

North Vancouver School District SCHOOL PLAN for 2014-2015

School: Mountainside Secondary School
Address: 3365 Mahon Ave
North Vancouver, BC V7N 3T7
Phone: 604-903-3333

School/Community Context:

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 North 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. **Eslha7an**, 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 (8-10 youth), targeting those students who are more in need of a smaller school environment and more intensive academic, behavioural and supervision support.

Demographics (2013-2014 school year):

Total number of students: 196 Male: 109 Female: 87

Number of students per grade								
Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
English								
Fr. Imm.								

Grade	8	9	10	11	12
English	3	28	53	42	70
Fr. Imm.					

# FTE Teachers & Administrators	% Aboriginal Students	% Special Needs Students	% International Students	% ESL
15.4	26	72	0	0

Progress Analysis:

Review of School Goals – Previous Year(s)

Previous School Plan Goal 1: To improve student engagement and sense of connectedness and belonging at school.

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

Trend Data Table:

Key Performance Measure: Average Weekly attendance, based on agreed upon expectations between staff, parents, and students		
	Baseline (September 2013)	Target
2013-14	65%	80%

Trend Data Analysis: (indicators of progress over time – 1 to 3 yrs)

This was our first year collecting data for this goal, and it was unusually difficult to accurately track (it should be noted that 65% is an estimate based on staff survey). Attendance data is a good measure/indicator of beginning stages of disengagement, but for students who are wrestling with mental health issues, their lack of attendance is very often not due to lack of engagement, but a medical condition. Our current attendance tracking system works very well for case managers to keep track of their students, but is difficult to tease out absences for truancy reasons, as opposed to the myriad of other reasons why a student is not in class. As such, attendance will not be used as a measure of engagement moving forward.

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

Trend Data Table:

Key Performance Measure: Students will self-report feelings of connection to school on student survey ("Tell Them From Me" Survey System).		
	Baseline (February 2014)	Target
Students feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at their school	52%	80%
Students self-report being regularly truant from school.	66%	40%
Students who are interested and motivated in their learning	26%	60%
Students who feel they have someone at school who consistently provides encouragement and can be turned to for advice (out of 10)	5.1	6.5

Trend Data Analysis: (indicators of progress over time – 1 to 3 yrs)

The student survey took place in late February, and provided the staff and students with some very clear indicators of success and areas of growth. This survey will serve as the primary data driver next school year, and our school-wide efforts will revolve around this particular goal and objective, as it is now measureable, and tangible.

Previous School Plan Goal 2: To improve students literacy skills.

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

Trend Data Table:

Key Performance Measure: Percentage of student body who at least minimally meet expectations using the MSS standard writing rubric.		
	Baseline	Actual
2013-14	n/a	n/a

2.2 To increase students reading comprehension as evidenced by standardized, school wide assessments.

Key Performance Measure: Improvement in individual student score on school wide assessment (SRA Kit, targeting grade level)		
	Baseline	Actual
2013-14	n/a	

Trend Data Analysis: (indicators of progress over time – 1 to 3 yrs)

It was determined early on in the school year, that there was not a universal assessment available for either writing or reading, that would be implementable for us to use this school year. We have developed an assessment team that will be exploring the use of standard school wide intake assessment measures, as part of the intake process, but for the purposes of this years school plan, no such instrument was found or used.

Qualitatively, teachers continue to recognize the significant gaps that many of our students have upon their arrival with us. Teachers are reporting that the absence of an assessment instrument is detrimental to their ability to appropriately adapt/modify courses content and expectations. Our English department will be making it a focus of theirs to find and make use of a mutually agreed upon literacy assessment tool that will provide them with sufficient information to guide their practice.

Previous School Plan Goal 3: To improve students numeracy skills.

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

Trend Data Table:

Key Performance Measure: Students will increase self-reported feelings of math self-worth and self-efficacy using MSS math survey (to be implemented in fall of 2013)		
	Baseline	Actual
2013-14	n/a	

3.2 To improve students’ basic mental computational math skills

Key Performance Measure: Student scores on mental computational assessment (to be developed and implemented in September of 2013)		
	Baseline	Actual
2013-14	n/a	

Trend Data Analysis: (indicators of progress over time – 1 to 3 yrs)

It was determined, early on in the school year, that there was not a universal assessment available for either math self-efficacy or computational skills, that would be implementable for us to use this school year. We have developed an assessment team that will be exploring the use of standard school wide intake assessment measures as part of the intake process, but for the purposes of this years school plan, no such instrument was found or used.

Qualitatively, teachers report that students are significantly lacking in numeracy and mental computational skills. The math teachers are continuing to meet to harmonize pre-course expectations and numeracy skill building excercises to close the gap between skill level and age. Teachers are making efforts to bring the need for numeracy skills into every day contexts and situations, which is helping to increase buy-in from students.

Opportunities for Further Development:

Throughout the school plan implementation process this year, it has become clear that our school plan needs to genuinely reflect the interests, needs, and passions of our students, parents, and staff. Our school goal regarding engagement is one which continues to reflect these interests, needs, and passions, but less so in a quantitative manner (evidenced by attendance data), but rather in the voices and stories of the students themselves. The survey we were able to make use of (Tell Them From Me) served as an excellent tool to access snapshot data of student thoughts and opinions, and will serve as a guide for our student plan for this coming year.

In addition to our focus on engagement, a second area of need, interest, and passion is that of transitions. Mountainside is a school of transitions, with students transitioning in from other schools and districts, and graduating or heading off to work, all at varied times throughout the year. As supported, again, by the Tell Them From Me survey, our school plan for the 2014-15 school year will also make one of its goals targeting successful and positive transition into our school, as well as preparation for transition out of school. Elements such as reading, writing, or numeracy assessment will play an important role in creating this effective transition plan, but these assessments will not serve as stand alone elements of our school plan, but rather in the context of supporting student transition.

