1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Sir William Van Horne Elementary School is in a diverse neighborhood in the Oakridge - South Slope area of Vancouver. It currently enrolls approximately 390 students in 17 divisions from Kindergarten to Grade 7. We have 78 students who are designated as our ELL learners and 41 students with Ministry Designations. Van Horne School and PAC (Parent Advisory Committee) values revolve around recognizing our community’s diversity, being active in learning in a variety of environments, transparency, cooperation, and seeking to make a difference in the lives of the students.

One major focus in the school is the development of an outside classroom that can be used to support a variety of programs including our gardening projects. The outdoor classroom currently consists of a ring of large bench boulders placed in a circular orientation paying respect to an indigenous learning circle. The school is seeking to add to this outdoor classroom in the coming years.

Van Horne is a community of learners that takes pride in developing curricular, extra-curricular, and core competencies to support the holistic development of each child. Students are challenged to excel in all areas of learning including academics and applied design, skills, and technologies. Staff work collaboratively to discuss students’ needs, strengths, and how to best support students. Our highly dedicated staff provide varied learning experiences including project and inquiry-based learning to Van Horne students.

Van Horne is a V.S.B. Early Intervention school. Kindergarten and Grade 1 students receive small group and one to one (Reading Recovery) support from the resource team for literacy skills. Our students participate in Heritage Fair, Destination Imagination and classroom Fairs to celebrate their learning.

Some other unique features of Van Horne Elementary School is the commitment, vibrancy and willingness towards providing well-rounded education including the Arts, Sports and Student Leadership. The school offers many musical opportunities for students. A large Intermediate and Primary Choir practices regularly and performs in and outside the school. This program traditionally holds winter and spring performances. Van Horne has a strong extra-curricular program sponsoring teams at the Intermediate level for cross-country, volleyball, basketball, badminton and track and field. Van Horne parents play a role in sponsoring our sports. Van Horne sponsors a variety of student leadership opportunities: Student Council, Playground Leaders, Safety Patrol, PA announcers, student-led assemblies, Library Monitors, and Big Buddy classes.

We are fortunate to have a highly dedicated and committed PAC. The PAC continues to support new initiatives including sports, technology, literacy and outdoor education.
2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

**Overall Strengths:**
- Students are generally kind, compassionate, and can be inclusive of others
- Willingness to engage in a variety of tasks
- Desire to take on leadership roles
- Students are creative

**Overall Needs:**
- Learning needs – mathematics and literacy
- Develop greater confidence (take greater risks and initiative in learning, take control of own learning, build confidence in their own decision making)
- Need to continue to develop better understanding of creating a safe community
- Continue to support the Social-Emotional wellbeing and self-regulation of our students, especially those who are most vulnerable and fragile
- Need to continue to develop an ability to stay focused on tasks for longer periods of time
- Further develop greater leadership skills (especially follow through on tasks to completion) in all students and in varying contexts

For the 2018-2019 school year, our goal was to improve literacy. The following is a list of some of the activities teachers did with their students in working towards the goal of improving literacy:

- Daily reading for enjoyment
- Factual reading for information
- Discussions on topics in the pre-writing process
- Writing in journals (reflective writing)
- Genius hour activities
- Focus on Main ideas and supportive details
- Class oral novel for discussion
- Heritage fair research
- Novel studies
- Buddy reading
- Focus on poetry particularly rhyming words
- Focus on letter identifiaction and initial letter sounds.
- Home reading and developing the home-school partnership (connection).
- Non fiction writing (salmon observations)
- Personal reflections writing
- Reading for comprehension (focus on nonfiction)
- Procedural writing (eg.how to build a snowman)
- Focus on ‘Painting a picture in the readers mind’ by using similes in writing
• Use of Reading Powers (Connecting, visualizing, questioning)
• Daily silent reading for enjoyment
• Guided reading
• Study on text in the environment
• letter/sound connections
• Penmanship
• Diagrams (labeling pictures)
• Moving from labelled pictures to expanding into writing a story to go with a picture
• Play-based literacy centres
• narrative essays
• weekly free writes
• Persuasive essay writing
• writing based on memory and embodied responses
• free association poetry
• presentation writing
• book club
• Research Writing
• Script writing and performing plays
• Reading song lyrics
• Drama games to act out
• Decoding and vocabulary development. Personal narrative writing
• creative writing
• non-fiction writing
• working with media

