



PERFORMANCE LEARNING PROGRAM: FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Submission to the Superintendent of Schools

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



Performance Learning Program

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Preface

On March 17, 2020, the British Columbia Ministry of Education suspended all in-class instruction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regrettably, this occurred as Ms. Brenda Bell was finalizing her review of the Performance Learning Program at Seycove Secondary. Despite this unanticipated development, best efforts were made to proceed as planned and review the submission with the PLP teachers and the school administration of Seycove Secondary to inform this final report and its recommendations.

The potential impact of COVID-19 on the Performance Learning Program or Seycove Secondary is not examined in this report.

The report and its recommendations are still intended to support both the short and long term sustainability of the program. It is expected that some adaptations to the recommendations outlined in this report may be necessary as schools begin planning to resume in-class instruction in accordance with guidelines provided by the Provincial Health Officer.



1. Introduction

The North Vancouver School District (NVSD) initiated a review of the Performance Learning Program (PLP) at Seycove Secondary following requests it received to provide additional staffing to support Grade 10 courses that had insufficient enrollment for the 2019/2020 academic year. In April and May of 2020, I held a series of meetings with the four teachers of the Performance Learning Program (PLP) and Seycove School Administration to review with Ms. Brenda Bell information that she had gathered through interviews conducted with students, parents, teachers, and administrators over the previous seven months. These interviews invited the perspectives of individuals currently or previously enrolled in, or associated with, the Performance Learning Program, as well as those of the larger Seycove school community.

Over the course of nine meetings, Ms. Bell's submission was reviewed by the PLP teachers and school based administration. Particular attention was focused on the *Suggestions for Consideration* outlined in Section 7. These suggestions were formulated by Ms. Bell based on the impressions she made from her interviews and other additional information she had collected during her review. The group was invited to seek further clarity on the submission from Ms. Bell and to provide input that would inform the subsequent recommendations made in this final report. The group was also invited to provide in writing any suggested points of clarification or corrections to Ms. Bell's submission. These were also taken into consideration when formulating the recommendations outlined in this report.

During the interviews that Ms. Bell conducted, a range of individual perspectives and opinions were gathered. Many of these expressed recognition and support for the Performance Learning Program while others provided critical feedback. While reviewing this information with Ms. Bell, the PLP teachers and school administration were encouraged to view this feedback through an appreciative inquiry lens with particular focus placed on how it might inform recommendations to further enhance PLP in ways that support its short and long term sustainability. Additionally, the group was advised that none of the information gathered by Ms. Bell was done so with the intention of evaluating any single individual's performance.



During our initial meeting and at various points throughout our discussions, three overarching themes consistently emerged as foundational to supporting the short and long term continuity of the Performance Learning Program and its intended objectives:

Program Sustainability
Accessibility and Equity
Culture and Community

As the group reviewed the feedback and information that Ms. Bell had gathered, it became apparent that these overarching themes are interdependent and require careful consideration in terms of how each is intricately related to the two others. Each of the recommendations made in this report is designed to support one or more of these areas that are essential to the program's continuity.

Throughout our conversations best efforts were made to develop consensus among the group. As one would reasonably expect, there were occasions in which divergent opinions and perspectives remained unresolved. I have endeavoured to summarize these differences in this report, particularly as they relate to any of the recommendations being proposed.

I would like to extend a heartfelt appreciation to the PLP Teachers, Seycove School Administration and Ms. Bell for the extensive time and effort they committed to these meetings. Without exception, all participants engaged in thoughtful and collaborative dialogue consistently demonstrating respectful consideration of each other's perspectives and opinions and an unwavering commitment to both the Performance Learning Program and the future of Seycove Secondary. Additionally, and on behalf of North Vancouver School District, I want to express deep gratitude to the students, parents, teachers and administrators who dedicated their time to be interviewed by Ms. Bell in support of this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vince White", written in a cursive style.

Vince White
Director of Instruction
Seycove Family of Schools



2. School District Context

The North Vancouver School District's vision is to 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. Our shared values of trust, respect, responsibility, and collaboration set the tone for how we relate to one another in pursuing our common goals.

The North Vancouver School District's goals are to:

- **Expand** the availability of best instructional practices and enriched curriculum
- **Encourage** the growth of collaborative, adaptive, and personalized learning environments
- **Develop** and promote innovative and sustainable programs
- **Provide** leadership in environmental education and sustainability practices
- **Strengthen** and expand reciprocal community relations
- **Nurture** an inspiring and healthy work environment

As part of its heritage, NVSD acknowledges and honours the history and culture of the Skw̓wú7mesh and Tsleil-Waututh Nations upon whose ancestral and unceded traditional territory it resides.

