

community report 2017



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North Vancouver
School District
the natural place to learn®

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.

North Vancouver Board of Education 2015-2018



BACK ROW: SUSAN SKINNER, CHRISTIE SACRÉ, BARRY FORWARD, CYNDI GERLACH
FRONT ROW: FRANCI STRATTON, JESSICA STANLEY, MEGAN HIGGINS

Message from the Chair



CHRISTIE SACRÉ

As the chair of the Board of Education, I am pleased to present the North Vancouver School District 2017 Community Report. This report is our opportunity to provide updates on some of the innovative initiatives, engaging programs and inspiring instruction currently underway throughout our 32 schools. By upholding our vision, values and goals, we are supporting success for all students and bringing our entire school district community together to learn, share and grow.

Throughout this report, there are many examples of how our school district vision is coming to life in our schools. I appreciate the work of our teachers, education assistants, support staff and administrators, who are engaging in professional learning opportunities in order to grow their professional practice in support of student learning. The development of new curriculum instruction and enhanced assessment practices are having a positive impact on students and improving communication with parents. Collaboration and personalized learning for all students, including supports for diverse learners, are flourishing. All of our students are unique

and supporting diverse learners is not just about special education, it is about ensuring all students feel welcome and supported in classrooms and within their schools. Diversity within our students and staff is celebrated and is a strength of public education.

Community connections and partnerships continue to grow and are important when supporting students in their communities. Our School District, Skwxwú7mesh Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation continue to work together to bring the history and culture of the First Nations communities, in whose territory we reside, into classrooms for all students and staff to learn from. New mental health curriculum is being implemented in all secondary schools as a result of a broad North Shore partnership between the two public school districts, health care providers, youth and family support services, First Nations, police and the provincial government. Career programs and opportunities continue to grow for all learners as partnerships with local businesses and organizations are established and expanded. Community connections are also being utilized to enhance environmental education and sustainability practices. The rich cultural diversity of our community is an immense benefit to our schools.

Overall, the innovation and educational leadership happening across the North Vancouver School District is too vast to capture in one report. However, the North Vancouver Board of Education hopes that the Community Report 2017 will give our community a glimpse of some of the initiatives taking place. "Public education is the key" and our Board is proud to share, celebrate and support it.

Sincerely,

Christie Sacré
CHAIR
NORTH VANCOUVER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Message from the Superintendent



MARK PEARMAIN

The 2016/2017 school year is my first year as Superintendent of the North Vancouver School District. Thus far, the year has been truly inspirational and I am consistently impressed by the world-class instruction and engaged learning I observe in classrooms throughout the entire school district. I have been visiting all schools to get to know our staff and students, and to see what they are up to. I am humbled by the passion and encouraged by the diversity and embracing of differences within our schools that makes our learning environments so rich. I can confidently say that students and staff in our school district uphold our values of trust, respect, responsibility and collaboration.

In our school district we have a Family of Schools model aimed at enhancing supports and collaboration amongst our schools. Each family of schools consists of a secondary school and surrounding elementary schools. Staff within each family of schools come together to plan, learn from one another, share best practices and resources, and grow their knowledge. These collaborative efforts are resulting in

concrete initiatives, such as new curriculum unit development, that inspire success for students.

Students are being empowered to take charge of their learning and inquire into areas of particular interest to them. It is inspiring to witness how much students thrive under the supportive 21st century instructional practices provided by staff. Students and staff are actively working together on school planning and setting goals for their entire school communities to work towards. While goals vary from school to school, many focus on the core competencies of the new curriculum (communication, thinking, and personal and social responsibility), indigenizing the curriculum, outdoor education, and celebrating diversity.

To demonstrate some of the excellence happening within our school district, the Community Report 2017 is organized with each page concentrated on one of our six strategic goals – Expand, Encourage, Nurture, Develop, Provide and Strengthen.

All of the hard work of our staff to inspire success for every student is supported by our educational partners. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the North Vancouver Teachers' Association, CUPE Local 389, North Vancouver Administrators' Association, North Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council, and District Student Leadership Council. It is an honour to work with dedicated partners and exceptional staff in our efforts to provide the best educational experiences for students and their families.

Sincerely,

Mark Pearmain
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
NORTH VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXPAND the availability of best instructional practices and enriched curriculum.

Moving from themes to concepts

BY MONIQUE ZANDER – Teacher, Lynnmour Elementary School

My class was learning about the history of Chinese New Year. At a recent curriculum implementation professional development day I learned about Concept Based Instruction. How do we as teachers move from teaching themes (or topics)



to teaching concepts? How could I connect Chinese New Year with our New Curriculum?

The Chinese New Year is based on an ancient lunar calendar. One of our Grade 4 Big Ideas is *The motions of the Earth and the moon cause observable patterns that affect living and non-living systems*. I connected this big idea to the concept of culture and presented *The motions of the earth and the moon cause observable patterns that have influenced our cultures and calendars*.

