



Vancouver School District

School Plan for Queen Victoria Annex

Year 3 (2016-2017)

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Queen Victoria Annex is a school of 140 students, from kindergarten to grade five. We are located in the active, Commercial Drive community in East Vancouver; situated at the corner of Victoria Drive and East 3rd Avenue. Queen Victoria is now an Annex school to Laura Secord Elementary, where there are programs for French Immersion and English. Each year, our in-catchment students transition there for grade 6. Queen Victoria Annex is a unique school with very close-knit families and community partners.

Our community partners such as Britannia Community Centre and our connection to the Community Schools Team (CST) at Vancouver Technical Secondary, enable programming, experts in residence, volunteerism and general community involvement. Working with staff at Secord and the Van Tech 'family of schools', allows us to collaboratively plan for professional development and various local initiatives such as our annual Spring Festival. Our small school offers a safe, nurturing environment for our students. Queen Victoria kids include a wide range of learners including English Language Learners, special needs students, Aboriginal learners, and learners from economically diverse backgrounds. We benefit from the support of neighbouring businesses and from our innovative and supportive Parent Advisory Council.

Our staff works collaboratively to make decisions for school wide activities, goals and philosophical directions. We acknowledge the positive contributions of all individuals in the school, district and community. Our school seeks to create opportunities for all students, and their families, to interact in a safe, accepting and positive environment. In addition to our enrolling teachers we have a full time teacher-librarian/resource teacher with a focus on the Reading Recovery Program, a part-time Speech-Language Pathologist, a part-time Aboriginal Education Enhancement Worker and two part-time area counselors. This school year, we were able to work with the "One to One Reading" program volunteers to provide weekly adult support for students with vulnerable reading skills. We also received a grant from ArtStarts to support a professional choreographer and scriptwriter to work with our staff and students on our Musical.

Our vision is to support students to be the best they can be and to believe in themselves as they work through the various years of schooling at the Annex. We aim to support all student needs and to design learning opportunities that will engage and help students see themselves, and others, in positive ways.

The new mission statement we have adopted, as noted in our Code of Conduct, states:

"Our purpose is to provide a safe and stimulating environment, where all individuals are motivated to do their best. We want to create a school community that R.O.C.K.S!" (R= respectful, O= open-minded, C= caring community, K= kindness, S= supportive).



A staff committee has led our school-wide inquiry in Positive Behaviour Intervention Systems (PBIS) this school year. This has been the first of a three-year process. We have begun to explore the question: **How do we develop a school culture that encourages students to exhibit positive behaviour and to self-regulate, through the PBIS system?**

Our rationale for this question was based upon staff and parent conversations regarding the students' self-regulation and the need for common language and expectations around positive behaviour at our school. Across all grade levels and over several years, our staff has agreed that Social Responsibility and specifically this area of focus on PBIS, would motivate learners to become more self-aware and able to contribute positively to our school culture. Furthermore, the focus on self-reflection and self-assessment in the new, Redesigned BC Curriculum, also can be a natural link to this work on positive feedback and school culture enhancement.

The goals we continued to work towards this school year, were:

1. To improve all students' **literacy with a focus on writing awareness** and appreciation of Aboriginal histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students.
2. To continue to develop a commitment to **personal and social responsibility** in all members of our school community.

2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

1) Our students have shown growth through our Early Literacy interventions, in particular, through our guided reading groups and Reading Recovery. Students often read at grade level, both for pleasure and when instructed; however, our students have continued to require more teaching support for **writing and for written output tasks**. This has become our area of focus for the last two years.