NVSD offers nine Secondary Enhanced Programs that provide enhanced learning opportunities for students. These programs are designed to assist students in developing an approach to their career pathways and life goals. Whether students are preparing to enter the workforce immediately after secondary school, or pursuing a higher level of education, the enhanced programs are developed to meet student needs by enhancing the curriculum for those with specific interests. The following enhanced programs are offered by the NVSD:

- Advanced Placement (AP) Program
- Alternate Education
- Apprenticeship Training and Work Experience
- Distributed Learning
- Outdoor School Counsellor Leadership Program
- French Immersion
- International Baccalaureate (IB) – Middle Years (MYP) and Diploma Programmes
- Performance Learning Program
- Young Entrepreneurship and Leadership Launchpad.



3. Overview of the Performance Learning Program

Seycove Secondary is located in Deep Cove in the District of North Vancouver. It currently enrolls 520 students and has 62 members of staff. The school has been home to the Performance Learning Program (PLP) since its inception in 2010. Taught by four teachers, the program has a current enrollment of 85 students in Grades 8 through 12. Over the past 10 years, approximately 300 students have been enrolled in the program.

Program Origins

The Performance Learning Program has evolved from an initial vision to provide students with enhanced learning opportunities while infusing technological skills that would prepare them to be successful in an ever-changing digital world. In 2010, Grade 9 students at Seycove Secondary were given the opportunity to register in a new integrated technology course. The following year, a single cohort of students was selected to be part of a pilot program called *Digital Immersion*, in which students were clustered together for English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Integrated Technology. Students were encouraged to bring their own technology device to school to support their learning.

In 2012, the program name was changed from *Digital Immersion* to *FLIGHT*. Two teachers in particular continued to serve as its visionaries. In addition to further advancing innovative instructional and assessment practices for students enrolled in the program, the teachers hoped to promote a broader reconceptualization of teaching and learning throughout Seycove Secondary that would eventually facilitate a school-wide implementation of the program's vision.

During 2013 and 2014, the program planning team continued to work with students and teachers to further develop a shared vision for this initiative. This process forged a stronger ideological commitment to certain core pedagogical fundamentals. Three key components of the program were identified: project-based learning (PBL), technology for learning, and learning outside of the classroom. An iPad was selected as the preferred device to be used by students to assist with the integration of technology in their learning.

It was during this time that *FLIGHT* introduced an application process intended to ensure that it was a 'good fit' for the students who would be enrolling in the program. The application process had the additional outcome of raising the program's profile at the school.



In 2015, *FLIGHT* was renamed the *Performance Learning Program* and officially recognized as a Secondary Enhanced Program by North Vancouver School District affording it the opportunity to recruit students from across the district.¹

Program Design

As outlined on the program's website, PLP identifies itself as "a mainstream public school program that challenges students to become learners."² "With a focus on deeper learning, its students master core academic content, think critically to solve complex problems, work collaboratively, communicate effectively, and develop academic and growth mindsets. PLP challenges learners in grades 8 to 12 who seek an academically rigorous, enriched, and supportive learning environment. PLP is for curious learners that want to make their time in school count."

An "instructional triad" is referenced as its conceptual foundation:

- **Inquiry and project-based learning** – Project-based learning uses projects as a focus for inquiry-based learning, requiring students to "be active participants in their learning and develop important skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication." While "PBL is our chosen method, inquiry is the ultimate goal." Inquiry is a process where students "formulate questions, investigate to find answers, understandings, meanings and knowledge, and then communicate their learnings to others." Inquiry is "the underpinning of PLP's pedagogical approach."
- **Technology for learning** – Purposeful use of an Apple iPad in the classroom allows PLP to "redefine learning in previously inconceivable ways." PLP students "do not have to wait for scheduled 'computer time' on shared devices. Instead, with a personal device, students have just-in-time access to a powerful tool that allows them to drive and document their learning in a way they never could before." Other technology tools used extensively in the program include *iTunes U*, *Showbie*, and *WordPress*.
- **Learning beyond the school** – PLP extensively involves field studies that include both day and overnight excursions, based on the belief that students "make stronger cognitive connections when learning is experiential, and rooted in a context that extends beyond school." Travel opportunities "are unique and tightly integrated with student inquiry and learning objectives." The program's goal is to provide "a field school learning experience that would not otherwise be available to the student."

