



Memorandum

vancouver school board



ITEM

September 5, 2014

TO: Education and Student Services - Committee III

FROM: Maureen Ciarniello, Associate Superintendent
Jessica Land, Supervisor Enhanced Support

RE: **Update on the Implementation of the Recommendations in the Re-visioning Inner City and CommunityLINK Resources report**

Background

In March 2014 the Board adopted the Final Report for Re-visioning Inner City and CommunityLINK Resources in Vancouver Schools which contained a number of recommendations for implementation over two school years from 2014-2015 through to 2015-2016. This report provides an update on progress to date and pending implementation plans.

Status of Implementation of Recommendations

Since the March adoption of the report, a number of the recommendations have been addressed or are underway. As noted in the report, 'what works' in terms of supporting children who are disadvantaged due to poverty, include these major areas: literacy, including early learning and early intervention; social emotional growth, including resiliency building; parent involvement; attendance, and community connections.

A major aspect of the work this year will be to develop a focused district and school-based strategy to provide supports to these students, and to develop the key measures, targets, and strategies related to the major areas, in order to provide ongoing monitoring and review of the impact of the supports. This includes the important task of realigning the goals of the work by CommunityLINK and Enhanced Support staff, as well as examining where these services intersect with other district-based supports to schools such as Aboriginal Education staff, and Special Education staff.

Continuing to grow the connections between community organizations and schools will remain a key strategy of the work, as well.

Actions: March 2014 – September 2014

- Providing support to tiered schools (recommendation 1)
 - o Schools formerly in the Inner City Project continue to maintain staffing for 2014-15 year as consultation begins for 2015-2016 staffing configuration and levels, with the exception of these immediate changes:
 - Brock Elementary was no longer indicated as a school with a high number of students with complex needs as determined by the review. To facilitate a less abrupt transition, Brock retained one of their (former) Inner City staffing allocations, and the remaining FTE was assigned to Roberts Elementary – 1.0 SSA for Kindergarten support, and to Fleming Elementary - .6 teacher. Both of these schools were identified as being part of the Tier 3 schools list for September 2015.
 - o SSA assignment to Kindergarten classes in Tier 1 schools
 - A number of positions have been filled for September 2014. Not every K class has been assigned an SSA yet, due to difficulty with filling positions with candidates who have both ECE and SPED qualifications
 - o Pilot Summer Early Learning Program (See Appendix 1 for details)
- Staffing:
 - o Hired both the Supervisor – Enhanced Support, Learning Services, and CUPE position for coordination and support for schools. (recommendation 3)
 - o Discontinued Community School Teacher positions as of June 2014. Defined the newly created position of Transition Teacher, posted positions and hired three staff effective September 1, 2014. (recommendation 9)
 - o Assigned additional counsellor to Britannia Secondary School for September 2014. (recommendation 10)
- VSB to have an active role in the place-based work underway in neighbourhood of Strathcona and Seymour (recommendation 2)
 - o Continue to work on the “Graduation Strategy” with Our Place Partners which includes the implementation of the Pathways Program.
 - o Work with RICHER and VCH to implement Summer Support for School Success Project (Appendix 2)

Actions: September – Dec. 2014

- Establish Committee for Implementation and Monitoring of Enhanced Support (recommendation 11)
- Begin review of school meal programs to align with tiers and to explore additional service models to support schools not provided the enhanced support.(recommendation 4)
- Develop clear goals, specific outcomes, and targets with timelines for monitoring impact and success of the enhanced supports, on student academic and social/emotional health. (recommendation 5)

- It is a requirement of CommunityLINK funding to have a logic model outlining impacts and indicators of success. Staff has begun to draft possible outcomes and targets. These will be reviewed and revised through discussion within each Tiered school context and setting, as well as within schools receiving CommunityLINK and Transitional Teacher support for vulnerable students.
- There will be further review with the Enhanced Support Schools Implementation and Monitoring Committee in planning for the 2015-16 service model
 - Areas of focus will include literacy, social/emotional growth, parent engagement, attendance, community connectedness, among others.
- Consult with community agencies, families and schools on the viability of Junior Kindergarten or other early learning supports. (recommendation 1)

