



# Vancouver School District

## School Plan for Dr. George M. Weir

### Year 3 (2017)

## 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

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

Dr. George M. Weir Elementary School is situated between East 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue and East 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue, just north of the Killarney Community Centre and park, and Killarney Secondary School. Student work displayed in classrooms and hallways reflects the pride our students, staff and parents have in our students' learning.

Weir School has a population of approximately 480 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7 within 20 Divisions. The home languages represented are predominately English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, and Vietnamese, with other languages represented as well. Approximately a third of our students receive ELL support from Resource Teachers. We also have a small Aboriginal population of approximately half a dozen families. A number of special needs students are fully integrated at all grade levels.

The staff are committed to the academic, social and emotional development of all students. We strive to provide a supportive learning environment in which students demonstrate social, emotional and academic growth. We are committed to developing well rounded students in a challenging, caring and healthy environment.

The Weir School Code is reviewed by student leaders in our daily announcements: We take care of ourselves, we take care of others, we take care of our environment. Student leadership is valued and promoted and our strong commitment to social responsibility and student learning is celebrated throughout the school year at our regular Social Responsibility/Student Recognition Assemblies.

Weir students enjoy and value the many after school programs offered throughout the school year by the Killarney Community School Team and More Sports. A well-established Heritage Chinese Language program is also offered twice weekly after school.

Weir is a digitally enhanced school that allows students to thrive in this new digital age. Grades K – 3 have a set of iPads in every classroom and Grades 4 -7 students are able to bring their own mobile devices to school for access to and curation of information, collaboration and communication. Students are provided opportunities to engage with the new B. C. Curriculum by designing and creating (coding) projects of their own. Students at Weir learn how to use dynamic digital resources for educational benefits. Weir has developed an inclusive program that allows students to engage in personalized inquiry-based learning. Through enhanced access to technology, students can pursue their passions and interests through weekly genius-hours and other best practices for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning.

The Weir Parent Advisory Committee has a strong core leadership and encourages parent involvement through morning and evening PAC Meetings and volunteer opportunities. Their ongoing, meaningful support throughout the school year contributes greatly to the positive school climate and enriches the school experience for all students. Their hard work and dedication are much appreciated!

During the 2017 – 2018 School Year we will continue our focus on Social Responsibility: becoming a personally and socially responsible citizen. As well, we will continue our school-wide inquiry into

developing skills in mathematical language, concepts and applications for computation and problem solving, enhanced by technology and physical manipulatives. This focus was the result of school-wide assessment which indicated a need to strengthen student skills and engagement in numeracy. This resulted in the inquiry focus: will we improve numeracy skills and student engagement through implementing programs such as “Mathletics” school-wide, involving increased communication and engagement with parents using technology. This initiative has been endorsed by our parent community.

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## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

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

In the area of Social Responsibility and our focus on our School Code, we experienced an increased need to review and monitor progress due to the large number of new students to our school this year. Our regular student assemblies where student progress was celebrated were especially important in communicating and sharing our school culture and strengthening the sense of school community. Throughout the school year success was noted as less student referrals to the office for conflict resolution at recess and lunch time were noted. As well, through the many opportunities provided for primary and intermediate classes to “buddy” with each other, increased student support for each other was noted throughout the school. The number of student incident reports being written by students to take home to their parents has been reduced by at least 50%, indicating success in student personal and social responsibility.

In the area of improvement in numeracy skills, staff focused their professional development and resource acquisition to better meet these needs. As well, for the first time, school-wide investigation of digital programs to engage learners was piloted. “Mathletics” was chosen to be implemented K-7 in the coming school year. Staff have also met throughout the school year to share “what’s working well in my classroom” with each other. Ideas, resources have been shared and time arranged for peer coaching. Gillian Rudge from UBC started the year on our September Professional Development Day by working with staff and giving direction for this focus throughout the rest of the school year. Primary and Intermediate Teams will be planning to purchase resources to support our numeracy focus before the end of the school year so we can be up and running early in September. Before the end of this school year, parents will be invited to an Open House to visit classrooms to see the programs being used “in action” and to be able to ask questions about supporting these programs at home.

