

Panorama Park Elementary School

Context: The school is located in a growing urban setting, the catchment bordered roughly by 64 Avenue at its north-most border to Highway # 10 to the south, and 132 Street to the east and 128 Street to the west.

The student population is smaller, consisting of about 364 students placed in 15 divisions, although we are growing steadily. Over the last two years, we have grown by 21 students, and have needed to add two more teachers to the staff, resulting in one portable being placed on the property so far. At the time this document is being prepared, there are twenty seven new lots being developed across the street from the school along 128 Street toward 64 Avenue, and there are about one hundred new single family homes and townhomes being built to the south of the school in the corridor between 60 Avenue and Highway #10 within our catchment. Many of our classrooms are filled to capacity.

The majority of the students come from Punjabi speaking families, but there are also students from a variety of other cultural backgrounds, including (but not limited to) Asian, African and Caucasian, respectfully. Many children receive ELL instruction from one of our three Learner Support Team teachers and/or within the classroom from their classroom teacher. Panorama Park has four Aboriginal students, who receive support from a district-based Aboriginal Support Worker one day every second week. Twenty-one of the children attending Panorama Park Elementary have identified needs and a Ministry learning or behavior designation. This school year, we have nine Education Assistants providing learning and behavioral support daily, one School Counselor providing support one and a half days per week, and one Child and Youth Care Worker supporting students two days per week. We have also been receiving support from the Surrey Safe and Caring Schools Department in the form of a worker supporting students about once every two weeks.

We have a very well attended Strong Start Program, with over one hundred students registered so far. We were up to over two hundred students in the Spring of 2013, and we expect that as word travels and the weather improves, we will see similar registration and attendance again. This is sometimes a problem, as we have very few parking spots in our parking lot, and the narrow road our school is on becomes very congested and busy. Student road safety is of the utmost importance.

Over the past ten years or so, the staff at Panorama Park has focused on a plethora of learning goals for their students. They were focused on literacy for a few years, participating in the Developing Readers District Initiative. They have also been participating in the District's more recent Numeracy Project. Most recently, the staff have been a part of the District's Inquiry Learning Design initiative, focused on the use of technology to support inquiry learning at the grade 2, 6 and 7 levels. All projects have been successful in the sense that staff members felt students were making steady progress in general, and they were making personal progress with respect to their own professional growth.

Since Panorama Park received a new Principal in April 2013, there has been some re-evaluation of priorities and goals for the students. In general, literacy is still a primary concern, especially given the high number of ELL students attending Panorama Park. The staff has also identified the need for a school-wide focus on Social Responsibility with our students, as they were noticing an increase in the number of students who struggle to solve problems with others in peaceful ways and a definite surge in aggressive behaviors of some students as well. The development of healthy relationships and a healthy community is a major factor in supporting student learning, so shifting our school culture has also become an important focus this year.

The development of students' numeracy skills is a focus for staff as well, mostly at the primary level, and the Primary Team continue to participate in the District's Numeracy Project this year. This is not to say that teachers overall are not attending to students' numeracy growth; simply that the primary teachers are engaging in some concentrated Professional Development and collaboration around this topic. Some staff members are in Year Two of the ILD Initiative focused on technology and inquiry based learning, and we are also providing Mentorship support to a Year One school in this area. Because the staff are already involved in inquiry projects in these areas with the District, they will not be specific to our School Learning Plan for the next few years.

In addition to the formal inquiry our staff is involved in, many members are also participating in less formal professional learning outside the school, and smaller "cliques" are investigating topics such as formative assessment, different ways of communicating with parents, Tools of the Mind, and student self-regulation.

Our staff is a busy one, committed to improving student learning and their own professional growth. We plan to investigate the topics utilizing a variety of resources including books, professional contacts and presenters, Professional Development opportunities, our students, our school community, and our colleagues. The opportunity for creating a Community of Learning is rich, and we look forward to the shared journey between our students and ourselves.

Learning Goals for 2013-2014: Panorama Park staff members are interested in and have become involved in a few inquiries related to the school's goals. Each inquiry will be structured/ framed with a set of questions to explore. These questions should provide us with information to continue the inquiry with fruitful results.

Inquiry #1: How will the use of targeted reading interventions impact our students' overall reading skills?