Actions: January – September 2015

Staffing:

- Develop staffing model for Sept. 2015, based on providing service and supports directly related to the identified goals, targets and outcomes, including:
 - Defining role and responsibilities of Literacy Teacher positions. Work with HR and VESTA to articulate the position details in terms of collective agreement provisions. (recommendation 1)
 - Realign the role of Youth and Family Worker to work directly with other enhanced staffing in the identified schools. (recommendation 8)
 - Refocusing of Community Schools Coordinator position (recommendation 7)

Recording and reporting:

- Develop a template for the annual report for the Enhanced Support Schools goals, to be integrated with School Growth Plans and CommunityLINK reporting requirements.
- Implement a system for tracking progress of vulnerable students as identified through the case management process. (recommendation 6)

Ongoing

- That the Board continue to advocate for a poverty reduction plan in British Columbia and for adequate funding in education. (recommendation 12)
 - Continued work through Board Advocacy Committee and other Board communication and decision-making structures

This report is presented for information purposes.

APPENDIX 1

Report on Summer 2014 Early Learning Program

Background

The Inner City / CommunityLINK Revisioning final report identified a trend toward children entering Kindergarten less prepared for school than in previous years. As well, the newest wave of EDI data has shown an increase in the vulnerability of Kindergarten aged children in Vancouver - particularly in the areas of language, communications and social competence.

Faced with these challenges, many agencies identified a more urgent need to work with preschool students prior to their entry to kindergarten. The summer prior to Kindergarten entry provided a natural opportunity to offer targeted programming to incoming Kindergarten students and their families.

Purpose

Building on the proven effectiveness and success of the Learning Partnership's "Welcome to Kindergarten" (WTK) program; the Summer Early Learning program was developed together with the Learning Partnership staff. The purpose was to promote Kindergarten readiness including the development of independence and social skills such as sharing and turn taking. The program emphasis was on play based learning; the importance of parent involvement; social emotional development, and community connectedness.

Partners

- Vancouver Children's First – MCFD
- Vancouver Board of Education
- Little Mountain Neighbourhood House
- The Learning Partnership
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Vancouver Public Library

Program Summary

Funding:

Vancouver Children's First program (MCFD) was able to provide seed funding for the pilot so that it was available at no-cost to parents and children who participated.

Recruitment of Participants:

The partners agreed to provide information on the summer program to parents through a number of different venues, including at the WTK school events in the spring, through StrongStart Facilitators, and through Little Mountain Neighbourhood House (LMNNH) staff. Families self-referred to the program and the school principal reviewed the referrals, giving priority to those children with the least amount of exposure to early learning opportunities.

Program Details:

The Summer Early Learning Program was piloted at Mackenzie Elementary in the summer of 2014. The program ran in the mornings for 10 sessions during the 2nd two weeks of July for 2.5 hours a day. There were 14 referred children (3 girls and 11 boys) who were registered to enter Kindergarten in September 2014. The children attended the program without their parent or caregiver. Parent /Caregivers were required to attend the last fifteen minutes of each session where key messages were delivered. Each session provided an opportunity to share information with parents around school readiness; health information in the areas of social emotional development and immunization; and opportunities for learning and fun in the community. In addition, parents took this opportunity to share relevant information, experiences and challenges with each other.

Program Staff:

The Summer Early Learning Program was staffed by a VBE CUPE (SSA-ECE) worker and a community based Family Support Worker (from Little Mountain Neighbourhood House) along with two John Oliver Secondary students as program volunteers.

