



Vancouver School District

School Plan for Britannia Secondary

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.)

Britannia Secondary Community School, which opened in 1908, is the oldest secondary school in Vancouver. It is situated on a 16 hectare site which includes Britannia Elementary School, Hastings Adult Learning Centre, Britannia Community services Centre, Britannia Community Library (Vancouver Public Library Branch), and a host of recreational, educational, and community services. The overall administration on site is done cooperatively, by the Britannia Community Services Centre, through a partnership established in 1975 between the Grandview-Woodlands and Strathcona communities, Vancouver City Council, Vancouver School Board, Vancouver Parks Board, and the Vancouver Public Library Board.

Britannia is a comprehensive community school. The staff consists of 1.75 administrators, 42 full and part-time teachers and 10 support staff (which includes community education coordinator; drug and alcohol counselor, school support B program workers). Recent cuts include 1x library staff assistant, computer tech support (reduced time), 1x career information assistant, multicultural workers (reduced time), and 1 First Nations support worker. These cuts have affected service to the 530 students in Gr. 8-12 (April 2017 headcount) at Britannia. 500 Students are enrolled in the main school and 50 in alternative programs attached to the secondary school; 150 students (27.2%) are Aboriginal or Metis; 16 students are designated ESL students; and there are 27 International students. Since 2007, approximately one quarter of Britannia students have been ministry coded.

Two significant drivers of uncertainty in the school's community recently have been the decision to put the school on the District's closure list, and recent changes to the master agreement with the community center. Although Britannia was later dropped from the closure list, staff and community members have noted that in the district's recent strategic plan mention is made of closure possibilities, and community members are concerned about the medium to long term plans for the school (Minutes: Staff meeting, February, 2017; Department Head's meeting, May 2017)..

These concerns are deepened when changes to facilities utilization have the potential to impact on school planning, in particular, our use of gym C. While the governance structure of the site is unchanged potential access to gym C might become restricted through the extension of the fee for service model from the pool and ice rink to gym C, and the related need to curtail block bookings of the facility.

Britannia is an Inner City School. Everyday there are situations and circumstances, associated with low income urban communities, which are dealt with by staff. Recognition of the impact of income on educational attainment has been a consistent theme in the literature on school and community linkages since the Plowden and Rutter studies of the early 1970's. We feel this impact at Britannia where approximately 30% of our students live in households that receive income assistance or have MCF involvement; 33% of our families earn less than \$30 000 pa (19% District; 16% Province).; 27% of our families are single parent (16% District; 15% Province) (Ministry of Education: School Data Summary 2003-2008; Fraser Institute, 2011; HELP Early Development Indicators: Community Summary, 2010; EDI Wave 4 Summary; EDI 08/09)

It is also true that Britannia serves a vibrant community of diverse cultures, interests and needs. Home languages of our students reveal that this diversity is reflected within our student population with at least 38 different languages spoken (BC Ministry of Education, 2011, Student Statistics 2010-2011). The Britannia catchment area also has the highest concentration of Aboriginal Peoples in Vancouver (~9.5% of the total Urban Aboriginal population) (HELP Early Development Indicators: Community Summary, 2010).

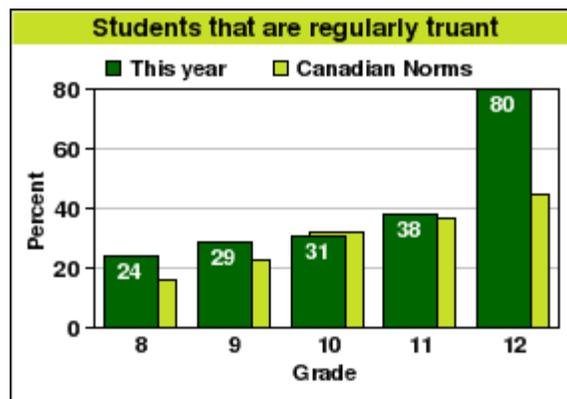
As a comprehensive school, opportunities are provided to all students in Mathematics, English, Sciences, Social Studies, Modern Languages, Physical Education, Fine Arts, Technical Studies and Applied Skills curricula areas. Modified and challenged/enriched courses are offered in some of the core academic areas to meet our diverse student needs.

