

June 2010

SuperBulletin – Summertime



Dear Parents and Staff,

*When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary;
When troubles come and my heart burdened be;
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence,
Until you come and sit awhile with me.*

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas;
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders;
You raise me up... To more than I can be.*

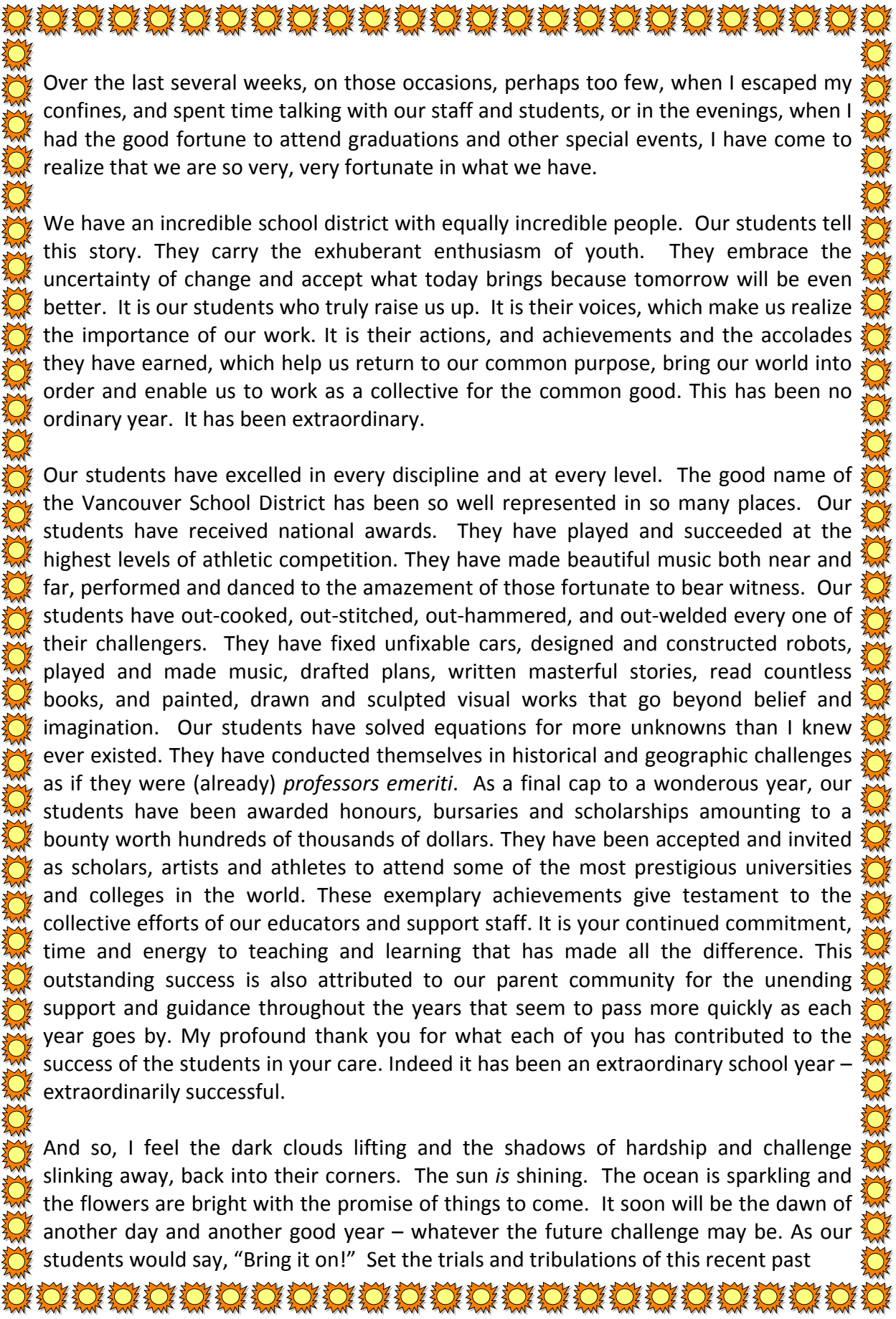
You raise me up... To more than I can be.

Brendan Graham

As the excitement and melodies of graduation fade away, they signal the passage of time and the close of another chapter in our lives – all of us connected as with a single cause – the success of the children in our care.

