

# community report 2020

A Second Step lesson is taught to kindergarten students in Leigh Koenigsfest's class at Boundary Elementary School. Second Step is a Social Emotional Learning initiative.



The North Vancouver School District would like to thank the Coast Salish people, specifically the Skwxwú7mesh Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation, upon whose unceded traditional territory the North Vancouver School District resides. We value the opportunity to learn, share and grow on this traditional territory.



North Vancouver  
School District  
the natural place to learn®  
[sd44.ca](http://sd44.ca)

## LEARN • SHARE • GROW



Bronwyn Wellenbrink, student at Seymour Heights Elementary, sold flowers at her school to raise money for The Pad Project, a non-profit that provides girls in India with the skills and machinery needed to make their own feminine hygiene products.



Capilano Elementary students, staff and parents enjoy taking their learning outdoors. On select Wednesday afternoons, many primary classes, along with parent volunteers, enjoy getting outside and exploring the local wilderness, including McKay Creek and Murdo Frazer Park.



Students at Sherwood Park Elementary display the tight-knit, community feel of the school.

## VISION

We provide world-class instruction and a rich diversity of engaging programs to inspire success for every student and bring communities together to **LEARN, SHARE AND GROW**.

## VALUES

**TRUST** - We act with integrity. We are open and honest in our communication with one another.

**RESPECT** - We relate to each other with care and appreciation. We honour diversity and recognize the exceptional in everyone.

**RESPONSIBILITY** - We are accountable for our actions. We support positive change, continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence.

**COLLABORATION** - We develop relationships and affiliations to achieve shared goals and consider each other in our decisions and actions.

## SIX STRATEGIC GOALS

### GOAL #1: EXPAND

Expand the availability of best instructional practices and enriched curriculum.

### GOAL #2: ENCOURAGE

Encourage the growth of collaborative, adaptive and personalized learning environments.

### GOAL #3: NURTURE

Nurture an inspiring and healthy work environment.

### GOAL #4: DEVELOP

Develop and promote innovative and sustainable programs.

### GOAL #5: PROVIDE

Provide leadership in environmental education and sustainability practices.

### GOAL #6: STRENGTHEN

Strengthen and expand reciprocal community relations.



Montroyal Elementary is an inclusive school where everyone belongs.



Students at Eslha7an support Pink Shirt Day.

## LEARN • SHARE • GROW

### Message from the Chair and Superintendent



CHRISTIE SACRÉ



MARK PEARMAIN

Having entered a new decade in 2020, it is time to reflect back on what we have achieved over the past 10 years. In 2011, North Vancouver became one of the first school districts in the province to create a Strategic Plan. This plan established six strategic goals that have been guiding us toward realizing our Vision and Values.

As our current Strategic Plan is coming to an end next year, we are now reflecting on how we have done and where we want to go. Since November we have been undertaking a comprehensive strategic planning process. We have met with students, employees, parents and community members. More than 700 people engaged in the process, sharing more than 1,200 ideas. Over the next few months, we will synthesize the results. We will then present the collated results back to the community to gather further feedback. The new Strategic Plan will be completed by June 2021.

In the meantime, we continue our efforts toward realizing our current strategic goals. Each year, we report back to the community about these efforts in our annual Community Report. Over the last school year, our instructional practices were enhanced by focusing on five educational priorities: modernizing the curriculum, supporting complex learners, bringing Indigenous Education to all staff and students, creating a kindergarten to grade 12 continuum for Social Emotional Learning and mental health, and career development. In November, we brought together our 2,500 employees to hear from Dr. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair and to collectively work on our commitment of reconciliation. We have continued to expand our social emotional learning education for all students. We have introduced new career planning software for secondary school students and have expanded our work experience programming. The professional learning staff have undertaken in relation to supporting complex and unique learners has been vast.

We continue to create learning opportunities for students that are varied in content and structure, to ensure we meet students' unique learning interests and styles. Our 10 academies, International Baccalaureate programs and other programs of choice continue to be popular. Distributed Learning and Summer Learning are reviewed annually to meet the needs of students. Our arts education, technology integration and elective options also evolve along with student interests, yet we maintain the strong foundation of programs unique to our school district such as Artists for Kids and Elementary Band and Strings. French Immersion and Cheakamus Centre both reached milestone anniversaries this past school year at 40 years and 50 years respectively.

We undertook our second Employee Engagement Survey last year to ensure that we are offering inspiring and healthy work environments. We will be moving forward with further workplace enhancements based on these results, including collaboration, communication and resource sharing across the school district. Schools will be using their school-based results from the survey to help with planning at the school level. We also continue to invest in our school buildings to ensure learning environments are safe

#### North Vancouver Board of Education 2018-2022



BACK ROW (left to right): Christie Sacré, Mary Tasi Baker, Devon Bruce, George Tsiakos

FRONT ROW (left to right): Megan Higgins, Kulvir Mann, Cyndi Gerlach

and comfortable for students and staff. The new Argyle Secondary School is pushing into the last leg of construction, the Mountainside Secondary School seismic upgrade is well underway, and shovels are hitting the ground for a new Handsworth Secondary School.

By the end of last school year, we had reached 18.2 per cent energy reduction since 2011. We are now pushing to get to a 20 per cent energy reduction target by the end of this school year. This school year we are asking all schools to do their part by running energy reduction campaigns to help us get to 20 per cent. The North Vancouver Board of Education also declared a climate emergency.

Our connections to our community continue to grow. Whether it is working with North Vancouver RCMP, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, local public libraries, North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission, Vancouver Coastal Health, ICBC, the Vancouver Aquarium, or Sport for Life; our partnerships continue to develop. An initiative we are particularly excited about is the Power 5 program with the RCMP, focusing on building closer connections between students and police officers. We are also an active participant in the North Shore Housing Lab, led by the City of North Vancouver, exploring opportunities to support affordable housing initiatives that will keep our community vibrant and diverse. We extend a warm 'Thank you' to all of the organizations and individuals in our community who support our schools.

We would like to thank all of our staff, students and parents who have worked hard to enhance our school district. Much has been accomplished over the past year, and over the past decade. Creating meaningful change takes time and a lot of energy. We are proud of what we have accomplished, and acknowledge that there is more we can achieve. ■

CHRISTIE SACRÉ  
CHAIR, NORTH VANCOUVER  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

MARK PEARMAIN  
SUPERINTENDENT, NORTH  
VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

## GOAL #1: EXPAND the availability of best instructional practices and enriched curriculum.

### Outstanding work is happening here!

#### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and mental health formally became an educational priority area for the school district. A video and website were created ([sd44.ca/sites/SEL](http://sd44.ca/sites/SEL)). Professional development is being provided. Second Step, an SEL curricular program, is now being taught in 12 elementary schools. Mental Health curriculum is taught to all Grade 9 students.

