

Georgia Ave. Community School Plan 2019

GENERAL SCHOOL STORY

WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE, POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR SCHOOL?

Our school's sense of community is reliant on building strong, supportive and trusting relationships with each other. Our dedicated staff make relationship building a priority in their daily interactions with our students and their guardians. We are a diverse community with a wide range of learning styles and various cultural backgrounds. We demonstrate acceptance for all and make time to acknowledge accomplishments and show gratitude for each other. We embrace our collective ownership of Aboriginal Education and are committed to developing a solid understanding of Aboriginal understandings in all of our students. All classes receive Hul'qumin'um language education in addition to the embedded Aboriginal curriculum for each grade.

Georgia Avenue uses a tiered level of support to ensure students who are struggling have access to small group and/or individualized support as needed. We are constantly evaluating our practices and outcomes and show exibility and a high degree of responsive team-work in addressing and meeting our students' changing needs. We provide a wide variety of supports and enriching activities for students. Some examples are: In-school and extra-curricular sports and arts programs, food support programs, sensory room, social thinking programs, playground and classroom peer mentorship and student leadership group.

There is a high level of participation and sense of pride in our senior sports. Our music program is unique in that students have daily opportunities to explore sounds though hands-on interaction with a variety of instruments. In addition to programs provided by our in-house staff we have many community groups and volunteers who support our students in a variety of ways and who are valued members of our school community.

Our school is a designated NLPS Focus School, providing extra literacy support (K-3) dedicated to achieving proficiency in literacy. We are also a Strong Start school, providing programming to early learners and their caregivers and enabling us to develop strong relationships with our families early in their schooling experience.

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT DEMOGRAPHICS OF OUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY?

Georgia Avenue Community School, located in the Harewood community of South Nanaimo, currently enrolls 397 students in grades Kindergarten through 7. We are proud to have a diverse student population represented by Indigenous, Caucasian, South Asian and Syrian families. Due to our close proximity to Vancouver Island University (VIU) our school attracts many international families. Our school houses our District's Elementary Life Skills program. Statistics Canada (2016) for Nanaimo indicates that we have 33.4% lone parent families and a child poverty rate of 28.2%.

The 2016 EDI (Early Development Index) demonstrates 46% vulnerability associated with socioeconomic disadvantage. 34% percent of our students identify as Indigenous. 13% of our students have a recognized Ministry Designation for learning differences, and all instruction is adapted to the unique learning style of each student. 15% of our students receive targeted ELL (English Language Learners) support.

41% of our teaching staff are new to the school and new to the teaching profession. We are fortunate to have 2 full-time CYFSWs, 2.6 Student Support Teachers and 0.8 Counselling support.

WHAT DO WE CELEBRATE?

Our students possess many strengths. Resiliency plays an important factor in their day to day success. We celebrate our student's ability to meet the challenges they face and to rise above them and show growth. Given that many of our students have experienced some type of trauma, moments when they are engaged in self-regulated learning are celebrated. Our students care for and look out for each other. We celebrate our diversity and any actions that help contribute to an inclusive culture. Students often have opportunities to show leadership in mentoring, encouraging and/or role-modelling for others. Many of our classes have daily sharing circles where students get opportunities to build connections and support and celebrate one another. We have an open gratitude board in our foyer for students to acknowledge their appreciation for each other and staff. We read several notes of gratitude on the announcements each day. It is often difficult for our students to take risks, any time they are able to demonstrate risk taking, it is a time for acknowledgement and celebration. Our strong personal relationships with our students allow us to recognize accomplishments in small increments that add over time to help contribute to student's developing self confidence and becoming independent learners.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR LEARNERS?

WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND STRETCHES WE SEE IN OUR LEARNERS?

Our students respond well to structured routines and to adults with whom they can develop a relationship of trust. Our students need time at the beginning of the day to check in (soft start). This time is used for staff to respond to students' physiological (food, sleep) and emotional needs and prepare students for the expectations of the day. Our students are capable learners especially when they have learning opportunities that are experiential, active, multi-sensory, hands-on and activities where they can be social. They appreciate and demonstrate a sense of humour. Our students are kind, compassionate and supportive of each other. They are eager/motivated to learn and participate in learning activities. They are creative, and especially enjoy Fine Arts and physical activities. Our students love to have opportunities to help/volunteer and are willing to share and present their ideas with each other. Tools for self-regulation, such as; break spaces/opportunities, flexible seating, dgets and low lighting are utilized by many of our students. Students enjoy having multiple ways of representing their thinking and learning. Many of our students utilize technology as a learning tool. Our students need a classroom environment that offers opportunities for choice (ranging from the activity structure and design to work space options).