I say this as the Sun sets on one more school year. As we intone the goodbyes to those moving to new places, the sad laments for those facing the uncertainty of layoff and changed assignments, and the bittersweet congratulations to friends and colleagues who are retiring. I join with everyone in wishing our colleagues the very best for the future, acknowledging and valuing the tremendous service that they have provided to our system.

I hope you have had a very good year. However, this has been no ordinary year. As another once said, "This is not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure... it has turned out to be an *Annus Horribilis*." In fact, it has taken me a while to write to you. Each time, as I attempted to put pen to paper (fingers to keys), the words of optimism did not come and so I did not, could not write to you. Ensnared as we have been in trying to solve the myriad challenges we have faced in each and every quarter, perhaps we have forgotten what matters... or so I thought. I was wrong. So very wrong...



Over the last several weeks, on those occasions, perhaps too few, when I escaped my confines, and spent time talking with our staff and students, or in the evenings, when I had the good fortune to attend graduations and other special events, I have come to realize that we are so very, very fortunate in what we have.

We have an incredible school district with equally incredible people. Our students tell this story. They carry the exuberant enthusiasm of youth. They embrace the uncertainty of change and accept what today brings because tomorrow will be even better. It is our students who truly raise us up. It is their voices, which make us realize the importance of our work. It is their actions, and achievements and the accolades they have earned, which help us return to our common purpose, bring our world into order and enable us to work as a collective for the common good. This has been no ordinary year. It has been extraordinary.

Our students have excelled in every discipline and at every level. The good name of the Vancouver School District has been so well represented in so many places. Our students have received national awards. They have played and succeeded at the highest levels of athletic competition. They have made beautiful music both near and far, performed and danced to the amazement of those fortunate to bear witness. Our students have out-cooked, out-stitched, out-hammered, and out-welded every one of their challengers. They have fixed unfixable cars, designed and constructed robots, played and made music, drafted plans, written masterful stories, read countless books, and painted, drawn and sculpted visual works that go beyond belief and imagination. Our students have solved equations for more unknowns than I knew ever existed. They have conducted themselves in historical and geographic challenges as if they were (already) *professors emeriti*. As a final cap to a wondrous year, our students have been awarded honours, bursaries and scholarships amounting to a bounty worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. They have been accepted and invited as scholars, artists and athletes to attend some of the most prestigious universities and colleges in the world. These exemplary achievements give testament to the collective efforts of our educators and support staff. It is your continued commitment, time and energy to teaching and learning that has made all the difference. This outstanding success is also attributed to our parent community for the unending support and guidance throughout the years that seem to pass more quickly as each year goes by. My profound thank you for what each of you has contributed to the success of the students in your care. Indeed it has been an extraordinary school year – extraordinarily successful.

And so, I feel the dark clouds lifting and the shadows of hardship and challenge slinking away, back into their corners. The sun *is* shining. The ocean is sparkling and the flowers are bright with the promise of things to come. It soon will be the dawn of another day and another good year – whatever the future challenge may be. As our students would say, “Bring it on!” Set the trials and tribulations of this recent past

aside and look ahead, anticipate the future, and strive with confidence for joy, happiness and success. The hurdles we face are fraught with uncertainty. The changes we see curving over the horizon carry with them purposeful opportunities for even greater choice and flexibility for those whom we serve. It is the personalized agenda of our learners that will carry the day within the 21st Century world in which we find ourselves. We are here to attend to the processes and practices, which help shape their learning. At the end of the day, we live and work together in a community full of optimism and possibility. We have a great system, which provides a teaching and learning environment that, in spite of our difficulties, is second to none.

In closing this extraordinary year, I want to thank *everyone* for the support you give to one another. I wish to offer my sincere thanks for your hard work, time and commitment. I firmly believe that our school district is exceptional. It is so because of the strong culture of caring, common purpose and mutual respect that I see every day. Our district is resilient, vibrant and full of promise – thanks to your collective efforts.

You raise me up... we raise each other up!

My best wishes to everyone for a restful, fun and relaxing summer with family and friends.

Steve.

Steve Cardwell
Superintendent of Schools
Email: scardwell@vsb.bc.ca



*Summertime,
And the livin' is easy
Fish are jumpin'
And the cotton is high*

*One of these mornings
You're going to rise up singing
Then you'll spread your wings
And you'll take to the sky*
George Gershwin