#### CURRICULUM

It has now been five years since the new B.C. curriculum was introduced. The shift in curriculum has been a major systemic change from a content focus to a skills focus. Professional development, collaboration and the Curriculum Hub have all been paramount to supporting new curriculum implementation.

#### CHEAKAMUS CENTRE

Cheakamus Centre offers rich, place-based, curriculum experiences that support SEL, inclusion and Indigenous education. NVSD's Outdoor School and Skw'unc-was programs continue to thrive for students in grades 3, 4 and 6. Professional learning opportunities are also offered at the centre.

#### EARLY LEARNING

Partnerships are continually enhanced with community organizations. The Kindergarten Network has been reinvigorated and early learning curricular programs were revised.

#### LITERACY

Literacy Centre resources have been updated. An Assessment Committee formed and completed research. Efficiencies were created in Library Services with electronic cataloguing and by removing

outdated resources.

#### PHYSICAL LITERACY

Physical literacy was officially launched. Two physical literacy conferences were hosted. More than 40 hours of workshops were offered.

#### INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Indigenous education is for all students and staff. We are now involving parents more. As a result of this universal approach, graduation rates of students of Indigenous ancestry have improved.

#### ACADEMIES

There are 10 academies comprising of 20 classes and 532 students.

#### ARTISTS FOR KIDS

There are various district arts festivals – music, dance, drama and visual arts. The professional art collection owned by Artists for Kids is an incredible learning tool. Programming teaches visual arts

and SEL skills, supports diversity and provides career connections.

#### INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

There are three priority areas that the inclusive education team is working on: consistency of practice, home-school partnerships, and modernizing curriculum, instruction and assessment. Individual Education Plan planning has changed to be student-centred. There has been a shift to trauma-informed practice and Ukeru. ■

### Dr. Sinclair inspires staff

Integrating Indigenous perspectives and celebrating student achievement yields positive returns. This is the key message Dr. Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair imparted on staff and students during his visit to sites around the school district in October 2019. A University of Manitoba associate professor, Dr. Sinclair is a prolific writer and sought-after commentator on Indigenous issues.

Ridgeway Elementary and Handsworth Secondary hosted Dr. Sinclair during the day on October 3. That evening, Dr. Sinclair spoke to school district administrators about the value of Indigenous education for all learners. On October 4, the eve of World Teachers' Day, Dr. Sinclair capped off his visit with an inspiring speech to roughly 1,600 staff members gathered at Carson Graham Secondary. As staff filtered out of the gymnasium, they were gifted with a bundle of white sage – considered a sacred plant by Indigenous peoples. ■

### North Van students ahead of curve

BY MARIA SPITALE-LEISK  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

North Vancouver public schools are ahead of the curve when it comes to student engagement. That was the consensus among international education delegates who toured

two high schools in May 2019. Argyle and Mountainside were two of four B.C. schools selected to be showcased for the world's top education policy-makers. Recent changes to B.C.'s curriculum, including a focus on student choice and cross-curricular connections,

were of interest to the 200 delegates from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, comprised of almost 40 member nations.

At Mountainside, the education envoy learned how community partners, including counsellors and doctors, are integrated into the programs at the school. At Argyle, principal Kim Jonat extolled the academic, arts and athletic qualities of the school. Jonat drew the delegates' attention to Argyle's Digital Media Academy – an enriched hands-on program that regales tech-savvy students from across the district because of its industry connections.

The Vancouver conference marked the first time the OECD has met in North America, as it undergoes an international rethink about the goals and competencies students need to thrive in a rapidly changing world. ■



Argyle Secondary Digital Media Academy students explain a game they created to visiting OECD delegate Joy Hu Jun from China.



PHOTO NEWS PAUL MCGRATH



## GOAL #1: EXPAND the availability of best instructional practices and enriched curriculum.

### Supporting executive functioning

BY JANIS MANN  
DISTRICT VICE-PRINCIPAL,  
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Roughly 80 North Vancouver School District employees recently came together to hone their strategies for supporting students with executive functioning skills. Executive functioning refers to the ability to plan, organize and complete tasks. These are skills that can be taught. By supporting students in this manner, our staff help students reach their full potential. Executive functioning skills can be harnessed in all students, and students with special needs benefit greatly from this learning.

Over two days, various employees partook in a seminar presented by Sarah Ward, a well-known Speech and Language Pathologist and expert in the implementation of practical strategies to improve executive functioning. The seminar was hands-on and offered practical strategies for supporting executive functioning for all learners. ■

### Dorothy Lynas robotic champs



Team Marvel Robotics from Dorothy Lynas Elementary won big at the regional First LEGO League championship on Jan. 19, 2020. They had to solve a tricky mission – created out of Lego – with the help of a robot.



### Jazz festival

BY BEN BENGTSON  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

A flurry of sound echoes through the hallways of a North Vancouver high school. Although it's a Saturday, students dressed in sharp black attire can be seen bustling from one room to the next at Carson Graham Secondary. And for

once, the kids are being encouraged to be loud – but it's not the usual sounds of youthful laughter and rip-roaring energy produced by a healthy dollop of teenage rebellion that are making soundwaves here. These students are all musicians. They're walking around tuning big brass instruments, strumming

guitars, and proving that any solid mass can become a drum set if it's treated the right way.

Jake Rubin, a Grade 12 student at Argyle Secondary, has been playing classical piano since he was five years old, but he really took to jazz music a few years ago.

"I love the atmosphere behind it, all the harmonies you can make out of it, and the fact that you can play any note along with any chord and it usually sounds good," he jests. "It's really cool."

Rubin was one of approximately 130 students from all six North Vancouver high schools who turned up on a Saturday for the first North Vancouver School District Jazz Festival. Organized and founded by Carson band director Kevin Yang and Argyle band director Diana Chan, the purpose of the one-day event was to get students out of their usual classroom environments and interacting with their fellow young musicians on the North Shore. ■

### Students visit residential school memorial

BY BEN BENGTSON  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

Students at Carisbrooke Elementary are walking to walk, even though there's still a long way to go. A group of kids in grades 4 to 7 walked from their school to St. Paul's Indian Residential School Memorial, at the corner of Forbes Avenue and Sixth Street, as part of an ongoing truth and reconciliation effort.

"Last year we became a Downie Wenjack Legacy School," said Carisbrooke principal Lisa Upton. "In addition to learning about the true history of Canada and the truth of residential schools, we do a reconciliation action."

In honour of the legacy of Chanie Wenjack, who was just nine years old when he was taken from his family and sent to a residential school hundreds of kilometres away in the 1960s, students were asked



PHOTO NS NEWS MIKE WAKEFIELD

Carisbrooke Elementary students observe a memorial for residential school survivors in North Vancouver.

to write down what they were going to bring with them – what they'd need – for a long walk. Wenjack was found frozen to death in 1966 after he ran away from residential school looking to get back home.

