

NOTICE OF MEETING

EDUCATION PLAN COMMITTEE

Secretary Treasurer's Office
Wednesday, June 11, 2025
Public viewing via live broadcast

Alfred Chien (Chair)
Christopher Richardson (Vice Chair)
Lois Chan-Pedley
Suzie Mah

Helen McGregor, Superintendent of Schools
Flavia Coughlan, Secretary Treasurer

Notice of Meeting

A Meeting of the **Education Plan Committee** will be held in room 180 of the VSB Education Centre (1580 West Broadway, Vancouver BC) for **participating trustees, staff, inherent rights holder representatives and stakeholder representatives** on **Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 5:00 pm**. The meeting will be live broadcast for the public.

Trustees:	Janet Fraser	Jennifer Reddy (Alternate)
	Preeti Faridkot	Joshua Zhang
	Victoria Jung (Alternate)	

Student Trustee:	Athena Yu
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Other Senior Team Staff:	Daniel Blue	Maureen McRae-Stanger
	Pedro da Silva	Pete Nuij
	Michael Gray	Alison Ogden
	Jessie Gresley-Jones	

Inherent Rights Holder Representatives:	Faye Mitchell, x̱məθḵəy̱əm (Musqueam)
	Kirsten Baker-Williams, Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)
	Kirsten Touring, səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation)

Representatives:	Priscilla Santos, CUPE 15	Alternates:	Suzette Magri, CUPE 15 (Alternate 1)
	Rebecca Keaney, CUPE 407		Lorena Spencer, CUPE 15 (Alternate 2)
	Ishi Dinim, DPAC		Adam Crawford, CUPE 407
	Tim Chester, IUOE		Tim De Vivo, IUOE
	Ericka-Jade Touzel, PASA		Scott Deyell, PASA
	Justin Chapman, BCVSBCMTU		
	David Nicks, VASSA		Bruce Garnett, VASSA
	Salena Sharma, VDSC		
	Deborah Tin Tun, VEAES		Karine Ng, VEAES
	Riley McMitchell, VEPVPA		Trevor Wrinch, VEPVPA
	Carl Janze, VSTA		Carmen Schaedeli, VSTA

Other Staff:	Ranjit Bains	Ricardo Lopez
	Shannon Burton	Christopher Wong
	Eartha Ann Hanson	

EDUCATION PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 5:00 to 6:30 pm
Room 180, VSB Education Centre

With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

The meeting is currently being broadcasted live, and both the audio and video recordings will be accessible to the public for viewing even after the meeting ends. Footage from this meeting may be viewed from Canada or anywhere else in the world.

Meeting Decorum:

The Board has a strong commitment to ethical conduct. This includes the responsibility of committee members to conduct themselves with appropriate decorum and professionalism. As Chair of the Committee, it is my responsibility to see that decorum is maintained. To do that I ask that:

- i. All committee participants request to speak through the chair.
- ii. Civility towards others is maintained as committee participants share perspectives and participate in discussion.
- iii. Staff are able to submit objective reports without influence or pressure as their work is acknowledged and appreciated.
- iv. Committee participants refrain from personal inflammatory or accusatory language or action.
- v. Committee participants present themselves in a professional and courteous manner.

Please see reverse for the Purpose/Function and Power and Duties of this Committee.

1. Items for Approval

None

2. Discussion Items

None

3. Information Items

- 3.1 Supporting the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) Priorities Well-being and Connections: Equity and Anti-Oppression Update
- 3.2 Digital Literacy Update
- 3.3 Elementary Arts Education: Fine and Performing Arts Update
- 3.4 Academic Achievement and Excellence

Presenters

Maureen McRae-Stanger, Associate Superintendent
Ricardo Lopez, Director of Instruction
Christopher Wong, Director of Instruction
Pedro da Silva, Associate Superintendent
Shannon Burton Director of Instruction
Eartha Ann Hanson, District Arts Teacher
Alison Ogden, Associate Superintendent
Ranjit Bains Director of Instruction

Education Plan Committee

C. Responsibilities:

- C.1 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding matters related to the development and implementation of the Education Plan.
- C.2 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding the annual Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Report.
- C.3 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding proposed Board Authority Authorized Courses.
- C.4 Review and make recommendations regarding the implementation and cessation of District programs.
- C.5 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding annual school learning plans.
- C.6 Review and make recommendations to the Board regarding school calendars.
- C.7 Review matters referred to the Committee by the Board and make recommendations as requested.