Our staff initiate programs that give support, assistance and curricular instruction for Grade 8 students who need help in managing the transition from Grade 7 to 8. The school offers several district programs of which we are extremely proud, including three in the main school. Our International Baccalaureate Program is a two-year program in Grades 11 and 12 that follow a rigorous curriculum leading to external examinations and an internationally recognized Diploma. Our Venture Program is an enriched, academic mini-school that offers a global education experience for motivated students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 and provides excellent preparation for entrance into the IB Program. In September 2007, Britannia implemented a Hockey Academy, the first in Vancouver, drawing students from Vancouver and Burnaby.

Outreach and Streetfront are district alternative resource programs providing curricular and developmental support in alternative settings for 50 students. The programs are located on site. Students in the Alternative programs can be re-integrated into the regular school at the senior level.

Britannia also houses two on-site programs for students with special needs. The Learning Support Program is a district program designed to serve students with learning difficulties. The program is capped at 15 students. Students take their core academics in a small, supported setting and are integrated into classes in the main school for their elective courses. The second program is Pacific Storm, a program for students needing social and emotional support. The program is capped at 14 and is staffed with a teacher, YFW and an SSW.

Historically, our school plans have focused on developing a network of support for struggling learners. In 2014-15 we shifted to focus on absenteeism and truancy/lates. In 2015-16 absenteeism and truancy remains a problem in the school, as shown, for example in table 1, from the 2016 OurSchool survey. The table summarizes data on students who skip classes or miss days at school without a reason, or arrive late for school or classes. At Britannia, in the 2016 survey, the student truancy rate was 32%; the Canadian norm for these grades was 31%. By gender, the truancy rate for girls was 33% and for boys, 32%. The Canadian norm for girls is 28% and for boys is 34%. While the data for grades 8-11 are roughly aligned to national averages, there is a significant deviance at the grade 12 level where 80% of our students admitted to skipping and truancy – double the national average. This suggests that the focus on attendance support in the early years has had success, though we are still above national self-reporting data.



To address the various realities noted above- cuts to services, site uncertainties, neighborhood socio-economic matrices, truancy and depression/low self-esteem (see tables 2-5)- staff have implemented various initiatives noted below. Further to these, in the upcoming years we are seeking to:

- develop our technology program at Britannia to include robotics and coding and design elements,
- develop a film program at the school,

- continue to build the Venture, IB, and Hockey Academy programs at the school within the opportunities created by the Supreme Courts' restored class size and composition ruling.

2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

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

Goal #1. To improve students' equity of access to opportunities which enhance students' social responsibility and engagement in school.

Actions:

- An adjusted bell schedule that acknowledges adolescent sleep habits and that allows for each teacher to provide 30 minute tutorial and seminar sessions every day as required for student success.
- A pro-active and positive early intervention system to address attendance issues (1. Teacher→Student→Parent; 2. Counsellor→student→Parent; 3.Admin→Student→Parent).
- Continued School Based Team and SBRT support; Skills support blocks provided on-going academic support of students with attendance issues.
- Synervoice attendance program attached to email and phone.
- In-school workshops by DRTs on differentiating instruction in relation to students with diverse learning needs.
- Professional Development focused on student engagement and positive classroom environments.
- Parent focus groups on engaging parents in regards to improving communication of teachers and parents, support for parents, as well as opportunities for parents to connect with each other.
- Continued offering of a variety of levels for core academic subject areas, from modified to enriched, to better meet the academic needs of all students.
- Whole school TTFM.
- Student Focus Groups.
- Improved attendance
- Regular attendance
- Provincial and school exam results, honor roll
- Grade to Grade transition rates,
- Student focus groups and forums,
- Formal and Informal Parent Feed back through PAC and other avenues
- TTFM

Goal #2. To align planning, resources, communication and practice such that all students attend classes regularly and in a timely manner, ready to learn.