We began an inquiry into our wonders about the lunar calendar. We researched the lunar cycle and Ancient Chinese legends about the Chinese Calendar. We discussed Iranian New Year and our personal new year (our birthday), compared the lunar calendar to the solar calendar we use today, and did a lesson about the 13 month First Nations lunar calendar. This learning journey was global, timeless and relevant. It deepened our questioning and interconnectedness between subject areas and understandings.

Embracing the new curriculum

The sun shines through chilled windows into a small workspace at Mountainside Secondary School, illuminating a group of three teachers on a frigid Monday morning in February.

"We're trying to design tasks so that the carrot is dangling far enough away that it stretches students' minds, but not too far that they become discouraged," said Emily Taylor, teacher.

The three teachers are from North Vancouver's Distributed Learning program, which operates out of Mountainside Secondary. They are designing units under the new grade 11 math curriculum.

"We're moving away from memorization and regurgitation to problem solving and critical thinking," said Naresh Chand, teacher.

"By focusing on the Big Ideas of Math 11, we are creating essential questions to engage students and designing performance tasks where students apply math concepts in real life situations," said Billy Lauzon, teacher.

The collaborative work this group is undertaking exemplifies the efforts happening across the North Vancouver School District to implement British Columbia's new curriculum. School teams

are using collaboration time to unit plan. Staff are also coming together within their Family of Schools to plan, share and learn from one another.

At a district-wide level, two curriculum focused non-instructional days have occurred this school year. Staff worked through four levels of planning, moving from basic understanding of the new curriculum to more complex integration of the core competencies (communication, thinking, and personal and social responsibility). A key element of this curriculum planning is a North Vancouver School District planner and guide that was created by a group of educators in the school district.

In addition to the planner and guide, the school district has also created a new website called The Curriculum Hub, which contains already designed units and resources to help teachers design their own units.

"Implementation of the new curriculum within our school district has been quite impressive. Staff are engaging in various ways with planning, and are applying new units geared at deeper, more meaningful student learning," said Kathleen Barter, District Vice Principal, North Vancouver School District.

Professional learning

BY CHRIS ATKINSON AND PIUS RYAN – Assistant Superintendents, North Vancouver School District

In partnership with our educational stakeholders, we have made a commitment to support the development of schools as 'Vibrant Learning Communities', as defined as:

- A focus on student engagement and learning
- A culture of teamwork and collaboration
- Respect for adult and student diversity
- A strong sense of community and collective responsibility
- Strong systemic structures (e.g., collaboration time, staff meetings, PACs)
- Ongoing and relevant communication of student learning

An essential feature to creating a Vibrant Learning Community is the ongoing professional development of educators. The North Vancouver School District offers many ongoing initiatives in support of professional development. Examples include:

- small collaborative inquiry projects involving a few teachers within a school

- formal networks of practice involving teachers from schools within a Family of Schools
- larger scale professional development opportunities (such as Educational Rounds, Standing Math, Changing Results for Young Readers, Positive Mental Health with Stan Kutcher, and embedding technology in the classroom)

We envision an increased focus on supporting professional learning for staff at the school level as the means to enhance the learning and engagement for our students.



Blanket exercise pro-d

The blanket exercise walks staff through a role-playing activity that challenges one's own biases and understanding of the history of Canada and the effects that colonialism, The Indian Act and residential schooling have had, and continue to have, on Indigenous communities today. Staff throughout the school district have and continue to take part in this activity.

"The exercise was brilliant. It was, for our staff, one of those singular "aha" moments as the exercise literally laid-out the historical timeline and brought together all the dealings that our Aboriginal peoples have had to comply with since Europeans first landed in North America. The staff were united in their comprehension of what occurred and also how, from this day forth, it is within their power to take the steps to correct past assumptions and beliefs and to no longer claim an ignorance of the truth," said Martine Stanley, Kindergarten Teacher, Ridgeway Elementary.

"This activity was extremely powerful and impacted each person individually and collectively as a school community. Growth in individual understanding of the process of colonization and how it impacts the entire community and our students was clearly evident," said Stephanie Maki, Aboriginal Academic Support Teacher, Carson Graham Secondary.



Communicating student learning

The days of crinkled and food stained report cards being pulled from backpacks for parents to read have come to an end in the North Vancouver School District. The 2016/2017 school year has welcomed new processes for communicating student learning to parents and guardians – including a more robust, digital report card.

"Parents are really happy with the way information is now being presented," said Kathleen Barter, District Vice Principal, North Vancouver School District.

To support the new curriculum, communicating student learning has looked different this school year. The biggest change has been that report cards are no longer printed, but are instead offered

to parents digitally through a secured web login. Providing report cards digitally has proven to be more convenient for parents, prevented lost report cards, saved significant money from reduced printing, paper and human resource costs, and is consistent with the school district's commitment to sustainable operating practices.

Another change for elementary reporting is that on the final June 2017 report card, students will reflect on and assess their development and growth over the school year in the core competency areas of communication, thinking, and personal and social responsibility. Also on the June report card, there will be an assessment of careers and applied

skills design and technology. Other changes to the elementary report card include consistency of teacher comments for each subject on what the student knows (content), can do (curricular competencies), and understands (transfer of big ideas and concepts). In addition to the above changes for all elementary students, there are also several schools communicating student learning in creative and innovative ways. Five elementary schools replaced one of the three traditional report cards with a three-way conference between parent, student and teacher, with reflection and self-assessment as a central component. There are also several elementary classes across the school district taking part in a FreshGrade pilot

project, which uses an app to enable teachers to communicate electronically with parents on an ongoing basis.