June 11, 2025

TO: Education Plan Committee

**FROM: Maureen McRae-Stanger, Associate Superintendent
Ricardo Lopez, Director of Instruction
Christopher Wong, Director of Instruction**

**RE: Supporting the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) Priorities
Well-Being and Connections: Equity and Anti-Oppression Update**

*Reference to
[Education Plan](#)*

**GOALS AND
OBJECTIVES:**

- Goal 1: The Vancouver School Board will improve achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging by...
- Improving school environments to ensure they are safe, caring, welcoming, and inclusive places for students and families.
 - Ensuring the alignment among school, district, and provincial education plans.
- Goal 2: The Vancouver School Board will increase equity by...
- Eliminating racism and discrimination in all forms.
 - Evaluating and renewing plans for the improvement of Indigenous learners' education.
- Goal 3: The Vancouver School Board will continue its Reconciliation journey with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit by...
- Increasing knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions.
 - Aligning 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.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education and Child Care's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) supports a shared commitment to improve the equity of learning outcomes for every student in British Columbia. Each district in the province is required to use the FESL planning structure to analyze district and school data to make evidence informed decisions that are responsive to the needs of students. VSB's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Annual Report, approved by the Board of Education and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Child Care in September, identified four areas of focus to support student success:

- Supporting Literacy and Numeracy Proficiency
- Quality Instruction and Assessment
- Support for Priority Learners
- Well-Being and Connections

This report and subsequent presentation at the Education Plan Committee will address our current work within the FESL priority area of Well-Being and Connections, specifically the work of the Equity and Anti-Oppression (EAO) team.

The EAO team supports the Vancouver School Board (VSB) in fostering equitable and inclusive learning environments. Composed of educators and district leaders, the team offers both strategic guidance and practical support to integrate equity and anti-oppression practices throughout schools and the broader education system.

Through targeted initiatives, the EAO team works to dismantle systemic barriers and promote inclusive practices that honor and reflect the diverse identities of students, staff, and families. These efforts address immediate needs while also building long-term capacity for equity-centered leadership and culturally responsive teaching.

Collaboration is at the heart of the team's approach. By partnering with school and district staff, the EAO team emphasizes that equity and anti-oppression are collective responsibilities. Together, they cultivate school cultures rooted in dignity, justice, and belonging—where every individual is respected, valued, and empowered to thrive.

EDUCATION PLANNING

Over the past year, we have advanced our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through a range of initiatives.

At the core of this work is the Equity & Anti-Oppression (EAO) Framework, which cultivates culturally responsive learning environments that honor diversity and foster a sense of belonging. The framework emphasizes the importance of engaging with diverse perspectives, developing cognitive complexity, enhancing cultural awareness, understanding intersectionality, and challenging stereotypes. These principles are integrated into student-centered, inquiry-based practices that promote accountability and inspire meaningful, action-oriented learning.

This year was marked by powerful student-led initiatives and meaningful educator collaboration. A standout event was the Student-Led DEI Youth Conference, which featured student-organized workshops and inspiring guest speakers. Student voices were further amplified through events like *Use All the Colours* and the *Day of Pink*, where learners shared their insights and personal perspectives.

A highlight included Daniel Gallardo's compelling talk on gender expression and inquiry. Additionally, students from Tyee Elementary reflected on the theme of joy as a source of resilience. In celebration of Asian Heritage Month, students conducted interviews with Canadian Senators, contributing to national conversations on identity and inclusion.

Educators played a pivotal role in advancing equity and inclusion. The SOGI District Resource Team collaborated with teachers to develop equity-focused resource kits. District literacy specialists supported teams in exploring diverse educational materials, enhanced by visuals like book covers and instructional tools.

To support ongoing professional learning, the district introduced "Learning Burst" videos—short clips designed for staff meetings that spark dialogue on equity and anti-oppression, each accompanied by discussion prompts.

More information about this work will be shared through a presentation to the committee, which will highlight the initiatives and impact of the Equity and Anti-Oppression team throughout the year.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information.