As students walked from

Carisbrooke to the memorial, they were asked to consider: "What do all of us need to bring on our journey moving forward on reconciliation?"

Kids wrote down ideas such as "hope," "patience," "honesty," and "courage," according to Upton. ■

## GOAL #2: ENCOURAGE the growth of collaborative, adaptive and personalized learning environments.

### Windsor drag club breaking down barriers

**BY MARIA SPITALE-LEISK**  
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT,  
NVSD

A new generation of Greasers are getting an adrenaline rush at Windsor Secondary – while breaking stereotypes. Student Kaitlyn Clark grips the steering wheel of the white 1980 Camaro Z28, one hand on the shifter, anxiously anticipating the green light. At the first flash of green, it's pedal to the metal for Clark as she takes off down the quarter-mile dragstrip at Mission Raceway Park.

The automotive program at Windsor has always included female students, but last school year saw a shift in the school's drag racing club: no male drivers. The purpose of the club is to give students a real application of the skills they are learning in the auto program, explains Windsor automotive teacher Stephen Lonsbrough.

"The responsibility of maintaining a vehicle, the safety aspects of driving, and the camaraderie of being part of a large project that spans the province," says Mr. Lonsbrough.

Windsor's drag race club is associated with the British Columbia Secondary Schools Motorsport Association, which has been running since the early 1990s. The racing season starts in mid-April and goes until the end of June, with a test-and-tune day in September. ■



**Windsor student Julia Sikich is excited for another season of drag racing.**

### Professional learning and collaboration are essential



**BY CHRIS ATKINSON AND PIUS RYAN**  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS,  
NVSD

The North Vancouver School District team is phenomenal. The effort, dedication and care placed into supporting student success is inspiring. Throughout the entire organization, staff members are constantly striving to improve their practice to better meet student needs. From teachers, to

education assistants, office support, administrators, custodial staff, and maintenance professionals – everyone is constantly learning and growing, with the purpose of ensuring students reach their full potential.

Within any profession, it is essential that employees are constantly learning and developing their practice. This is true now, more than ever before. The rapid rate in which

technology is transforming our lives requires organizations to constantly adapt, and employees to constantly learn. This is also true within the education sector.

In addition to the need to learn and adjust as the world rapidly changes, education research continues to grow. Better understandings of how students learn are being revealed, along with increased awareness of what learning environments need to encompass. As a school district, we place strategic efforts into supporting change that will spur student success. Staff professional development is the foundation of these efforts.

Professional development days and collaboration days are essential to this continued growth. Employees need the time to focus on areas where they want to learn and grow in their professional practice and they need to be able to connect with colleagues to share best practice and learn from one another. There is deep employee learning that takes place on professional development days and collaboration days. This learning is then applied directly to support students. ■

### Game Ready is making a difference

**BY REGAN RANKIN**  
TEACHER, EASTVIEW ELEMENTARY

Recently my students played football. Out on the school field, we learned how to throw a football, and catch a football, and kick the ball. And while this may not seem like that big of a deal – it was. It really, truly was.

Some students cannot focus as well as others. They become engaged in their learning in less common ways. Game Ready has been able to provide that engagement for my students.

On one visit, BC Lions player Mitch Barnett from Game Ready gifted my class with a signed football.

He recommended that the kids research a bit about the player who signed it (Drew Bledsoe). This recommendation prompted

a 40-minute research block on computers and sparked excellent questions and conversation, which then sparked MORE research! All of the students demonstrated 100 per cent engagement and remained calm, focused and regulated for the entire time. They were very proud of themselves – and of course, we were very proud of them too.

During another session, Mitch taught us how to throw a football and do some kicking. Again, there was full participation and the students demonstrated a willingness to try something new and perseverance when things got challenging. Pushing past challenges and insecurities can be very difficult. The fun, active approach of Game Ready enables students to challenge themselves.

Thank you to Game Ready and the



**Regan Rankin, NVSD teacher, and Mitch Barnett, BC Lions player**

Washington Foundation for making this fun and unique experience possible and for supporting students to succeed! ■



## GOAL #2: ENCOURAGE the growth of collaborative, adaptive and personalized learning environments.

### Summer Learning connects concepts



**BY MARIA SPITALE-LEISK**  
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT,  
NVSD

Studying mathematics in the summer is time well spent for many students across North Vancouver.

"Having the course condensed makes it easier. I don't forget as much because I'm taking the class every day," said Will, a Sutherland Secondary student who signed up for Pre-Calculus 11.

The diverse suite of course offerings at North Vancouver School District's Summer Learning attracted 1,200 students to Carson Graham Secondary in July 2019. Summer Learning programs support English language learners, students transitioning to high school, those in Grade 8 and 9 looking to enhance core math, literacy and language skills, and those who aim to earn advanced credit towards graduation. The elementary program runs later

in the summer.

Just like during the regular school year in classrooms across the school district, students at Summer Learning make discoveries as they explore new ideas and master new skills. In the school's science labs, menacing bacteria was grown and examined closely, young biologists dissected pigs, and chemists in Mr. Bulger's class explored polarity while making soap. Expository essays took shape in Mr. Murphy's English Studies 12 class as students explored how storytelling deepens understanding of ideas and the world.

Physical and Health Education 10 was a new addition to the Summer Learning lineup last year. Students enjoyed this alternative way to earn credits – from climbing Quarry Rock, swimming at Whyte Lake and rowing in Deep Cove, to planning a healthy personal workout routine.

Registration for 2020 Summer Learning will be open from May 1 - June 19, 2020. Foundation Courses will run from July 2 - July 23, 2020, and Full Credit Courses will run from July 2 - July 30, 2020. For full course offerings visit [sd44.ca/school/summer](http://sd44.ca/school/summer). ■

### Lacrosse academy produces well-rounded players

**BY MARIA SPITALE-LEISK**  
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT,  
NVSD

"It's a medicine game," says Tewanee Joseph, of the sport richly steeped in North Vancouver's Indigenous history. Joseph twice helped lift the legendary North Shore Indians, pioneers in the sport of box lacrosse, to national glory.

Beginning in 2018, Joseph has lent his experience and talent to the

North Vancouver School District's lacrosse academy, offered through Carson Graham Secondary and which Joseph helped shape. His teachings go beyond skill development – catching, carrying, passing, and shooting the ball. Honouring the history and culture of the Squamish Nation and their connection to Canada's pastime is intertwined with skills training required for success at field and box lacrosse. An overarching goal of the unique academy, open to students

### Ancient craft uncovered at Cove Cliff



PHOTO NS NEWS PAUL MCGRATH

Tsileil-Waututh weaver Kiki Whitebear shows one of her woven shawls during a Cove Cliff Elementary celebration of Coast Salish weaving at the school. The entire student body learned how to weave, while working on a legacy project.

