

2023-2024

CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT





With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

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Chair's message



As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the collective efforts that have driven our progress. Our commitment to

reconciliation, equity and inclusion has been unwavering.

This year, we celebrated numerous student achievements that underscore the excellence within our schools. From improvements in literacy and numeracy consistently above provincial rates, to the inspiring participation in events like the District Science Fair and the Indigenous Graduation Ceremony, VSB students have demonstrated remarkable growth and resilience.

Governance excellence has also been a cornerstone of our success. The Board's strategic initiatives, such as the adoption of policies promoting focused learning environments and online safety, and the approval of a comprehensive financial plan, have been pivotal in enhancing student well-being and achievement. Our collaborative efforts with the three Host Nations – xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) – and the development of a four-year policy review plan ensures that our governance practices are inclusive, transparent and aligned with legislative requirements.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my fellow trustees for their collaboration and thoughtfulness as we govern together in the best interest of our public education system.

In addition to participating in committee and Board meetings, as well as reviewing reports and information to guide our responsibilities as a Board, trustees also attend gatherings and sessions with various education partners and stakeholder groups at the local, regional, and provincial levels. Their leadership and dedication are instrumental to students and our education system.

On behalf of the Board, we are deeply grateful for the invaluable insights rights holders shared with us. Their advice is a bright and guiding light on our continued reconciliation journey.

To staff, our deep appreciation for their support to us as a Board and for their tireless dedication to students and families. And we also appreciate the contributions and input by representatives of the VSB's formal stakeholder groups, which are informative to our Board's decisions. Together, we are building a future where every student can feel a deep sense of belonging and is empowered to pursue their unique pathways of learning.

As my second term as chair draws to a close, I want to extend my personal gratitude to everyone who throughout the year shared their perspectives while always keeping students' learning and needs at the center of our collective work. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Victoria Jung".

Victoria Jung
Chair, Vancouver School Board

Reconciliation, equity and inclusion

The Board's equity statement is central to its service to students. In its considerations and activities this past year, the Board maintained a focus on creating an equitable learning environment where every child can experience a deep sense of belonging and is free to pursue pathways of learning in ways that are authentic to themselves. Reconciliation through relationship building

Indigenous ways of learning and being are deeply respected and embraced by the Board which leads the education system that operates on the unceded and ancestral lands of the x̱məθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

To learn more about the histories, traditions and cultures of Indigenous people, trustees gathered with staff in the Indigenous Education department to partake in a drum making session in December 2023. Trustees learned drum teachings of various Nations and the benefits that drum making and drumming bring to education.



Furthering the school district's reconciliation journey is fundamental to the Board and its work. As such the Board gathers with the three Host Nations to increase knowledge, awareness, appreciation of and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions. In May, trustees joined VSB's Red

Dress honour ceremony hosted by the Indigenous Education Department. The ceremony was solemn, sacred and poignant. And, on June 21, 2024, trustees joined with staff and students at the Education Centre in celebration of National Indigenous Peoples' Day. Activities celebrated Indigenous peoples and heritages with speeches, performances and cultural workshops. Throughout the year, trustees also attended several events honouring Indigenous ways of being and learning including house post unveilings and community gatherings.

Additionally, engaging with members of the Host Nations for guidance to the education system is also fundamental to the Board's work. This past year, much of that guidance was received during meetings of the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) and the language and governance sub-committees. The IEC met four times; once at VSB's Education Centre and three times within each of the communities of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Some topics discussed and advanced this year included:

- Revised Land Acknowledgement and communications roll out
- Discussed hiring process and Indigenous staff mentorship
- Three host nations actively participated in Indigenous leadership hiring processes.

Building equity

The Board's equity building efforts extend beyond learning activities and formal events. The Board believes in creating a school system where students can see themselves in their curriculum and their learning spaces. To further enable this, it adopted a motion for submission at the B.C. School Trustees Association (BCSTA) 2024 AGM to help address workforce planning for the education system. The resulting motion was adopted at the AGM held in the spring.



“ That the BCSTA request that the Ministry of Education and child Care in collaboration with the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti Racism Initiatives conduct a voluntary census of all K-12 employees to provide data on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the workforce.”