June 11, 2025

TO: Education Plan Committee

FROM: Pedro da Silva, Associate Superintendent

RE: Digital Literacy Update

*Reference to
Education Plan*

**GOALS AND
OBJECTIVES:**

- Goal 1: The Vancouver School Board will improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging by...
- Encouraging students to reach beyond previous boundaries in knowledge and experience.
 - Improving school environments to ensure they are safe, caring, welcoming and inclusive places for students and families.

INTRODUCTION

Digital literacy is a vital competency for students in today's technology-driven world. As digital tools and platforms become increasingly integrated into both educational settings and daily life, it is essential that students develop not only the technical skills to navigate these tools but also the critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and communication skills necessary to use them responsibly and effectively.

Aligned with the goals of the Education Plan—to improve student achievement and foster inclusive, safe, and caring school environments—this report outlines the district's current and emerging work in digital literacy. It highlights the efforts of staff to support both students and colleagues, promote responsible technology use across our schools, and reflect on how this work intersects with broader initiatives such as personal digital device (PDD) restrictions, the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in education, and the supports currently in place.

This report is provided for information.

BACKGROUND

The Board has taken meaningful steps to advance digital literacy through two key motions.

In April 2024, the Board approved dedicated funding for one full-time Digital Literacy Mentor Teacher and one full-time Cybersecurity and AI Specialist. This investment reinforces the Board's strategic commitment to strengthening digital competencies, ensuring online safety, and supporting privacy compliance for both staff and students.

Building on this foundation, the Board passed a second motion on June 10, 2024, titled *"Promoting Focused Learning Environments and Online Safety."* This motion directed the Superintendent to update school Codes of Conduct to align with provincial mandates on personal digital device use, implement clear usage guidelines, and establish a process to guide ongoing improvements.

Together, these motions reflect the Board's proactive approach to embedding digital literacy and responsible technology use across the district.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the Education Plan Committee with an update on ongoing initiatives related to digital literacy, highlighting key developments across three strategic focus areas: Professional Learning, AI Integration, and Personal Digital Device (PDD) Restrictions.

- 1. Professional Learning**

The Vancouver School Board (VSB) continues to strengthen digital literacy through the support of a dedicated mentor teacher, curated learning resources, and professional development aligned with the BC curriculum.

- 2. AI Integration**

A multi-year strategy for artificial intelligence is in progress, grounded in principles of transparency and student-centered design. Educators are being equipped with curated tools and targeted training, while AI literacy is being embedded into existing digital learning frameworks.

- 3. Personal Digital Device Restrictions**

New PDD guidelines limit student device use during instructional hours to enhance focus and well-being. Exceptions are made for educational purposes and Individual Education Plans (IEP)s. Feedback from students, staff, and families has been collected to assess the impact of these changes and identify areas requiring continued support.

A supporting PowerPoint presentation will be shared with the Education Plan Committee to provide further detail on the Professional Learning and AI Integration components.

KEY FINDINGS - PERSONAL DIGITAL DEVICE RESTRICTIONS

In July 2024, in alignment with the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's requirements and to foster a safe and focused learning environment, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) updated its Student Code of Conduct to restrict students' use of personal digital devices (PDDs), such as cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices.

At VSB elementary schools, students must keep their personal digital devices turned off and out of sight from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In secondary schools, the same expectation applies during instructional time. Use of these devices is permitted only for educational purposes when directed by an educator or as outlined in a student's IEP.

Each school was given the flexibility to add specific guidelines to support the implementation of this change. At the Board's request, the district engaged students, staff, and families to evaluate the impact of the new restrictions and to explore opportunities for improvement and resource allocation. These efforts align with broader goals of enhancing digital literacy and fluency.

The first phase began with a district-wide survey of students and staff. To build on the survey findings, focus groups were held to explore key themes in greater depth. Throughout this process, student voice and agency consistently emerged as central priorities. To further elevate student perspectives, the Vancouver District Students' Council (VDSC) was invited to engage students directly and gather input on how best to support them in their use of personal digital devices.

Phase 1: Staff and Student Survey

Conducted from January 22 to February 28, 2025, the survey aimed to assess the impact of the PDD restrictions on students, classrooms, and learning since their implementation in September 2024.

Participation Overview

A total of 5,357 individuals responded to the survey:

- 423 elementary students
- 4,346 secondary students
- 306 elementary staff
- 282 secondary staff

Survey Findings

Student Learning & Well-being

When asked about their feelings toward the new PDD restrictions, 65% of respondents (Q1) expressed neutral or positive sentiments. This suggests a general acceptance of the changes, with many viewing them as beneficial or at least non-disruptive. While not universally praised, the overall tone indicates openness or approval from both students and staff.