### Westview receives Indigenous books



PHOTO NS NEWS MIKE WAKEFIELD

Westview Elementary student Jordan Noble joins One to One executive director Carol Neuman, volunteer Kamy Zargarpour, TD bank representative Rick Chou and One to One school co-ordinator Leslie Tarves in diving into a selection of new books from Strong Nations Publishing, donated by the children's literacy program One to One, as part of a project to include books with more Indigenous stories in local elementary schools.



in Grades 8 to 12, is to instill in the young players values, skills, attitudes and knowledge needed to be healthy, active and global citizens.

"We set goals to aspire to as a team

and as a family," says Joseph. "The players are learning the skills and concepts. Through the game it's inspiring them to do other positive things in their lives." ■

**GOAL #3: NURTURE** an inspiring and healthy work environment.

## Sage gift fosters curiosity in Eastview students

**BY NICKY MEY**  
TEACHER/VICE PRINCIPAL,  
EASTVIEW ELEMENTARY

We sat in a circle and shared the wonderful dried sage that was given to each of the teachers to celebrate World Teachers' Day.

We smelled it, and told stories

related to plants and smells, and then learned that it is one of the sacred medicines used by Indigenous peoples.

At "tell my story" time, the children wrote about sage and their connections to it – unprompted.

Thank you for this amazing gift. ■




## Artistic enhancements

 **MURAL ENLIVENS LYNN VALLEY ELEMENTARY**



Hastings Creek holds a special place in the hearts of Lynn Valley Elementary students – even after they leave. So, when last year's Grade 7 class started to imagine a legacy gift for their school, the creek came to mind. Chosen to bring their beloved creek to life inside the library was local artist Caroline Chao, who spent 120 hours this past summer meticulously painting every frond and ripple around the creek.

 **CARISBROOKE LIBRARY NOW HOME TO TWO AMAZING, HAND-PAINTED MURALS**

**BY CHERYL TOMS**  
TEACHER-LIBRARIAN,  
CARISBROOKE ELEMENTARY

The Carisbrooke Elementary library is now home to two stunning murals that will have you feeling as though you've escaped into the lush North Vancouver forests. Taking two months to complete, the murals were painted by community member Caroline Chao and funded by the generous Carisbrooke PAC. A proud past North Vancouver School District parent, Caroline worked long

and hard on the murals. Donating hours of her time, the murals are a true labour of love and gift to Carisbrooke Elementary. The murals are place-based. One is the forest at the back of Carisbrooke Elementary. The other is part of the forest on the west side of the school property.



 **BRAEMAR MURAL GIVES SCHOOL CUL-DE-SAC BACK TO STUDENTS**

**BY BRENT RICHTER**  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

At Braemar Elementary, they get the big picture. Specifically, a massive mural that now adorns the cul-de-sac outside the main entrance, welcoming students. More than 100 Braemar students and parents turned out on a Saturday to help designer Rob Zylstra paint the street.

"It's a way of symbolizing that this is a public space and that it belongs to everyone, not just drivers," said Martyn Schmoll, a Braemar parent and Safe Routes Advocates member who lobbied for the project.

More than encouraging healthier, pollution-free commutes to school, Sandra Singh, Principal of Braemar Elementary, said she feels the mural itself is representative of the Braemar community.

"It's an open, free space with that beautiful circle that signifies unity and equality and the lines within it represented interconnectedness. I see that representing the Braemar school community – who we are and who we strive to be every single day," she said. ■



PHOTO NS NEWS PAUL MCGRATH

Martyn Schmoll, a Safe Routes Advocates member, Braemar Elementary Principal Sandra Singh and District of North Vancouver Coun. Jordan Back celebrate atop a new mural outside the school.

## Outdoor Learning



Many schools now have dedicated outdoor learning spaces. Check out the new space at Brooksbank Elementary.

## Accessible playground opens at Xwemélch'stn



Norgate Community Elementary – Xwemélch'stn – celebrated the completion of its new, accessible playground on September 27, 2019.

## GOAL #3: NURTURE an inspiring and healthy work environment

### Summer of work

BY MARK PEARMAIN  
SUPERINTENDENT, NVSD

I want to share my immense gratitude to our school district's facilities and maintenance team. The amount of work they accomplish is immense. This work makes our schools safer, more sustainable and more comfortable for students and staff. Every summer they dive into getting projects done. Here is the work that was completed over summer break last year:

#### ARGYLE SECONDARY SCHOOL: REPLACEMENT UPDATE

Construction continued on the new replacement school with a completion date of September 2020.

#### MOUNTAINSIDE SECONDARY SCHOOL: SEISMIC UPGRADE

Seismic mitigation work commenced in July 2019, with demolition in Phase 1 of the project completed in the summer.

#### QUEEN MARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: PORTABLE

A new portable was installed.

#### EASTVIEW ELEMENTARY

New double-glazed windows throughout the older sections of the school were installed. The school now has enhanced thermal comfort, improved energy efficiency, and operable windows for natural ventilation.

#### CAPILANO ELEMENTARY

Installation of new windows, rainscreen building envelope, new central heating plant, and classroom ventilation upgrades in older sections of the school. The school has improved thermal comfort, indoor air quality, energy efficiency, daylighting, and operable windows for natural ventilation.

#### SEYMOUR HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY

New ventilation units in the north wing were installed and gas-fired

combustion equipment within classrooms were removed.

#### UPPER LYNN ELEMENTARY

New ventilation units in the east wing were installed.

#### LYNN VALLEY ELEMENTARY

A retaining wall was installed and the back outside stairs were replaced.

#### COVE CLIFF ELEMENTARY

A new ramp system was installed to enter the portable.

#### LARSON ELEMENTARY

A window renewal project was completed on the upper south side of the school.

#### DISTRICT-WIDE

Installation of new water bottle filling stations in pre-1990 elementary schools. This project included dedicated piping to reduce potential lead in water concerns. The installation of carbon monoxide detection and monitoring systems in all locations that have gas-fired combustion equipment. ■

### Celebrating LGBTQ2S+ history

BY DENEKA MICHAUD  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, NVSD

In a flowing pink dress and pink wig, Conni Smudge performs to a packed house at Seycove Secondary School. The room erupts with positive energy, as students, staff and guests clap along with the show. It was not that long ago, however, that a performance such as this would never have occurred in a school.

"I was only in a school a decade ago, and could not have imagined anything like this taking place with such acceptance and celebration," said Kas Baker, a North Vancouver native who began transitioning while in secondary school. "While I had a lot of support from friends, family and the school, I was still referred to as a science experiment at the time."