With increased support for students through our resource teachers and support workers, we were able to create daily, structured, opportunities for re-teaching and supported writing activities. Students requiring support with writing were offered small group instruction and various ongoing adaptations that allowed for improvement in written output. Strategies for student success included:

- Graphic organizers and pre-writing activities, especially for scaffolding support for writing (i.e. 4 Square methods)
- Publishing and highlighting student work with families and through classroom celebrations
- Collaborative work with a guest scriptwriter and songwriter for our school musical
- Classroom based writers' workshop
- School wide (3 step), impromptu writes
- Script writing and reading for weekly assemblies
- 1:1 re-teaching or small group instruction and mini-lessons for writing
- formative writing assessments as well as summative assessments for reporting
- peer correcting (early primary) and strategies to select motivating topics for writers (all levels)
- eligible students to attend Challenge Centre programming for writing as opportunities come available

2) In 2015-2016, our students required a great deal of support for **social emotional learning**, including a focus on 'self-management' and 'self-awareness', at all grade levels. In particular, our staff wanted to work toward more peaceful peer relationships as well as better listening in general, on the playground, in the hallways, in the gym and the lunchroom. These 'common spaces' (as in many schools) were sometimes a source of peer conflict, transition difficulties, challenges with voice volume and respectful language. Working on our self-awareness of this, as well as with relationship skills and responsible decision making especially for our intermediate students was a key focus this year, through PBIS. Our

overall goal of achieving stronger personal and social responsibility is an area of very positive growth for us, and also an area where we will continue to work.

Strategies for success included:

- staff training for PBIS support
- use of PBIS common language and staff supports across the school
- development of a set of expectations for each location in the school (ongoing rubric changes for 2017-2018 as well)
- IEPs and formal documentation for students with specific social responsibility/social emotional learning (SEL) goals
- Use of the Indigenous Principles of learning with staff to examine the connection between SEL and Aboriginal ways of teaching and learning
- Use of the Core Competency language as mandated by the Ministry of Education this year
- Ongoing conversations and lessons to bring understanding to the Core Competencies with students, families and at PAC meetings
- Report card data and social responsibility reporting comments each term that will demonstrate student leadership opportunities taken, strengths and areas of development that have been noted for particular students
- Participation in diverse, seasonal and school-wide social responsibility events (i.e. Pink Day, etc.), facilitated by our school “spirit team”
- Documentation and problem solving as discussed at School Based Team (SBT)
- School-wide focus on empathy and R.O.C.K.S. messages through weekly assemblies and daily student-led announcements
- strategies from the MindUP program in classrooms, assemblies as well as with school-wide implementation on daily, student-led announcements (mindful breathing)
- Using Restorative Justice practices; conflict as means of teaching empathy and kindness
- Class meetings, sometimes including various staff and admin in addition to the classroom teachers
- Creation of a new logo, acronym, code of conduct and motto for our school (R.O.C.K.S) with collaborative decision making from staff and students

3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL

1) For our goal: “To improve all students’ literacy with a focus on writing awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students”, we do feel some success. While 80% of students in grade 5 for example, are meeting expectations for writing in this final term, there are still many who need support. While 91% of students in kindergarten for example, are meeting expectations, we know they may not have the Indigenous knowledge that we had originally intended to measure at this time. Classroom teachers and Resource teachers continue to teach direct writing skills and measure them through formative and summative methods (i.e. the Grade Wide Impromptu Write).

We will continue to implement the strategies named for this goal in order to increase our efficiency in student writing. We will seek to continue separate goals for Aboriginal learning as we found this difficult to maintain and measure throughout the school year. We felt successful especially looking at our grade 3/4 class who developed spoken word verses for their original song in our school musical. This was done with a traditional drum beat and with the guidance of our AEEW, Godwin Barton.

2) For our goal: “To continue to develop a commitment to **personal and social responsibility** in all members of our school community”, we have made some very positive growth. Our school culture is

shifting towards a more inclusive, peaceful atmosphere for students. We notice this through a variety of ethereal ways, but also through:

- Decreased number office referrals for student behaviour during class
- Decreased number of playground issues resulting in consequences for recess and lunch times
- Use of a common language for behaviour expectations (ROCKS) spoken about by staff and students, daily
- Direct teaching and daily use of “I statements” for taking responsibility and stating emotions as needed
- Increase in positive hallway behaviour (walking, respect for guidelines, safety)
- Increase in the variety of games played/students included during recess and lunch times
- Student participation in some of our supports such as lunch hour “iPlay” and “QVA Café”
- Increased use of classroom playground equipment/personal responsibility for class items
- Common language for all student discipline situations
- Common language for our school counselors to use with peer groups

Our staff created SEL Student Surveys (May 2017) with the following questions:

-Does QVA ROCKS help you feel safe at Queen Victoria Annex?