Staff Perspectives

Staff reported several positive outcomes:

- 61% (Q12) observed improved student engagement during class.
- 40% (Q14) noted a reduction in the need to address device-related issues.
- 70% (Q15) felt the restrictions contributed to a better learning environment.

Student Perspectives

Students indicated that their device usage at school either remained the same or decreased. Many reported improved focus during class. However, only a small percentage felt safer (7%, Q6) or experienced reduced stress or anxiety (Q7) due to the changes. While the restrictions support classroom focus, their impact on students' sense of safety and well-being appears limited.

Suggestions from students and staff

Feedback from students and staff highlighted several areas for improvement:

- Clearer communication: Better explanations of the purpose and goals of the restrictions are needed to foster understanding and support.
- Digital literacy education: Students emphasized learning how to use devices safely and effectively.
- Professional development: Staff requested training and resources on digital literacy, online safety, and media literacy.
- Consistent messaging: Suggestions included posters, newsletter items, and teacher talking points to ensure alignment across schools.
- Community partnerships: Respondents recommended inviting guest speakers on topics such as cyberbullying, social media, AI, and gaming.
- Family supports: Workshops and resource lists were encouraged.
- Equitable access to technology: There was a strong call to ensure all students have fair access to digital tools.

Key Takeaways

- Improve consistency and clarity of communications
- Increase professional development and resources
- Leverage external expertise through partnerships
- Enhance equitable access to technology

Phase 2: Focus Groups

A coordinated effort with VDSC involved conducting focus groups at each secondary school to gather student voice. The focus was on student safety and self-regulation—two main themes from the Staff and Student survey. Students acknowledged the need to learn self-control and made suggestions about how, when, and where this learning could take place. They also shared ideas on how schools and teachers could improve safety (See Attachment A for VDSC feedback).

Meanwhile, elementary and secondary administrators, along with other staff, reflected on the early impacts of the PDD restrictions—discussing what’s working, what isn’t, and what support is needed moving forward. They reported noticeable improvements in student behaviour and engagement since the restrictions were implemented, though students’ sense of online safety remained largely unchanged. Staff highlighted the clarity of Ministry expectations and the support from the Digital Literacy Mentor Teacher as particularly helpful. However, they noted that the effectiveness of school-based restrictions is limited, as many online safety challenges occur outside the school environment. To strengthen impact, staff recommended introducing digital literacy instruction before students receive PDDs, involving families and communities in online safety efforts, engaging students as peer leaders, continuing professional learning for staff, maintaining open dialogue across school levels, and providing consistent communication materials for families.

In parallel, VSB Communications engaged families through VSB Voices to gather their perspectives, ensuring that family voices are also part of the ongoing review and refinement of the PDD restrictions. Survey feedback indicates that most families have a child who owns a personal digital device, and the majority of those children bring their devices to school daily. While most respondents found the VSB’s procedure on personal digital devices clear, many suggested improving communication of the guidelines and expectations to staff, families, and students. Respondents also identified a need for stronger enforcement and expressed interest in more education for students on online safety. Over half believed the procedure has positively impacted student learning and engagement, though fewer felt it had improved online safety.

CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Education and Child Care introduced Personal Digital Device restrictions with the following goals:

- To reduce distractions in classrooms and support focused learning environments
- To foster online safety
- To promote consistency across the province

One year into implementation, PDD restrictions in Vancouver schools appear to be contributing positively to student engagement and more focused learning environments. However, students’ sense of online safety has not shown the same level of improvement.

Based on survey data, focus group discussions, and work with staff, we recommend continuing with the current restrictions while working toward consistent implementation across the District. Ongoing data collection and engagement in future years will help assess long-term outcomes and provide further insights.