¹ In both 2015 and 2017, requests were made to have PLP designated as a District Academy. On both occasions, it was determined that the program would be more appropriately classified as a Secondary Enhanced Program.

² In this section, all text in quotations are taken directly from the program's website.



Suggested Course Offerings

Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
English	English	English	English	English
Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
Math	Math	Math		
Science	Science	Science		
ADST	ADST	ADST		
Personal Growth Plan / Career Ed.	Personal Growth Plan / Career Ed.	Career Life Education	Personal Growth Plan / Career Ed.	Personal Growth Plan / Career Life Connections
6 blocks	6 blocks	6 blocks	3 blocks	3 blocks
Total: 24 blocks				

Assessment and Reporting

The Performance Learning Program subscribes to a project-based learning approach with assessment focused on “the process of learning, not a final product or test score.” As such, PLP approaches assessment in a manner that sets high standards for student achievement and requires students to “show evidence of having gained competency and core knowledge to an appropriate degree for their age and experience.” Emphasis is placed on “formative forms of assessment that provide constant feedback to the student and parents on student progress and performance.” Critique is a key aspect of the program’s formative assessment and includes a component that is self-directed, as well as the constructive feedback provided by teachers and peers. Students are required to conduct critiques on all project proposals and assignments and to revise their work accordingly in an effort to ensure that it is of their highest personal standard.

In accordance with school district and ministerial reporting guidelines, PLP students receive letter grades in Grade 8 and 9 and percentages in Grade 10, 11 and 12 for their courses consistent with reporting timelines. However, PLP students do not receive traditional



numerical marks for their completed work, but instead “are measured against criteria-referenced performance standards in core competency areas: critical thinking, creativity and innovation, collaboration, presentation, and writing.” Student achievement is communicated to parents on a continuous basis through *Showbie*, “an online portfolio of all the work completed by a student and the assessment and feedback received from teachers.” Student-led conferences occur twice a year, providing an opportunity for students to discuss their work as well as establish academic and social goals in collaboration with their parents.

Application Process

The application process referenced on the program’s website requires interested applicants to complete an online questionnaire, upload a short video about an area of interest / passion, submit previous report cards, and provide references from both teachers and parents. Individual and group interviews are included in the application process. Specific reference is made to selection criterion that aims to ensure the program is a ‘good-fit’ for the students it enrolls.

History of Student Enrollment

	Program	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total annual
2011/12	Digital Immersion Pilot		25				25
2012/13	Flight Program		50	23			73
2013/14	Flight Program		18	17	19		54
2014/15	Flight Program	17	25	8			50
2015/16	PLP	26		22			48
2016/17	PLP	23	25		22		70
2017/18	PLP	20	22	25		22	89
2018/19	PLP	28	20	17	18		83
2019/20	PLP	25	28		16	16	85
Class size average		23	27	19	19	19	



4. Recommendations

Throughout the meetings held with the teachers of the Performance Learning Program and Seycove school administration, it was apparent that there is a strong, shared investment in the program's continuity. At various times during these discussions, reference was made to the potential for PLP to expand beyond its existing design with the possibility of it eventually enrolling a larger proportion of the Seycove student population.³ There was consensus among the group that the program's continuity, and its potential expansion, is dependent upon substantively addressing some of the issues and challenges that were identified during the interviews that Ms. Bell conducted. It was noted that the information shared by students, parents, teachers, and administrators during these interviews represented a wide range of perspectives and opinions. These were understood to be influenced by each individual's knowledge of the program, their involvement in it, or their impressions of it. It was further noted that these perspectives were largely representative of this current period in time and do not necessarily extend to the program's previous years at Seycove Secondary.

In the interest of supporting the future sustainability of the Performance Learning Program, the group paid particular attention to the *Suggestions for Consideration* outlined in Section 7 of Ms. Bell's submission. These were formulated from impressions Ms. Bell made based on her interviews, as well as any additional information she gathered as part of her review. Each of these suggestions was reviewed by the group, providing the opportunity for individuals to seek further clarity from Ms. Bell and to share additional information that they felt was important to consider. In many instances this resulted in a suggestion being clarified, reframed, or set aside in order to reflect the consensus of the group. Some information from these discussions has been included in this report to provide additional context. The group did not reach full agreement on all of Ms. Bell's suggestions.

