



# May Day Task Force

Recommendations to the Board of Education

**MAY DAY TASK FORCE**

October 10, 2017

## Purpose of the May Day Task Force

On November 24, 2015, the Board of Education passed the following motion directing that a May Day Task Force be commissioned to review the School District's participation in the annual celebration of May Day:

RESOLVE to establish a Task Force comprised of four teachers, two parents, one support staff, admin staff and two Trustees, with one Trustee as Chair, to review May Day in New Westminister; AND THAT the review include a process for gathering feedback from parties with an interest regarding matters pertaining to the District's annual celebration of May Day; AND THAT the May Day Task Force report back to the Board of Education no later than the fall of 2016 so that any suggested changes can be implemented in the spring of 2017; AND THAT staff bring forward to the December Education Policy and Planning Committee, terms of reference for the May Day Task Force.

The purpose of the May Day Task Force was to review the nature and scope of the New Westminister School District's participation in the annual May Day celebration. As per the May Day Task Force Terms of Reference, (see appendix B), the committee was asked to bring recommendations to the Board of Education in the fall of 2016. After numerous meetings, the May Day Task Force requested, and was granted by the Board of Education, an extension to bring their recommendations forward in the fall of 2017. The recommendations found in this document represent 18 months of conversation, dialogue and debate. The process also included a comprehensive survey of teachers, support staff, administrators and exempt staff about the District's ceremony in Queen's Park (see appendix A). The committee's discussions were frank and often characterized by disagreement; however, as outlined in the May Day Task Force Terms of Reference, the committee operated on the principle of seeking consensus for all recommendations.

## Rationale for Recommendations

The May Day Task Force, having been asked to consider the District's celebration of May Day, engaged in a collaborative and consultative process with a view to make recommendations to the Board. The committee considered the historical/traditional importance of the May Day Celebration in the district, its place in the context of a contemporary curriculum, and issues related to equity and inclusion. The committee gave a great deal of weight to the survey responses. Given the 203 staff responses, the May Day Task Force believed that the feedback in the survey had a very high degree of reliability and validity and was a fair representation of the opinions of the staff in our School District. The qualitative responses to the survey and our own discussions suggest that, at least as presently conceived, May Day and its institutions command little general support amongst District staff. Specifically, as presently conceived, May Day faces significant pedagogical and practical issues that the Board should bear in mind as it considers how to proceed.

The survey results indicated meagre support or justification for the institution of the “Royal Suite.” The selection process is widely characterized as a popularity contest which is probably indefensible in a contemporary School District. While no eligible student is specifically barred from putting themselves forward for a position in the Royal Suite, the institution itself does not positively reflect the District’s values of inclusion and diversity, owing to its anachronistic core notions of stereotypical gender roles and reliance on a selection method of casting one group of students “above” the others. Attempts at changing or modernizing the composition and role of the Royal Suite, including the mandatory costume, have met with little success. The District does not sanction or promote the election of Prom Queens, or Homecoming Queens at the secondary level, so it is difficult to justify doing so at the elementary level – apart from the argument that it is traditionally done.

Teaching May Pole dancing as a component of the physical education/fine arts curriculum remains a defensible use of teaching time and facilities. However, requiring an entire grade cohort to master the dances for a certain set date imposes difficulties with respect to allocation of practice space and teachers’ curricular autonomy. There are practical complaints that possibly too much teaching time is required and that the necessity for practice typically infringes on other classes’ gym allocations. With respect to how the District’s May Day celebrations fit into other aspects of the curriculum – history, specifically - the historical legacy of May Day in New Westminister could possibly be integrated to promote critical engagement with the province’s history, but that goal is typically not being met, possibly owing to the time commitment and focus on practicing the dances for the collective performances in Queen’s Park.

There are considerable hurdles to be faced if the collective celebration of May Day with the dancing ceremony in Queen’s Park is to continue as a District-organized event. There seems to be little pedagogical or staff support for the amount of time taken out of the teaching schedule to make this event happen. The justification for taking the grade 2 and 5 classes out of school that day seems to be merely to act as an audience. There is little engagement amongst student spectators with the ceremonies themselves. Apart from those parents who attend to watch their children dance around the poles, there seems to be little other public engagement with the event itself, even though it has historically been linked to the local community spring festival. Parent volunteers to assist with transiting students to Queen’s Park are difficult to marshal. Volunteer district staff willing and capable of organizing the event may prove impossible to find even for the upcoming 2018 iteration of the event. Amongst staff there is broad support for the general notion that the May Day ceremony in Queen’s Park ought to transition away from a District-orchestrated event to one prepared by some other organization that students should voluntarily participate in, held outside of school hours.

