



NORTH VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 44

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January 5, 2009

To Students, Staff, Parents, and Community Members:

Subject: Welcome to the New Year

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of our students, staff, parents and the community back to school and hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season and survived the snow! I am looking forward to 2009 as your new Board Chair and working collectively with our new Board of Trustees: Holly Back, Linda Buchanan, Barry Forward, Susan Skinner, Franci Stratton and Mary Tasi.

Through students, staff, parents and the public, 2008 was a year where community engagement contributed to our progress as a School District. Clearly, this is a long-term way for all of us to improve our understanding of issues and decision-making while we collaborate to maintain a thriving School District.

The Sustaining Schools Working Committee continues to consider viable strategies as alternatives to the closure of schools and will be providing a semi-annual report to the Board of Education in January 2009. The Board will be considering district program proposals at the Public Meeting of January 27. We strive to balance the interests of the community with the challenges of a provincial budget tied to declining student enrolment.

In late December of 2008 the Board received approval of capital project agreements for the replacement of Carson Graham Secondary and the heritage restorations of Ridgeway Elementary and Queen Mary Elementary. This is a very exciting opportunity and reflects the positive outcomes that can be accomplished for our students when the School District, the community, the Municipality and the Province all work together. Community consultation regarding these capital projects will proceed early in 2009.

We are delighted to report the number of Kindergarten registrations that have already been received for September 2009 is nearly 1000 students. The Board is awaiting the decision from the Ministry of Education regarding the possibility of full day Kindergarten for all five-year-olds effective September 2009. Once a decision has been made by the Ministry, the School District will actively communicate this information to parents.

Tremendous progress was made during the 2008 school year regarding the application process to provide all levels of the International Baccalaureate program in the North Vancouver School District. Capilano is at the applicant stage for the Primary Years Program while Balmoral and Carson Graham are candidate schools for the Middle Years and Diploma IB programs respectively. We congratulate our staff for their hard work towards the implementation of these programs and to the parents and students for their ongoing interest.

The Board will be receiving a report from the School Calendar Committee at the January 27 Public Board Meeting regarding the School Calendar for the 2010 Olympics. The Board will communicate any possible alterations for the 2009/10 school year by February 2009.

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We look forward to an exciting year within the North Vancouver School District. Trustee School Liaison and committee assignments will be distributed shortly and trustees will be visiting each of their liaison schools in the coming months to further strengthen the positive relationships existing within our schools and our community.

We encourage all students, staff, parents and the community to check our website for dates, times and venues of all of our public meetings and to come out and attend. We have re-instated the 10 minute comment period prior to our Public Board meetings to encourage more people to become involved.

Future Meetings and Information Sessions
(all meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.)

Education and Programs Standing Committee Jan. 13 at Seycove Secondary
IB Diploma Program Information Meeting Jan. 15 at Windsor Secondary
IB Diploma Program Information Meeting Jan. 19 at Sutherland Secondary
IB Diploma Program Information Meeting Jan. 20 at Carson Graham Secondary
Late French Immersion Information Meeting Jan. 21 at Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre
Public Board Meeting Jan. 27 at the School Board Office

On behalf of the Board of Education, I wish you a good beginning to 2009!

Yours sincerely,



Jane Thornthwaite
Chairperson, Board of Education

JAT/vm