Ongoing Priorities

1. Enhancing Communication Strategies and Materials

- Provide schools with a start-of-year resource package to support digital literacy and PDD implementation, including:
 - *For Families:* Information sessions, newsletter content, and resources on school and District websites
 - *For Staff:* Lesson plans, classroom posters, internal resources, professional development opportunities, and guest speakers

2. Supporting Students and Families

- Offer learning opportunities and resources for families, recognizing that digital well-being is a shared responsibility, especially regarding out-of-school screen time
- Provide age-appropriate learning activities for students that focus on digital literacy, well-being, and online safety
- Facilitate conversations between elementary and secondary students to support a healthy transition from Grade 7 to Grade 8 and the associated PDD expectations

3. Engaging Student Voice and Leadership

- Encourage peer and near-peer mentorship to support Grade 8 students adjusting to secondary-level PDD restrictions

4. Providing Professional Development and Resources

- Equip staff with resources and training focused on digital literacy, well-being, and online safety to support effective implementation of PDD restrictions

5. Promoting Equity and Inclusion in Technology Use

- Remain attentive to how PDD restrictions may impact equity and inclusion across diverse student populations

RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information.

Attachment:

- A. VDSC 2025 Personal Digital Device Feedback Report

2025 Personal Digital Device Feedback Report

This report was compiled by the Vancouver District Student's Council's Senior Executive Team using information provided by members who attend Vancouver School Board secondary schools. Members gathered school-wide feedback from students either through in-person discussions or Microsoft Forms.

Question #1: Given that fostering online safety was one of the reasons the Ministry of Education introduced Personal Digital Device restrictions, what makes you feel unsafe and what can schools and teachers do to make a difference in this area?

The two main concerns that were shared by almost all students were being unable to contact their family in the case of an emergency and having photos posted without their consent.

1. In the case of an emergency, especially if students have to leave the school building, they would not be able to communicate with their family without their device. There was overwhelming feedback against phone "calendars/jails/cubbies" that some teachers make students put their phones in for this reason. Instead, they would feel safer keeping their device with them, even if this means inside of their bag.
2. Students shared that photos and videos being taken of them without consent causes emotional distress as they are taken when they are caught off guard, causing concerns over their image. Often, these photos are shared online for many to see. Students believe that a difference can be made in this area if teachers further enforce regulations, specifically those about taking photos of others within school buildings.

Other concerns that were expressed by many students were online bullying, scam calls, and social media "school confessions" pages.

1. Students noted that online bullying takes place in many forms including spreading rumours on social media, impersonating others, and making threats. Suggestions revolved around the role that teachers can play in supporting students, especially checking in on them, taking their problems seriously, and notifying authorities as needed.
2. Many expressed receiving an unsettling amount of scam calls. As a result, increased education regarding how to identify a scam call and appropriate responses was requested.
3. "School confessions" pages refer to social media accounts that are created by students to post "confessions" that other students at their school have submitted through an anonymous form. Often, these confessions are regarding feelings towards another student, whether positive or negative. Either way, many students do not like the existence of these pages and feel that there is not much done to discourage the creation of the pages and get students to take existing ones down.

Question #2: A number of secondary student survey respondents said “we need to learn to control ourselves” with regards to use of Personal Digital Devices. What do you think and how, when, and where do you see this learning taking place?

Students had mixed responses to the statement “we need to learn how to control ourselves”. Many agreed with the statement, arguing that there will not always be a teacher to restrict them from using their device so they must learn to independently manage its use. However, other students felt that since the teenage brain is still developing, restricting the use of their device in schools is important to ensure a distraction-free learning environment. Ultimately, students want to learn how to “control themselves” and would like to learn how to at school, but there is an acknowledgement that practicing that control does not necessarily need to take place within the school building.

The suggestions for how to make this learning take place are as follows:

1. The majority of students emphasized that this learning needs to start from a young age and be continuous to form good habits. It should start in elementary school and continue throughout secondary school with more than one lesson each year.
2. Many students believe that learning how to “control themselves” would require a mix of instructional lessons regarding the responsible use of devices and the developmental harms of improper use along with opportunities for goal-setting and reflection. As a result, it is suggested that at the secondary school level, this learning can take place during Flexible Instructional Time (FIT) through similar structures as FIT for Learning sessions and Core-Competency goal-setting and reflections.
3. Some students shared that the learning can also be on how to use devices in ways that are beneficial, not just how to effectively restrict its use. A key suggestion under this point was the inclusion of artificial intelligence in schoolwork.
4. There was an acknowledgement that individual students may struggle more than others. Students stated that if needed, individual students should be worked with directly to support them in their learning journey.