The following data was collected from our school-wide reading assessments (Grade K-1) and writes (Grades 2-7) through to the spring of 2019. It tracks the growth of reading/writing in our students over a 2 year period (with the exception of Kindergarten and Grade 1).
Comment: Kindergartners participate in reading assessments in the spring when they are developmentally more ready for such an assessment. The assessment focuses on the concepts of print.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>April</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Beginning</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Developing</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td># Applying</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td># Extending</td>
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Comment: The Grade 1 students showed a significant decrease in the number of “Beginning” and an increase in the number “Developing” or “Applying”.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>March</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Beginning</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Developing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td># Applying</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td># Extending</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
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Comment: Grade 2 is the beginning of assessing writing for the purposes of this School Growth Plan. Over a 2 year period the students in this grade showed a decline in “Beginning” and an increase in “Extending” – showing tremendous improvement.
Comment: There was an increase in the number of students in this grade over the 2 year period. 3 of the 4 categories saw an increase in numbers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Sept</th>
<th>April</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong># Not Yet Meeting</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong># Meeting (Minimal)</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Meeting (Fully)</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong># Exceeding</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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Comment: This cohort showed a significant decrease in the “Not Yet Meeting” level and an increase in the “Exceeding” level over a 2 year period.

![Grade Five Writing - Overall](chart.png)

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<td><strong># Not Yet Meeting</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong># Meeting (Minimal)</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Meeting (Fully)</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong># Exceeding</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
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</table>

Comments: This cohort of students showed a general trend in decreasing the “Not Yet Meeting” level and increasing the “Meeting (Fully)” level over a 2 year period.
Comments: Over the course of 2 years this cohort of students showed a decrease in “Not Yet Meeting” and an increase in “Meeting (Minimal)”. 
2B. WHAT DO WE NEED TO RE-ADJUST?

Staff began an extensive review of year one of the School Growth Plan and decided a radical change was needed. The realization that literacy was, and always will be, a school goal gave staff permission to change the goal #1 as outlined in this School Growth Plan.

A new lens was adopted to reimagine what staff could be working on together and a discussion of focusing on student strengths and on the learning process took hold.

“Children grow into the intellectual life around them – Lev Vygotsky”

What part of the learning process, what part of learning as we understand it, could be utilized to improve learning in and of itself?

There is much we understand about learning, such as learning about what one is already strong at, learning about what one is passionate (motivation) about that can be harnessed to achieve better student outcomes.

3. INQUIRY QUESTION (previously known as “Goal”)

Given this re-imagining, the previous focus on literacy is now being changed.

What further student learning improvements can be gained when students are given choice and voice in what to pursue, an increased focus on metacognition and self-assessment?

The staff believe that giving students choice honours their voice and students will pick to learn things that they are interested in or are already good at which leads to improvements in motivation which leads to improved learning.
4. **WHAT IS YOUR NEW PLAN?**

Each teacher in the school has their own topics of interest and their own passions. These will inevitably be things they are each good at, or have a strong desire to be better at.

Each student in the school has their own topics of interest and their own passions. These will inevitably be things they are each good at, or have a strong desire to be better at.

Teachers will set aside a common regular time (example: one afternoon a week) to offer a 6-8 week course on a topic of their choosing (taking into account student’s brainstormed ideas).

Students will sign up for one of these courses (for a total of 2-3 in a school year).

During the assigned “workshop times” students will attend class with the teacher who’s workshop course they chose, working on projects created with that teacher.

Additionally, students and parents will also be offered opportunities to teach workshops.

