

# McGirr Elementary

Year: 2021-2022

Principal: Mr. Robbie Dhillon



## Our School Story

### What are the unique, positive characteristics that we celebrate in our school/community?

There has been a major focus on numeracy and SEL at the school

Using the Successful Learner Traits to help students self-assess their progress by identifying strengths and areas for additional focus in all curricular areas including behaviours for success. The SLTs include compassionate, confident, creative, enthusiastic, industrious, risk taking, strategic, and thoughtful, which all align with the BC core competencies Staff examined our beginning

Running Club – Grade 3-7 Cross Country Group is over 130 students

Terry Fox Fundraising and related assembly is yearly highlight

Very active PAC and parent community.

Weekly spirit days organized by the school

### What are the important demographics of our school and community?

Larger school with about 440 students and 19 divisions (2<sup>nd</sup> largest elementary school in the district)

Fairly tight, “walkable” catchment area, with no school bus

Many different cultures, languages etc... spoken in the homes (and school)

Diverse social/economic make up.

Dedication of staff to the school and community.

We acknowledge that we live, work, learn and play on the unceded and traditional territories of the Stz’uminus peoples.

Staff believes every child matters.

## Our School Goals

McGirr students will demonstrate growth in the 4 tenets of computational fluency (flexibility, appropriate, strategy use, efficiency and accuracy).

Students will better understand, identify and acknowledge emotions and feelings, and develop personal strategies to become more resilient.

# Our School Celebration Story

## McGirr DURING A PANDEMIC

We at McGirr would like to celebrate that we noticed many silver linings amidst the challenging time of teaching, learning and being safe during a pandemic. We learned many lessons through trial and error, through following protocols, through being flexible and pivoting quickly, and through viewing ourselves and others using a trauma sensitive lens.

The amazing story of McGirr's families and staff over the past two years (from the start of the pandemic, during lockdown, to now – fall 2021) starts simply with feeling initially grumpy with all of the rules, then discovering that McGirr may have needed some re-imagining. Here is what we invite you to celebrate with us:

1. That Recess Zones (rubber playground K, 1, 2, field Grade 2-7, concrete basketball court Gr 5/6/7) created a safer play environment for our students. Age-appropriate behaviours are more inclined to occur (less incidents of older to younger peer conflict), regular staff supervising in zones permits relationship building, and we knew where to expect students to be. We noticed our post-recess re-entry into class was calmer. Currently we still maintain a version of our original zones created last year.
2. Virtual meetings can be efficient and effective, if they are offered as an option. We continue to have staff meetings on-line and they are faster and permit some of the CUPE staff to plug in on their phone and participate as they need to pick up their own kids. Some parents are also choosing this over in-person meetings for student conferences and IEP meetings.
3. That the school was calmer with cleared hallways, monitored visitors, and entry/exit to gym (and now music and library) are via outside doors (when and where possible) to ensure the 'calm' is preserved (and students can be outside for a bit). We have kept the outside doors locked to monitor volunteers or visitors (important in this area) and aim to find a balance between safety and creating a welcoming school. Part of our plan this year, is to 'Catch the Calm' in classrooms after transitions and keeping the hallways quiet and calm has supporting learning in the classrooms.
4. That asking staff and students to stay home when sick, wash hands regularly and wipe things down regularly really makes a difference on even the common cold, flu or other things that normally rip through our school community. Last year, and this year so far, except when scary COVID exposures happen, has been a time when we are seeing less generalized illness in our school. And when the caring adults land here, they are not being heroes and 'toughing it out', they are well and have the right kind of energy for students as being an educator takes a lot of patience and love.

There are more examples, and lessons learned we can share, but in short, at McGirr we recognize that 'kids don't care how much you know until they know how much you care' so we are working on providing a safe, calm and relationship-rich place for our students before they can learn. We would like to celebrate that we think about, read about and meet and talk about the things we can do to improve student connection and learning on a daily basis. We believe social/emotional learning is pivotal for academic growth and starts with a calm, caring environment provided by a calm, caring staff.

