

North Vancouver School District

School Plan 2011-2012

School: North Vancouver Distributed Learning School
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School/Community Context:

The North Vancouver Distributed Learning School (NVDLS) serves students who are seeking to take courses in the online environment at the grade 10-12 level. It provides a flexible pathway for students to reach their academic goals and provides a personalized, 21st century learning approach to education. Currently, 26 courses are offered in a variety of subject areas leading to both a Dogwood Diploma and an Adult Dogwood Diploma, with several new courses in development for the 2011-2012 school year and plans for future course development. In order to enhance communication and learning opportunities, all online students have access to the "DL Centre", which allows students to have face-to-face interaction with their online teachers and provides a classroom/computer lab for tutorials and test/exam invigilation. This "blended" model has been successful for many students.

The school has a diversity of learners including non-graduated youth, non-graduated adults, graduated adults who are upgrading, English Language Learners, and students with IEPs. The majority of students in the program are cross-enrolled from mainstream secondary schools in the North Vancouver School District, with a growing population from other secondary schools on the North Shore, including private, independent, and public as well as a small population of students from other school districts in the province. NVDLS is a member of the BC Learning Network, a consortium of DL schools that work together to upgrade and develop course materials and share best practices. The courses are held in an open source Learning Management System, "Moodle", and hosted by an online service provider, "Knowplace".

Youth students enrolled are typically only taking one or two courses in coordination with their "mainstream" bricks and mortar school schedule. Some are taking courses to free up their face-to-face timetable for additional electives, some are involved in elite athletic programs, some prefer the flexibility of online, some are trying to work on courses in advance of the next grade level, and some learn better in a self-paced, technology-rich environment. The adult DL population is typically enrolled in two or more courses, with the goal being graduation, or to upgrade marks in order to be eligible for specific post-secondary programs. These adult learners are most often working and balancing home-life obligations, which makes the flexible DL model suitable for their learning needs.

The program follows a continuous entry and self-paced mode of course delivery and as such, the student/parent population is transient. Due to the flexible nature of program completion and the fact that many of our students are cross-enrolled, it has been challenging to establish

a Parent Advisory Council specific to the school. In the 2010-2011 school year, the NVDLS has linked closely with the Youth Learning Centre, an alternate program in the district. Students in this program are accessing the DL school and the blended model of the DL Centre to give them an alternate path to graduation. The Parent Advisory Council for the Youth Learning Centre is becoming more involved in the NVDLS, and this partnership is beginning to provide a parent voice for the program.

Demographics:

Gender of Students, Number of Students Per Grade, Total Course Enrolments, Total FTE

Total Number of Course Enrollments	Total Number of Students	Male	Female	9	10	11	12	Graduated Adults
1, 441 180 FTE	1092	507	585	9	399	199	420	65

FTE Teachers FTE Administration	% Aboriginal Students	% Special Education Students	% ESL
4.546 FTE (Teaching) .5 FTE (Admin)	0.01	0.12	0.18

Progress Analysis:

Review of School Goals – Previous Year

1. To increase student attendance at the DL Centre:

Good progress has been made with this goal. The DL Centre is open more frequently during the week for student tutorials, test and exam invigilation, as a place for students to work in the computer lab and for students to drop in or make scheduled appointments for face-to-face support. The Centre is opened four days a week, up from two days a week during the 2009-2010 school year. A significant increase in student attendance at the Centre, as recorded in the student sign in book, is evident. Students also report that the flexible hours at the Centre, including two evenings when the Centre is open until 6:00 are beneficial. A weekly laboratory evening session, facilitated by the DL Science teacher, has allowed students to complete hands-on Biology, Chemistry, and Physics experiments.

2. To improve student engagement in DL learning experiences:

Good progress has been made with this goal. The 2010-2011 school year represents year two of using the Moodle Learning Management System and working in collaboration with the BC Learning Network. This year, we have seen incredible progress with course improvements. Most DL courses now contain animated visuals, interactive audio and video links, the use of course forums to encourage social networking, and an active communication system between staff and students using Moodle messaging, e-mail, phone, and DL Centre interactions. Some

courses contain Flash Animation and built-in tutorials that actively engage students in using Web 2.0 tools. Teachers continue to streamline course content to make it both rigorous and engaging, and create meaningful assignments using assessment as, of, and for learning, as well as provide instructional communication that clearly links to Ministry outcomes. It should be noted that the DL administration, teaching staff, and support staff are committed to the DL program and are excited to create opportunities for students to engage in their learning through technology. The teachers both individually, and in collaboration, have embraced the huge learning curve of utilizing tools in the Moodle environment and have pushed course engagement further.