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5. **WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?**

Staff will have to create a common timetable to allow this course of action to take place. Staff will also need to coordinate/collaborate with others in order to allow the scheduling to work. Some individual students will need additional supports in place to help them navigate a successful workshop environment.

Students will need extensive scaffolding to determine what are their own passions, understand that they should pursue their interests, that they need a certain level of independence and responsibility to attend workshops and complete workshop courses, and if classes are missed, students will need to learn how they can catch up.

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6. **HOW WILL WE KNOW WE’RE SUCCESSFUL?**

Student progress through their workshops along with student and staff feedback will determine whether success was achieved or not.

The data collected will come from a common learning journal that students will keep along with various teacher assessments based on the core competencies and student self-assessments collected.

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7. **HOW WILL WE SHARE?**

Various opportunities will be explored including a student learning fair will be organized in order for parents to see what progress students are making in their own learning.
District-wide Indigenous Goal: To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students.

8. **WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS LEARNERS IN OUR SCHOOL?**

We currently have 9 indigenous students which is 0.3% of our total student population.

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

The following is a list of actions taken by various teachers to support this goal:

- comparing 3 levels of government in Canada to traditional and modern First Nations governance
- storytelling linked to Salish style art
- debate about fairness of Treaty Process
- Readers’ Theatre and Indigenous storytelling to develop oral language
- incorporate First Nations stories, tales, and myths into various lessons
- study on local animals important to local First Nations and the meanings behind each animal particularly the Raven.
- Use of indigenous stories integrated into lessons
- Project on Artic animals including understanding how the Inuit people regard certain artic animals
- Project focussed on artistic styles of the Pacific Northwest indigenous people
- Social students activities related to ancient cultures and government
- Residential school study
- Novel study on *My name is Seepeetza*
- discussion on Shishietko/ Shinshi’s canoe Residential schools
- Indigenous art posted in the room
- Heritage Fair
- Recognizing many ways of knowing
- Treaty process
• Field trip to Museum of Anthropology Connecting
• salmon study focussing on the importance of connection of all living things
• Indigenous stories
• Writing creation stories inspired by indigenous stories
• Baking bannock
• Orange shirt day learning
• Connect canadian colonialism to other cultural genocides
• use indigenous story telling to tell your own story
• various explorative activities about colonialism discuss reconciliation
• Indigenous support worker has supported our indigenous students especially on cultural activities and connection
• Incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing in my teaching methods
• including Indigenous Culture as part of the Social Studies curriculum
• Creation of the new School Logo based on Musqueam style art
• Creation and use of the Outdoor Classroom built upon a circle of learning model
• Incorporating First Nations flag in our classrooms
• Use indigenous stories for drama games
• Indigenous songs and dances

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

• Gardening with an increased focus on indigenous plants and how these plants were traditionally used by local First Nations Peoples
• Read 100 indigenous picture books Challenge
• comparing 3 levels of government in Canada to traditional and modern First Nations governance
• storytelling linked to Salish style art
• debate about fairness of Treaty Process
• Readers' Theatre and Indigenous storytelling to develop oral language
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This year, our school took a focus on Indigenous culture by creating an outdoor classroom. This classroom includes several elements of Indigenous learning and culture such as the outdoor classroom embodies an understanding that learning shows a connection and a sense of place and the classroom is shaped in a circle that represents a traditional Indigenous way of learning and sharing.

We also adopted a new logo this year. We moved away from a traditional European Wildcat and participated in a lengthy process that resulted in a logo developed by a local Indigenous woman from the Musqueam nation that represented Musqueam art. The logo honours the land that our school is situated upon.

Both these examples showed a growing understanding of Indigenous awareness and an increasing knowledge and acceptance Indigenous culture.

Next year we will be tracking the number of Books read by each class in regards to the investment we are making in improving our Indigenous book collection. We are also exploring a survey to measure student attitudes towards their learning of Indigenous cultures and the Indigenous ways of knowing.