North Vancouver School District
SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

February 26, 2008

1. Anti-Bullying Day – February 27, 2008

Premier Gordon Campbell has proclaimed February 27 as Anti-Bullying Day to support efforts to end bullying in schools and communities across the province. Anti-Bullying Day highlights British Columbia's commitment to a safe and inclusive province and is an opportunity to actively promote respectful and kind behaviour among citizens. It recognizes efforts to build communities that foster respect, fairness, equity and compassion, and to celebrate the actions of individuals, schools and communities to address bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Everyday is an Anti-Bullying Day in North Vancouver School District. The Board is committed to providing the safest possible learning environments for all of its students. In 2006, the School District administered the *Safe School Social Responsibility Survey* to all students in Grades 4 to 12. Eighty-six percent of our students in Grades 4 to 7 and eighty-five per cent of our secondary students say that they feel safe at school all or most of the time. The Survey also asks specific questions about students' experiences with bullying. By using data from the *Survey*, our schools have identified issues and developed plans to address concerns. *The Safe School Social Responsibility* Survey will be repeated in April 2008 to give schools information on progress that has been made.

North Vancouver schools continually work to create an environment where bullying is not tolerated. Every day, schools implement a wide range of programs that address the broader issues of safety and tolerance. By creating a climate of inclusiveness, schools are able to influence large numbers of children thus reducing the incidence of threatening and bullying behaviour. Programs such as *Second Step*, *Roots of Empathy*, and *Tribes* promote a culture of understanding and acceptance. Under adult supervision, student-led initiatives such as peer counselling, peer mediation, and restorative action help students to resolve problems with others. In addition, the North Vancouver District has specifically targeted programs such as *Focus on Bullying* and *Focus on Harassment and Intimidation*, which deliver classroom lessons on the identification of bullying behaviour and strategies to deal with these behaviours. School counsellors often work with students, both individually and in small groups, to strategize and practise anti-bullying responses.

However, a successful anti-bullying program cannot focus solely on prevention. Our school administrators and staff respond to incidents of bullying, when they are aware that it is taking place, by supporting the victim while administering fair and consistent discipline to the perpetrator. The key to reducing bullying is in the behaviour of bystanders, who may require encouragement to demonstrate an attitude that does not reinforce bullying. Reporting to an adult is often essential and must be possible without fear of retribution. Clearly no one solution or program will bring an end to bullying, but proactive programs matched with thoughtful responses that identify and enforce relevant consequences can, and do, reduce this problem in our schools.

2. Musical Notes 2008

Orange Jam, a strings extravaganza with students from Handsworth, Canyon Heights, Cleveland, Highlands, and Montroyal students, will take place at 7:00 p.m. on March 6, 2008 at Centennial Theatre. Peter Van Ooyen, Band and Strings Teacher at Handsworth, has brought together students from the Handsworth Family of Schools together to provide an entertaining and exciting musical performance. Advance tickets are available through the Centennial Theatre Box Office, 604.984.4484.

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra will perform with the North Vancouver High School Honour Band and Strings students at Centennial Theatre in North Vancouver on April 30, 2008. Nine years ago, the North Vancouver School District Band and Strings Program formed a partnership with the VSO to provide valuable learning experiences for our music students. As part of this mentoring program, Honour Band and Strings students have the opportunity to rehearse and perform with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

Lasse Leslie, Elementary Band and Strings Coordinator, has worked tirelessly to facilitate the VSO enrichment opportunity for District students. Keith Woodward and Peter Van Ooyen, Handsworth's Band and Strings teachers, have contributed countless hours to provide a weekly rehearsal schedule for our Honour Band and Strings students.

We thank the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra for their continued support of our North Vancouver music program. In addition, we thank the community partners who continue to support our Band and Strings Program. Without community partnerships for financial and artistic mentorship, this special program would not be possible. Please plan to attend this family event on Wednesday, April 30th at 7:30 p.m. Tickets can be ordered through the VSO, 604.876.3434.

3. Education Week – March 10 – 14, 2008

Education Week in North Vancouver School District will kick off with *Community Report Spring 2008*, an informative and colourful insert in the North Shore News. It highlights the exciting programs and opportunities that make North Vancouver School District *the natural place to learn*.

- Having a new centre of learning at Sutherland has injected tremendous pride into the school community. The Sutherland Family of Schools is hosting an Open House on March 8
- On Monday, March 10, the Board is hosting its annual reception at Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre to celebrate the contributions of community partners, students, and staff
- An outstanding display of First Nations student art will be on display at Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre from March 11 through 14
- Artists for Kids will launch their newest print edition, *Spring Vision*, by Kenojuak, an internationally renowned Inuit artist, at a special reception on March 12th
- On March 13th, the Board will celebrate and recognize the contributions of staff members who have reached their 25-year milestone of employment with the School District. The event will also include special recognition of the contributions of our community of parents
- Our schools are showcasing Education Week with school-based concerts, fairs, plays, and performances.

It is through our collaborative efforts--students, staff, parents, and community partners--that North Vancouver School District is *the natural place to learn*.

4. *Towards The Future For Schools*

More than 340 people attended the *Towards the Future for Schools* meeting held at Windsor Secondary School on Thursday evening, February 21, 2008. We were very pleased with the positive response to the invitation to participate in the examination of the challenges the School District is facing in regards to declining enrolment and the per-pupil funding model.

Presentation materials have been posted to the School District's website and "Key Questions" and Answers will be posted in the coming week. A representative Study Group will be established in consultation with PACs in the coming weeks. The Study Group will further examine the challenges being faced in this area of the School District and will consider various options for the future configuration of schools. The work of the Sustaining Schools Working Committee will integrate with the Study Group in the coming months with a report of the Study Group being distributed in June 2008. Further communication will be posted to our website to keep the community informed.

5. In Memorium - Sadie Hardman

On February 22, 2008, Sadie Hardman, a 17-year-old Argyle Secondary student, died after sustaining critical injuries from an early morning accident at Upper Lynn Elementary School.

According to Olga Woodland, Argyle's principal, "Sadie Hardman was an honour student and an active member of Argyle's student council. She loved art and was especially interested in digital media. She made a positive contribution to the school in her five years at Argyle. Sadie was a good citizen of the school and she will be greatly missed by Argyle staff and students."

On behalf of the Board and the students and employees in North Vancouver School District, I extend our most heartfelt sympathy and condolences to Sadie's family and friends. The Minister of Education, the Honourable Shirley Bond, has communicated her sympathy to the North Vancouver School District community.

The tragic loss of Sadie hits all of us—friends and fellow students, teachers, support staff, administrators, parents, trustees, and District staff. It makes all of us pause and reflect on the extremely fragile nature of life. We will not forget you, Sadie Hardman. May you rest in peace.