"We are providing flexibility for teachers to communicate student learning in more robust ways. Parents are important supports to student learning and we are trying to provide them with more wholesome information at regular intervals, instead of only three times a year," said Barter.

While the secondary reporting process remains virtually the same as previous years, aside from report cards being moved online, discussions are underway as to what the process may look like moving forward.

GOAL #2: ENCOURAGE

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

Celebrating and supporting all learners

BY DR. VINCE WHITE – District Principal of Inclusive Education, North Vancouver School District

"Diversity is our oxygen!" This statement highlights North Vancouver School District's commitment to celebrating and supporting the many ways in which diversity is richly expressed in our classrooms and school communities. Every student brings a special and unique way of being in the world that meaningfully contributes to this diversity. Alongside this celebration of diversity is the need to support individual differences in ways that ensure academic success and an authentic sense of belonging for every student.

North Vancouver School District approaches this important responsibility through a multi-tiered system of support designed to provide universal, targeted and intensive interventions. At the classroom level, a universal approach is based on the fundamental understanding that every student has a unique learning style that may be supported through adaptations to curriculum, instruction and assessment. Universal approaches are made available to all students at any time. In this regard,



every student in our school district resides within the multi-tiered system of support to both assist and challenge them in their learning.

Targeted supports are provided to students whenever they require additional assistance in ways that extend beyond universal interventions. At this stage, students and their parents play a key role by working in partnership with classroom teachers and other school personnel to determine the best approach to implementing these supports. Targeted interventions are generally implemented in consultation with the school based resource team, which comprises of specialist staff who provide more advanced assessment and support as needed. Every effort is made to provide this assistance within the classroom through additional personnel.

At the intensive level, the school based resource team activates more comprehensive interventions that extend beyond the classroom as necessary. Students receiving this level of assistance are often formally identified in a particular area of special needs and have an individualized education plan (IEP) that outlines specific goals to support academic success and/or social-emotional development. Specialist teachers serve as case managers and work in close partnership with students, their parents and classroom teachers to implement strategies that are aimed at achieving these individualized goals. In many instances, support for the student is provided in coordination with community-based agencies who specialize in various areas of diversity.

At every level of this multi-tiered system of support, the intended outcome is to instill within our students a genuine sense of their own success as a learner, and the understanding that their special and unique way of being in the world enriches their classroom and larger school community.

Celebrating diversity

BY CHANIN SMYTH – Principal, Seymour Heights Elementary

Over the past two years, the Seymour Heights Elementary School community has been exploring our vision and values. What has emerged from the highly collaborative process is a recognition that honouring diversity is at the heart of our school's culture, vision, values and goals. As a school community, we believe that when we honour diversity in our curriculum planning, our instruction and assessment practices, as well as in our relationships and social emotional connections, our students will be further connected to school, show greater engagement and ultimately enjoy deeper, more meaningful learning.



Photo: Stephanie Hirose, Teacher, Seymour Heights Elementary

Family of Schools model

The North Vancouver School District embraces a Family of Schools (FOS) model. Each secondary school is considered a "family" with surrounding elementary schools. The purpose of this model is to build and maintain positive community within secondary school neighbourhoods, enhance staff collaboration, and optimize student supports.

The FOS Model is the key vehicle to support school development and professional capacity building. The structure is intended to enable resources (physical and personnel) to be brought closer to the school and classroom level in a timelier manner. Each FOS is supported by a Director of Instruction, a Human Resources Manager, a District Administrator, an FOS Leader, and an FOS Teacher Leader. The FOS Team meets regularly throughout the school year with the respective Zone Assistant Superintendent, Principals and Vice Principals to determine priorities and plans of support.

The FOS is a vision of a vibrant learning community where expertise can be developed and shared across school sites. This expertise includes the development of universal classroom

practice through to more targeted and intensive instructional support. Key to the ongoing initiatives are the Pillars of Educational Practice (curriculum, instruction, assessment, and social emotional learning) and Universal Design (universal practices, targeted practices and intensive practices of student supports).

- **Argyle:**
Boundary, Lynn Valley, Ross Road, Upper Lynn
- **Carson:**
Braemar, Capilano, Carisbrooke, Larson, Norgate, Queen Mary, Westview
- **Handsworth:**
Canyon Heights, Cleveland, Highlands, Montroyal
- **Mountainside and Distributed Learning**
- **Seycove:**
Cove Cliff, Dorothy Lynas, Sherwood Park
- **Sutherland:**
Brooksbank, Eastview, Queensbury, Ridgeway
- **Windsor:**
Blueridge, Lynnmoor, Seymour Heights

Providing choice for students

The North Vancouver School District offers a variety of enhanced programs for both elementary and secondary students to meet a broad range of student interests and abilities. Through flexible pathways that include project-based activities, work experience, targeted athletics and arts training, and distributed (online) learning, we offer personalized, authentic learning experiences for every student. Offering a rich array of programs and services supports our school district vision and commitment to provide a rich diversity of engaging programs to inspire success for every student.