June 11, 2025

TO: Education Plan Committee

FROM: Shannon Burton, Director of Instruction
Maureen McRae-Stanger, Associate Superintendent

RE: Elementary Arts Education: Fine and Performing Arts Update

*Reference to
Education Plan*

**GOALS AND
OBJECTIVES:**

- Goal 1: The Vancouver School Board will improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging by...
- Encouraging students to reach beyond previous boundaries in knowledge and experience.
 - Increasing literacy, numeracy, and deep, critical, and creative thinking.
- Goal 2: The Vancouver School Board will increase equity by...
- Improving stewardship of the district's resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.
- Goal 3: The Vancouver School Board will continue its Reconciliation journey with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit by ...
- Increasing knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions.

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the progress made in Fine and Performing Arts and supports the ongoing implementation of the Elementary Music Review. The report is provided for information.

BACKGROUND

During the 2019/2020 budget consultation process, the equitable provision of comprehensive music programming across elementary schools was identified as a priority.

John White was engaged to conduct a review which was completed in April 2020. [The Elementary Music Review](#) was presented to the Student Learning and Well-Being Committee on June 10, 2020.

The Elementary Music Program Review generated four recommendations:

1. Establish a Shared Mission, Vision, and Strategic Directions
2. Develop a Plan to Realize the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Directions
3. Actualize the Vision and Achieve the Goals
4. Resources – Instructional Space, Classroom Resources, Leadership

The implementation of the recommendations commenced in the 2020-2021 school year with the completion of recommendation 1. Updates regarding progress in the other three recommendations have been provided at the May 2023, November 2023 and March 2024 Education Plan Committee Meetings.

ONGOING WORK TO SUPPORT MUSIC REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION

The ongoing work to support the music review implementation includes several key initiatives. These initiatives aim to ensure that music education is accessible to every student and to provide resources for elementary schools without music specialists. Efforts are being made to recapture space for music activities where possible and to continue partnerships that enhance the delivery of the music curriculum in schools. Support is being provided through professional learning and resources to both music specialists and general educators in their efforts to support music education effectively. Additionally, there is ongoing recruitment of qualified music educators. The district will continue to work toward ongoing implementation of the music review recommendations within the limitations of staffing, space and budgets.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS - FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGHLIGHTS

During the 2023/2024 budget process, Trustees approved the addition of a Fine and Performing Arts position. This District Arts teacher role is dedicated to K-12 arts education across the district, which includes supporting teachers to deliver the music, visual arts, drama and dance curriculum. The addition of this position aligns with a recommendation from the music review that the district explore, “strategic directions for other visual and performing arts disciplines, including dance, drama, and visual arts” (p. 24). With the addition of the District Arts K-12 teacher role, work to support all aspects of the arts has begun and is being prioritized. The Fine and Performing Arts Working Group established in 2022 has met once this year. Moving forward, this group, comprised of music focused stakeholders, will be expanded to include representation from all areas of arts education. The group will meet again in the upcoming school year.

There are many highlights to share with regards to the fine and performing arts this year. All schools without music specialists were provided with musical instruments selected by the school. Each of the 87 elementary schools also received a MusicplayOnline license to support music education for all students, which will continue next year. The District Arts teacher has helped support the use of these instruments within the educational environment. Additionally, connections from the District Arts teacher were established to assist schools both with and without music specialists. There were ongoing professional learning opportunities in various arts education areas throughout the year. Additionally, a music inventory system and share-out was made available for use by educators. District arts kits, such as clay kits, soundscape kits, and Orff kits, were created for use across the district to enrich the arts education experience.

NEXT STEPS

We will re-visit the current mission, vision, and strategic goals from the music review and update it in relation to all aspects of the arts. We will also continue to support the dedicated work of our teachers in delivering the visual arts, music, dance, and drama curriculum to inspire and educate VSB students.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information.

June 11, 2025

TO: Education Plan Committee

FROM: Alison Ogden, Associate Superintendent
Ranjit Bains, Director of Instruction

RE: Academic Achievement and Excellence

*Reference to
Education Plan*

**GOALS AND
OBJECTIVES:**

- Goal 1: The Vancouver School Board will improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging by...
- Encouraging students to reach beyond previous boundaries in knowledge and experience.
 - Increasing literacy, numeracy, and deep, critical, and creative thinking.
 - Ensuring that students develop and can implement a plan for a successful transition upon completion of secondary school.
- Goal 2: The Vancouver School Board will increase equity by ...
- Eliminating gaps in achievement and outcomes among students.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2024, the Board approved a motion directing staff to investigate avenues to strengthen academic achievement and excellence at its secondary schools, and report back to the Board with recommendations on how to move forward no later than June 2025.