On April 10, 2019, an event hosted at Seycove Secondary kicked off the start of a new educational initiative called Our History. The program is offered by the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity with the purpose of educating youth and Canadians about the history of LGBTQ2S+ rights in Canada. ■

### Process and protocol

WORDS AND TEACHINGS FROM  
SWALKLANEXW, DALLAS GUSS  
INDIGENOUS SUPPORT WORKER

The Indigenous Education team's offerings of Educating the Educator need to follow protocol. In some instances, the traditional offering might include separation of events, or roles, by gender. For example, the "Shukwem" (spiritual cleansing bath) does not allow males and females to be together for the ceremony. Another example: when ceremony occurs that involve speakers, it is only males that are allowed to be the

speakers according to protocol, and females are the floor managers. The Indigenous Education team works closely with knowledge keepers from the Squamish Nation and Tsileil-Waututh Nation to ensure that we are following protocol.

This school year, the NVSD Indigenous Education Team has been sharing teachings about Shukwem. Shukwem dates back thousands of years and is a process of cleansing oneself of negative energy. The Coast Salish ancestors created a community culture of removing negative thoughts, feelings and energy through multiple different facets: brushing-off with a cedar bough, smudging with sacred plants, ho'oponopono cleaning thoughts, and bathing in water.

Shukwem at sunrise symbolizes spirits returning from their earth sleep back to the spirit world, which



is a powerful cleansing moment. At this time, the spirits can give an extra hand in carrying away the harmful energies. Depending on the purpose, different waters represent different energies. Rapid waters for energy, ocean for power and still waters for calm feelings. The reason we do this is because we would not dare to bring negative feelings into our communities. The ancestors realized that even one ounce of negative energy will affect the entire circle. ■



Kas Baker speaks to Seycove students.

## GOAL #4: DEVELOP and promote innovative and sustainable programs.

### NVSD celebrates 40 years of French immersion

**BY CHRISTOPHER SUN**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER,  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

It was halfway through his first week as a teacher at Delbrook secondary school when Don Fraser received a phone call, telling him he was not going back. It was 1974 and the high school teacher had recently returned from Europe with his family after spending some years teaching there. He was puzzled at first, but not about to argue with the superintendent. That phone call became a pivotal moment for public education in North Vancouver.

"The superintendent said, 'Don Fraser, you are not going back to Delbrook,'" Fraser recalls. "You're going to come to the school board office and you're going to start the French second language program."

French was offered in high school only, at that time. Fraser was fluent in French and in his new role as modern languages co-ordinator, was tasked to introduce 20 minutes of daily French education into the school curriculum at the Grade 6 level. Soon after, he was keen to expand the program.

To start, two French immersion classes were proposed at two elementary schools – Cleveland

PHOTO NEWS MIKE WAKEFIELD



**Teacher Michelle Didier works with student Mila Neff on a French comic book at Cleveland Elementary.**

and Ross Road – and seats were available on a first come, first served basis. North Vancouver's French immersion program started in September 1978 with about 20 kindergarten students in each class.

"There was tremendous interest," Fraser remembers, adding that after each school year, a new French immersion grade had to be introduced until there were classes from kindergarten to Grade 12. More elementary schools and eventually high schools were added.

Today, 15 per cent of the North Vancouver School District's approximately 15,700 students are enrolled in French immersion, from kindergarten to Grade 12. That's 2,500 students. ■

### Cheakamus Centre celebrates 50th with time capsule

**BY KEILI BARTLETT**  
SQUAMISH CHIEF

Since 1969, hundreds of B.C. students have crossed through the Cheakamus Centre, picking up valuable environmental and outdoors knowledge during their stay in the wooded area north of Squamish. At the centre's 50th anniversary celebration on Dec. 6, 2019, more than 100 North Vancouver students gathered to witness the burial of a time capsule, set to be opened in another 50 years. Christie Sacré, now the chair of the North Vancouver Board of Education, first visited Cheakamus Centre as an elementary school student. So did her children. She's learned first-hand – as a student, parent and trustee – the value of the immersive program that focuses on place-based learning.

"It's nice for our students to be able to come here, get into nature, put away the phones. Put away all that part of life, and it's back to basics," she said.

Mark Pearmain, the superintendent of the North Vancouver School District, said the capsule will give a snapshot of what learning was like in 2019.

The capsule includes mostly

letters from the school district, the ministry of education and students. Khapquolanogh (Henry) and Siyámken (Matthew) Williams added devil's club salve and a traditional cedar bark bracelet to the capsule. Each student, from Lynn Valley Elementary and Queen Mary Elementary, wrote reflections on their experience at the centre. The founder of what was then called the North Vancouver Outdoor School, Don Robertson, added his own letter to the capsule as well. ■



PHOTO SQUAMISH CHIEF KEILI BARTLETT

**NVSD Superintendent Mark Pearmain, Board Chair Christie Sacré, Cheakamus Centre founder Don Robertson, Cheakamus Centre Project Manager Cathy Jenkins and Squamish Nation Coun. Chris Lewis throw dirt onto the 50th anniversary time capsule.**

### Good things brewing at student-run café

**BY ANDY PREST**  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

If you're ever in the Central Lonsdale area on a Friday and get a craving for a mid-morning snack, a wholesome new endeavour running out of the NVSD office has got you covered. The Higher Grounds (Chilhinup) Café opened for the first time Friday, Oct. 11, 2019, with Grade 12 and 13 students from the district's Inclusive Education program for complex learners

serving up coffee and baked goods out of a nifty little hole in the wall at NVSD headquarters. The project was created as a way for Inclusive Education students from Sutherland and Carson Graham to experience a work-like environment and get a taste of what life will be like after high school.

"It gives them a lot of skills," said Neeru Parmar, the school district's work experience facilitator. "I want these kids to feel that they can contribute to the community, and

give them enough skills that they can land on their two feet outside after high school."

Everything at the café is sold by-donation – there are no price tags – and supplies so far have been donated by North Vancouver's Moja Coffee and Two Daughters Bakeshop. Money collected at the café will be used to buy extra supplies, with anything left over at the end of the school year going towards a year-end outing for the students.

The café is scheduled to run every Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. during the school year – Thursdays when Friday is a professional development day – at 2121 Lonsdale Ave. ■





## GOAL #4: DEVELOP and promote innovative and sustainable programs.

### Artist for Kids celebrates three decades of student success



**BY ALLISON KERR**  
DIRECTOR OF ARTISTS FOR KIDS

Artists for Kids is now thirty years old! Affectionately called AFK, this program reflects what can be possible when our community has a vision. This vision places kids, teachers and artists front and centre. AFK knew intrinsically that learning through the arts and learning through relationships with each other – kids, educators and

artists – provides a venue to share, build and grow our identity and belonging as people, as Canadians. Thirty years later, our Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art boasts more than 650 pieces of original Canadian art from some of our most noted Canadian artists. Our Artists for Kids' team supports students through outreach, gallery programs, enrichment, after school programs, and spring and summer camps. These efforts

not only support every elementary and secondary school in North Vancouver, but all educators in British Columbia through our extensive interdisciplinary curriculum and resources shared on our website.