Actions:

- BRITE 8 – A year-long initiative to connect and support the Grade 8s to develop positive and healthy relationships with their peers, teachers and the school. BRITE 8 included day long Community building camp in Squamish. Green Thumb Theatre production , Professional development for teachers regarding resilience and mindfulness, on-going peer support from the Link Crew and Leadership students and a series of workshops looking at issues around social media, appropriate conflict resolution and self-esteem.
- Staff supported student activities and clubs which promote good citizenship such as Student Council, the Leo Club and the Queer Straight Alliance
- Students acted as mentors through programs such as peer support, and the Leadership class and Link Crew
- Safe Teen workshops for all Grade 9 students
- Student participation in focus groups and TTFM
- The Cave
- The Britannia Business Club (portion of profits to local charities)

- SACY – Step program
- Britannia Leadership Team cards
- Grade 8 Welcoming Ceremony
- Continued Science Fair focus for Junior Science students working with UBC mentors
- Business Education Certificate of Achievement Program
- Port Metro Vancouver Leadership Development program

Goal #3. Aboriginal Enhancement Goal: To design and implement specific strategies which will enhance learning and success for Aboriginal students, as well as deepen overall understanding and appreciation of students' diverse cultural backgrounds. Please see paragraphs 6-9 below.

3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

Outline results

Goal #1. To improve students' equity of access to opportunities which enhance students' social responsibility and engagement in school.

Success is assessed by measuring the number of students who participate in various school events, projects and service clubs and from school behavior referral data. In this regard, there has been excellent participation in the Brite 8 initiatives (grade 8 camp, LINK activities like the grade at welcome week and recent lunch) and grade field trips (organized by the English department). Participation in clubs remains low. Other indicators of engagement include anti-social behavior: we had 3 fire alarm pulls in September/October; the perpetrator was caught; parental follow-up occurred. Subsequent alarms were due to dust in the alarm mechanisms. In January 2017 a spate of 7 locker break-ins occurred. A suspect was interviewed along with liaison officer and parent communications. The break-ins ended. In 2016-17 we had 2 fights, both quickly ended by students and staff, and both resolved on the day within the school, following parent contacts. Graffiti and vandalism in the school is practically non-existent (we had 26 counts of graffiti this year, 18 of these being in a girl's washroom). However, as tables 1-5 show, a significant number of students still struggle to connect with the school.

Goal #2. To align planning, resources, communication and practice such that all students attend classes regularly and in a timely manner, ready to learn.

- Improved and Regular attendance
- Provincial and school exam results, honor roll
- Grade to Grade transition rates,
- Student focus groups and forums,
- Formal and Informal Parent Feed-back through PAC and other avenues
- TTFM

Goal #3. Aboriginal Enhancement Goal: To design and implement specific strategies which will enhance learning and success for Aboriginal students, as well as deepen overall understanding and appreciation of students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

- Please see paragraphs 6-9 below

4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

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

Goal #1. To improve students' equity of access to opportunities which enhance students' social responsibility and engagement in school.

Success is communicated through and celebrated by report cards, the honor roll and principal's list, the student and staff bulletin, the PAC, the daily PA announcements, school newsletters, the school website, awards nights, and Graduation ceremony.

Goal #2. To align planning, resources, communication and practice such that all students attend classes regularly and in a timely manner, ready to learn.

Success is communicated through and celebrated through the student and staff bulletin, the daily PA announcements, school newsletters, the school website, and awards nights.

Goal #3. Aboriginal Enhancement Goal: In addition to the above, First Nations celebration events (eg July 2nd 2016 event; Collaborative week held in March 2016) and First Nation's graduation event.

5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

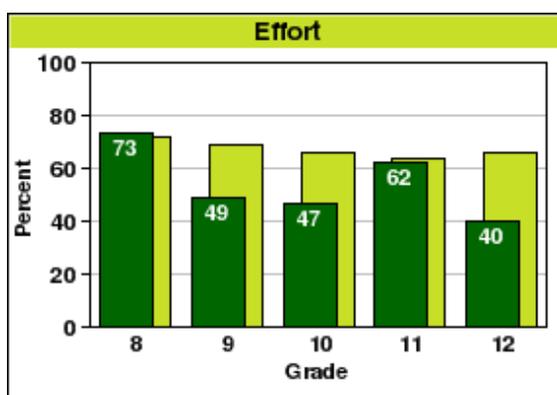
- What will we be doing as we begin to plan for next year and the next multi-year goal?