This report outlines key findings and proposed directions for action aimed at strengthening academic achievement and excellence in our secondary schools.

This report is presented for information.

BACKGROUND

When providing direction to staff, the Board acknowledged the historical significance of honours classes in offering rigorous academic opportunities, while also recognizing the need to reimagine what academic excellence looks like within the framework of British Columbia's redesigned curriculum. This shift reflects a broader understanding of excellence—one that values inclusive, equitable learning environments and diverse pathways to success. The Vancouver School Board continues to see strong performance in student achievement and well-being, with literacy and numeracy results for resident students consistently exceeding provincial averages across grades 10 and 12.

However, despite these positive trends, achievement gaps remain for priority learners, including students with disabilities or diverse abilities, Indigenous students, and Children and Youth in Care as identified in the September 2024 [VSBC Enhancing Student Learning Report](#). As such, academic excellence must be reframed not only as high performance but also as a commitment to equity. This includes improving outcomes for all students, particularly those historically underserved, and taking deliberate action to dismantle systemic barriers. Excellence, in this context, becomes a shared responsibility to ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

KEY FINDINGS

VSB secondary schools are committed to providing challenging and stimulating learning environments that support the success of every student. Across all classes, educators design instruction that not only meets academic standards but also embraces the diverse learning needs of students. Through inclusive practices, differentiated instruction, and a focus on student engagement, schools foster environments where learners are encouraged to think critically, explore creatively, and grow confidently. This commitment ensures that all students—regardless of background, ability, or learning style—have access to meaningful and enriching educational experiences that prepare them for future success.

Building on this inclusive and student-centered approach, VSB schools also offer flexible pathways for academic acceleration. The current British Columbia curriculum is designed to be flexible and inclusive, providing educators with the tools and frameworks needed to tailor instruction to a wide spectrum of diverse learners—supporting personalized, competency-based learning that reflects students’ individual strengths, needs, and interests. Any student can advance more quickly through their studies, regardless of whether they have a Ministry of Education and Child Care inclusive education designation. For example, in a semester model, students may complete two grade levels of a course within a single school year. Additionally, summer learning opportunities allow students to earn credits toward graduation outside the traditional school calendar. With these options, students have the opportunity to graduate in less than five years, provided they complete the [required 80 credits](#) for a Dogwood diploma.

In addition to the possibility of accelerated learning, secondary schools offer a broad spectrum of academic excellence opportunities -both in and out of the classroom. Just over 20% of all secondary students are enrolled in formal enrichment opportunities such as mini school programming, Advanced Placement courses, French Immersion, Mandarin Bilingual and International Baccalaureate programming.

Sixteen of eighteen high schools operate a [mini school program](#), enrolling a total of 2,407 students. These mini school programs provide enrichment opportunities for highly motivated students who are Vancouver residents, consistently working at a proficient level and seeking a challenge.

International Baccalaureate (IB) programs are offered at Britannia and Churchill Secondary schools, with Britannia enrolling 39 students and Churchill enrolling 159 students in the IB program. The IB Programme is a globally recognized two-year educational program for students in grades 11 and 12 that emphasizes academic rigor, critical thinking, and international-mindedness.

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are available at eleven schools as well as at the Vancouver Learning Network (VLN), VSB’s Provincial Online Learning School. AP courses are high school classes that offer university-level curriculum and assessments, giving students the opportunity to challenge themselves academically. By successfully completing AP courses and exams, students can earn credit or advanced standing at many colleges and universities. In the 2024–2025 school year, there are 1316 course enrollments in AP courses in VSB schools. VLN, the only BC public online school offering AP courses, has 170 students actively participating.

French Immersion programs run at three secondary schools (Churchill, Kitsilano, and Vancouver Technical) enrolling 1,402 students in total. Mandarin Bilingual is offered at Hamber and Windermere and enrolls a total of 66 students.

