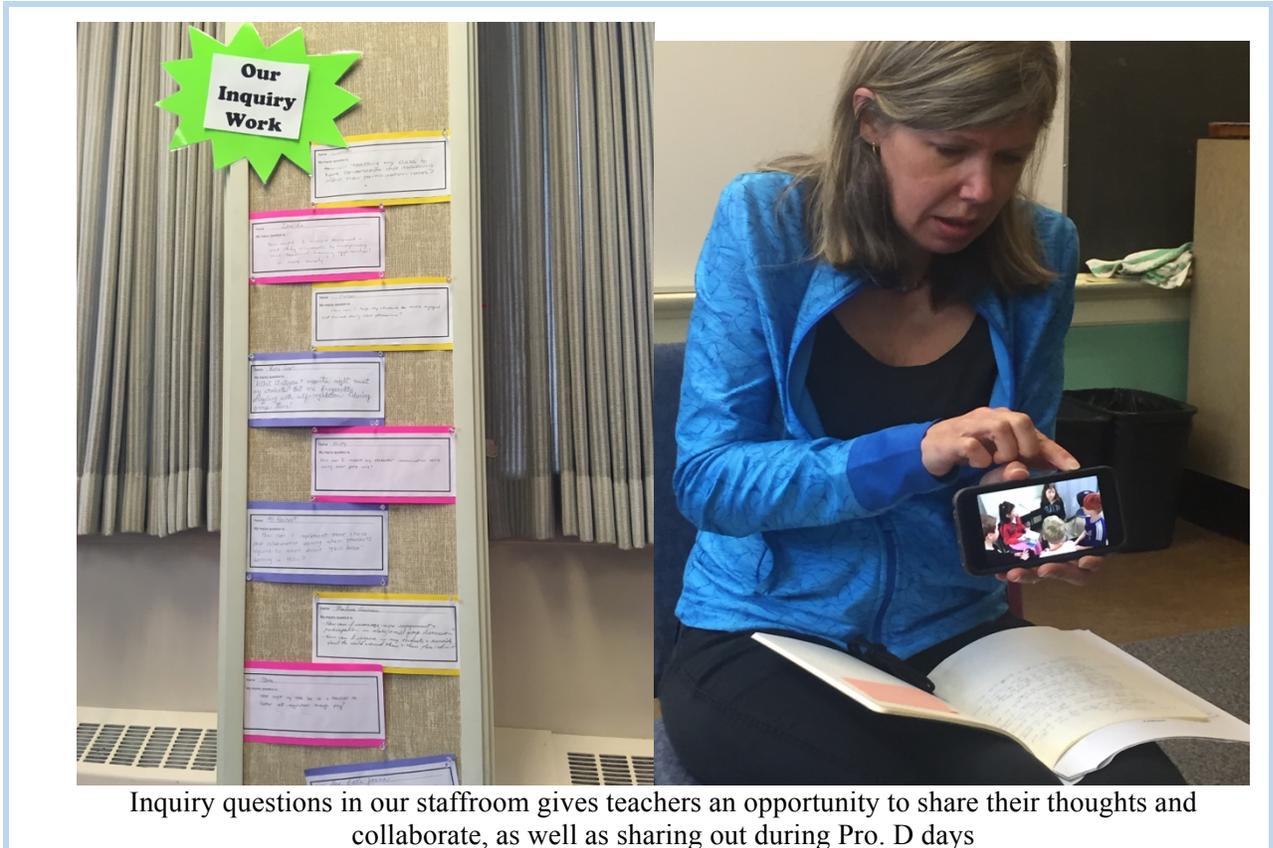
- presentations
- personal connections
- higher participation
- more student engagement
- productive collaboration
- understanding what a proper inquiry question looks like
- student generated criteria
- ability to write good inquiry questions
- scaffolding for students (strategies) are successful
- students showing that they are able to use the strategies
- able to formulate more inquiry questions on current projects
- more class discussions about inquiry
- paying more attention and making connections to the world around us
- Modelling
- Discussions and examples and peer or selfassessment
- Build into research and essay writing
- Definitions of types of questions
- Criteria for questions
- Sorting of questions
- Inspiration for the question
- Learning to question based on prior experience; scaffolding process after front loading new information
- Question what they wondered on different topics sparked from curiosity \*authentic questioning
- Takes time to develop (higher order questioning)
- Gauge student present levels of question as baseline to develop step to ask more critical questions

**How can we provide strategies and supports for students throughout the process of developing questions for inquiry?**

- Constructive immediate feedback
- Conferencing
- Resource support for inquiry and research reports
- Deep classroom discussions
- Being positive and open and supportive of student ideas throughout the process
- Connecting to real world events and making it relevant
- Teachers discussing in grade groups - to see what is age-appropriate questions based on student levels
- I Outline results
- Make connections to the real world
- Real life experiences to make connections to their topic of study
- Makes connections between subject areas
- Direct teaching
  - Peer feedback

#### 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

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



Inquiry questions in our staffroom gives teachers an opportunity to share their thoughts and collaborate, as well as sharing out during Pro. D days

- Students and teachers shared their questions in peer groups
- worked in different groupings to share ideas
- used questions to direct learning
- displayed project work around inquiry
- brainstormed ideas and discussed which questions were "thick" or "thin"
- self-assessment of inquiry questions
- reminded students about valuing process over/as well as product
- Shared in pro-d, culminating with a Celebration sharing on our final day
- term end reviews
- iPad projects
- hallway displays
- posted inquiry question in class for students to see
- recipe day/ healthy eating day
- Members of the community came into classes
- Letters home
- Performances (ie celebrations of learning - Mrs. Chan)
- Parent participation with field trips and classroom
- Photos or PowerPoint assemblies
- Sharing strategies at prod sessions and meetings
- Sharing inquiry work with families (photographs of inquiry process; displays and work in class)

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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?

