

EDUCATION AND PROGRAMS STANDING COMMITTEE

NORTH VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Meeting Notes: Tuesday, February 6, 2007

Meeting Attendance:

The Trustees and representatives of DPAC, the NVTAs, CUPE, Elementary Administrators, and Secondary Administrators attended the meeting. The Superintendent and several district staff members also attended. Students participating in agenda item #1 were also present, as were their parents and a number of interested members of the public.

Meeting Notes:

Laptop Projects for Students with Hearing Difficulties

Maureen Clarke, Irene Gutmann, and Rhena Tevendale, District Teachers of Programs for the Hearing Impaired, gave the background and structure of this project, which has involved hearing impaired students in creating PowerPoint presentations which clarify their own disabilities as well as their learning strengths and preferences. Several of the students who have participated in the project shared their PowerPoint presentations with the attendees at the meeting. The students' presentations displayed excellent familiarity with the PowerPoint medium, and strong understanding of the uses of these presentations for self-clarification and for educational self-advocacy. This team of teachers and their students showed evident pride in this innovative and potentially effective approach.

Potential Variation to the Standard School Calendar

The Standard School Calendar is in effect on a yearly basis in all school districts that have not gone through a process during which a variation to the standard calendar is proposed and input is elicited from the various stakeholder groups, followed by the Board voting on the adoption of the proposed variation to the school calendar. North Vancouver School District is currently in the process of considering potential variations to the Standard School Calendar for the 2007-2008 school year. Attendees at the meeting were invited to consider the possibility of adding three days to spring break in 2008 and were invited to provide input regarding the potential for covering the three days in alternative ways during the course of the school year. Attendees worked in table groups to provide input. This was followed by general comments from attendees and a question and answer period.

International Baccalaureate (IB)—A Deeper Look at Educational Aspects of the Program

Mark James, District Principal of Extension Services, and Lisa Upton, Vice Principal of Dorothy Lynas Elementary School provided the meeting with deeper insights into the educational or pedagogical aspects of the International Baccalaureate Program. Ms. Upton particularly stressed the inquiry-based aspects of the Primary Years Program (PYP) and the Middle Years Program (MYP). She displayed a number of methodologies that are currently being practiced by numbers of teachers in the North Vancouver School District, by which students are supported in inquiry-based learning with strong induction of the basic practices of critical thinking. These methods are similar to those practiced within the IB Program. Ms. Upton and Mr. James then provided further information on the various structures and focal points of the curriculum for the three levels (PYP, MYP and DP or Diploma Program) of the International Baccalaureate Program. Lively discussion ensued, with a number of participants urging the School District to set out upon the path toward an IB Program without significant delay.