All eighteen schools run math contests, offer Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) courses, run a variety of student clubs, offer field studies, bring in guest speakers, and participate in FIT for Learning monthly webinars. They also engage in Career Education/Capstone, Core Competencies, Athletics, Arts, and demonstrate a strong commitment to Indigenous education and Truth and Reconciliation.

Nearly all schools (about 83%) run English and science contests, offer international field trips, and implement unique school-wide initiatives. 61% of schools run social studies contests and participate in Skills Canada competitions in Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies (ADST).

Several schools provide work experience and mentorship opportunities with industry partners through the Career Life Connections (CLC)/Capstone course. Partnerships include collaborations with UBC Sauder School of Business and the VCC Cooking program, and project-based learning with the SFU Math Department. Community partnerships are also strong, such as work with Indigenous artists and neighbourhood houses.

Student leadership is fostered through various formal enrolling courses (e.g. Link Crew, New Faces Leaders, etc.), grant projects, clubs, district-wide student conferences (e.g. Diversity Equity and Inclusion conference, Sustainability conference), the Indigenous Youth Leadership group, school-based student councils and Vancouver District Student Council.

In addition to the survey of formal and informal academic excellence opportunities outlined above, District staff engaged students from diverse cultural backgrounds and learning programs (mainstream, choice, and English Language Learner (ELL)) across grades 8–12 in round table conversations. Students were asked: “What does academic excellence mean to you?”, “How are you challenged in your courses?”, and “What types of academically challenging opportunities would you like to see?” Students emphasized the importance of challenge, choice, and relevance in learning. They expressed a desire for enriched programming, deeper learning, and recognition of diverse pathways to excellence. Project-based and collaborative learning, paired with descriptive feedback, were identified as key to their growth. Students appreciated enrichment opportunities through clubs, contests, and competitions, and highlighted the importance of creative arts and physical activity in supporting their well-being and academic success. They also valued partnerships with community organizations such as neighbourhood houses and community centres.

Equity and inclusion were identified as essential to ensuring all learners can access excellence. This includes addressing systemic barriers, ensuring culturally responsive pedagogy, and embedding Indigenous ways of knowing across the curriculum. Students emphasized that academic excellence must be pursued alongside well-being and belonging and noted that additional costs (e.g., exam and resource fees) can be a barrier. Uneven access across schools to course selection and scheduling constraints were also identified by students as barriers to accessing excellence-oriented programming.

The pursuit of academic excellence in VSB secondary schools must be grounded in a deep commitment to equity and inclusion. As the findings in the survey of formal and informal opportunities and student voices make clear, excellence cannot be defined solely by academic metrics—it must also reflect the diverse strengths, interests, and identities of all learners.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the key findings, the following are next steps that will strengthen pathways to academic achievement and excellence and ensure secondary schools continue to provide a challenging learning environment that meets the unique needs and capabilities of all students within the current curriculum.

1. Define excellence in a way that reflects VSB’s values of equity, inclusion, and student agency
 - The definition should embrace a broad understanding of achievement that includes academic, artistic, athletic, and leadership pathways.

2. Expand Enrichment and Acceleration Opportunities
 - School principals should continue to have the flexibility to allocate resources and schedule classes based on the unique needs of their student populations.
 - Increase access to advanced coursework, interdisciplinary projects, mentorship programs and career and work exploration programs.
 - To ensure equitable access, include VLN's AP course offerings and Youth Train in Trades pathways in all secondary school course planning information, making these opportunities visible and accessible to all students.
3. Enhance Data and Evaluation
 - Track student participation and outcomes in excellence-related programs, disaggregated by demographic indicators, to identify gaps and ensure equitable access.
4. Engage Community and Post-Secondary Partners
 - Deepen VSB engagement with community and post-secondary partners to broaden opportunities and support student transitions beyond secondary school. Expanding these types of partnerships can provide students with real-world learning experiences, mentorship, and clearer pathways to post-secondary education and careers.
5. Provide Supports for Professional Learning for Educators
 - Provide learning opportunities that support the design and facilitation of real-world, inquiry-driven learning experiences to enhance student engagement and deepen critical and creative thinking (e.g. Universal Design for Learning, differentiated instruction, and culturally responsive pedagogy).
 - Provide opportunities for educators to collaborate with colleagues, post-secondary institutions, and community partners to expand their capacity to offer enriched and accelerated learning pathways.

Staff will proceed with the implementation of the outlined next steps in the 2025–2026 school year.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information.