### **What will we be doing as we begin to plan for next year and the next multi-year goal?**

- Assess our own strengths and weaknesses
- Experimenting with new curriculum
- Sharing our experience of teaching and inquiry process- teaching techniques
- Researching potential speakers/conferences/experts
- Access supports
- Evaluate where we are now through discussion and survey data
- What are the kid's interests
- Need new goal- reframing new focus to enable further growth (moving the focus away from questioning to exploring practical inquiry based learning)
- Inquiry groups and pro-D (discussions)- ongoing throughout the year
- Source field trip and speakers or experiences
- gather more resources for inquiry, Aboriginal education, speakers, Pro-D, logistics of delivering A/B year, team-teaching, co-planning

**What discussions have we had as a staff around what we see in our students, where we see areas of need, etc.**

- Self-control, self-regulation, executive functioning
- Behaviour
- There have been more observations around anxiety
- Get SELC consultant to present on social emotional development /competencies
- Reflecting on student expectations ask parents on the root of the problem on rising issues in behaviour; responsibilities and differences on expectations for each child at home
- How do belief and values of school and home align (e.g. Supporting personal responsibility, independence etc.)
- Support or speaker in areas of applied design and technology
- High math needs have been noticed from teachers

**Will we continue with the same goal or will we move or we will move to another area and why?**

Our discussions have led us to ponder the following question as we move forward to 2017/18, "How does providing an inquiry rich environment support and enhance the New Curriculum, specifically Applied Design, Skills and Technologies, as well as Personal Awareness and Responsibility?" This goal furthers our focus on establishing inquiry into our classrooms, while providing extensions in areas that interest teachers, such as applied design and technologies. This area is a focus for the sheer fact that it is a new area 'fostering the development of the skills and knowledge that will allow students to create practical and innovative responses to everyday needs and problems' (BC New Curriculum 2017). Scanning has also highlighted the need to revisit personal awareness around students taking ownership of goals, learning and behaviour, and using strategies to find peace during stressful times.



*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.

At present Lord Nelson has 11 students who have Aboriginal ancestry. These students are currently from grades 1-7, with 2 designations of Autism. 9 of these students are within the Lord Nelson catchment, while the other 2 are cross boundary.

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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.
  - Grouse Mountain Hiwas cultural program: presentations from an Elder about cultural practices
  - Gr.2 presentation from a Tseil Watuth Elder and the importance of those lands at Cates Park
  - Elder in Residence Elder Shane Pointe visit speaking about Aboriginal beliefs of how we are one as a whole
  - Elder come in to teach traditional round dance, talks about residential schools
  - Integration of residential school topic with Fine arts, Social Studies, Language Arts in forms of poetry, diary entries, letters
  - Gr. 2, Gr. 5/6 different cultural and spiritual perspectives, storytelling of legends and personal experiences as a member of a tribe
  - Aboriginal art appreciation (weaving, silk screening, soapstone)
  - Study aboriginal technologies using natural resources throughout history
  - Pro-D: Aboriginal math symposium, aboriginal conference at John Oliver
  - Music mentor ship incorporates learning of residential schools
  - Orange Shirt day in remembrance of Residential school experiences
  - Novel study on residential school
  - Discussions on truth and reconciliation
  - Guest speaker about personal experience at an residential school
  - Visits from aboriginal worker to discuss spirituality and story-telling and raise class awareness about First Nations struggles (past and present)
  - Acknowledgement before all assemblies and meeting
  - Sharing of art work/music
  - Sharing of writing and stories based on First Nations culture
  - Indigenous practices in science
  - Nutrition and traditional foods
  - Purchased aboriginal resources in all subject areas (even math!)
  - pen pals in Haida Gwaii

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

- List continuing and new initiatives
  - Incorporate aboriginal opportunities into the classrooms as well as the whole school setting
  - Use of Raven Tale series (DVD and books)
  - Aboriginal workers
  - Aboriginal literature. (Stories and cultural books)
  - Having speakers
  - Teaching why we acknowledge the unceded territory of the school

- Need to be intentional of the language of referring to territory and land
- Learning and discussing traditional terminology and understanding aboriginal culture
- Continue having pro-D (Visitations to aboriginal centres and events)
- First hand learning from aboriginal communities and people
- Sharing history with students
- Adding aboriginal tools and protocols (e.g. Talking stick; gratitude stones to learning communication and listening)
- Integrating curricular areas with Aboriginal art
- Reading Aboriginal legends and discussing the symbols of animals, beliefs and morals within them
- Field trips and guest speakers
- Performances in the gym
- Art projects
- Working with Aboriginal Enhancement workers

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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

- making personal comments/wondering/inquiries
- KWL charts
- acknowledgements at assemblies
- pen pals - skypeing and writing
- art projects such as printmaking and soap stone carving
- greater appreciation/ interest for Aboriginal culture as observed in class discussions
- discussion and awareness of each student's own culture and background and connections to aboriginal culture
- more community participation within the school and classroom
- higher student participation in classroom discussions
- more student engagement and motivation
- more background knowledge about aboriginal culture
- being able to implement elements of aboriginal culture in their story writing
- more aware of aboriginal beliefs that they share with their own