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## 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

- Outline results

We feel we have been successful, have a sense of accomplishment for this school year and a clear sense of direction for the next. We have noted a higher level of responsibility in our students for their interactions with others and their learning. We have received acknowledgement from many parents that they appreciate our focus and efforts and are eager to continue to support our programs and work with us. Teachers have appreciated the increase in collaboration and peer support. We have focused on our resource needs and have improved acquisition of materials to support classrooms and student learning and have a plan for the coming year to continue. Through the continued expansion of our use of technology, communication through “Freshgrade” and digital student portfolios has improved ongoing communication between student, teacher, and parent. The sharing of ideas and “speaking the same language” has resulted in “opening the doors of the classrooms” enhancing school wide discussions and planning.

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## 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

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

It is our hope that parents will feel more connected as “partners” in their child’s education through continued use of “Freshgrade” and “Class Messenger”. As our focus evolves we plan to continue to include parents in this journey with us through Family Math Nights, parent workshops, education sessions at PAC meetings. We also connect with our community through newsletters, our school website, twitter, and class manager. Throughout the year we also remind parents to take time to walk through the school to enjoy the bulletin boards outside all classrooms displaying student work. In June we host a “Digital Boot Camp” for parents of Grade 3 students so they can be better informed about the “Bring Your Own Device” program in Grades 4 – 7 (and repeat this session in the fall for parents of intermediate students who are new to the school). Throughout the school year our celebrations of student success and student learning at concerts and assemblies are open to parents and enjoyed and appreciated.

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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?

We are planning to continue with the same goals as a lot of time, energy and resources have been devoted to these areas. We are enjoying the improvement and successes noted to date, and look forward to continuing our focus in these areas. Although a number of grades piloted the “Mathletics” program this Spring, it will be implemented school-wide for the first time in the coming school year. Our goal is to achieve improved student engagement and success in numeracy in the coming school year. We wish to continue to focus on personal and social responsibility for learning and being a positive and contributing member of the school community in order to maintain our positive school culture. In our staff discussions we are pleased that our efforts this year have proven to be worthwhile, but we know we can continue to improve. We also need to focus on the new families entering our school in order that they feel welcome, involved and that they have a valuable role to play in our Weir School Community. With approximately 55 new Kindergarten families joining us in the fall, this will be a good place to start! The first Professional Development day in the fall will be an opportunity for returning and new staff to reflect on these plans for the new school year, continued dialogue on the new Curriculum, assessment and reporting: communicating with parents, and our digital programs, especially our school-wide implementation of “Mathletics”.



*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 presently have 9 aboriginal learners in our school, ranging from Grade 2 to Grade 6.

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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.

We have enjoyed a number of school-wide initiatives, including guest speakers (story tellers as well as jigging), in-class speakers, visits from the Burnaby Arts Museum (working with each class on aboriginal art projects), Soapstone Carving (Inuit), a visit by Elder Shane Point, student inquiries into the impact of explorers on First nations people and their lands, embedded content into curricular areas, an improved focus section in the school library, and the Acknowledgement at the beginning of all school get-togethers (ie assemblies). As well, this year the theme of our Sports Day was a celebration of Aboriginal histories, and traditions. The authentic appreciation and enjoyment of this focus by students was heartwarming and a confirmation of their increased awareness and appreciation.

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

- List continuing and new initiatives

We will continue to do the same activities discussed in #7 as well as take advantage of other opportunities that we become aware of throughout the next school year. One area we plan to explore is to arrange some field study opportunities such as visits to the Museum of Anthropology for specific grades, so that all student will have the chance to do this at least once in their elementary school years. We also have parents who are willing and eager to come in to volunteer in classes to share their culture with students so we look forward to these experiences.

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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

Awareness, knowledge and acceptance have improved as a result of this focus over these past years and is now an integral part of school life. Our students share their enjoyment and knowledge with their families; parents often reporting at PAC meetings and conference times that they are learning more about our country's Aboriginal peoples and histories from their children. Students are proud of their knowledge and enjoy the experiences at school – often this is an area for personal inquiry and projects. Teachers are enjoying planning collaboratively to incorporate activities and lessons in their classrooms, when planning field studies, and school-wide events such as assemblies.