Self-regulation is a challenge for many of our students, especially during less structured times. Challenges in daily routine can be hard for some, a lack of sleep and food security and lack of regular attendance and/or frequent tardiness can make learning challenging. Some of our students lack self-confidence and have difficulty taking risks and/or demonstrate learned helplessness. A high majority of issues needing support come from students in grades 2-5. Many of these students are learning to recognize their emotions and develop strategies to regulate them. These students are still learning strategies for overcoming a need for control and/or personal anxiety and are working on being part of a group. Our students often need extra time/space to debrief about social conflicts and problems. Our students need a strong relationship built on trust with staff to foster learning. Some of our students have difficulty trusting adults despite our best efforts to support and connect.

WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE HAVE OF THESE STRENGTHS AND STRETCHES?

Evidence includes: office referrals/incidents requiring administrative support, Green Room (self-regulation) usage log, feedback from staff (class reviews), attendance reports, NLPS screener data, POPARD scan (October), Benchmark data, and school based team data (tier 2 & 3 participation).

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

WHAT AREAS WILL WE FOCUS ON TO IMPROVE OR ENHANCE SUCCESS FOR OUR LEARNERS BASED ON WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THEM?

Social Responsibility - Self-regulated learning & Trauma informed practice

Recognition of that many of our vulnerable learners have been affected by trauma and implement trauma informed practice in our classrooms at a tier 1 level.

Literacy - Reading and Writing

WHAT ARE OUR SPECIFIC GOALS?

Goal 1: To recognize the social emotional needs of all of our learners and implement practices and strategies to best support student's learning and continuous growth.

Goal 2: To improve student performance in reading.

WHAT LEARNING AND ACTION WILL WE TAKE?

WHAT WILL TEACHERS LEARN MORE ABOUT TO SUPPORT OUR GOALS?

- 1) September Pro-D - Trauma Informed practice presentation - (Counselor - Carolyn Broadhurst)
- 2) PLC - Cycle 1 - Focus on trauma informed practice and self regulation techniques
- 3) Staff Meetings - November: Introduce "Get Ready, Do , Done" Strategy to foster independence, December: Introduction of NVCI's 4 behaviour levels and preventative planning
- 4) Classroom visits - Principal Lisa Frey - Zones of regulations
- 5) Pro D Feb - NVCI and Inclusion Tier 1 Focus on de-escalation
- 6) Creating RTI approach and de-escalation plans for our Tier 3 students (Student Support team in conjunction with teachers)
- 7) PLC Cycle 2 - Focus on Reading - Small group projects.

WHAT ACTIONS/STRATEGIES WILL WE TAKE/USE (TEACHERS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS) TO SUPPORT OUR GOALS?

- PLC Mini-Sprint Cycles - Cycle 1: Social Emotional focus, Cycle 2: Reading focus, Cycle 3: Writing focus
- RTI Inclusion based model - Working through tiered approach. Create individualized de-escalation flow charts and supportive plans, in conjunction with strong emphasis on Tier 1 strategies to help support tier 3 students. Weekly team meetings to review progress and tune our tier 3 student plans.
- Green Room (sensory/calming room) creation and monitoring
- Creation of a Positive Behaviour Intervention Committee (tasks include: establish common beliefs regarding student behaviour, update PBIS/school-wide expectations, review school discipline structures, restorative practices and preventative strategies)
- Implementation of Tier 1 practices school wide: Get Ready, Do, Done strategy, morning Soft Start, Zones of Regulation, classroom calm corners, and self-regulation tool kits
- Inclusion team scan & consults
- Survey students - Sense of belonging
- Creation of Mindful Learning Groups
- Creation of the Student Mentorship groups
- Building diverse Literacy Program - In class support (Literacy Coordinator - Olivia Densmore) supported by NLPS Data/ FSA (4,7)
- Tier 2 Reading Support - Led by Student Support Teachers - targeted intervention based on Sept. reading Data. Implementation of Haggerty & PRESS
- Push in co-teaching Literacy co-ordinator - Creation of reading centers
- Library initiatives

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

WHAT EVIDENCE OF LEARNING WILL WE COLLECT TO CHECK THE PROGRESS ON OUR GOALS?

Literacy Goal: We will continue to collect and monitor literacy data - Spring NLPS/Benchmark data, Student Learning Survey (student perspective on how they are doing and attitude towards reading), Student self-reflection/assessment data, data collected from primary conferencing, progress report and report card data, feedback from SST's providing targeted literacy supports (PRESS & Haggerty), ELL assessments, staff feedback

Self-Regulation Goal: Office referral data, Green Room data, student surveys, staff feedback, class reviews, SBT data, attendance data, PLC cycle data

HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION?

HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR PLAN WITH STAFF?

Our goals are embedded in our PLC work and will be reviewed at the beginning and end of each PLC mini-sprint cycle. In addition, the plans will be reviewed by smaller committees and shared at staff meetings. Staff will be provided data using our shared spreadsheets.

HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR GOALS WITH STUDENTS?

Teachers will share our goals and progress with their classes.

HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR GOALS AND PROGRESS WITH PARENTS?

Information will be shared in our school plan document as well as at regular PAC meetings and parent written communications (newsletters).