3. To improve student completion in DL courses:

Progress continues to be made in the area of student completion rates in DL courses. In 2008-2009, course completion rates were at 54%, in 2009-2010, course completion rates were 65% with projected completion rates for the 2010-2011 year to be in the 70%+ range. Patterns over the last three years indicate that specific courses have higher completion rates than others. Of note are the higher rates in PE 10, Planning 10, Grad Transitions, and Mathematics 12. Upon further investigation, it is evident that the courses with higher completion rates are courses that have been upgraded with Web 2.0 tools and have been streamlined in such a way as to effectively and efficiently cover required Ministry outcomes. The DL teachers have made extensive course improvements by adding media links, visuals, authentic assessments, and an opportunity for engagement in course forums and Elluminate sessions. With continued work on improving all courses, as mentioned in goal 2, completion rates in all courses will continue to improve. Quality, engaging courses lead to better student success.

Opportunities for Further Development:

Distributed Learning continues to be a rapidly growing area of the education landscape in British Columbia and in North Vancouver in particular. With the emphasis on 21st Century Learning, the NVDLS has a unique opportunity to integrate technology with authentic learning experiences and provide students with many skills that are desirable in a 21st century world. The creation of locally developed core and elective courses continues to be a key component in meeting the needs of our diverse student population while attracting new students to our program. This year we have developed several new courses that will be introduced in September 2011. Planification 10 DL was created by three North Vancouver School District French Immersion teachers with tech support from two current DL teachers. The course was developed completely in-house and will support course diversity and selection for students in mainstream French Immersion programs. The course represents a key partnership between the NVDLS, three mainstream high schools, and district staff. In addition to this, a DL Humanities teacher has developed a Marketing 12 DL course and PE 12 has also been developed by our current PE 10 online teacher. These courses will provide our students, both youth and adults, with more opportunities and pathways to high school graduation.

On-going teacher professional development in distance learning teaching techniques and ways to provide students with convenient, effective, and engaging online experiences are also of paramount importance. Advanced Moodle training and attendance at the yearly Digital Learning Conference continue to be a focus. An emphasis on creating a fluid connection with

our mainstream schools will provide the wrap-around support that students need to be successful in the online environment. Using on-site “DL Centres” in mainstream high schools and registering DL students in support blocks in the bricks and mortar setting will help to increase both learning opportunities and success in online courses as well as give mainstream schools the ability to offer a greater variety of face-to-face course experiences.

Currently the NVDLS operates on a 10 month model, but plans are underway to expand the school to 12 months in order to allow for greater flexibility for students and to remain competitive with other DL schools. The further development of the North Vancouver Distributed Learning School is an exciting opportunity and a way to meet the diverse needs of students.

School Goals:

Based on the review of student achievement using Provincial, District and school evidence, the goals set out in the North Vancouver Distributed Learning School Plan for 2011—2012 are:

- 1. To increase student attendance at the DL Centre**
- 2. To improve student engagement in DL learning experiences**
- 3. To improve student completion in DL courses**
- 4. To improve student learning in DL through a closer partnership with mainstream secondary schools**

School Goal 1: To increase student attendance at the Distributed Learning (DL) Centre

Goal Rationale:

Research suggests that students who have a relationship with their teachers tend to be more engaged in their course work and have a better chance of course completion. Currently, the Distributed Learning Centre, which is comprised of a classroom and a computer lab, is open four days per week from 9:00am to 3:00pm on Monday and Wednesday and 9:00am to 6:00pm on Tuesday and Thursday. The Centre is staffed by online educators, and students have the opportunity to interact with their teachers by asking questions, participating in tutorials, using the computer lab, and taking tests and exams. Data collected indicates that the Centre is busy during these four days. By increasing the time/days the Centre is open (including increasing evening hours), the potential of more students being able to attend will be increased. This will give students more flexibility to get the support they need and to establish a relationship with their teachers.

Objective 1.1:

To increase the hours/days of operation of the DL Centre

Strategies/Structures:

- development of a more flexible schedule for the DL Centre which may include day, afternoon, evening and 5 day a week access, subject to teacher staffing.

Evidence: (Quantitative)

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Actual	Target
Number of days the DL Centre is open	2	4	5
Number of hours per week the DL Centre is open	20	30	40

Objective 1.2:

To increase student use of the DL Centre

Strategies/Structures:

- continue to advertise the DL Centre schedule on the nvsd44.bc.ca website, in the Moodle Learning Management System, on a NVDLS Facebook page, and in individual courses
- advertise the DL Centre schedule in local newspapers
- teachers invite students in groups and individually to attend scheduled tutorial sessions
- teachers encourage individuals to “drop-in” or make an appointment to see them at the Centre when the student is experiencing difficulty

Evidence: (Quantitative)

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Actual	Target
Percentage of the total DL student enrolment attending the DL Centre at least once per month	60%	60%	65%

School Goal 2: To improve student engagement in DL learning experiences

Goal Rationale:

Students need to be engaged in the online learning environment. Improvements of current courses and future development of locally created courses will meet student needs by providing more user-friendly and engaging learning experiences that utilize the capabilities of Web 2.0 tools. Quality courses that clearly cover Ministry outcomes and are challenging, engaging, relevant, and easy to navigate will assist students to remain active in their courses. This goal will be ongoing, and will continue to be an integral part of the NVDSL vision.