Program Observations and Feedback

Observations From Staff

Staff observed that children showed marked improvements from the beginning to the end of the program in the following areas:

- Direction following – simple one step directions were difficult on the first day of program yet by day 10 students were able to follow 4 step directions in the form of relay races
- Social play – on day 1 a four person card game with turn taking had to be facilitated by a staff or volunteer and by day 10 students self-initiated the game and managed their own turn taking
- Classroom routine – initially parents entered the classroom with students and hung up their child's backpacks and by day 10 parents waited in the hallway while their child took their jacket off and hung up backpack
- School environment – students became more familiar with the school facilities including the classroom, washrooms, playground and lunchroom

Feedback From Parents

Parents provided the following suggestions for future programs:

- Include recess and lunch because these routines are new to most children
- Invite more speakers for parents e.g.: nutritionist, dental hygienist, school PAC reps etc.
- Increase program duration to at least 3.5 hours per day

“From meeting his future classmates ahead of time, to familiarizing him with the school, to fostering increasing independence in preparation for school, to learning about the typical kindergarten routines, expectations and activities, all of these aspects of the program will reduce many of the anxieties that he may have about starting school and will undoubtedly give him more confidence when he approaches school and learning. We are glad that his first experience with school has been a positive one, in a smaller classroom environment with lots of support from staff and volunteers. What a wonderful way to start his education off on the right track!” – Parent of a participant in the Summer Early Learning Program

Looking Forward

This pilot program has delivered a valuable service to children and families in collaboration with partner community agencies. This model, with relatively minor alterations, could be adapted and delivered in other communities where local agencies have the interest and mandate to partner on early learning initiatives.

It also provided an opportunity for the partner agencies, including the VSB, to consider how this model might be adapted and delivered in future years for some Tiered school neighbourhoods, where similar community services don't already exist. Staff in all the partner agencies are reviewing the pilot to consider whether it might be expanded for summer 2015.

APPENDIX 2

Summer Support for School Success Project

Background

Through the Inner City / CommunityLINK revisioning process, it was noted that many children were arriving in Kindergarten (especially in Tier 1 schools) with limited early learning experiences and some with significant challenges (physical, social emotional, learning etc.) that had not yet been identified by medical or other professionals. Further to this, during board and committee discussions there was considerable concern raised regarding waitlists for assessments once children had entered school. A preemptive strategy to screen children prior to their entry into Kindergarten was proposed to place based partners in the Strathcona community who were more than willing to pilot a new service delivery model. A small amount of funding was provided by VBE for the pilot and substantial in-kind contributions were given from project partners.

Purpose / Scope

To provide family and child friendly general health and wellness screening and assessments to children entering Kindergarten who are planning to attend Strathcona, Macdonald, Britannia and Seymour Elementary Schools or who lived/ attended childcare in these catchment areas.

Partners

- Provincial Health Services Authority:
 - BC Children’s Hospital (RICHER - Responsive Intersectoral Children’s Health, Education and Research Initiative)
 - Sunny Hill Health Center
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Vancouver Board of Education
- Ray-Cam Co-Operative Center
- BC Centre for Ability

Program Summary

Over the months of July and August 2014, 5 full day clinics occurred at 3 locations in the Strathcona and Britannia communities. Each family/child that attended the clinic was offered the following services:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) 3rd Edition¹ – 54 or 60 month screen depending on the age of the child (completed with assistance from Nurse Practitioners and Public Health Nurses). The ASQ is a widely accepted screening tool for early childhood.
- Hearing Screening

¹ <http://agesandstages.com/asq-products/asq-3/>

- Vision Screening
- Dental Screening

If concerns arose during the ASQ screening the child was referred on to see one of the following professionals either the same day or the following week: Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP), Occupational Therapist (OT), General Pediatrician or Developmental Pediatrician. The Developmental Pediatricians attempted to use the Brigance² another widely accepted screening tool for early childhood.