Trustees also attended several school-based events throughout the year that focus on student voice, diversity, equity and inclusion. Among many included were:

- Pink Shirt Day
- The annual Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Conference
- International Women's Day
- Vancouver Pride Parade

At school events and during monthly public meetings the Board also marked other commemorative occasions including heritage months, Chanukah, Christmas, Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Vaisakhi, Pride Month, Orange Shirt Day/National Day for Truth & Reconciliation and Diwali to note a few.

2024 student-led DEI Youth Conference





Improving student achievement and well-being

Through its work, the Board enables improvements in student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging. Several student achievement and well-being events highlight advancements this past year.

Improving conditions for students

In September, as the new school year began, trustees attended the opening of the new seismically safe Eric Hamber Secondary School. The new school, with capacity for 1,700 students, was built to LEED gold standards that include energy-saving measures to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. The school integrates Indigenous designs, including a five-metre (16 foot) female welcome figure and weaving creations thanks to the talents and skills of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) artists. This reflects the VSB's commitment to reconciliation and to honour the rich cultural traditions and history of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The new Eric Hamber is also the first secondary school in Vancouver to feature a dedicated child care centre for children under age five.

In June, Deputy Prime Minister Freeland visited Roberts Elementary's LunchLAB program to

announce a national school food program. At the event, students and staff heard Deputy Prime Minister Freeland speak about the importance of food programs in schools. Along with the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister Beech, B.C. Education Minister Singh, federal Minister Sajjan and VSB chair Jung served food to students and enjoyed lunch.



Another foundational component to student achievement and well-being is their classroom environments. In June 2023, the Board passed a motion, "Promoting Focused Learning Environments and Online Safety." As a result, and

in alignment with the provincial government's direction to all B.C. school boards, all VSB school code of conducts were updated to include restrictions to student use of personal devices at schools ahead of the 2024-2025 school year. Additionally, within the financial planning process, the Board allocated funding to promote student online safety – essential skills also needed beyond the classroom environment.

Advancing outcomes for students

At its first public meeting of the 2024-2025 school year, the Board reviewed and approved VSB's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) Annual Report for submission to the Ministry. This year's report indicates that student achievement results show continued proficiency in all areas of overall student achievement and well-being. Literacy and numeracy results are consistently above provincial rates for all grades. This year's FESL report also reveals that inequities remain for priority learners: students who are Indigenous, students with diverse needs and students who are in-care. Elimination of gaps in outcomes for these students requires strategic supports. As such, this year's report details further focus on literacy and numeracy supports, instruction and assessments as well as enhancing student well-being and connections to their school communities to improve outcomes

for students this school year, with particular emphasis on supports for those students.

Celebrating student learning and accomplishments

Each month, numerous activities and events at schools showcase student learning. This year, trustees attended many, including the:

- District Science Fair
- AIRS Opening Ceremony
- District Applied Design, Skills & Technology Celebration
- VSB Cross Country event



Trustees also joined staff, students and their families at the Grade 7 Moving Ahead Ceremony as well as the Indigenous Graduation Ceremony and secondary school graduations.

2024 Annual District Cross Country Meet



Governance and stewardship

The Board's role is to provide strategic direction and leadership to ensure the success of students through effective resource management and alignment with district goals, while being accountable for delivering appropriate educational programs and services

Advancing Policy

The Board created a four-year policy review plan with input from the Policy & Governance Committee to ensure regular policy reviews and compliance with legislation, regulations, and mandate directions. As part of this work, the Board updated several policies this past year.

- Policy 3: Role of the Trustee
- Policy 4: Trustee Code of Conduct
- Policy 8: Board Committees
- Policy 10: Policy Development

The Board approves Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) courses under policy and the B.C. School Act to meet local school and community needs, offering students choice and flexibility. This year, the Board approved two courses developed by VSB educators for 2024-2025 school year:

- Application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Grade 12
- Queer and Trans History of B.C. – Grade 12

One of the Board's objectives within the Education Plan is to align its policies and practices in a manner consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the calls-to-action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The update to policy 8 including adding representation to rights holders of the three Host Nations (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) to participate in all of the Board's standing committees.

