



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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September 5th, 2017

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff:

Welcome to the 2017/2018 school year! It promises to be an exciting year ahead in the Vancouver School District with the continued implementation of the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan and educational initiatives advanced by the new provincial government and Minister of Education Rob Fleming.

We are excited by the opportunity to work with Minister Fleming and Deputy Minister Scott MacDonald as we maintain our focus on student success by engaging our learners through innovations in teaching and learning. While a change in government results in a shift in priorities, the Minister has expressed his confidence in the quality of BC's public education system and commitment towards continuous improvement. The existing focus on student success and the transformational change of the BC educational system aligns closely with our strategic plan.

A focus on the redesigned curriculum, already implemented for kindergarten through Grade 9, will continue as we collaborate with our partner groups to prepare and plan for the implementation of the new Graduation Years (Gr. 10-12) curriculum in 2018/2019. Communicating student learning will be a key area for us in 2017/2018 as we develop new methods for reporting student progress to parents. We're also looking at ways to enhance our communication with parents. We're moving forward with a digital strategy to make better use of information technology and the internet to aid that communication.

The memorandum of agreement on class size and composition between the province and the BC Teacher's Federation this spring has paved the way for a welcome increase in the number of teaching staff in our district. Our human resources team have been working extremely hard during the summer to hire additional teachers. We have added 342 full time teaching positions to our base staffing level through the Classroom Enhancement Fund. It has been a very competitive market for teachers, particularly in specialist positions such as French Immersion, Montessori and school psychologists.

We thank you for your patience and understanding while we continue this process into the first weeks of September. Recruitment continues as we seek to secure staff to meet district needs. School organizations are somewhat 'fluid' at the start of the school year as we accommodate local changes in enrolment that occur each September. If you have specific questions about your school, your principal will have the latest information and updates.

In addition to the arrival of new teaching staff, we have welcomed more than 50 new Principals and Vice Principals into our schools and started the recruitment process for a number of senior leadership positions at the district level. We are working towards having those senior positions filled by early 2018.

In collaboration with the Vancouver Teachers Federation and the Ministry of Education, we have identified the need for a comprehensive program of professional development for our new teachers, principals and vice principals to assist them in achieving successful learning outcomes for our students.

The district's strategic plan identifies a number of program reviews for 2017-18 including alternative education, special education, choice programs and school catchment boundaries. In addition, we will be examining the delivery of Adult Basic Education in consultation with post-secondary institutions. We will also be updating our Long-Range Facilities Plan to reflect the latest population trends in the city and will continue to work in collaboration with the Ministry to identify the need for new schools and to expedite the completion of seismic mitigation projects.

We have a busy year ahead of us and look forward to your support. We will continue to maintain our focus on student success as we work through these initiatives. The return of our students this September along with the infusion of many new staff members gives us renewed energy, hope and enthusiasm for a very positive year ahead.

Sincerely,



John Lewis,
Interim Superintendent of Schools



Dianne Turner
Official Trustee