The following recommendations represent best efforts to arrive at a consensus among the group as to what is required moving forward in order to ensure the continuity of the Performance Learning Program while also supporting the interests of the larger Seycove school community. Within each of the four overarching recommendations, a series of embedded recommendations are made that outline specific steps that can be taken in order to support the program's sustainability in a manner that ensures that it is accessible to all students, its continuity is based on equitable access to school resources, and it meaningfully contributes to a unified culture and community at Seycove Secondary.

³ In September 2020, the Performance Learning Program will expand from one to two cohorts of students in Grade 8.



Recommendation 1: Enhanced Planning and Coordination

A key outcome of this review is to affirm that PLP is a Secondary Enhanced Program. As such, it is understood to be included in the course and program offerings at Seycove Secondary and should be promoted as such in all school and district communications.

During discussions with the PLP teachers and school administration, it was highlighted that PLP had been previously misunderstood to be a 'district-based' program and that this had led to some confusion particularly in relation to who is responsible for its oversight and resourcing. This uncertainty may have impeded the extensive planning and coordination that must occur between the program teachers and school administration in order for it to operate successfully at the school. This is particularly relevant in relation to the program's application process, the scheduling of course offerings, and allocation of resources including staffing. Advance planning is also essential in relation to the program's field studies that must be scheduled in alignment with the school calendar and in adherence to district policy. It is recommended that moving forward all of the above be included in the advance planning and coordination that occurs between the PLP teachers and school administration and that this be outlined in the program's annual instructional plan.

Additionally, this planning and coordination should extend beyond a yearly focus to take into consideration how the program, or at least some of its instructional design, may further develop over the long term in ways that may enable it to meaningfully integrate into a larger school-wide initiative at Seycove. It is recommended that this longer term planning begin immediately and include representatives from outside the program to invite the perspectives of other educators at the school. Advance planning in relation to potential program expansion should carefully take into account enhancing the program's accessibility, ensuring equitable distribution of available resources, and further unifying the school's culture and community.

Ms. Bell included in her submission specific reference to the frequent changes in school principal that have occurred at Seycove Secondary since PLP's inception in 2010. She expressed concern for its potential impact on planning and coordination between the program's teachers and school administration. While it is understood that changes to school administration are influenced by factors that extend beyond any particular program or school, and are sometimes determined by an individual's personal or professional choice, its potential impact on short and long term planning and coordination for the program should be taken into consideration. Accordingly, it is recommended that the school district continue



to take this into account when making these decisions. In future circumstances where a change in principal is unavoidable, the director of instruction will assume responsibility for supporting the transition in ways that promote the continuity of advance planning and enhanced coordination between the program and new school administration.

Recommendation 2: Flexible Course Offerings and Program Design

During discussions with the PLP teachers and school administration, several factors were identified as essential to ensuring the program's sustainability. In this regard, particular attention was given to defining the program and its core components in order to consider how to support its continuity. These conversations surfaced key questions and considerations related to the program's accessibility, the equitable allocation of school resources, and the importance of cultivating a unified community and culture at Seycove Secondary.

A review of the Performance Learning Program was initiated by the Executive of North Vancouver School District in June of 2019, following requests it received to provide additional staffing to the school to address insufficient enrollment in the upcoming Grade 10 PLP cohort. These requests were made by parents of PLP students through emails sent to school and district administration. Additionally, a number of parents expressed their concerns during the public comment period at a school board meeting held on June 18, 2019. It should be further noted that the school principal of Seycove Secondary first brought this concern to school district administration in December 2018, advising that without additional staffing, a Grade 10 cohort would not exist in September 2019. After further consideration, the Executive of NVSD agreed to supplement the PLP program with an additional two blocks of funding for the 2019 / 2020 academic year. Alongside this decision, it requested that a review be undertaken to gain a better understanding of the program, including its design and intended outcomes, in order to determine how best to support its short and long term sustainability.

In conversations with the teachers of the Performance Learning Program, they felt it important to note that they had not advocated for additional blocks to support the Grade 10 program in 2019 / 2020, recognizing that doing so involved an inequitable distribution of available staffing to PLP. The teachers further highlighted previous occasions where they had preemptively redesigned the structure of the program through blending grades or collapsing sections as necessary due to insufficient enrollment. In this regard, there was consensus among the group that the program's short and long term sustainability is essentially dependent upon flexibility in its course offerings and program design. As an



extension of this, the teachers drew attention to what they believed was a misrepresentation of the program's attrition rates as listed in a table included in Ms. Bell's submission. This final report accepts this clarification as noted, recognizing previous and future commitment to restructure course offerings and program design on a yearly basis as necessary to ensure PLP's sustainability.

