

North Vancouver School District **SCHOOL PLAN** for **2013-2014**

School: Mountainside Secondary School
Address: 3465 Mahon Avenue
North Vancouver, BC V7N 3T7
Phone: 604-903-3333

School/Community Context:

Mountainside Secondary is the North Vancouver School District's newest secondary school, and serves as the main alternative program for the school district. In April of 2010, the NVSD trustees made the decision to close all existing alternate programs (Keith Lynn Alternate Secondary School, Youth Learning Centre, Windsor House Therapeutic Day Program), and consolidate their services into one site, named, at that time, the Community Learning Program.

During the following two years, the NVSD began planning for the new school, set to open in the fall of 2012, at what was previously Balmoral Junior Secondary School. Part of this planning process involved consultation with students, parents, teachers, and community partners such as Vancouver Coastal Health and Ministry of Children and Family Development. NVSD staff also made visits to other existing alternate programs in the province, gathering information about best practices for service delivery for alternative schools.

Starting in the 2011-2012 school year, the transition process began for students, parents, and staff. This process included meetings, surveys, course selections, and staffing conversations. There was also considerable energy spent on the transition process for the surrounding neighbourhood of Balmoral Secondary School, as there were some concerns expressed by neighbours about an alternate program opening in the area. Tours of the new facility took place in June of 2012, and finally, the existing schools closed in June of 2012.

The Community Learning Program opened its doors to students in the fall of 2012. A new staff team had been consolidated on site, but were familiar to students and parents. This new staff spent two days in August working to create common vision and purpose for their work with students, and to build a collective understanding of process and administrative in a completely new environment. In November of 2012, the Board of Trustees approved a motion to rename the Community Learning Program to Mountainside Secondary School. The name was intended to give the students of Mountainside a new identity, and allow the school to shake the stigma that is so often attached to "alternative" programs and schools, and had existed with the previous schools and programs.

Mountainside Secondary School (MSS) is best described as a small secondary school, funded as an alternative program, which aims to meet the diverse needs of its students. Through flexibility, choice, accountability, and relationships with staff, the goal is for students to think beyond graduation, and begin to prepare themselves for life beyond graduation into adulthood. Students are expected to engage in adult relationships with staff and each other, and conduct themselves as adults. Although their paths to graduation or school leaving are varied, a consistent theme for students is that they are the drivers of their own educational journey.

By fostering this sense of accountability and responsibility for their program, students also become more accountable to the school environment and the community as a whole. Students are offered many opportunities to take leadership and initiative in the school community, and are encouraged to serve as ambassadors for MSS both at school, and in the broader community. Students are called to reflect on their goals and directions, as well as their actions, through the lens of working to create a safe, caring, and positive learning environment.

MSS serves a population of students ranging in age from 13-20. Each student has had his or her own educational experiences, and MSS serves as an opportunity to re-focus students' energies on pursuing their educational paths into adulthood. Students are referred to MSS via the NVSD District Resource Team, which serves as the screening body for all students entering the school.

MSS has an active Parent Advisory Council, which meets 4-5 times per year. The PAC serves primarily as an opportunity for parents to share and discuss with other parents, as well as offer feedback about the new program, as well as hear about upcoming events and timelines. Parents are also kept informed via the Schoolconnects e-mail service, and are sent any news items directly into their e-mail accounts.

MSS is well-connected with community partners and agencies. Formal partnerships are in place with Vancouver Coastal Health (both community health and the Child and Adolescent and Concurrent Disorders program), Ministry of Children and Family Development (Child and Youth Mental Health), Ayas Men Men (Squamish Nation mental health), Capilano Community Services and Noth Shore Neighbourhood House (Youth Outreach Workers). The school works in partnership with these agencies to support the social, emotional, and physical health and development of all students.

Under the umbrella of MSS, there are three other programs that exist. The **Therapeutic Day Program** assists students with mental health issues and is partnered with Vancouver Coastal Health to provide clinical support to students. **Eslah7an**, a program in partnership with the Squamish Nation for aboriginal youth in grades 10-12, provides a self-paced academic program with a strong emphasis on native culture and language. The **KEY Program** is a small program (6-8 youth), targeting those students who are more in need of a smaller school environment and more intensive academic, behavioural and supervision support.

Demographics (2012-2013 school year):

Total number of students: 178 Male: 95 Female: 83

Number of students per grade					
Grade	8	9	10	11	12
	2	16	36	61	63

# FTE Teachers & Administrators	% Aboriginal Students	% Special Needs Students	% International Students	% ESL
1.0 Admin 13.0 MSS 0.6 Eslah7an 0.6 KEY	24	73	0	0

Progress Analysis:

As mentioned above, both KLASS and YLC closed in June of 2012. Because of this, neither school prepared a school plan for the 2012-2013 school year. MSS did not begin as a school until September of 2012, and the administration and school staff were not determined until May of 2012. As such, so school plan was created for MSS for the 2012-2013, and this school plan serves as the first school plan for the new MSS.