Elementary enhanced programs:

- Artists for Kids After-School Art
- Artists for Kids Paradise Valley Summer School of Visual Arts
- Band and Strings Program
- Early French Immersion
- Late French Immersion
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP)
- Grade 4/6 Outdoor School Program
- Grade 3 Skw'ne-was Cultural Program
- StrongStart

Secondary enhanced programs:

- Advanced Placement (AP) Program
- Apprenticeship Training and Work Experience
- Artists for Kids Studio Art Academy
- Basketball Academy
- Dance Academy
- Digital Media Academy
- Distributed Learning
- Experiential Outdoor Environmental Leadership
- Field Hockey Academy
- French Immersion
- Hockey Skills Academy

- International Baccalaureate (IB) - Middle Years (MYP) and Diploma Programmes
- Outdoor Education Academy
- Performance Learning Program (PLP) – Apple Distinguished Program
- Semester System
- Soccer Academy
- VCC Culinary Arts Level 1
- Volleyball Academy/Volleyball Canada Centre of Excellence
- Young Entrepreneurship and Leadership Launchpad (YELL)



NURTURE an inspiring and healthy work environment.

Building schools for 21st century learning

BY MICHAEL CHAPMAN – Assistant Director of Facilities, North Vancouver School District

In the North Vancouver School District we understand that teaching and learning thrive when the buildings and outdoor spaces they take place in are comfortable, flexible and accessible. This means safe, clean, well-maintained spaces that support a wide diversity of learners and staff. The facilities department embraces a school design model that comprises of the following design principles: maximum flexibility and adaptability for today and the future; healthy, sustainable and accessible environment; school-community connections; connections to the wider community; and professional support.

Through our annual facilities grant we are able to help improve school spaces. This includes replacements and upgrades to building systems such as heating and windows, structural upgrades such as roofs, enhanced accessibility such as ramps, enrichment of learning spaces, and improvements to outdoor areas. We are also applying the above noted school design principles to larger projects such as the seismic upgrade at Windsor Secondary and the replacement of Argyle Secondary. Both of these schools are being designed to have flexible learning spaces conducive to student and staff collaboration, project-based inquiry initiatives, and embedded technology.

Another key component of the work we undertake



Accessible washroom upgrade at Capilano Elementary

to improve our facilities is sustainability. Our facilities department strives to demonstrate continuous improvement by reducing resource consumption, waste and harmful emissions.

To support the work we do in schools, our department is continuously improving our service delivery model. We are in the process of a phased launch of a new work order management and preventative maintenance software platform. The new software will significantly enhance asset stewardship and improve communication between school stakeholders, trades and custodial staff by providing real time information and updates to status of service requests.

The facilities department strongly believes that the work we do directly supports student and staff wellbeing by enhancing learning and teaching environments.



Conversion of storage to a welding training facility at Sutherland Secondary School



A new flexible learning space at Windsor Secondary

Outdoor learning space

Students at Highlands Elementary School are fully engaged with grade four teacher, Jennifer Sherlock, observing the bark of a western red cedar tree, as she teaches a lesson in the new outdoor learning space at the school.

“For those students who have high stress or anxiety, being outside in nature provides the ‘natural’ calming environment for our state of mind that optimizes learning. Also, for those students with high energy needs, being outside eliminates sitting at a desk for extended lengths of time,” explained Sherlock, adding that much of the learning can be taken outside. “There are many connections between the curriculum and nature, in addition to more opportunities for the tactile learners to engage in hands-on learning.”

The new outdoor learning space is designed to meet a diversity of student and teacher needs. The multi-use space includes various areas that can accommodate full classes, yet also serve as play spaces, art spaces, small group seating nooks,



and quiet reflection areas. There is a rock spiral section that fits up to 30 students, a log area that also fits 30, smaller log and rock breakout nooks, a dry riverbed play space, a river’s edge play and learning space that also supports proper drainage from the gravel field, and a cedar teaching shelter. The notion behind the project is to enhance student learning and wellbeing by connecting students to the outdoors for both their classroom work and unstructured playtime.

Kindness Project

BY DESIREE BLUME – Counsellor, Upper Lynn Elementary

This school year, Upper Lynn Elementary has implemented The Kindness Project. We want our school to be a place where kindness happens every single day. Students are seeing many different ways they can be kind at school:

- Smile and say hello to people
- Give a compliment
- Ask someone to play
- If someone asks you to play, say “sure!”
- Pick up litter
- Use kind words and polite words
- Let someone go ahead of you in line
- Write someone a kind note

We also decided to put our thoughts of kindness into a piece of art. Every person at Upper Lynn



was given a block of wood and asked to use bird images to represent kindness through art.

One person doing an act of kindness is contagious. With one act at a time, kindness has spread throughout the school.

