



## 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Lord Roberts Annex is a kindergarten to grade three primary annex located in the heart of downtown Vancouver. We currently enroll 156 students. Just over 48% of our students are English language learners. Our students come from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds representing 22 different countries, with 24 different languages spoken. 9% of our population has special needs designations and all of these students are fully integrated into the classroom with varying levels of support.

Roberts Annex students live throughout the densely populated downtown core, with the majority living in multi-unit low and high-rise dwellings. The student population was at one time very transient with less than 25% of the students remaining in the school until grade 3. We have begun to see a shift in this transience and this year 69% of our grade 3's started with us in Kindergarten (up from 57% in 2016).

Roberts Annex was one of the core three schools that began in the Early Literacy Project in 1999. Seventeen years later, literacy is still the center of what we do. Monthly Literacy meetings give everyone a forum to share and discuss their Literacy practice and also, provide opportunities for teachers to problem-solve around students or strategies. These meetings are integral to the collaborative community that the teachers at Roberts Annex strive to create.

Other school initiatives include using technology with primary children, in meaningful ways, community gardening initiatives (ie. Spuds in Tubs, garlic garden, community garden) and developing mindful strategies in our daily practice, which were introduced in the 2013-2014 inquiry project and have continued to be extended upon (ex. through mindful breathing at assemblies, *Ready Bodies*, *Learning Minds* used in sensory gym and breathing strategies, etc.).

Roberts Annex also values the Performing and Fine Arts. A variety of experiences in the visual, musical and fine arts form an important component of each child's school program. All students are provided with a visual journal at the beginning of the year. It is a place for students to take a closer look at the world around them and express themselves through art and writing. The annual Spring Musical continues to be a way to build community through the arts.

Roberts Annex continues to have a strong emphasis placed on increasing students' understanding and skills in peaceful problem-solving and self-regulation. Students are learning to be safe and caring in their daily interactions, through such strategies as monthly assemblies, where one class focuses on an area of social responsibility (based on our school behaviour rubric) and presents to the school. Grade 2 and 3 Student

Leaders have taken a leadership role in these assemblies and out on the playground. This year we had 62 out of 73 students volunteer their time to be Playground and Student Leaders. They give up a recess and lunch every week to help out. A classroom teacher supervises and has monthly meetings of the playground leaders and office monitors. The playground leaders do roleplays at the monthly assemblies to remind children of school rules and appropriate behaviours.

Our 2016-2017 inquiry question was 'How can we support students to identify, own, articulate and put into action their social responsibility skills?' Further, we decided to include a focus on what it means to be a good listener. The need for this goal came from staff observations, noting that our kids were not applying their knowledge of appropriate behaviours and were still getting unfocused and off-task. While we had some success in the area of social responsibility, we wanted to continue to build on it. In addition, listening was a big part of the aboriginal goal, being focused upon through such strategies such as classroom meetings in the form of listening circles and through the use of talking sticks/feathers. While all teachers were addressing the skills needed for good listening with their students in a variety of ways, there was a demonstrated need for a common language and a whole school program that could build upon the prior year and continue to be reinforced each year thereafter.

---

## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

We were able to develop a common language around self-regulation through various supports and activities used throughout the year, as follows:

- Used/reviewed the books, *Whole Body Listening Larry* and *What it Means to be Present*
- Brought in whole body listening program
- Reviewed common understandings
- Used strategies like role playing and modelling
- Explicitly taught self-regulation skills
- Used assemblies to reinforce at a school community level
- Gave children access to their own focusing tools to demonstrate their own self-regulation
- Self-regulation charts used for students that struggled with self-regulation
- Strategies to promote self-regulation (listening), such as 'blurt beans' and working towards a class goal
- Students demonstrated an expectation of respectful listening to a speaker when they were sharing with their class (ie. "I'm waiting for you to listen!")
- Core competencies self-assessments

---

## 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

The results were as follows:

- The staff has developed a common language when discussing good listening
- Students can demonstrate an understanding of whole body listening
- Students are able to demonstrate what good listening is when requested to do so
- Students are demonstrating that they are picking up on the modeling (ie. making appropriate choices of who they are sitting beside and being able to identify what kind of listener they are)
- Grade 3 students rated themselves on their personal goals at the beginning of each term, through a survey (using 'always', 'sometimes' or 'never'), 3 times per year, reflected, and shared at student led conferences

---

#### 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

We have shared with and involved parents, students and other members of the community in a number of ways, including the following:

- Stories about good listening skills read, shared and discussed in all classes
- Whole Body Listening song presented at a school assembly
- Contributed to a school video on our listening goal
- Students adopted the lessons/language used in the classroom (ie. as seen in the language used by playground leaders)
- Posters from whole body listening
- Type of Listening posters
- Classroom rules posters
- Shared goals at PAC meeting
- Parent teacher conferences (ie. Discussed the common language that could also be used at home to reinforce good listening)
- Informal discussions after school with parents
- Communicated the Code of Behaviour to the school community through assemblies, class meetings, PAC meetings and the school calendar/parent handbook that each family received in September

## 5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

Roberts Annex learning community has built a solid foundation to continue with self-regulation and mindful strategies with students and will continue to work in this area independently from our school goal.