YLC School Plan Goals 2011-2012

- 1. To improve students' knowledge of healthy living choices**
- 2. To improve students' awareness and connectedness with outside resources**
- 3. To improve the number of course completions per student**
- 4. To improve students' development of social responsibility**

KLASS School Plan Goals 2011-2012

- 1. To improve reading proficiency for individual grade 8, 9, and 10 students.**
- 2. To improve numeracy skills for individual grades 8, 9, and 10 students.**
- 3. To improve school success rates of Aboriginal students.**
- 4. To increase the social responsibility for individual grade 8, 9, and 10 students.**
- 5. To increase the involvement of parents in the school community.**
- 6. To provide support to parents before and during the transition of Keith Lynn Alternate School to North Vancouver Community Learning Center.**

School Goals for 2013-2014:

Based on the review of student achievement using Provincial, District and school evidence, the goals set out in the Mountainside Secondary School Plan for 2013-2014 are:

- 1. To improve student engagement and sense of connectedness and belonging at school.**
- 2. To improve students' literacy skills.**
- 3. To improve students' numeracy skills.**

School Goal 1:

To improve student engagement and sense connectedness and belonging at school.

Goal Rationale:

Mountainside Secondary School aims to connect/re-connect students with their educational paths. Current research of best practice indicates that students learn best in environments where they feel a sense of belonging and engagement. Students who attend MSS have typically been some of the most disengaged and disconnected youth in a school setting, and as such, the most challenging to re-engage and re-connect. Student often self-report not feeling connected in their previous school settings, and name their disconnection and lack of attendance as one of the primary reasons for their previous school setting not being successful. This pattern often continues once they become students at MSS. As such, it is of primary importance that if MSS is to have any lasting impact and change on its students, it will first need to address the issue of engagement and sense of belonging.

Objective 1.1:

To increase students' engagement in their school experience as measured by attendance data.

Strategies/Structures/Resources:

- School wide celebrations (Christmas dinners, basketball games, etc.)
- Student recognition ceremonies for course completions and attendance milestones
- Staff phone calls home and to students when students are absent
- School program field trips and outings
- Elective courses targeting student interests
- Work Experience courses and opportunities to hone work related and employable skills
- Student self-reflection tools and personal goal setting
- Staff making efforts to ensure that every student has one adult in the building who is connected to them
- Avoid use of consequential methods for those that are struggling to re-engage
- Use of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) to resolve conflicts between students and staff
- Opportunities for experiential, hand-on, and personalized learning (PBL, Integrated Studies Program, etc.)
-

Evidence: *(Quantitative)*

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline Fall 2013	Target April 2014
Average weekly attendance for school, based on agreed upon expectations between staff, parents, and student		

Evidence: *(Qualitative)*

Qualitative Baseline: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To be determined in September
Qualitative Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students will self-report feeling engaged or excited about school experience- Teachers will report increase in students engagement in class and school wide activities
Qualitative Actual: <ul style="list-style-type: none">-

Objective 1.2:

To increase the number of students who report feeling more connected to their school and school experience, as measured by self-reporting.

Strategies/Structures:

- Use of advisory group format for daily student check-ins, breakfast, and check-outs
- Advisor groups to exist in context of academic groupings
- School wide PBS efforts, including monthly whole school assemblies, celebration events, activities, etc
- Every student to have a connection with at least one Youth Engagement Worker
- Avoid use of consequential methods for those that are struggling to re-engage
- Use of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) to resolve conflicts between students and staff
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with community agencies such as VCH, MCFD, and local community youth outreach workers
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Evidence: *(Quantitative)*

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline Fall 2013	Target April 2014
Students will self report feelings of connection to school on student survey		

Evidence: (*Qualitative*)

Qualitative Baseline:

- To be determined in September

Qualitative Target:

- Students will self-report feeling connected at school and feeling cared for by adults
- Staff will report students attaching to staff
- Community partners will report students feeling connected at school
- Behaviour of students in classes and hallways will improve

Qualitative Actual:

-

**School Goal 2:
Students will improve literacy skills.**

Goal Rationale:

Many students who attend MSS struggle with basic/functional literacy skills. Although addressing the Prescribed Learning Outcomes from English 10-12 and Communication Skills 11-12 is of importance, the primary purpose, or “big idea” of English at MSS is to have students leave with the functional literacy needed to pursue each students life’s ambitions after high school, and at a minimum, be able to meet the basic literacy skills to survive in an increasingly literate, and fast-paced society.

Objective 2.1:

To increase the number of students who can write clearly, effectively, with a clear grasp of conventions of language.

Strategies/Structures/Resources:

- Collective school wide influence
- School wide writes evaluated school wide writes
- Regularly scheduled journal writing
- Individually set language goals
- Mini class structures for intensive, targeted writing skill building
- Incorporating use of authentic writing experience
- Standardized assessment rubrics across grades and programs (kid friendly and teacher friendly)

Evidence: *(Quantitative)*

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline Fall 2013	Target April 2014
Percentage of student body who at least minimally meet expectations using the MSS standard writing rubric.		

