

McGirr Elementary

Year: 2023-2024

Principal: 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

Safe and Caring Learning and Teaching Environment. Staff are starting the Open Parachute Program this year

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 100 students

Athletics, long recess and after school activities offered by staff are high in numbers

Terry Fox Fundraising and related assembly is yearly highlight

Very active PAC and parent community

Spirit days organized by the school and our students

What are the important demographics of our school and community?

Larger school with over 485 students and 20 divisions largest elementary school in the district)

We have approximately 50 staff members at the school which includes our itinerant staff

Fairly tight, “walkable” catchment area, with no school bus, but many families who do drive a distance to get here

Many different cultures, languages etc... spoken in the homes (and school), over 27 at last count

As of January 2024 our ELL student count is well over 130 students

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.

Our School Goals

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

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

Our School Celebration Story

As we shift out of the 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 this time. We also know we have to be mindful that many of our learners will need a lot of time to “catch up.” 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. Now that we are moving out of the pandemic we have been able to put many pieces into general practice.

Here is what we invite you to celebrate with us:

1. The creation of, and running of, our HUB by our Child Youth Family Support Worker allowed for many connections with students and helped them become more resilient. Many students struggle at recess and this program was a safe place for them to flourish.
2. Virtual meetings can be efficient and effective, if they are offered as an option. We have been able to have some of our smaller assemblies online, meaning less instructional impact for these assemblies. 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 the school. 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. A specialized literacy week taking place in January will incorporate many literacy pieces and there will be a celebration for our school. In addition, our PAC is holding a scholastic book fair as well this school year.
5. With the work of Carole Fullerton, and the help of our inclusion support teacher, we have been able to embed good instructional practice in classrooms.
6. 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.

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