Objective 2.1:

To increase the number of students consistently working in online courses

Strategies/Structures:

- increase the number of online technology tools incorporated in the courses: Elluminate, webcasts, wikis, blogs, website creation, social media, etc. to make the courses more interactive and engaging
- fully utilize the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) tools in the courses (chat, discussion, online assessments, use of meta-courses, gradebook, selective groups and groups, Moodle messaging, progress indicator, audio etc.)
- design assignments and assessments (formative and summative) to make them relevant and authentic for students
- provide collaborative time for teachers to work together to re-structure and streamline current course materials to create more effective learning experiences for students
- collaborate with other DL schools and online associations (BC Learning Network) to share courses and course materials that engage students
- provide frequent communication with students via online tools to help them set goals/ deadlines, and provide them necessary encouragement to consistently keep working in the course

Evidence: (Quantitative)

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Actual	Target
Percentage of students submitting a minimum of one assignment every two weeks	25%	30%	50%
Average number of communication contacts with students, both individual and though group e-mail blasts, and postings in the Moodle site	Bi-weekly	Bi-weekly	Weekly

Objective 2.2:

To increase student engagement and choices through the development of locally created courses

Strategies/Structures:

- support teachers to participate in professional development to assist in course creation both in the district through staff meetings, Collegial Conferencing and out-of-district (i.e. BC Learning Network, Digital Learning Conference) opportunities
- provide training sessions for teachers to learn advanced Moodle techniques and explore and use web tools (Elluminate, wikis, blogs, social networking systems etc.) in the creation of courses
- use Elluminate for staff meetings to give teachers hands on experience
- encourage teachers to use Elluminate with students
- encourage DL teachers to add their own course content and activities to existing courses based on student needs
- develop elective and core courses uniquely created for the students in North Vancouver
- Planification 10 and Marketing 12 have been developed by North Vancouver teachers and will be available in September 2011, and PE12 has been developed and will be piloted in the fall of 2011, with registration opening in December 2011
- development of French 12 DL course is being explored

Evidence: *(Quantitative)*

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Actual	Target
Number of courses used that are locally developed	2	2	5

Evidence: *(Qualitative)*

Student and teacher interest and engagement in the courses as evidenced by student feedback on course evaluations, discussions with teachers, and the results of the Ministry's DL Satisfaction Survey.

School Goal 3: To improve student completion in DL courses

Goal Rationale:

Improving completion rates will provide evidence that our courses are meeting the needs of students and allowing them to reach their academic goals. Students need to be “activated” in the course, “actively” work in the course, and ultimately complete the course. Research has suggested that completion rates in online courses are linked to effective relationships between students and teachers. These relationships must include active communication and meaningful, timely feedback on assignments.

Objective 3.1:

To increase the number of students completing courses

Strategies/Structures:

- use face to face meetings, telephone calls, e-mail, wikis, blogs, social networking, Elluminate sessions, and in-course chat rooms to enhance communicate between teacher and students
- encourage students to access the DL Centre to promote face-to-face interaction and teacher support to assist in course completion
- create an interactive and social learning environment between students through the use of social networking tools both in the course and on the Internet
- use a balance of formative and summative assessment (rubrics) in order to allow students to practice and learn skills with effective teacher feedback before the marks are given
- mark assignments in a timely fashion so that students will be encouraged to complete the course

Evidence: (Quantitative)

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Actual	Target
Percentage of students completing courses	54%	65%	70%

School Goal 4:
To improve student learning in DL through a closer partnership with mainstream secondary schools

Goal Rationale:

21st century learning focuses on increasing opportunities for students to direct and personalize their own learning while mastering key skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and collaboration. Technology is a vehicle that students can use to gather information and produce authentic, relevant assignments to show and share what they know. Students are looking for more flexible pathways to learning and using Distributed Learning courses in a blended model, with supports available on site at their mainstream school will allow the District as a whole to support the needs of our students.

Objective 4.1:

To establish closer partnerships between the NVCLS and teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents of students in mainstream secondary schools.