Evidence: *(Qualitative)*

<p>Qualitative Baseline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To be determined in September

<p>Qualitative Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement in students' completed assignments - Able to write in a number of different formats - Improvement in student attitude and enjoyment of the writing process
<p>Qualitative Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -

Objective 2.2:

To improve students' reading comprehension as evidenced by standardized, school-wide assessments

Strategies/Structures:

- Regularly scheduled individualized reading time
- Increased focus on the instruction of reading comprehension strategies to enable students to become more effective readers
- Focus on authentic reading experiences that relevant to students' interests
- Use of standardized reading test

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline Fall 2013	Target April 2014
Improvement in individual student score on school wide assessment (SRA Kit, targeting grade level)		

Evidence: (Qualitative)

<p>Qualitative Baseline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be reviewed in September
<p>Qualitative Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students self-report enjoying reading for pleasure and at school - Teachers notice improvement in student time on task during reading - Students engaging with a variety of reading materials and genres
<p>Qualitative Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -

**School Goal 3:
To improve students numeracy skills.**

Goal Rationale:

Our students need to leave high school with math competency. Students should have the fundamentals of computational, problem solving, and financial skills to avoid getting taken advantage of financially, adequately plan for future home ownership or rental, and feel comfortable with the process of problem solving and persevering through mistakes and adversity.

Objective 3.1:

Students will improve their math self-esteem and self-efficacy as measured by math survey

Strategies/Structures/Resources:

- Use of hands-on learning opportunities for math
- Use of small group pull-outs for targeted interventions
- Problem of the day in all math classrooms, and in hallways
- Exposure to real-life examples of the importance and usefulness of math concepts (credit, interest, measurement, etc), with multiple pathways to demonstrate understanding
- Focus on "Math at Mountainside" as a continuous learning pathway, not silos of Math 10 and 11

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline Fall 2013	Target April 2014
Students will increase self-reported feelings of math self-worth and self-efficacy using MSS math survey (to be implemented in fall of 2013)		

Evidence: (Qualitative)

<p>Qualitative Baseline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be reviewed in September
<p>Qualitative Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will actively participate in problem of the day - Students will create varied expressions of understanding of key concepts - Students will express enjoyment and understanding of math concepts and classes - Teachers will report improvement in students attitude towards math classes and concepts

Qualitative Actual:
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Objective 3.2:

To improve students' basic mental computational math skills

Strategies/Structures:

- Daily mental computational practice, making use of:
 - o Card games
 - o Drills
 - o Flashcards
 - o Real life examples (check-out counters, tax and tip calculations, etc)
- Proactive teaching of mental computational skills
 - o Rounding
 - o Memorization
 - o Estimation
- Use of assisted technology and online resources to keep students engaged
- Collective, "Math at Mountainside" approach to skill building
- Use of standardized posters and materials in all math classrooms

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline Fall 2013	Target April 2014
Student scores on mental computational assessment (to be developed and implemented in September of 2013)		

Evidence: (Qualitative)

<p>Qualitative Baseline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be reviewed in September
<p>Qualitative Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students self-report feeling more able to perform computational processes - Teachers report that students are engaged in learning activities and make use of skills in other settings - Students report feeling more confident with math due to increase skills
<p>Qualitative Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -

Connections:

Connections to Family of School's School Plans and/or District Achievement Plan:

Mountainside Secondary School does not have an assigned FOS, but rather serves as a continuum of service for all schools in the district. Our staff have actively participated in many different FOS activities with almost every FOS in the district.

The MSS school plan connects directly with the North Vancouver School District Achievement Plan, as they both address improvements in literacy and numeracy for students. Also, both the Achievement Plan and our school plan target at-risk learners in these areas.

Our first goal of improving students' sense of engagement and belonging aligns with the Social and Emotional Learning Pillar from the "NVSD 4 Pillars of Learning". Our students, being the most disengaged and at-risk by nature, stand to benefit from a school and district-wide emphasis on meeting all students' social and emotional needs, including feelings of engagement and connection.

Consultation Process of Mountainside Secondary School Planning Council:

- School administrators, staff, parents and students have been actively involved in the development of the School Plan.
- A summary of the approved Mountainside Secondary School Plan will be posted on the school web site by October 31, 2013.

School Planning Council Approval of Proposed School Plan:

Date: May 1, 2013

	Name	Signature
Chairperson (Principal)	Jeremy Church	<i>Original Document Signed by SPC Members</i>
Teacher	Jen Macdonald	
Parent	Betty Ann Pryzdial	
Student (Gr 10, 11, 12 schools only)	Anahita Rahmatian	

Board Approval of School Plan:

Approved by:

Mark Jefferson, Assistant Superintendent