Learning from experience

BY XENIA O'BRIEN – Senior Manager of Human Resources, and **JOHN MCGOWAN** – District Principal of Human Resources, North Vancouver School District

Staff wellbeing is essential to ensuring that our work environments are healthy and inspiring. When staff feel well-prepared to perform their roles, they are happier and more fulfilled. An excellent way to offer professional learning to support staff to be well-equipped in their jobs is through mentorship. The knowledge of experienced staff is of immeasurable value.

In the North Vancouver School District, we offer both a teacher mentorship program and an educational assistant mentorship program. The

programs are designed and offered in partnership with the North Vancouver Teachers' Association and CUPE Local 389. The benefits of the programs are many.

Mentees gain immense insight from the experience of their colleagues. By sharing their knowledge, mentors are able to expand their networks and can feel accomplished by giving back to their profession and workplace. School environments as a whole benefit from more engaged, collaborative and knowledgeable staff who feel more connected to their workplaces. There is also a positive impact on students from the enhanced confidence and knowledge of those educating them.

Flexible seating

at Windsor Secondary

BY JOANNE DREW – Special Education Teacher, Windsor Secondary

The students in Room 200 (a specialized room to support complex learners) at Windsor Secondary are enjoying funky new “NODE” chairs. These chairs have a high comfortable back and wheels on the base to allow students to move around when they need a movement break. In addition, the “BUOY” stool is a student favourite. This wobbly yet stable stool allows the students to self-regulate and move their bodies while remaining engaged in their work. Overall, the vibrant colours of the furniture have livened up the room and given a positive energy to the space, which has made the students proud and has improved focus and productivity.



at Cove Cliff Elementary

BY CAITLIN MANN – Teacher, Cove Cliff Elementary

In September I had a traditional classroom design – 24 desks arranged nicely in small groups. In the weeks that followed, I got to know my students.



I witnessed their varying abilities, personalities, and learning styles; but, what stood out the most was the amount of fidgeting, chatter, mess, and lack of work completion. After countless seating arrangements and classroom management techniques, I was at loss. A colleague suggested I try flexible seating.

Today, my classroom is anything but ordinary. It has tables with chairs and stools, kneeling desks, wood stumps, patio furniture, a turf grass carpet, and a plethora of throw pillows. Clipboards allow students to work in nearly any position: seated, standing, or laying on their stomachs. This allows students to move freely around the room to find their best working environment for the given task.

My students have thrived. I've seen a drastic improvement in their work.

GOAL #4: DEVELOP

DEVELOP and promote innovative and sustainable programs.

Enhancing secondary French Immersion

Beginning in September 2017, secondary school French Immersion in the North Vancouver School District will look different.

Currently, there are set courses that students must take in French at each grade level. Through extensive consultation with students, staff and parents, the desire for more choice was clearly expressed.

Beginning next school year, four big changes will take place in Secondary French Immersion. The first is that students in grades 8-10 will now have a choice as to whether they take Science in French or in English. The second is the addition of three

new courses: Éducation physique et santé en plein air 8, Culture et communication 9 and 11/12, and Leadership 10. The third change is that more emphasis will be placed on French oral language proficiency in the new courses. The fourth change is greater choice and flexibility in completing the requirements for graduation.

"We are very pleased with the input we received from students, staff and parents towards enhancing the Secondary French Immersion program. We are confident that the changes we are implementing will better meet the needs of our students," said Dr. Joanne Robertson, Director of Instruction, North Vancouver School District.

School planning in action

BY MAUREEN STANGER – District Principal, North Vancouver School District

North Vancouver Distributed Learning School staff have been working hard to create a school plan that focuses on supporting students to be successful online learners. Using a collaborative model, we first came up with qualities that make our school great:

- innovative, flexible, and adaptable staff and programs
- strong culture of teamwork and collaboration
- focus on success for all students
- fostering a sense of belonging and community

We then asked ourselves, how can we further realize our vision to provide all students with flexible, innovative, personalized pathways to graduation through interactive and engaging online experiences. We developed two goals:

Goal #1: Communication. Specifically, we want to increase our focus on ongoing and meaningful



communication between staff, students, parents, administrators, and mainstream schools.

Goal #2: Curriculum Development and Student Engagement. We want to work with the transformed BC curriculum to create engaging and authentic student learning experiences and create dynamic new courses that focus on understanding the big ideas and essential questions.

Summer Learning

Card games, art and video creation are all activities that certainly fit the expectations of how youth might spend their time over summer break. These activities might not, however, align with the general perception of summer school.

In the North Vancouver School District's Summer Learning program, card games, art and videos are merely examples of some of the creative teaching techniques used to engage students in deep, meaningful learning.

"We have revamped our offerings and delivery of courses. We are not trying to fit every student into the same box. Instead we have targeted our

efforts towards student needs," said Jeff Aw-Yong, Vice Principal, Summer Learning, North Vancouver School District.

Teachers are team teaching and collaborating to offer students a varied experience personalized to the students. For the grade eight and nine review and completion Math and English courses, all students are assessed on the first day and then grouped according to their skill sets. Lessons are targeted to each group and groups rotate through various teacher teams. Teachers are also using innovative teaching techniques, such as games, art and video to engage students.