➤ What are our students' strengths?

Primaries: inferencing, evaluating are strong. Intermediates: finding facts, identifying the main idea and word recognition
Overall: a keen interest in learning, mainly cooperative and social

➤ What areas/skills require focus?

K: vocabulary, phonemic awareness, word recognition
Primaries: finding facts, finding main idea, word recognition and vocabulary.
Intermediates: inferencing, evaluating and vocabulary.
Overall: learning when to use strategies, metacognition about own strengths/needs

➤ What evidence will inform our teaching?

Formative assessment (rubrics, self assessment, peer assessment, daily observation, conferencing), informal reading inventories, ELPATS and twice yearly Jerry Johns assessment (school wide).

➤ How or where can we learn more?

Collaboration with colleagues, literacy workshops, Professional resources: Adrienne Gear, Developing Readers, Formative Assessment workshops, District Literacy Helping Teachers, LST colleagues

- What will we do differently?

Try at least one new instructional strategy or resource in our classrooms, focus on EXPLICIT teaching of strategy use and practice

- Have we made enough of a difference?

To be seen!

Inquiry #2: How can the use of school-wide positive behavioral recognition and a focus on problem solving instruction affect our students' ability to form healthy relationships and peaceful conflict resolution?

- What are the strengths our students possess?

According to the Social Responsibility Quick Scales, our students seem generally able to meet expectations in Exercising Democratic Rights and Responsibilities, and in Contributing to the Classroom and School Community.

- What are the areas needing focus?

- "Solving Problems in Peaceful Ways" and "Valuing Diversity and Defending Human Rights". Students at all grade levels need some support in managing their emotions and reacting to situations in appropriate ways, and in treating others fairly and respectfully. Teachers felt that students are generally able to "talk the talk" but lacked motivation to act appropriately either at times of heightened emotion or when not monitored directly by adults.

- What evidence will inform our teaching?

Informal evidence, such as report from staff and supervisors regarding student behavior, formative assessment and descriptive feedback to students, the number of formal behavior incidents being reported to the office, students' self and peer reports regarding how they feel about the situation, parent reports regarding how their children are feeling

- How or where can we learn more?

Safe and Caring Schools presentations, WITS website (teacher training program and lesson plans), Stuart Shanker's Calm, Alert and Learning

- What will we do differently?

Formalize a school-wide program using WITS language and concepts to reduce victimization and to increase student confidence, teach peaceful problem solving strategies in classrooms, enlist Peer Mentors/Mediators to help younger students on the playground, recognize positive behaviors in weekly draws and monthly recognition assemblies, build community through school shirts awarded at assemblies

- Have we made enough of a difference?

To be seen!

Professional Resources:

Halberton, Judy & Kaser, Linda (2013) Spirals of Inquiry. Victoria, BC: BCPVPA.

Shanker, Stuart. (2013). Calm, Alert, and Learning: Classroom Strategies for Self-Regulation. Toronto, Ont.: Pearson Canada Inc.

WITS Program : <http://www.witsprogram.ca/about-us/>

Instructional Resources and Strategies:

Johns, Jerry Reading Assessment

Guided Reading/platooning

Recognition at Monthly Assemblies

ELPATS

Literacy Centers

“Gotcha” Tickets for weekly recognition

Explicit instruction/practice of reading strategies

Literacy in Motion program

Community Building: T-shirts

Gear, Adrienne. Reading Power.

The Daily Five

Community Building: Buddy work

RAZKids website

Novel studies and Literature Circles

Peer Mentors/Mediators

Tumble Books website

DLR program

WITS lesson plans, books

Tool Sounds program

Phonemic awareness activities

Connect with community leaders

Novels and picture books at various reading levels

Home Reading Program

Schoolwide use of WITS language

Nelson Literacy, various grades

Variety of opportunities to read (alone, partners, choral)

Surrey School District. Developing Readers

Differentiation of instruction and representation of learning

Signatures of School Planning Council:

Principal: _____

Parent: _____

Teacher: _____

Parent: _____

Parent: _____

Assistant Superintendent Approval: _____

Date: _____

Panorama Park Elementary
School Inquiry/Learning Plan 2013-2014
Nov. 30, 2013