-How often do you talk about QVA ROCKS with peers/family/at school?

-QVA ROCKS helps me remember school expectations. (yes/no/sometimes)

-Do you use QVA ROCKS to solve problems (yes/no/sometimes)

For Kindergarten and grade 1, using a symbol scale ☺ ☹ , students noted:

-Adults at school care about me.

-I like school.

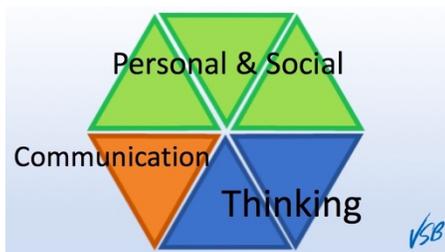
-I feel safe at school.

-I know what QVA ROCKS means.

The results of these surveys were interesting to the PBIS committee as they indicated awareness, knowledge and some success but they also indicated that students especially in intermediate grades felt less connected to the concept of ROCKS. However, several students did indicate that this helped them understand school expectations clearly and could possibly “help me get a job in the future”, “be a better person” or “help me have more self-control”. After analysis, 69% of students responded positively to these statements and questions; 25% in a neutral way and 6% of responses indicated that there were negative feelings about ROCKS and the school climate.

4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

- Student’s written work has been shared on website, social media (twitter), newsletter emails
- Student work has been featured around the school in hallways and at special events where the community has been invited in; also in classroom visits (i.e. inventions fair, school musical song writing sessions, etc.)
- Student leadership and assembly agenda script writing featured and modeled weekly at Monday Morning Meetings (assemblies)
- QVA radio PA announcements (daily) where student leaders have input for both social responsibility themes and with writing the scripts themselves
- Student achievement and participation highlighted in weekly assemblies and on QVA radio
- Students have their work highlighted and celebrated during the year in every classroom (at class meetings, informal feedback to students, etc)
- Students supported to understand standards for written work and provide (samples from previous years, rubrics, etc.) before beginning of project to help with success—every intermediate student supported to understand project criteria
- Visuals around the hallways and classrooms to communicate student learning regarding virtues, leadership, empathy, gratitude and ROCKS expectations
- individualized thank you’s and praise for student leaders and volunteerism from students
- School to home communication to include language being used at school (i.e. ‘expected and unexpected’ behaviours, ‘the size of the problem’, the ‘Group Plan’, the Zones of Regulation program, etc.)
- Educating families at PAC meetings and in newsletters about the programs we use (e.g. MindUP, ROCKS, and various other classroom strategies for self-management and self-awareness).
- Core Competency descriptions and information about our value of self-assessment has been shared with families via the report card in terms 1 and 2; term 3 reports include formal self-assessments from students that reflect ongoing work with the three Core Competency categories: thinking, personal/social awareness and communication
- PAC meetings have included presentations by the vice principal about social emotional learning and about the Core Competencies:



5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

We continue to see writing as an area of need for our students, but have discussed that this will continue to be an area of growth for many children. We will continue our strategies for intervention and seek to find other areas of focus for a school-wide goal that can link to this and broaden the students' experience. We plan to increase our use of technology in a variety of areas sampled this year and growing into the next. This will not be a formal goal for our school, but certainly a focus.

Our new focus on communication through technology may include:

- Use of iPads and mobile devices for small group instruction, RazKids reading online, grammar and math games online, surveying,
- Use of desktops in classrooms and library for small group research and word processing work
- Use of laptops in classrooms, small groups and resource groups for motivating students to generate more ideas and get those down on paper
- Possibly using the 6 Traits of Writing to drive writing instruction and focus on just a few aspects at a time, especially when using technology (i.e. focus on Voice when writing with humour and cartooning, focus on Ideas when brainstorming, etc)

Continuing with the same personal and social responsibility goal will be something discussed further with QVA's new administrator in the Fall of 2017. At this time, staff would like to continue working with PBIS, to improve our commitment to ROCKS and our focus on the Core Competencies.