Further enhancing this flexibility involves taking into consideration the program's accessibility, which is integral to the equitable allocation of school resources. As part of its fiduciary responsibilities, the school is mandated to ensure that all students have access to the resources they require to fulfill graduation requirements or attain a School Completion Certificate. These resources must be equitably allocated in an effort to remove any barrier a particular student is experiencing to their academic success. Both the number of students enrolled in a particular class and its composition of students who have formally identified unique needs factor in substantively to this equitable allocation, given that classes that have lower enrollment or composition will typically result in an increase to the size and complexity of other classes.

For this reason, it is recommended that PLP course offerings not only include class sizes that correspond with averages in the mainstream, but that their composition of students with complex learning profiles be in similar alignment. With respect to the program's existing diversity, the PLP teachers drew attention to what they believed was a misrepresentation of the program's commitment to include students with diverse needs as represented in a table included in Ms. Bell's submission. It was particularly noted by the teachers that no student is discouraged from enrolling in PLP as a result of their unique learning profile. This final report accepts this clarification with the understanding that the process by which students are recruited and selected to join the Performance Learning Program reflects this previous and future commitment to enroll students who have diverse and complex learning profiles.

As an extension of this, it is worth noting that Ms. Bell's submission did not include a comprehensive review of how prospective students are selected to join the Performance Learning Program. During discussions with the PLP teachers and school administration, concern was expressed regarding Ms. Bell's reference in her submission to the program's application serving as a "screening" process. The teachers regard this to be a mischaracterization, suggesting that it would be better understood as the process through which students are selected based on a determination of whether the program represents a "good fit" for their learning profile. In the interest of supporting both the program's sustainability and its accessibility, it is recommended that the process for recruiting and



selecting students be further reviewed and revised as necessary as part of the advance planning and enhanced coordination between the PLP teachers and school administration. Included in this recommendation is to reconsider the application's "good-fit" criterion with an understanding that curriculum, instruction and assessment can be extensively adapted as necessary in order to support any student's learning profile including an individual with complex needs.

A number of significant benefits extend from increasing the program's accessibility that go beyond supporting the equitable allocation of resources. Throughout the conversations with the PLP teachers and school administration repeated reference was made to how the program had innovatively developed an instructional design that reflects the modernized curriculum that has now been introduced by the BC Ministry of Education for all learners. A cornerstone of the modernized curriculum is its focus on personalized learning. This has had a significant impact on the inclusion of students with unique needs as it compels an instructional approach that is customized to each learner. Increasing the inclusion of students with more complex learning profiles in PLP will serve to further align it with key foundations of the modernized curriculum, particularly with respect to differentiating instruction and assessment to support and enhance student success.

Ensuring program sustainability through flexible course offerings and program design requires a shared commitment between PLP teachers and school administration to make best efforts to consistently provide the program's suggested course offerings. These best efforts will include a continued willingness to design as necessary blended or combined courses that enroll students from more than one grade. On occasions when this does not provide sufficient enrollment for a suggested course offering, it is recommended that a parallel course in the mainstream be offered to include PLP students with the understanding and expectation that the assigned teacher allow for adaptations to instruction and assessment that align with some or all of the practices used in the program. Support for this kind of differentiated instruction and assessment in a mainstream course may require some coordination between the mainstream teacher and an educator at the school who is well-versed in PLP. One approach to supporting this would be to further develop the capacity of Learning Services personnel at the school to support mainstream teachers with this differentiation. Another possibility would involve utilizing existing PLP teachers to serve in a case manager capacity that enables them to collaborate with mainstream teachers to design and implement adaptations for PLP students whenever they are registered in a mainstream course. This case management option is further discussed in Recommendation 4 of this report.



A more extensive integration and expansion of the Performance Learning Program at Seycove Secondary could involve a grade-wide implementation that would result in all students at a particular grade level being enrolled in courses that are consistent with PLP's instructional design. An approach of this nature is currently in place at Carson Graham Secondary where all Grade 8, 9 and 10 students are enrolled in courses that align with the school's International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme. At Seycove, the scheduled expansion of the Grade 8 PLP program from one to two cohorts in September of 2020 affords an optimal opportunity to explore an approach of this nature. Accordingly, it is recommended that this option be considered as part of the advance planning and enhanced coordination occurring between teachers of the PLP program and school administration in preparation for the upcoming academic year. If determined viable, further consultation with the larger Seycove faculty and parent community would be essential.