"The rotational aspect worked-out really well and the collaborative approach to our teaching has really helped the students," said Jeff Teed, teacher.

In addition to review and completion courses, Summer Learning offers a grade seven to eight transition course, English Language Learning, and many full credit courses. Students often take full credit courses to get a leg-up on their educational needs for post-secondary. The 2016 Summer Learning programs enrolled more than 800 students.



Pathways to Aboriginal ways of knowing

BY BRAD BAKER – District Principal of Aboriginal Education, North Vancouver School District

In North Vancouver we are lucky to have rich local Aboriginal culture embedded within our community. The Skwxwú7mesh Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation have lived here since time immemorial, and we are incredibly fortunate to have them as educational partners in our school district. The North Vancouver School District is committed to enriching the educational experience of all students in Aboriginal ways of knowing. Three pathways have been identified as means to bring this knowledge to students.

The Student Pathway

First Peoples Principles of Learning are embedded into each learning environment.

The Educator Pathway

Employee development includes activities that enable shared understanding, cultural competence



and a history of local knowledge in order to support authentic Aboriginal experiences within the school community.

The Community Pathway

A community focus highlights and informs our community on Canadian History and the reality of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, building an appreciation of Aboriginal culture, local First Nations customs and traditional ways of being.

Bringing art to life

BY YOLANDE MARTINELLO – Director of Artists for Kids and District Principal of Fine Arts, North Vancouver School District

Artists for Kids (AFK) is a unique, self-sustaining art education venture operated by the North Vancouver School District. Over the past 27 years, we have enhanced art education in schools,

encouraged students to pursue their own artistic abilities, helped more people discover Canadian art, acquired a sizeable community art collection, nurtured an art collecting public and, in 2012, established Canada's first public art museum for young audiences.

Some of our offerings include:

- after school arts programs
- spring break and summer arts experiences
- a secondary school arts academy
- gallery programs whereby teachers bring their classes into the Gordon Smith Gallery for a day of learning
- outreach programs that bring art instruction into the schools
- a StART Strong Program for parents and their toddlers
- art teaching assistant training and work experience for secondary students
- several enriched arts programs focusing on architecture, photography, sculpture, drawing, painting and collage working with career artists
- scholarships and bursaries for students
- professional learning opportunities for teachers and direct supports to schools



Blending course curricula

BY LUCAS KING – Vice Principal, Mountainside Secondary School

At Mountainside Secondary our focus is to personalize learning to meet the specific needs of our students. We do this in a myriad of ways, from adjusting timetables, to leveraging community supports, to tailoring the curriculum. One innovative way we are utilizing the new curriculum to meet student needs is through the blending of course curricula.

By combining multiple courses into one, we have been able to create unique and engaging learning experiences for our students. Some of the new combined courses are:

- Builder Math – combines shop class with

apprenticeship and workplace math to teach students how to apply math concepts to real, hands-on construction projects

- Social justice marketing – combines social justice with marketing to explore ways of using promotional tactics to affect positive changes in our community
- Filmglish – combines drama, film and television with English to explore the English curriculum, as well as various components of the film industry

The staff at Mountainside Secondary are always looking for new ways to engage students, and the blending of course curricula is one way we have been able to inspire our students to succeed.

GOAL #5: PROVIDE

PROVIDE leadership in environmental education and sustainability practices.

Nature is in session

BY CONOR MCMULLAN – Director of Educational Programs, and **CATHY JENKINS** – Project Manager, Cheakamus Centre

Now in its 48th year, Cheakamus Centre is a special place that continues to inspire thousands of learners of all ages, and transform countless lives through time spent in nature. The centre is located near Squamish on 165 hectares of designated ecological reserve along the banks of the Cheakamus River. Unique features include ancient cedars, a network of salmon spawning channels, one of the largest recorded concentrations of winter bald eagles in North America, and the LEED Platinum BlueShore Financial Environmental Learning Centre.

“Outdoor School” is one of our best known and best loved traditions, dating back to 1969. Nature-based activities are tied to the new BC curriculum and designed to instill in young learners a sense of respect and appreciation for the natural world. Every year, hundreds of secondary students learn valuable life lessons as volunteer counsellors for the program. Skw'unc-was, another time-honoured program, was developed in conjunction with

Skw'unc-was (Squamish) Elders in the early Eighties. At the Bighouse, cultural program staff, parents, teachers, and students share in the daily life of the Coast Salish people. A deeply rooted and culturally authentic respect for the natural world is fostered through traditional communal living. Our students, even as adults, consistently talk about these overnight learning experiences as highlights of their school years.

What started as one teacher's idea in 1969 to get kids outside to learn to love nature is emerging as a centre of excellence for environmental learning, leadership and sustainability.



Sustainability Strategy

The North Vancouver School District is committed to providing the highest standard of education and demonstrating leadership in environmental stewardship by providing programs, education and facilities that foster greater sustainability. Since late 2015, the school district has been developing a Sustainability Strategy that provides

coherence, direction, focus and coordination to sustainability-related activities. We have engaged in a consultative planning process to which the Sustainability Strategy, which will be finalized in Spring 2017, is the result. The strategy will be posted to the school district website.