At our administration professional day held on 5 May 2017 we reviewed our past school goals and their alignment to the Districts Strategic Plan (Vision 2021), Provincial New curriculum initiatives, OECD data on school innovation and learning, and Indigenous Ways of Learning. Our Department Head's meeting on 19 May 2017 also examined data from our 2015-16 TTFM survey on school attachment, and our Staff Meeting on 23 February discussed attendance and attendance tracking. In May 2017 we surveyed students again using the TTFM instrument; other student surveys that we will draw on are surveys of the Venture and IB students, a survey of First Nations students conducted by our Aboriginal Education Department, and a focus group discussion facilitated by the VPD on drug awareness.

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

Several discussions have been held, including discussions in Venture/IB department meetings, staff and department head meetings, school-based team meetings, and during collaborative time, Provincial New Curriculum Implementation staff planning sessions, and Professional Development days.

- Will we continue with the same goal or will we move to another area and why? We are considering modifying our focus on attendance to resiliency and success for all students. OurSchool data from 2016, for example presents data on student vulnerability and effort.



Students who try hard to succeed in their learning is reflected in OurSchool Effort data, shown in table 2. Thus Britannia students who try hard to succeed in their learning revealed an average of 56% of our students felt they tried hard to succeed; the Canadian norm for these grades is 68%. Disaggregated by gender, 56% of Britannia girls and 56% of Britannia boys tried hard to succeed. The Canadian norm for girls is 71% and for boys is 64%.

Students who have intense feelings of fear, intense anxiety, or worry about particular events or social situations is reflected by grade in table 3. Aggregated, 26% of students at Britannia had moderate to high levels of anxiety; the Canadian norm for these grades is 18%. And by gender, 46% of the girls and 11% of the boys at Britannia had moderate to high levels of anxiety. The Canadian norm for girls is 21% and for boys is 14%.

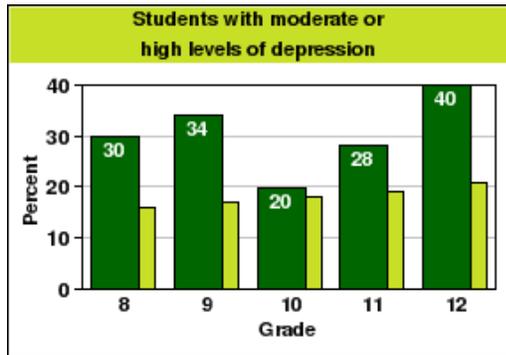
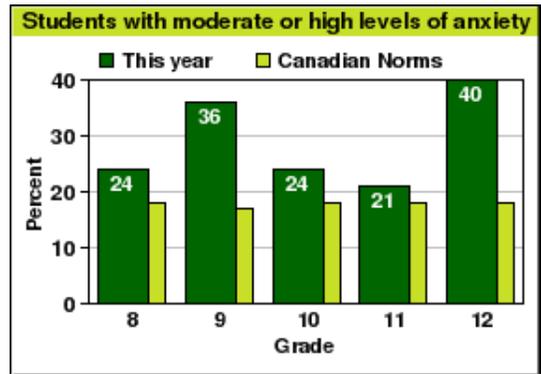
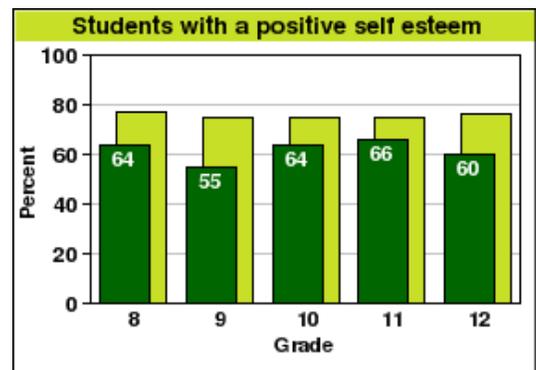


Table 4

shows OurSchool data on students who have prolonged periods when they feel sad, discouraged, and inadequate. While the table shows grade level data, averaged, 28% of students Britannia had moderate to high levels of depression; the Canadian norm for these grades is 18%. By gender, a clear discrepancy is revealed: 48% of the girls and 12% of the boys at Britannia had moderate to high levels of depression. The Canadian norm for girls is 21% and for boys is 15%.