From a sustainability standpoint, further integrating PLP related instruction and assessment practices into Seycove's mainstream program is preferable over not running the program at a particular grade level on any occasion where there is insufficient enrollment. This is especially true if the school's long term goal is to further expand the program to include a larger proportion of the Seycove student population. This potential expansion and integration of PLP, whether through the continuation of combined grade classes, purposeful differentiation in mainstream courses, or grade-wide implementation of the program, will invariably present additional challenges to teachers and students as they endeavour to sustain the core philosophy of the program while increasing its flexibility to adapt for change. A strong partnership between the program teachers, school administration and the larger faculty will help overcome these challenges especially if doing so is recognized for its potential to further enhance a unified culture and community at the school.

Recommendation 3: Further Unifying Culture and Community

During discussions with PLP teachers and school administration considerable attention was given to aspects of Ms. Bell's submission that reflected on how the program is perceived by students, parents and teachers at Seycove Secondary. This includes individuals enrolled in or directly associated with the program, as well as members of the broader school community. Both the feedback from Ms. Bell's interviews and subsequent conversations with the group compel careful consideration as to how the program can be better situated within the school in ways that promote a more unified culture and community.



Secondary Enhanced Programs by their very definition suggest that something is being offered to a particular group of students that is different or *enhanced* from what other students are receiving as part of their educational experience. If not managed carefully, this has the potential to create within a school community an impression of preference or privilege for some over others. Establishing and maintaining a unified culture and community within a school is dependent upon all members of that community feeling that they are equally valued and supported. Accordingly, it is essential that careful attention is paid to any aspect of a Secondary Enhanced Program that may set it apart and distinct from the educational experience of other students in ways that may foster the impression of it having a preferred or privileged status.

Ms. Bell's interviews with members of the school community generated for her the impression that further consideration should be given to how PLP can operate within the school in ways that enhance a sense of unity. In the preceding recommendations, reference was made to the importance of ensuring the program's accessibility to all students, as well as the necessity to equitably allocate the school's available resources. Additionally, recommendations have been made that encourage enhanced consultation with the broader faculty at the school to include their perspectives and involvement in supporting PLP's sustainability through flexible course and program design, purposeful integration into mainstream courses and potential expansion of the program to include a possible grade-wide implementation.

Building on this to further enhance a unified culture and community at Seycove may benefit from all educators at the school having opportunities to share with one another how they are innovatively modernizing their instructional practices to align with British Columbia's new curriculum. Similarly, students both within and outside of PLP would greatly benefit from any occasion when they can come together to share their perspectives about which approaches to curriculum, instruction and assessment make learning particularly meaningful for them. An ongoing dialogue of this nature within and between teacher and student groups is not only likely to underscore the value of inquiry and project-based learning, technology for learning, and learning beyond the school, but reveal that in many instances these approaches are being similarly embraced in both PLP and mainstream educational settings.

In addition to expanding efforts at the school to unify its culture and community through purposeful dialogue within and between student and teacher groups, it is also essential to carefully manage anything which sets one group apart from another in ways that have the



potential to create an impression of preference or privilege for some over others. During discussions with program teachers and school administration the question was raised as to whether or not PLP should be given special consideration when building the school's yearly timetable. While it was acknowledged that particular attention needs to be given to PLP course offerings in order to ensure that students within a particular cohort are placed together in their classes, there was shared agreement that doing so should not result in PLP students or teachers receiving confirmation of future course offerings in advance of the rest of the school population.

Related to this concern is ensuring that the Performance Learning Program at Seycove does not exist in an ongoing state of uncertainty based on whether some or all of its suggested courses offerings have sufficient enrollment in any given year. Instead, the program's sustainability should reflect a multi-year commitment to students with the explicit understanding that the program and its suggested course offerings are flexible and will look different from one year to next. Included in this commitment is the understanding that consistent efforts will be made to primarily situate a PLP student's educational experience within the core tenets of the program's instructional triad. Optimally, this will occur within the program's suggested course offerings. Where necessary this may extend into mainstream courses with every effort being made to support this approach through differentiation. This understanding should eliminate discussions about whether or not the program will continue to exist from one year to the next, as these have the potential to strain relationships within the school community, especially if situated within the context of some programs having priority or increased value over others.