Approximately 30 referrals were received from health care professionals, child care operators, community agencies, school board staff (Principals and Learning Services staff) and through informal community networks for parents. Referrals were managed by RICHER on a first come first serve basis. A total of 18 children were actually seen in the clinic during the 5 week period. RICHER staff are following up on those not seen during the 5 week pilot. All but 3 children of the 18 required some form of follow up referral ranging from dental, audiology, ophthalmology etc.

Parents signed consent forms that allowed for the sharing of information and results with project partners. Schools enrolling any of the 18 children in September 2014 will receive a summary report of the results. Five children were seen by the RICHER Pediatric team presented with significant developmental concerns that will affect their ability to be school ready. Learning Services staff have been advised of these complex cases and have begun planning to ensure adequate supports are in place to receive these children when school begins. This type of information is critical for the students and families to feel comfortable attending school and for schools to be able to operate in a supportive manner for students with developmental concerns.

Observations and Feedback

Parents really appreciated having the dental, vision and hearing screenings available in a 'one stop' venue and these services proved to be an excellent way to break the ice with parents or children who were nervous about medical interventions. Parents also commented that it was great to have snacks and gift bags for the children.

The medical professionals stated that the unique collaborative nature of these pilot clinics has paved the way for future partnerships to address the screening / assessment needs of children entering Kindergarten and possibly older school aged children / youth.

VBE staff from Learning Services believe the reports going to schools will be very helpful especially for the more complex cases.

² http://www.cscinc.org/wp-content/resource_pdfs/Informational%20sheet%20for%20The%20BRIGANCE%20ECDI%20-%20Pre-Kindergarten.pdf

Some improvements could be made around the appointment booking for families, scheduling of professionals, larger spaces for assessments and a more robust referral process. General time constraints and the provincial education labour dispute also contributed to challenges faced around referrals and access to school spaces.

Looking Forward

At a recent project debrief session, the partner team members expressed a willingness to work towards a similar clinic style multi-service delivery model for next year. They suggest that planning start late fall 2014 in order to have clinics operating over spring break and June 2015.

Appendix 3

Advisory Committee Representation and Terms of Reference

DRAFT

Representation:

CUPE
DPAC
VESTA
VSTA
VEPVPA
VASSA
Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP)
MCFD
Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society
Vancouver City
VCH
VCH – Mental Health
Vancouver Parks and Recreation
VPD
Ministry for Children and Families
Ministry of Housing and Social Development
PASA
Trustee Liaison
Supervisor Enhanced Supports
Associate Superintendent

Draft Terms of Reference

- Review and monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the Final Report for Re-visioning Inner City and CommunityLINK Resources in Vancouver Schools during the two-year transition period from 2014-15 to 2015-16.
- Review, monitor and provide advice to the Board on the goals, indicators, measures and outcomes for students in the schools receiving enhanced supports related to the identified areas. (i.e. literacy, social/emotional growth, parent engagement, attendance, food security, and community connectedness)
- Liaise with municipal and provincial governmental organizations, health services, and community-based service providers and organizations to share information and create stronger connections.
- Advocate for services in support of vulnerable children through the representatives' respective organizations.

The committee will meet 4-5x annually during the implementation period, and 3x annually for subsequent years.

Appendix 4

Schools Requiring Enhanced Supports

2014 - 2019

Tier 1 Schools

Macdonald Elementary
Strathcona Community Elementary
Grandview Elementary
Seymour Elementary
Britannia Community Elementary
Thunderbird Elementary

Tier 2 Schools

Queen Alexandra Elementary
Tillicum Community Annex
Hastings Community Elementary

Tier 3 Schools

Nightingale Elementary
Selkirk Elementary
Cook Elementary
Fleming Elementary
Henderson Elementary
Roberts Elementary

In Transition from Inner City identification (former):

Mount Pleasant Elementary
Brock Elementary

Note that determinants of school population vulnerability will be reviewed annually and services may be adjusted over the 5 year period.