There are four trustee members of each Board standing committee. Representatives of the District's formal stakeholder groups (unions/

labour and associations, plus the Vancouver District Student Council and the District Parent Advisory Committee) are also invited to attend committee meetings. Standing committees act in an advisory capacity to the Board and support good governance and informed decision making by the Board. In addition to expanding the invitation to include perspectives of Host Nations, the Board also streamlined its committee structure to reflect effective practices and efficiency. There are now four Board standing committees:

- Policy and Governance Committee
- Facilities Planning Committee
- Education Plan Committee
- Finance and Personnel Committee

Financial Planning

Annually, under legislation the Board is required to approve a balanced budget for the upcoming school year. Once again, the Board's financial decisions were informed with input and feedback from rights holders, representatives of the formal stakeholder groups, members of the public and staff. The Board approved 2024-2025 financial plan includes spending of nearly \$785 million next school year, and provides:

- Additional staffing to support students with key literacy, numeracy as well as critical and creative thinking skills
- More support for arts education focusing on the fine arts, drama, dance and music
- Funding to expand student access to technology/devices
- Support dedicated to digital literacy and students' safety online.

The 2024-2025 financial plan also includes supports for improvements through process simplification, digital infrastructure upgrades, staff training and user-centric service delivery, and to advance the District's recruitment and retention initiatives.

Capital Planning

In April, the Board received funding approval from the Ministry of Education and Child Care to build a new school in Olympic Village and expand Henry Hudson Elementary. The government will provide \$150 million for a new four-story school in Olympic Village to serve 630 students. It will include a neighbourhood learning centre, providing space for 60 school-age children in need of before- and after-school child care. The school will also feature an active rooftop, providing space for students to engage in various active or outdoor activities. The expansion project at Henry Hudson, with a funding approval of \$15 million, will add another six classrooms, more library space, additional resource rooms and a covered outdoor area for the recently completed seismically safe school. Through the expansion works, the school will have a capacity of 535 student seats.

The Board also approved capital plans for submission to the Ministry. This year, this Ministry approved several minor capital projects at six schools to provide for window replacement, roofing work, HVAC system projects, accessible playground equipment and kitchen upgrades.

In addition, the Board approved a five-year major capital plan includes several seismic mitigation program (SMP) requests and new school and school addition requests for consideration by the Ministry. Minor capital plan priorities were submitted to the Ministry in September and requests funding approval for accessible equipment (elevators, lifts and playground equipment), safety systems, heating and cooling upgrades, window replacement and roof upgrades as well as kitchen upgrades and equipment at 13 schools.



Funding announcement for Olympic Village school and Henry Hudson Elementary



Trustees at BCSTA trustee academy

Advocacy

School boards in BC have a pivotal role as advocates for public education. Through work with elected officials at the local and provincial level, the Board highlighted key areas to enhance the education system, so it better serves students and society at large.

Leadership at the provincial level

One of the primary advocacy avenues for the Board is through the BCSTA through trustee academy, leadership sessions and its annual advocacy day.

In addition to the motion requesting baseline education workforce data (noted above), the Board also approved a second motion for submission to the BCSTA AGM seeking collective advocacy for inclusive education funding and for more support for early childhood educators (ECEs) and education assistants. This motion was also adopted at the provincial AGM in the spring. This BCSTA adopted motion was a key part of the provincial advocacy efforts by all school trustees and was included in BCSTA's advocacy plan ahead of the 2024 provincial election. This plan underscores BCSTA's commitment to improving public education across British Columbia through strategic advocacy on pivotal issues.

Advocating for Vancouver students, their families and communities

The Board also advocated for enhanced child care services in Vancouver, recognizing the important role these services play in the Vancouver community. The Board also developed an advocacy plan to guide VSB's advocacy efforts aimed at federal, provincial and local governments, as well as other outside organizations. Through targeted advocacy, the Board aims to ensure equitable and sufficient funding, enhance recruitment and retention, improve facilities and promote inclusive education.

The Board further worked with the Minister of Education and Child Care, members of the legislative assembly, City of Vancouver Mayor and Council and Board of Parks and Recreation to align our work thereby benefiting students, their families and school communities.



“That the BCSTA advocate to the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills, to address recruitment and retention barriers for Early Childhood Educators and Education Assistants.”



Closing

As this year marks the mid-point of the Board's term, much pride can be taken in its accomplishments in alignment with the VSB Education Plan. We diligently worked to provide clear strategic direction and wisely utilized available resources to support the achievement of the goals outlined in the Education Plan. Together, trustees remain committed to further building an equitable learning environment where every child can experience a deep sense of belonging and is free to pursue pathways of learning in ways that are authentic to themselves.