The vision for AFK continues to be bright, supporting kids, teachers and artists locally and nationally – continuing a legacy of possibility and support for each other. ■

### International student program

For more than 20 years, students from around the world have come to North Vancouver to learn and grow under NVSD's International Education program. Approximately 650 international students, enrolled from kindergarten to Grade 12 at sites across the school district, enjoy the smorgasbord of high quality, vibrant education programs the school district has to offer.

"It's the diversity of our programming that makes it very rich," says Lynne Bolen, International Program Administrator. The program consistently attracts students hailing from 30 countries worldwide. While living in homestay, international students immerse themselves in Canadian culture and develop their English language skills in a caring, comfortable family setting – leading

to lifelong friendships.

"We are exceptionally grateful to our host families – the fact they open their doors and their hearts to our international students," says Bolen.

There are many reciprocal benefits, as the students physically broaden their horizons and bring along a cultural taste of their homeland to their host families. ■

### Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

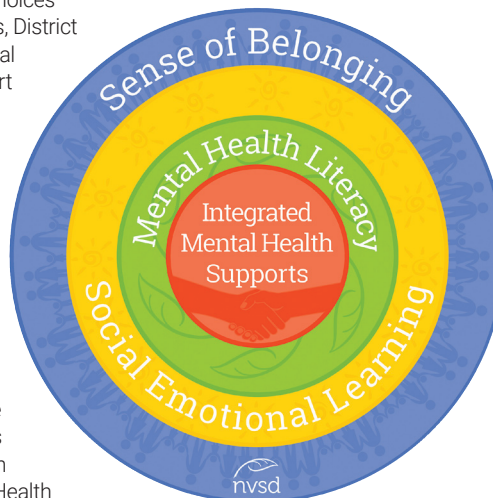
**BY JEREMY CHURCH**  
DISTRICT PRINCIPAL,  
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING  
AND MENTAL HEALTH

In the North Vancouver School District, we believe that the Social Emotional Learning Continuum is central to student development and the educated global citizen. Intentionally enhancing a student's sense of belonging while teaching social emotional skills and positive mental health enables student engagement and enhanced learning. In partnership with parents and community, we share the role in the intentional development of students.

A joint committee of district leadership, principals, classroom teachers, counsellors, specialist teachers, and support staff are helping to set future direction as a school district related to SEL.

We recognize that social and emotional skills can be taught and are increasingly important in today's world. Presently, we are extremely proud of the work of Mountainside Secondary School, Choices Program, Counsellors, District Resource Team, Social Responsibility Support Program, School Based Resource Teams, and our relationship with Foundry in supporting our students. In addition, we are teaching SEL and mental health from kindergarten to Grade 12. We have been national leaders in the implementation of a Positive Mental Health

Curriculum for all Grade 9 students. Twelve of our elementary schools are implementing the Second Step program, which is SEL curriculum from kindergarten to Grade 7. ■



### Indigenous Education: New Logo



**Indigenous Education**  
nvsd

Introducing the new Indigenous Education logo designed by Jaimee Thomas, Tsleil-Waututh Nation member and a student at Lynnmour Elementary School. Jaimee's design includes Wolf for the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Thunderbird for the Skwxwú7mesh Nation. The water represents Coast Salish Peoples and has the Métis sash running through it. The colours green, yellow, blue and orange are the NVSD colours. Jaimee drew her logo, which was then digitized by graphic designer, Olivia George, Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

## GOAL #5: PROVIDE leadership in environmental education and sustainability practices!



### I see a change

**BY DENEKA MICHAUD**  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER,  
NVSD

"I see a change!" exclaims a kindergarten student, pointing to a newly blossomed flower on a bush along the sidewalk on Mahon Ave.

Students in Paul Wright's kindergarten class at Queen Mary Community Elementary School are walking from their school up to Wagg Creek Park. Along the way they are looking for changes in nature that they notice compared to last week's walk up to the park.

"Change!" another student yells. "The cherry blossoms are falling off the tree," she explains.

Every Friday throughout the entire school year, Wright has walked his class up to Wagg Creek Park. The weekly ritual started as an adventure out of the classroom to check out local nature, and has transformed into a powerful place-based learning experience connected to the local municipality and secondary school.

After the first class trip to the park, students had questions about how the creek is managed. Wright asked the City of North Vancouver about it. As a result, an environmental technician from the municipality came to visit the class. Students learned about all of the efforts that are undertaken to keep the creek healthy, such as a rain garden, drainage basins and garbage cleanup. As the year progressed, science lessons were incorporated

into the weekly outing.

Meanwhile, up the hill at Carson Graham Secondary, Laurie Louwe, a science and biology teacher, was looking for an opportunity for her students to go out into the community in a meaningful way, to share their growing knowledge of the natural world around them.

"I was trying to create a community of learners where my students could become the teachers, and build their leadership skills," said Louwe.

Willow Mumford, the teacher leader for the Carson Graham family of schools, introduced Wright to Louwe, and the three of them created a plan for each of Louwe's Grade 11 classes to be partnered with a kindergarten class from Queen Mary Elementary School. Paula Jasek and Christina Empey, kindergarten teachers at Queen Mary, agreed to take part in the pilot project, with the help of parent volunteers to accompany the kindergarten students to the park. The kindergarten and Grade 11 students started to meet at Wagg Creek Park each week. The kindergarten students then visited their older partners at Carson Graham Secondary in the science lab.

"It was amazing to see how well the kindergarten and Grade 11 students connected," said Wright. "They really came together to explore science questions collaboratively. They felt connected to the project because it was directly related to our local creek and park." ■

### North Van students harvest life lessons in school garden

**BY MARIA SPITALE-LEISK**  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

A special friendship between a senior and students blossomed after the harvest at Highlands Elementary. The original plan called for flowers to brighten up four empty garden beds by the gravel field, when the school reopened in 2009 after a rebuild.

"Then we discovered the kids were way more interested in vegetables," exclaims former Highlands teacher Edie Rustemeyer, who routinely comes out of retirement to help students find their green thumbs.

The school's vegetable garden is thriving with potatoes, garlic, berries and greens in late May. Grade 4 and 5 students are eager to get outside for their monthly, hands-on sustainability lesson from Edible Garden Project. Today, the students play plant detectives – using magnifying glasses to comb through kale in search of pests and pollinators. Off to the side, another group of students is sorting and cleaning lettuce seeds harvested from a crop they planted last year. Below the surface of their leafy exploration are myriad curriculum connections – that not only benefit the students but also result in positive global impacts they are making.

"Sustainability comes into the science aspect of things, and looking at climate change and how we can grow our own food in our own backyard," explains Highlands Grade 4/5 teacher Jennifer Sherlock. "The children take some of their skills home and we've found that some families start growing their own vegetables in their own backyards, as a result of this."