Take Me Outside Day

BY PAMELA C. MCLEOD – Learning Support Teacher/Teacher-Librarian, Sherwood Park Elementary

On October 26, 2016, students at Sherwood Park Elementary joined more than 200,000 students across Canada and around the world to participate in 'Take Me Outside Day'. This movement, originating in 2001 in partnership with The Child and Nature Alliance of Canada, is an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of unplugging and spending time outside – being active and connecting with nature. It's a day to support and celebrate education extending beyond four walls and a desk!

This year, experienced outdoor educator Tricia Gardner challenged the rest of our staff to make a commitment to take students outside for an hour – outside of recess and lunch hour, and rain or shine – to continue the learning, but in a more natural environment.

“It is what many of us already do, and believe in, in this age of electronics, but I thought it would be great if we celebrated this day as a school,” said Gardner.

Gardner's colleagues embraced her challenge, even in the very rainy weather, and enthusiastically moved outside to extend the learning begun in the classrooms. Grade 3s went outside for math, starting with 'equation hopscotch' and then a forest scavenger hunt. Grade 1s learned the difference between natural things and man-made things and made patterns out of natural objects. Grade 5/6 got an introduction to orienteering.

Taking learning outside connects well with the idea of 'place-based learning', an educational approach found in the new BC curriculum. This is just one more example of how North Vancouver is truly a 'Natural place to learn'.



Sustainability Challenge

This year, as a part of our commitment to being “the natural place to learn” the North Vancouver School District is hosting a Sustainability Cup Challenge. Schools have assembled Sustainability Cup teams to organize green campaigns and activities that support the environment. Participating schools collect points for the challenge in two ways: 1) participation points and 2) demonstrated energy savings collected from utility data. The winning team gets a coveted Sustainability Cup trophy and funding to support the school's sustainability and health and wellness wish list.

North Vancouver School District is committed to saving energy and reducing our impact on the natural environment. Our goal is to reduce energy consumption by 20 per cent by 2020. That is equivalent to saving enough energy to run 12 elementary schools for a year.



Lennie Laminator goes on holiday

BY JOAN MARTINS – Principal, Upper Lynn Elementary

At Upper Lynn Elementary, Lennie Laminator took a vacation for the month of January. As part of our participation in the school district's Sustainability Cup Challenge, we made an effort not to laminate this month.

So what kind of plastic is used in laminating? The harder outer layer is usually made from PET plastic (Polyethylene Terephthalate) and the softer inner layer is made out of EVA plastic (Ethylene-Vinyl Acetate). Coating papers in PET will preserve the materials for years. Drop the same laminated

material into a landfill, however, and you might have second thoughts. Why? Because petroleum-based plastics like PET don't decompose the same way organic material does. The only real way to break down plastic is through photo degradation, which is when UV rays break down a big piece of plastic into lots of little pieces. This doesn't sound so bad until you realize those small bits of plastic are toxic chemicals that end up in the guts of animals or wash up on shorelines.

So now that Lennie has had a nice January vacation, we hope that he can reduce his workload to part-time or an early retirement.

Sutherland market garden

BY CYNTHIA BUNBURY – Teacher, Sutherland Secondary

In March 2015, the Edible Garden Project partnered with North Vancouver School District and built a fabulous market garden on the northwest lawn at Sutherland Secondary School. In its first year, it produced hundreds of kilograms of fresh produce, sold twice weekly at Loutet Farm, in a sustainable social enterprise. It motivates and makes use of volunteer community members and students to maintain, till, cultivate harvest and collect seed; and in return provides a rich and varied outdoor environment to instruct urban dwellers about the origins, sources and value of the food we eat. The garden provides information and hands-on experience of growing healthy, wholesome and organic food for local consumption, shortening the distance from farm

to table, drawing attention to the immediacy of climate change as it affects our ability to feed ourselves, and encourages city dwellers to produce at least some of their own food. The sharing of knowledge and of food is integral to the experience.



GOAL #6: STRENGTHEN

STRENGTHEN and expand reciprocal community relations.

New program teaches mental health literacy

A new mental health education program is being introduced in North Shore schools this spring to educate and empower teens, promote positive mental health, and give youth the confidence to seek help for themselves and/or others, if needed. This is the first time mental health literacy will be provided to all students as part of a coordinated public school program in North and West Vancouver.

"Schools play an important role in promoting mental health and supporting students to foster a positive self-image, and this program helps them do just that," said BC Health Minister Terry Lake.

The initiative is the culmination of a year of work by the North Shore Local Action Team of the Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative. This team consists of representatives from North Vancouver School District, West Vancouver Schools, health care providers, youth and family support services, First Nations, police and the provincial government. The team has been working to address the complex mental health needs for young people in the region. The result is a concrete plan to increase knowledge and understanding of mental health issues for local youth and educators – termed mental health literacy – by embedding

mental health education in the grade nine program.

"Our children are growing up in a time where one in five are likely to develop some form of mental illness, and it is incredibly important to de-stigmatize the conversation with them about mental health, provide them with tools to keep themselves well, and equip them with knowledge of where to seek help if they or their friends begin to show first signs of mental illness," said Jeremy Church, District Principal, North Vancouver School District.