Strategies/Structures:

- DL administration to foster communication with mainstream administrators, by attending and presenting at meetings
- DL administration to coordinate DL registration with mainstream school course planning
- DL administration to provide information about DL courses for mainstream course selection booklets
- encourage closer connections between the DL counselor and mainstream counselors
- DL staff/administration to attend district-wide counselor meetings, in order to provide information and updates about the DL program offerings
- DL staff/administration to present at mainstream staff meetings when necessary
- mainstream counselors given guest access to DL courses to be able to show the courses to parents and potential DL students
- continue to invite all staff, parents, and students in the district to the DL Open House events, scheduled twice a year in the fall and spring
- continue to work with mainstream teachers and administrators to develop new courses

Evidence: *(Quantitative)*

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Actual	Target
Number of meetings attended by DL staff/counselor/admin with mainstream staff/counselors/admin	4	4	10 + (1 per month)

Evidence: *(Qualitative)*

Increased sense of positive relationships, communication, and understanding of the way DL and face-to-face learning opportunities can be flexibly integrated as based on feedback from both DL and mainstream educators.

Objective 4.2:

To establish on-site DL support at each mainstream North Vancouver School District secondary school

Strategies/Structures:

- use currently “embedded” DL teachers to provide time in their schedule for DL students to connect with them and get support for their online course
- increase the number of embedded DL teachers in the mainstream high schools
- use DL support blocks in the mainstream schools to allow DL students to have a dedicated block for working on their DL courses during their regular school day
- using the above, eventually create a DL centre, opened before, during, and after school and staffed by both DL teachers and support staff

Evidence: (Quantitative)

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Actual	Target
Number DL teachers embedded in mainstream schools	5	5	8+
Number of schools using DL support blocks	0	0	3+

Objective 4.3:

To continue to establish partnerships with secondary schools outside of the North Vancouver School District

Strategies/Structures:

- continue to provide DL Planning 10 to all grade 10 students at Mulgrave School
- communicate with other private, independent, and public schools to create partnerships with their students and the NVDLS
- encourage DL staff with out-of-district students attending secondary schools on the North Shore to visit the school sites to make connections with DL students, particularly groups of students working as a cohort in the DL course

Evidence: (Quantitative)

Key Performance Measure:	Baseline	Actual	Target
Number of private and independent schools in partnership with NVDLS	1	1	2

Connections:

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

Distributed Learning is not directly associated with a Family of Schools, but serves students in the entire North Vancouver School District. The majority of our students are cross-enrolled in other North Vancouver secondary schools or are part of our adult learner population at Continuing Education. A small number of our students are out of district. The NVDLS has clear links to the North Vancouver District Achievement Plan:

Providing for the Diverse Needs of Students:

By providing an alternative means of completing courses required for Graduation, we are servicing individuals who, due to specific circumstances, are looking for more flexible opportunities to complete their high school courses in conjunction with the traditional, mainstream school environment. This includes students with physical, emotional, or behavioural issues, students who learn more effectively in a flexible, independent, and self-paced environment and students who are involved in specialized programs such as Peak Performers. We provide opportunities for students to learn any time and any place, we accommodate for diverse schedules, and met the needs of both youth and adults who are working while completing school.

Promoting Literacy Skills:

All online learning supports literacy skills through opportunities to access the read/write capabilities of the web and by expecting the production work for an authentic online audience. By providing DL courses in English 10, 11, and 12, youth, adults, and ESL students are able to work more specifically on the reading and writing skills that are essential in order to meet the Ministry outcomes in Language Arts. The promotion of these literacy skills for both youth and adults is in keeping with the District Literacy Plan.

Meeting the Needs of Aboriginal Students:

The NVDLS provides courses to all students, and is connected with the Youth Learning Centre/EIsla7an program where aboriginal students are encouraged to enroll in the online environment.

Creating Safe and Caring Schools:

The NVDLS is aware of the issues regarding online safety and stresses with the students the acceptable use of the Internet, the importance of submitting authentic work (avoiding plagiarism), and the appropriate use of in-course chat rooms, discussion forums and social networking. All NVDLS students sign the District "Acceptable Use of Technology" agreement and must adhere to the policies regarding the appropriate use of personal devices and guest wireless while working in the DL Centre.

Consultation Process of North Vancouver Distributed Learning School

- x School administrators, and Distributed Learning staff have been actively involved in the development of the School Plan.
- x A summary of the approved North Vancouver Distributed Learning School Plan will be posted on the school web site by October, 2011

School Planning Council Approval of Proposed School Plan:

Date: May 6, 2011

Name	Signature
Maureen McRae-Stanger (Administrator)	<i>Original Document signed by SPC Members</i>
Jeremy Church (Administrator)	
Michael Kee (Administrator)	

Board Approval of School Plan:

Approved by:

Approved by:

Mark Jefferson, Assistant Superintendent

June 12, 2011