School Goals for 2014-2015:

Based on the review of student achievement using Provincial, District and school evidence, the goals set out in the Mountainside Secondary School Plan for 2014-2015 are:

- 1. To improve student engagement and sense connectedness and belonging at school.**
- 2. To improve students' experience of transitions at Mountainside, both transitioning into program, and out of program to graduation, work, or another school.**

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:

[Click here to type objective](#)

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.)
- Move advisory time to a block more central to the day.

Evidence: *(Quantitative)*

Key Performance Measure: Students will self report feelings of connection to school on student survey			
	Baseline	Target	Actual
Students feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at their school	52%	80%	

Students self-report being regularly truant from school.	66%	40%	
Students who are interested and motivated in their learning	26%	60%	
Students who feel they have someone at school who consistently provides encouragement and can be turned to for advice (out of 10)	5.1	6.5	

Evidence: *(Qualitative)*

<p>Qualitative Baseline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using the survey, opinions and personal anecdotes certainly varied for students regarding their feelings of engagement - Students indicated feeling better about being at our school than their previous schools - Many indicated that they wanted more activities, stating that it felt a little boring sometimes - Many students commented on feeling like they had teachers or other adults they could talk to - Community partners all speak very positively about their experience and connection with MSS, which translates well with the youth they work with
<p>Qualitative Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
<p>Qualitative Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Click here to type qualitative ACTUAL comments

School Goal 2:

To improve students experience of transitions during their time at Mountainside, both transitioning into program, and out of program to graduation, work, or another school.

Goal Rationale:

Transitions are a key component of our program, and it has only been quite recent in the 2013-14 school year that it has been realized how important careful and considerate transition planning are for our students. The two areas in need of consideration are:

- Transition into the program (from other schools or districts)
- Transition out of the program (return to another school, graduation, or enter the work force)

Our students at Mountainside are some of the most sensitive and vulnerable in our district, and they are often asked to leave the comforts of their current school and community, and land themselves in a new school and community. Mountainside works hard to settle the waters and address the issues they currently are facing, and then, once the students are comfortable and settled, they must transition again in another school or adulthood. As such, having students feel comfortable and prepared for these transition will only help to make them more successful.

Objective 2.1:

Students will experience successful and supportive transitions into the mountainside program.

Strategies/Structures/Resources:

- Use of thorough and universally used assessment as part of the intake process (to be determined by newly formed assessment team)
- "Tell Us About You" assignment done by student as part of intake
- Ability for student to sample any electives they are interested in before choosing elective courses
- Review of student assessment data by teachers before starting academic program
- 1-1 outreach opportunity with one of our Youth Engagement or Youth Outreach Workers prior to school start-up
- Use of Transitions Counsellor to begin transition process for students from mainstream North Vancouver School District high schools as early as possible (as soon as District Resource Team makes recommendation for referral)
- Meeting between student, teacher advisor, counsellor and family as part of intake process, but separate from paperwork signing and intake assessments

Evidence: (Quantitative)

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Target	Actual
Student weekly attendance average during first 4 weeks after intake process.	TBD Fall 2014		

Evidence: (Qualitative)

Qualitative Baseline: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students often struggle with consistent attendance patterns upon intake- Teachers indicate that intake process seems rushed, and often they feel unprepared and unaware of students needs and interests
Qualitative Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students will self-report feeling ready to enter Mountainside- Teachers will report feeling more ready to provide academic materials for students upon entrance- Students will change courses less often, and longer after they have started our program
Qualitative Actual: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Click here to type qualitative ACTUAL comments

Objective 2.2:

Students will be supported through, and prepared for, transitions out of the Mountainside program into work or post-secondary schooling.

Strategies/Structures:

- Transitions counsellor to be heavily involved with any students within one calendar year of graduating
- Use of career exploration, Work Experience, post-secondary visits, and guest career presenters to encourage thoughtfulness regarding post-secondary plans
- Connecting students interests and passions with academic and elective offerings and case manager selection
- Connecting with partner groups who work with young adults during transition phases to ensure that every youth is transitioned into the care of either a non-profit agency, post-secondary school, work site, or other.
- Careful and considerate use of graduation programs based on age, academic ability, and post-secondary plans
- “Life After-noons” – student group discussing transition elements and opportunities
- Creation of a “Mountainside Transitions” curricula (using Planning 10 and 12 as shells) that all students would enrol in and take before graduating from the school

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Target	Actual
Average number of community partners, post-secondary institutions and job sites that graduating students are connected to at the time of graduation		1	
Students planning to finish high school (Student survey TTFM)	81%	90%	
Students planning to pursue a trade or apprenticeship program (Student survey TTFM)	22%	30%	
Students planning to go to college or university	46%	50%	

Evidence: *(Qualitative)*

Qualitative Baseline:

- Many students do not have plans for post-secondary
- Students often delay graduation, as they are afraid of the transition out of our school
- Some students rush to graduation without any plan for what will come next, and return feeling unprepared and asking to take more courses
- Many students leave without plans for appropriate support once they leave our school

Qualitative Target:

- Students self-report feeling “ready” to take next steps
- Community partners are willing to engage in transition planning for all graduating students
- All graduating students will complete “Mountainside Transitions” course prior to graduating

Qualitative Actual:

- [Click here to type qualitative ACTUAL comments](#)

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 student engagement. 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 Click to type school name 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 Click to type school name School Plan will be posted on the school web site by October 31, 2014.

School Planning Council Approval of Proposed School Plan:

Date: Click to type date

	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)	Leanne Ferguson	

Board Approval of School Plan:

Approved by:

**Dr. Pius Ryan, Assistant Superintendent
June 2, 2014**