To bring mental health literacy to all grade nine students, teachers and community partners received training from renowned mental health expert Dr. Stan Kutcher. Dr. Kutcher, along with other experts, created the Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide being adopted by North Vancouver School District and West Vancouver Schools. The guide and training offer strategies to support positive mental health, understand the teenage brain and its development, manage stress and anxiety, recognize signs and symptoms, and provide advice on how to seek help. Dr. Kutcher also provided training to parents on the North Shore.

Powerful learning through work experience

BY MEGHAN BURNS – Family of Schools Leader - Carson Graham FOS, Learning Services Teacher

North Vancouver School District's Work Experience (WEX) program provides the opportunity for our more complex learners to demonstrate and develop their talents, experience and passions in jobs within the community. Work experience programs allow individuals to make positive contributions to their community and to fulfill personal and educational goals. Many companies and organizations in the community have supported the WEX program by providing employment experience to students with special needs. It is a result of these community partnerships that the WEX program is able to thrive and provide rich opportunity for student success. Through these work experiences and

community connections, our students continue to prove the value of a diverse workforce and are able to gain increased independence through new responsibilities. Thank you to those who have and continue to support all of the students in WEX.



A student works at Harvest Project

Community Canvas Project

As part of a "Community Canvas" art project, the North Vancouver RCMP Youth Intervention Unit provided canvases, paint and brushes, and asked secondary students: what does community look like to you? The students' finished works are brilliant in both scope of interpretation and artistic quality. All forty of the paintings were displayed in the North Vancouver RCMP lobby.

"The quality and artistic message of the work is truly inspiring. Our youth are to be commended for their effort and insight into what community looks like," said Supt. Chris Kennedy, Officer in Charge of the North Vancouver RCMP.



Windsor welding gets a boost

The entire shop classroom at Windsor Secondary looks pitch black through protective masks, until a grade eight student sparks-up a welder. Instantly the blue arc becomes visible and it is easy to see that the student is welding together two pieces of metal. Students at the school are able to learn welding from grade eight to grade 12, thanks to a generous donation from the Canadian Welding Association Foundation, Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation and Seaspan.

"This is an important initiative because secondary school welding programs are very costly to run, due to materials, consumables and personal protective equipment. This donation provides our welding program with updated equipment and enough consumables for an entire year to enhance the overall program," said Nancy Roberts, Vice Principal, Windsor Secondary School.

Due to the donation, Windsor Secondary has received \$12,000 worth of welding equipment and one year supply of welding consumables.

In addition to the supplies, students at Windsor Secondary will also be able to visit Seaspan to see welding in action.



Honouring First Nations' partners

The North Vancouver School District honours the traditional territories of the Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh) and Tsleil-Waututh Nations on which we learn, share and grow. We are committed to working collaboratively with these two partners to ensure success for every student. To celebrate these partnerships and demonstrate the importance of them, the 2016/2017 school year was kicked-off with back to school community dinners hosted at both the Skwxwú7mesh and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

"Aboriginal education is important to ensure success for all students. As a school district we are committed to reconciliation via rich, meaningful and accurate education of First Nations history, culture and ways of knowing. The collaborative relationships we have with our local First Nations are central to this commitment," said Brad Baker, District Principal, North Vancouver School District.

On September 28, 2016, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the North Vancouver School District hosted a joint dinner at the Tsleil-Waututh Nation community centre. In an act of reconciliation and working together, the North Vancouver School District returned to Tsleil-Waututh a 1964 wooden canoe carving by Chief Dan George.

"It was such an honour to be welcomed by the Tsleil-Waututh community. Sharing a meal together was enjoyable on so many fronts. Seeing students and parents connect with their teachers and principals outside of school was really special. I am humbled that I was able to get to know the Tsleil-Waututh community a little bit better. Our school district is committed to ensuring all students and staff become more knowledgeable of local First Nations – both historically and currently," said Mark Pearmain, Superintendent, North Vancouver School District.

On October 13, 2016, Skwxwú7mesh Nation hosted a welcome back to school dinner in

partnership with the North Vancouver School District. The event took place in the Squamish Nation longhouse where a meal was accompanied by traditional Squamish ceremony.

"It was a great honour to be invited to a ceremony that has been in place for thousands of years, blanketed, presented to the community, and addressed by leaders of the Squamish Nation. The mutual respect and commitment to supporting children that is shared between us is a strengthening and powerful bond. It is through this work that we will reach genuine reconciliation," said Chris Atkinson, Assistant Superintendent, North Vancouver School District.

Both events were hosted as a means of bringing local First Nations families and educators together to share a meal. The events also had symbolic significance.

"While we were really just coming together to enjoy good food with good people, the events also demonstrate the deep commitment the North Vancouver School District, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Squamish Nation have to improving learning for all students. It is by working together that we can support every child to reach his or her personal best," said Pius Ryan, North Vancouver School District.



NVSD Superintendents are honoured in a traditional Squamish Nation ceremony