The green project at Highlands is sustained through support from the school's PAC and grants from community partners including Vancouver Coastal Health. Parents also play a vital role in keeping the garden growing – especially when school is out for the summer. ■



PHOTO NS NEWS PAUL MCGRATH

**Highlands Elementary students exercise their green thumbs during their class' monthly, hands-on sustainability lesson from Edible Garden Project.**

### Together to 20

Did you know that the North Vancouver School District has a target – set in 2011 – to reduce its energy consumption by 20 per cent by 2020? And...did you know we have almost reached that target! We have reduced our energy consumption by 18.2 per cent!

The Together to 20 campaign asks schools to take part in one of five challenges that will help reduce energy use: Winter Fashion, Lights Out, Energy Education, Winter

Shutdown, and Print and Copy Challenge. Ask your school what campaigns they are undertaking. ■



## GOAL #5: PROVIDE leadership in environmental education and sustainability practices.

### Schools do their part!

#### ARGYLE CLOTHING SWAP A SUCCESS

**BY OLIVIA BRENNAN**  
STUDENT, ARGYLE  
ENVIRONMENT CLUB

The Argyle Environment Club hosted a clothing swap in October. We didn't prioritize money, instead focusing on reducing clothing waste. Our goal for the year is to focus on reducing waste, whether that be plastic waste, food waste, or even clothing waste. Students brought in donations. We received a variety of clothing pieces such as accessories, shoes, outerwear, jeans, shirts and sweaters.

Approximately 50 to 100 students participated in the event. Following the event, there were 129 clothing items left. Mr. Cheng volunteered to transport these leftover donations to the Salvation Army.



#### QUEEN MARY – KEEPING OUR SHORES CLEAN

**BY CHERYL DAY**  
TEACHER, QUEEN MARY  
COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

On Tuesday, April 23, 2019, as part of Earth Day celebrations at Queen Mary Community Elementary School, students from nine classes put on gloves and got to work cleaning up the shoreline at Waterfront Park. This was the fourth year that our school participated in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. The program is offered by Ocean Wise (Vancouver Aquarium) and the World Wildlife Fund - Canada.



At Queen Mary, following our Earth Day assembly where we talked about the purpose of the shoreline cleanup, students in grades 1, 2, 3 and 5 headed out cleaning down Chesterfield Ave. and then at Waterfront Park. We found lots of cigarette butts and foam pieces in the rocks along the shore. Two student groups from Jen Aragon's Grade 7 class sorted, classified, and tallied the garbage.

This event is always fun and really educational for the students, who are amazed at how much garbage there is along our shores.

#### KUDOS TO WINDSOR GREEN TEAM FOR TARGETING PERSISTENT PLASTIC LITTER

The issue of litter was brought forward from a community partner who shared how plastic trash in the forested areas nearby Windsor Secondary School was attracting rats and, in turn, creating the potential to harm wildlife and the fish bearing stream. If rodenticide



is needed to manage the rats, secondary poisoning of wildlife can occur. After receiving this information, the Windsor Green Team quickly mobilized and took action to remove all of the litter from the forest and prevent more harm to the local wildlife.

One of the Green Team's main priorities is litter reduction. Each year they organize an annual community cleanup to help clean up unwanted trash throughout the community. 2019 marked Windsor Secondary's ninth year of community cleanups.

#### LARSON CLASS WINS COOL IT!

Last spring, Cynthia Whyte's Grade 3/4 class at Larson Elementary won the Cool It! Climate Leadership Training Challenge for North Vancouver. The Sustainable Energy Association, in partnership with B.C. municipalities, puts on this challenge each year. The program develops and empowers young sustainability champions in grades 4 -7 in schools throughout the province through workshops and contests.

As part of an environmental stewardship inquiry project related to marine animals, the students



discovered how many of their day-to-day actions can affect, directly and indirectly, the planet's health. The students spent a full month monitoring their daily activities and those of their families, as a way to become more aware and to integrate 'greener' ways of doing simple things. The program scientists calculated that if the students continued their amazing efforts throughout the year, the class would save 21.772 tonnes

of greenhouse gases from being released into the atmosphere!

The grade 3/4 class was invited to attend a ceremony on Monday, June 17, 2019, at the City of North Vancouver City Hall to celebrate their dedication and stewardship.

#### CANYON HEIGHTS CLEANUP CREW

Last year, three grade 7 students at Canyon Heights Elementary saw that there was a large amount of litter and discarded items behind the school. On their own accord, the students darted home and gathered supplies for their mission. They returned to the site and cleaned up every piece of trash. Thank you to these remarkable students who took time to lend a helping hand to the environment.



#### BLUERIDGE KIDS CARE

NVkids care started in 2017 by students at Canyon Heights Elementary, with the help of their teacher, Stephanie Reynolds. It has since continued to grow at Blueridge Elementary. Their mission is to make North Vancouver more sustainable by educating people about the impact single use plastic has on the environment. ■



**GOAL #6: STRENGTHEN** and expand reciprocal community relations.

## North Van students receive CPR and defibrillator training

**BY BEN BENGTSO**  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

In the event of a medical emergency, North Vancouver secondary students might be a good group to turn to for help, following a demonstration of student proficiency at CPR and use of an AED held at Sutherland Secondary. The demonstration was part of a launch event for the North Vancouver School District's new life-saving training program. The program covers the administration of cardio pulmonary resuscitation as well as the use of an automated external defibrillator, which can jump-start a person's heart using an electric shock.

The school district phased in defibrillators at all seven of its North Vancouver high schools starting in September, noted school district spokeswoman Deneka Michaud.

With some teachers and administrators having now been trained on the life-saving devices, North Van high school students are starting to receive their own training on how to use AEDs and administer CPR through a new program established by the Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation, a national charity devoted to getting such life-saving training into Canadian high schools. The foundation initially partnered with the Deep Cove Lions Club and

Rotary Club of Lions Gate, whose sponsorship allowed the foundation to offer North Van teachers and administrators the necessary training

materials – such as mannequins and training defibrillators – as well as provide the know-how to then educate students. ■



Alex McDonald, a Grade 10 student at Sutherland Secondary, performs a CPR demonstration.

PHOTO: NEWS MIKE WAKEFIELD

## North Van band students called up to big leagues

**BY MARIA SPITALE-LEISK**  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

Select North Vancouver band students have qualified for the Super Bowl of the symphony world. Every year for the past two decades, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra has performed a joint concert with the North Vancouver School District's honour band and honour string orchestras. Entry is by audition-only and each year only a select number of local elementary students successfully make it into the honour bands.

Ridgeway Elementary Grade 7 student Marea Belleville tried out for honour band because she thought it would be an amazing experience



to perform with great musicians and play more challenging music. For fellow honour band member Atrisa Tashakorinia, a Canyon Heights Elementary Grade 6 student with aspirations of becoming a professional violinist, performing alongside the VSO musicians is a thrill.

"It feels great hearing myself play with professional players and I have learned a lot from them," she says.

