



# Vancouver School District

## School Plan for Queen Elizabeth Annex

### Year 3 (2017/8)

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## 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) is a single-track French Immersion school serving 80 students from Kindergarten to Grade 3. We are located on the West side of Vancouver, on the very edge of UBC endowment lands. We are the Annex to Jules-Quesnel, our main school.

Our code of conduct is: "I take care of myself, I take care of others, I take care of my environment."

At QEA, parents are welcomed partners in their children's educational development and our parent community contributes significantly to our school culture. Many parents volunteer in classes to share their passion and expertise. Through PAC and/or school sponsorship, our students are offered a variety of activities to enhance the curriculum such as tennis, an Artist-in-Residence Program and field studies to Vancouver Art Gallery, VSO, UBC's Museum of Anthropology, the Children's Festival and others. Additionally, the PAC runs an annual Spring Fling event that brings together children and their families for the benefit of the whole school community.

Our school also provides space for extra-curricular activities such as choir and Arts Umbrella, in which many of our students participate.

QEA is following the Action School model of daily exercise for better learning. Our students in grades 1-3 start each school day outside, playing cooperative games as a whole school for 15-20 minutes. Older students are great role models for the younger ones; our grade 3 students are offered leadership responsibilities such as Big Buddies, equipment and announcement monitors.

Our school wide goal for 2017-18 is to improve our students' French oral language skills.

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## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

In addition to classroom activities with an emphasis on authentic interactions in French, students engage in music and other cultural activities, such as Remy the Maple Man and the Children's Festival, that allow them to experience Francophone culture in their school. These events help the children to understand that French is not just for school but that it is an integral part of our community and the larger world.

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## 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

Our students continued to make gains in all areas of the curriculum, thanks in large part to the growing confidence that they acquired with their oral language. In addition to the many formal markers of progress such as benchmark evaluations, dictées, one-on-one oral assessments, etc., it is the students' spontaneous use of French during unstructured time (recess, lunch, before and after school) that indicates that the efforts to improve oral French are working.

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## 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

Improving French Oral Language: Teachers use a variety of methods to encourage the use of oral French throughout the school day. They use online platforms and agendas to communicate to families about the weekly progress of students. There are classroom reward systems as well as verbal feedback and encouragement on a daily basis. Students also have regular opportunities to self-evaluate their developing language skills.

Students' progress is also shared through report cards, conferences and scheduled meetings with parents as required.

Finally, the monthly newsletter that is shared with all our families allows them to keep abreast of our activities and to plan to engage in upcoming events as they are able.

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## 5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

QEA will continue with the same goal of increasing our students' oral language fluidity. We have found that students gain confidence when they are able to share their thoughts and ideas easily in French; this confidence then allows them to take more risks in their learning and benefits their overall educational experience. We will continue to seek interesting and engaging ways to have students use their newly acquired language in meaningful and authentic ways.



*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?

In 2016-17, we had one Aboriginal student at our school in Grade 2. Next year, we will be joined by her brother in Kindergarten and thus will have 2 Aboriginal students at QEA.

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

In all school-wide gatherings, we continue to remind our students and visitors that at QEA, we live, learn, work and play on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Coast Salish peoples.

Over the course of 2016-17, staff have engaged in and initiated a variety of activities in pursuing this goal. As a team, administration and staff participated in a Professional Development workshop around embedding the First People's Principles of Learning into the curriculum. Additionally, one teacher attended the Aboriginal Literacy K-12 Symposium: Reconciliation through Story held by the UBC Language and Literacy Education and will facilitate a workshop for staff in the fall.

This year, the entire school participated in an Artist in Residence Project where a First Nations Artist visited our school for several weeks and shared knowledge and stories while supporting students in creating button blankets.

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

We will continue to work on embedding the First Peoples Principles of Learning into our daily practice by seeking new and interesting ways to bring Aboriginal art and culture into our school. Through invited guests, art projects and other school-wide initiatives, we are continuing to foster an understanding and a deeper appreciation for the contributions of Aboriginal Peoples. As mentioned previously, in the fall, one of our teachers will facilitate a workshop to share what she learned in her symposium at UBC. Additionally, we are adding several First Nations books and other materials to our library collection to ensure that students have adequate opportunity to engage in Aboriginal literature.

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

Following both the Artist in Residence session and the visit to the Art Gallery to meet the artist Susan Point and to see her exhibition, students had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and what they learned. Both projects left the school with art that will be displayed in the classrooms and common areas. For example, in the case of the Artist in Residence, students created a communal button blanket that will hang permanently in the entry of the school, as well as smaller banners that will be installed in the classrooms. Parents were integrally involved in these initiatives, volunteering over several days for the Button Blanket as well as for the Susan Point project.

The school received both written and verbal feedback from parents expressing the gratitude they felt that these projects had been undertaken by staff.