Table 5

corroborates data in tables two and three by considering the other end of the spectrum: positive self-esteem. Thus students who like and accept themselves, and are proud of their accomplishments amounted to 62% of Britannia sample students had high self-esteem; the Canadian norm for these grades is 76%. And 48% of the girls and 73% of the boys at Britannia had high self-esteem. The Canadian norm for girls is 72% and for boys is 79%.





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?

- Include numbers of students, grade levels
 Britannia’s Aboriginal learners include status, non-status, Metis, and identified on-reserve students. Although the significant majority of Aboriginal students are non-reserve, we have two important clusters of students from West Vancouver Island (the Ahousaht community) and the Nisga’a valley who have chosen to attend Britannia. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal data is shown in table 1, below. The table includes regular and alternate program students; of our total enrolment, 39% of students have Aboriginal ancestry, up from 27% in 2010/2011 and 2011/12. In-short, over the past 10 years an increasing number of students at Britannia have Aboriginal heritage. Intake interviews with parents provide part of the explanation:

“Britannia is known in our school as an excellent school. It supports Aboriginal kids and cares about us.”

“Britannia has an excellent reputation in our (Nass valley) community- it is a magnet school for us!”

(Intake interviews, September 2016).

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
Aboriginal	35	28	39	28	20	150
Non-Aboriginal	62	60	88	80	90	380
Total	97	88	127	108	110	530

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.

In addition to celebrations and communication identified in our Goals, our Aboriginal Assemblies also honor First Nation’s experience and place in our school. Further celebrations include participation in community events where our students are represented, and formal and informal student meetings and celebrations that recognize achievements.

Further to actions identified in Goal 1, above, practices that focus on Aboriginal Students include:

- Significant attention to improved attendance through positive engagement with our aboriginal students and a concerted effort to connect with parents.
- BRITE 8 is a holistic program that focuses on community and relationship building amongst all of our grade 8 students. The Welcoming Ceremony and the activity day at Cheakamus provided opportunities for all of our students to experience Aboriginal teaching in a context of learning, growing, sharing and acceptance.
- School Based Team and SBRT support; Skills support blocks.
- Aboriginal Student and parent focus groups
- Britannia’s First Nations Success club

Ongoing partnerships with community groups, for example, with Vancouver Native Housing Society and UNYA.

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

- List continuing and new initiatives

In 2015/16 and 2016/17 we facilitated, along with colleagues from Churchill Secondary, a collaborative inquiry into supporting Aboriginal learners and integrating themes of Reconciliation into the classroom. The inquiry resulted in several important school-community collaborations including participating in two Reconciliation in Action community events in 2015 and 2016, and collaborative lesson planning and unit delivery.

Our Aboriginal Support teacher and worker have continued to play a vital role connecting aboriginal students and families to school through daily phone calls and follow-up meetings, liaison with community based agencies, a weekly (Wednesdays from 3:15-6:30pm) extra homework club, and alongside district staff, district leadership (for example, coordinating and hosting professional development workshops at Britannia and at the Museum of Anthropology).

Guided by district policy and national and provincial initiatives regarding Reconciliation we intend to continue this work.

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

In a survey of 300 Britannia students that focused on First Nation's and Indigenous experience, students across the school, using a 5 point Likert scale (1= Low knowledge; 5= High knowledge/Very proficient), students rated their knowledge of indigenous history at 2.54/5; their knowledge of indigenous culture at 2.43/5, and their knowledge of current affairs regarding First Nations peoples at 2.36/5.

When disaggregated to our non-First Nations students, responses indicated a lower understanding of First Nation's affairs and experience. Students rated their knowledge of indigenous history at 2.37/5; their knowledge of indigenous culture at 2.21/5, and their knowledge of First Nations current affairs at 2.07/5.

Students were also asked what they would like to learn about First Nations societies. The three most frequently cited items included material on (1) First Nation's culture, (2) First Nation's traditions and festivals, and (3) First Nation's spirituality. Other topics included First Nations stories, food, and residential schools.

Clearly, we must continue initiatives underway. However we do need to recognize our successes: our Aboriginal Student graduation rates are among the highest in the district and Province; First Nation's athletes are leaders in our school and we are pushing these students to assume leadership roles on our student council; one strategic planning meeting in January explored the possibility of enhancing Aboriginal student access and success in the Venture and IB programs. Lastly, as noted earlier, we are identified as an aboriginal "magnet school" (intake interview; parent comment, October 2016).