Next year, as we begin to plan for the multi-year goal, we will be discussing how we are providing our students with “increased opportunities to connect...to their learning” and also connecting to our district goals (*District Goal 1: Engaging our learners through innovative teaching and learning practices, VSB Strategic Plan 2016-2021*). Teachers have noticed that as they begin to introduce an inquiry based learning approach into their teaching, students are beginning to delve deeper into their learning by building more meaningful questions. As they become increasingly immersed in knowledge building together, it is observed that their excitement in their own learning increases. For example, when one student asked “How did the universe start?” another exclaimed “I’m so excited! I wanted to learn about this!” It is our hunch that inquiry stimulates the student’s natural curiosity and leads to better questions and deeper learning.

In addition, we will discuss narrowing our focus to incorporating environmental inquiry, as a school wide approach, into all areas of the curriculum and tapping into children’s curiosity about the natural world. As stated in our school story, many of our students live in apartments, often limiting their outdoor experiences. “Imagine them venturing outside their classrooms”, writes Lorraine Chiarotto in *Natural Curiosity: A Resource for Teachers* (p. 1), “to learn about nature in nature, gaining a full sensory experience of their natural surroundings, making close observations, and recording and reflecting on their findings.” There are many places to explore both, around the school and in our neighbourhood (back garden plot, next door community garden, Stanley Park, English Bay, etc.). Currently we are having a new playground built and there may also be possibilities for student involvement with the new landscaping project. There are also many ways in which we could build our resources and encourage classes to be outside more often, such as creating a class set of travel backpacks (magnifying glass, clip boards, pencils, etc.), to encourage more frequent and ease of planning for outdoor exploration. It is expected that this type of experiential learning will enhance student learning.

Further, our discussions will be looking at ways in which we can, within a shift to environmental inquiry, “support the implementation of the curriculum” and “enhance assessment and reporting strategies to support teaching and learning” through student self-awareness of the core competencies at a metacognitive level.



*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?

- We have 4 Aboriginal students with Aboriginal heritage in our school of 156 students, 2 students in kindergarten, 1 in grade 1 and 1 in grade 2
- These students have not shared about their aboriginal heritage, but speak in terms of values rather than about aboriginal culture (and are more likely to share about their non-aboriginal family heritage)
- They are currently not explicitly identifying or demonstrating aspects of their aboriginal culture (ie. dress, food, holidays, etc.)

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

In order to support all learners in regards to this goal, we have done the following:

- Continued to build our Aboriginal resources for staff and students
- Ensured that all of our Aboriginal resources were identified with an Aboriginal sticker on the spine
- Continued to begin assemblies and school gatherings with the following opening: "Please join me in acknowledging that we live and work on the traditional lands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh (Slay-wahtoo) people."
- Introduced First Nations language and developed a concept that 'We are one' (Neca mat ct ) and 'We are connected'
- Organized school wide cultural presentations (ie. Alex Wells Hoop Dancer)
- Organized hoop dancing workshops for students
- Incorporated information about Aboriginal contributions to Canada into the Remembrance Day ceremony
- Infused Aboriginal education into all subject areas of the curriculum (some activities included heritage talks, making Bentwood boxes and Dreamcatchers and learning about the medicine wheel)
- incorporated indigenous ways in our school community, like conducting class meetings in a circle, and in some cases used a talking feather/stick, based on the Aboriginal tradition of communication/problem solving
- Used Visual Journals to allow students to take a closer look at nature and the natural world we inhabit
- Presented First Nations-focused school musical, called *Dreamcatcher*
- Small group discussions around First Nations reading material
- Class discussion around Aboriginal resources, such as *Raven Tales* and discussing the *Moe the Mouse* program
- Staff participated in the BCTF Workshop, Aboriginal Education within the Redesigned Curriculum

---

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

We will do the following:

- Continue to access both VSB and non-VSB resources
- Continue to create an ongoing list of contacts and resources available for our support in Aboriginal education
- Invite Aboriginal artists to our school to perform, teach and share their culture (ie. story tellers, hoop dancers, button blanket artists)
- Source possible student craft workshops given by someone who can highlight various indigenous art forms
- Continue to build and organize our Aboriginal resources for staff and students (around such things as Aboriginal Art, Aboriginal connections to nature, traditions and culture, storytelling, food and lifestyle, etc.)
- Continue to infused Aboriginal education into all subject areas of the curriculum
- Continue to participate in informal pro-D (ie. share books, story ideas, important ideas)
- Continue our environmental inquiry at Literacy Meetings and connecting to Indigenous ways of knowing
- Participate in staff Pro-D (such as the Museum of Anthropology and the Talking Stick festival)

---

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

Our success is demonstrated through the following:

- Students have expressed an interest in incorporating more Aboriginal education and resources into their learning
- Students have continued with their learning on their own, outside the classroom (extend and play), as seen in such things as their hoop dancing outside at recess and creating their aboriginal inspired art
- Students demonstrated universal connections (ie. drumming in aboriginal culture and African culture)
- Community initiated and supported Aboriginal cultural events, such as our Aboriginal Hoop Dancing performance
- When asked the question “How do you see Aboriginal culture showing up in our school?” parents were able to recall many examples they’ve noticed throughout the school year
- Teachers displayed Aboriginal inspired student art
- Staff and students contributed to the creation and showing of a video depicting the integration of Aboriginal education that has been taking place throughout our school
- As a staff, we now feel more confident in incorporating Aboriginal education into the curriculum