

Aberdeen Public School: Caring, Supportive and Determined.

So, you think *you're* busy?

It was my absolute pleasure to meet Principal Squires and Vice-Principal Devooght, the driving forces behind Aberdeen Public School. Principal Squires has been at the school for several years now and is very focused on reaching the needs of each student. VP Devooght is new to the school but brings years of experience and an infectious energy. Like pretty much everything these days their school has had many changes. An increasing population of students which reflects the growing multiculturalism of Canada. Upgrades to accommodate students with special needs, and the ever-growing requirements to modernize and keep pace with the necessary technology of today's classrooms.

During our conversation in the beautiful, welcoming, well-stocked library I was struck by the multiple layers of support that the school has in place to make sure that every student gets whatever help they may need. The next day after this meeting, 75 backpacks were being delivered to the school from the Education Foundation. The packs will hold supplies and stationary to ensure as many students as possible achieve success. Thought the school year the school runs a "Caring Cupboard" with clothing, school supplies and food. There is a breakfast and snack program for any student who wishes to participate.

While accommodating all these things, Aberdeen is still very much an old school. Only a small percentage of the students are bussed in so most walk or bike through the neighbourhood to school. An entire new wing has been added to the school with accessibility ramps and elevators to remove any barriers from student learning. Secure bike and E Scooter stands have been built to ensure safety and security.

The original school was built in 1883 facing Hamilton Road. Aberdeen is located on the corner of Adelaide Road and Hamilton Road, just at the limit of SOHO and is part of the Beal Family of Schools. The school has a population of approximately 325 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade Eight. The school is one of the oldest in the city with a rich history. After Lord Aberdeen, Governor General of Canada, visited London in 1893, the Board of Education decided to name the school in his honour. The present building with the entrance on Grey Street was opening in 1914. Aberdeen consists of 12 classrooms which spans from Full Day Kindergarten to Grade 8. Core French and Oneida as a Second Language is part of the daily programming for students in grades 4 thru 8. One of the staff, Miss Fairburn, was there for 43 years!

The teachers back then would have been amazed and envious of the many things Aberdeen has in place. There are Spring and Fall introduction programs. After school programs in cooperation with Crouch Library and the Boys and Girls Club. Reading support and literacy groups. The caring and support for students is truly amazing and inspiring. As Principal Squire said: "Attitude and effort is always well-received."