Upper Lynn Elementary band teacher Bill Piggott is the rehearsal conductor of the school district's honour band comprised of Grade 6 and 7 students. This special program, says Piggott, offers the students a chance to play much more challenging music than they would ever see in their regular school band programs. The honour band students meet for several weeks and rehearse alongside top-notch VSO musicians in close quarters, guided by VSO assistant conductor William Rowson. Then comes the real treat for the precocious musicians: a joint concert with their VSO counterparts at Centennial Theatre. ■

## North Vancouver RCMP "Power 5"

North Vancouver RCMP understand the importance of positive interaction with youth from an early age and, as a result, are implementing a program where uniformed police officers attend local elementary schools during recess, lunch hour or after school to interact with students. The uniformed police officers aim to greet the students with a fist bump, which may then lead into a game of pickup basketball, soccer, ball hockey, four square, or simply a conversation. Students are

encouraged to approach the police officers when they see them on the playground. Each visit is expected to last 15 - 30 minutes depending on calls for police service that day.

North Vancouver RCMP already have a Youth Intervention Unit, which includes a corporal and three constables, who regularly liaise with students and school officials. The Power 5 initiative will involve all uniformed members of the North Vancouver RCMP taking time to build a rapport with our youth. ■



North Vancouver RCMP Superintendent Ghalib Bhayani gives 'power 5s' to students at Ridgeway Elementary School.



## GOAL #6: STRENGTHEN and expand reciprocal community relations.

### North Van choir connects students and adults living with memory loss

BY BEN BENGTSON  
NORTH SHORE NEWS

The singers are gathering. It's late in the afternoon on a recent Friday and a mix of people are hustling to find their seats at Windsor Secondary. Energy is high because it's the early goings of a new choir with a unique twist. Composed of roughly 10 students, 10 people living with memory loss, and 10 caregivers, the choir is calling itself the NoteWorthy Singers.

"One of my favourites that we're doing right now is 'Country Roads,' which is so much fun to sing," says Chloe Di Salle, a Grade 12 student at Windsor.

Di Salle loves to sing in general. She's already a member of four separate high school choirs, but didn't pause for a second when the

opportunity arose to join the new intergenerational choir, directed by Windsor's Adam Kozak.

"I was super interested, first of all, because my grandmother, before she passed away, she had severe Alzheimer's," says Di Salle. "One of the things that's been stressed ... is the importance of this not only for the people who are struggling with memory loss, but for their caretakers and their loved ones who are taking care of them now."

They're all mainly strangers here – there's teenagers and older adults, seniors living with mild to moderate memory loss, and in some cases, family members who have become caregivers to their loved ones. But everyone finds common ground through music. The NoteWorthy Singers are a project devised by Cindy Bouvet, part of Vancouver



Choir leader Adam Kozak conducts a group of students, adults living with memory loss, and their caregivers during a recent practice of the NoteWorthy Singers, a new intergenerational choir that rehearses at Windsor Secondary.

Coastal Health's older adult mental health team, and Pam Havens, supervisor of dementia services at Parkgate Community Services Society. The purpose of the choir is multifaceted, according to Havens. She hopes the new choir

will help bridge the gap between different generations, foster a more dementia-friendly community and, perhaps most crucially, the choir could provide welcome respite for people living with memory loss, and their caregivers. ■

### Experiential learning at the Polygon Gallery

BY DENEKA MICHAUD  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER,  
NVSD

The morning is slightly crisp, and unbelievably clear and calm – not only outside, but also inside the Polygon Gallery. Along the waterfront at the base of Lonsdale,

the ocean is serene and the view to downtown Vancouver is breathtaking. Things are quiet with barely a soul or travelling boat in sight.

Inside the Polygon Gallery things are much the same. There are no public guests because the gallery

is not yet open. Upstairs, in a room that overlooks the ocean and city, an entire class of grades 5 and 6 students sits calmly in a circle on the floor. The tranquility envelops the room.

"I enjoyed going into the exhibits and journaling about the art – what we thought of it and the thoughts the art triggered for us," said Taylor, a Grade 5 student.

It is the last day of a weeklong learning in place experience at the Polygon Gallery. For the entire week students have been coming to the gallery instead of going to their school, Queensbury Elementary School. Their teacher, Heather Duncan, has been using the gallery space to deepen her students' learning.

"The experience is rich. As a class, they are becoming closer and more

supportive of one another," said Duncan.

Throughout the week, the students did a wide variety of learning activities. They visited the exhibits and engaged in writing based on their perceptions of the art. They took a guided walk with Cease Wyss to learn about Indigenous plants, history and local Indigenous ways of life. They had a visit from artist Hannah Rickards. They drew. They made videos with iPads. They also engaged in deep reflection by journaling about their experiences.

"I have enjoyed everything!" said one student as he sat in the circle on the floor at the gallery on their last day.

With the sun shimmering off the water in the background, another student added, "I just wish I could make it two weeks." ■



# A Year in Review – 2018/19 School Year

## Modernizing the curriculum

**100s**  
of teacher support documents

**>60**  
unit plans

**106,022**  
pageviews

**>10**  
professional learning sessions focused on assessment + curriculum

**>80**  
participants in the New Teacher Network

The Educated Citizen  
"Attributes of a Graduate"

Live a Good Life  
Make a Good Living

Goals of Public  
Schooling

Intellectual  
Development

Human and  
Social  
Development

Career  
Development

School District  
Priorities

Modernizing  
Curriculum

Complex  
Learners

Indigenous  
Education

Social  
Emotional  
Learning

Career  
Development

## Complex learners

**587** staff members who specifically support students with special needs

**2,116** students with special needs designations

**79%**  
(grad rate)

**10**  
specific programs

**62**  
professional learning sessions

**68.1%**

(inclusive of all learners of Indigenous ancestry)

Indigenous  
education

**632**  
students of Indigenous ancestry

**6**  
taking part in the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund

**15**  
have learned the Coast Salish Anthem

**50**  
professional learning sessions

**16**  
career specific courses

**8**  
professional learning sessions

Work experience facilitators at all secondary schools

**229** students enrolled in career programs

Career development

Social Emotional Learning

**25**  
professional learning sessions focused on

"Resilience" (film screening)

**11** Second Step pilot schools  
**+15** school staff  
**>100** parents

**\$250K**  
provincial grant to support

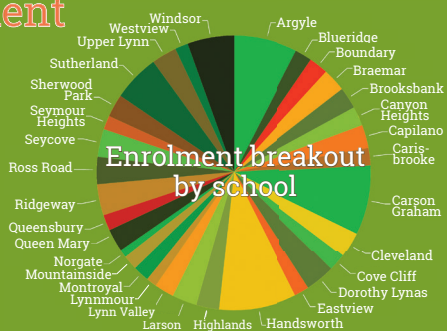
**16** member SEL committee

**1,200** students

mental health curriculum

## Enrolment rates

June 2019  
total enrolment  
**15,553**



## Success rates