Student survey results were not yet shared with the parent community and this would be a positive next step. Helping parents to better understand our reasons for embracing the acronym and the focus on self-awareness and social responsibility has been ongoing but can grow, too.

Moving forward, the PBIS team have noted general survey results from classrooms and will support teachers to also self-reflect and have professional discussions about new focus areas and ways to support students. As a staff team, we will continue working towards our goal of a strong commitment to personal and social responsibility at school, modeled by adults and children in the QVA community.



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

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

Queen Victoria Annex has a small population of Aboriginal learners and families (six) ranging from grade 1 to grade 5. These students are mostly from families that have culturally diverse backgrounds. Some of our Aboriginal learners access community supports and cultural programming, while others only benefit through school experiences.

We know that these students have a range of access and support from Aboriginal families or government services. We know that these students are often not recognized by their peers as having Aboriginal heritage. We also know that many of these students, and other students, feel excited to learn about Aboriginal practices and culture.

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

Our Aboriginal learners connect with their histories and with contemporary Aboriginal leaders and elders in order to fully understand/cultivate a connection to their culture. Our school's Aboriginal Education Enhancement Worker, Godwin Barton, has worked with each of the six divisions this school year in various ways including:

- Annual Evans Lake Camping Experience – students learned about the first peoples of the area; lessons about respect for the physical environment and history of the land
- Sincere acknowledgement of Aboriginal territories at weekly assemblies and school events (and teaching about why we have this)
- Art and social responsibility projects with Aboriginal Education Enhancement Worker Godwin Barton (ie. button blankets with buddy classes, etc)
- Art projects with Aboriginal themes for all grades (3D totems and Aboriginal, paper mask-making)
- Broadening of student knowledge of what is 'Aboriginal' to include main groups in Canada but also an understanding of world-wide Indigenous culture
- Creating a set of spoken word verses for an original song in our school wide, spring musical
- Direct teaching about Residential Schools to the grade 4/5 students
- Discussions about the links between social emotional learning and the 'Indigenous Principles of Learning' at monthly staff meetings and PAC meetings
- ArtStarts partnership with MacDonald Aboriginal Focus School for work with choreographer, Lisa Sars; June 2017 visit to MacDonald Aboriginal Focus School, to acknowledge National Aboriginal Day and strengthen QVA's connection to MacDonald school.
- June 2017, we are hosting a special assembly performance from local dancers, as coordinated by Godwin Barton our AEEW

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

Next school year, we will continue to look for opportunities that further develop and broaden our communication with families and the wider community, (newsletter content, social media, PAC meetings, email articles), regarding Canada’s Aboriginal heritage and cultural events. Telling positive stories and enriching the student and community understanding—regardless of cultural background—about Aboriginal people and culture, is vital to a deeper understanding.

We also look forward to working with our Aboriginal Enhancement Worker and our school-based staff to create new school wide activities and events that utilize and name Indigenous practices, as well as opportunities for professional development. In September 2017, we have booked a staff professional development session with the District Vice Principal for Aboriginal Education, looking at weaving Indigenous practices into the classroom as well as learning more about teaching regarding colonialism and Residential Schools.

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

Similar to this school year, we plan to use survey methods to learn more about student perspectives and feelings relating to their connection with school and a sense of belonging, whether they are students of Aboriginal background or not.

We will know when we are successful with increasing student knowledge of Aboriginal culture when all students are able to name various Indigenous principles of teaching related to social emotional learning (i.e. “Learning requires exploration of one’s identity” is a form of reflection and way of looking at the self/what one finds strengths in or what one works towards, or, “Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions”—an example of social responsibility).

We also will know we are successful, when staff and students can recall/draw on school-based experiences with Aboriginal art, culture and history in order to inform future learning. We will know we are successful when students are more able to recall important aspects of Canadian Aboriginal history such as events regarding Residential Schools and the impact of colonialism, in age appropriate ways.