Recommendation 4: Developing an Enhanced School-wide Support Infrastructure

Previous reference has been made to the potential for PLP students to be supported when enrolled in mainstream courses through a case management model that would assist classroom teachers to differentiate instruction and assessment in ways that align with the program's design. Essential to this recommendation is the development of an enhanced support infrastructure that would serve as a resource for both students and classroom teachers. There are a number of non-enrolling positions in every school that play a critical role in supporting the academic and social emotional development of students. In the Learning Services department, specialist teachers, counsellors and educational assistants work in close partnership with classroom teachers to support a wide range of student needs. In many instances, this support takes the form of assisting classroom teachers with the differentiation of curriculum, instruction and assessment to align with a student's unique



learning profile. As case managers, specialist teachers and counsellors are a highly valued resource for coming alongside classroom educators as necessary to support a student's academic success.

In this regard, Learning Services personnel may serve as one part of a larger school-wide infrastructure that could be strategically developed to support the continuity of PLP and its potential expansion beyond the program. Of particular note is the fact that project and inquiry-based learning, purposeful use of technology, and learning beyond the classroom and school are among the adaptations commonly recommended by case managers when working with classroom teachers to support a struggling learner. Applying these kinds of adaptations at universal, targeted and intensive levels of intervention to support student diversity represents the foundation of NVSD's service delivery model. As such, it provides a recognizable and transferable framework for assisting PLP students as needed.

A second essential component of a school-wide support infrastructure involves the role of the librarian. By similarly serving in a case management capacity for PLP students when they are registered in mainstream courses, the librarian could assist classroom teachers with differentiating instruction and assessment to align with program design. Because Seycove's librarian is one of the core teachers of the Performance Learning Program, it provides an optimal opportunity to further develop a dedicated space within the school where all members of the Seycove community can meaningfully connect to collaborate on modernizing the curriculum in ways that align with and extend beyond the instructional practices that are foundational to PLP.

In Ms. Bell's submission, she identifies a need to give greater attention to student well-being including effective self-management of course workload and use of technology. Within this enhanced infrastructure, the potential exists for program teachers to work in close partnership with Seycove's counselling team to help support PLP students in this manner. There is potential for this to develop into a larger school-wide focus on student well-being in ways that may serve to further unify the culture and community at the school through a collective focus that would be beneficial to all learners.

Developing an enhanced infrastructure of this nature will require advance planning and coordination between program teachers and school administration. It is recommended that this planning involve one or more representatives from the Learning Services department and the larger faculty since its design is intended to be school-wide in nature and its outcomes intended to serve all members of the Seycove school community.



5. Conclusion

When reviewing the recommendations included in this report, both the PLP teachers and school administration expressed some concern that its various references to potential program expansion at Seycove Secondary may not be well received by all members of the broader school community. Included in these concerns was an acknowledgement that Ms. Bell's submission had revealed some division between the program and larger school community. It was noted that the final report purposefully reframes current issues and concerns into a future orientated perspective that is notably optimistic in tone. In doing so, some questions were raised as to whether or not the report had understated the extent to which Seycove Secondary currently finds itself at an impasse with regards to the future of its Performance Learning Program.

In this regard, it is worthwhile noting that this report is in no way intended to diminish any of the various points of tension that may currently exist within the school in relation to PLP. Its recommendations are intentionally framed to call upon members of the school community both within and outside the program to work in partnership to ensure that future efforts to support PLP's sustainability do not come at the cost of creating further division within the school. This report highlights the critical importance of ongoing and highly coordinated planning between program teachers and school administration in ways that consistently and purposefully invite the perspectives and involvement of other educators at Seycove Secondary. A meaningful collaboration of this nature is built upon an acknowledgement that all members of the faculty are passionate and innovative in their instructional practice and contribute meaningfully to co-designing excellence in programming for students whenever afforded the opportunity. As such, references made in this report to potential program expansion are essentially dependant upon co-constructing its future design.

On a more immediate level, the recommendations in this report are intended to focus particular attention on the importance of ensuring that the sustainability of the Performance Learning Program be foundationally situated on flexible course offerings and program design, accessibility to all students, equitable allocation of resources at the school, and advance planning and coordination between program teachers, school administration and the larger faculty in ways that promote a unified culture and community at Seycove Secondary.