An argument can be made that the large collective celebration of May Day in Queen’s Park has served as a “unifying” moment that promotes social cohesion for generations of schoolchildren in New Westminister. The Board of Education may want to consider that rationale when determining how to proceed.

**The May Day Task Force Committee respectfully submits the following recommendations to the Board of Education:**

1. For the 2018 and 2019 May Day, celebrations be school-based celebrations and further recommend that on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of May Day in 2020, the School District support the May Day Celebration Ceremony at Queen's Park.
2. The District should discontinue the practice of selecting a Royal Suite. The Board should support the transferring of responsibility for the Royal Suite to a community organization.
3. The Board should endeavor to transfer responsibility for organizing the May Day celebrations in Queen's Park outside of school hours to a community organization who could then decide how best to continue the tradition. In this way, for example, those community members who are particularly keen to keep alive the institutions of the May Queen and Royal Suite could formulate their own selection methods, costume requirements and ceremonial "duties".

# May Day Task Force

## APPENDIX A

### May Day Survey 2017 Summary Overview

## Survey Respondents

The May Day task force survey ran from June 6 to June 15. The survey resulted in 203 responses comprised of 67% teachers, 20% support staff, 5% principal/vice-principals, 6% exempt staff and 2% other (i.e. facilities and operations staff). Of the 166 elementary and middle school teachers in New Westminster Schools in 2016-2017, 124 participated in the survey – a teacher response rate of 75%.

## Survey Questions

The survey posed ten questions. These questions sought input on the following queries:

- a description of the respondent's experience of May Day
- the hours of instructional time for dance preparations
- an assessment of student spectator and community engagement with the event
- assessments of the relevance of the ceremony to the redesigned curriculum
- does the Royal Suite align with the district's values of inclusion and diversity
- an assessment of the use of resources devoted to the ceremony
- the merits of school-based May Day events
- the importance of the annual event for the district
- should the District's May Day ceremony be a community-run event

### Below, please find a summary of the survey responses:

#### **Q1: Please describe your experience with May Day in New Westminster:**

- Respondents identified their role or involvement in May Day in various capacities as follows:
  - 67% teachers, 20% support staff, 5% principal/vice-principals, 6% exempt staff and 2% other (i.e. facilities and operations staff).
  - Of the 166 elementary and middle school teachers in New Westminster Schools in 2016-2017, 124 participated in the survey – a teacher response rate of 75%.
- Of the 203 responses to this question: 79 offered qualitative assessments of their experience.
  - 45 negative comments (57%)
  - 21 positive comments (27%)
  - 13 mixed comments. (16%)
- 26 respondents (13%) said they had direct experience of May Day as children, in the Royal Suite, as parents, etc. In most cases, this group of respondents wanted to see the tradition continue; a smaller cohort said they recognized that the time for change had come

**Q2: Grade 3 and 4 teachers: How many hours of instructional time do you use to prepare students to perform the traditional May Day dances?**

- Teachers cited anywhere from 15 to upwards of 35 hours devoted to practice; the typical time involved was about 16 hours over 8 weeks.

**Q3: How would you assess student spectator engagement with the May Day ceremony?**

- Positive: 11.5% (18 /156)
- Negative: 78% (122/156)
- Mixed: 10% (16/156)
- No Response: 33

**Q4: How would you assess community engagement with the May Day ceremony at Queen's Park event?**

- Positive: 27% (54/203)
- Negative: 34% (70/203)
- No Response: 39% (79/203)

If percentages are calculated for the total respondents who offered an assessment (124) then they are 43% positive and 56% negative.

**Q5: The redesigned curriculum promotes critical engagement with the province's history. In your opinion, does the district's May Day ceremony in Queen's Park reflect this emphasis?**

- No: 65% (95/147)
- Yes: 22% (32/147)
- Undecided: 14% (20/147)
- No response: 43

Total responses: 147 (i.e.: percentages are calculated in relation to the total yes/no/undecided responses and excludes those who did not answer this question. Many 'no responses' were support staff/others who likely did not feel in a position to address the issue.)

**Q6: Do you believe that the Royal Suite aligns with the school district's values of inclusion and diversity? Why or why not?**

- No: 73% (110/150)
- Yes: 23% (35/150)
- Undecided: 3% (5/150)
- No Response: 45

**Q7: The May Day ceremony at Queen's Park is a significant commitment of district staff time and resources and is conservatively valued at \$50,000 to organize and stage. Do you think this is a good use of the district's time and resources?**

- Yes: 12% (23/185)
- No: 84% (156/185)
- Mixed: 3% (6/185)
- No response: 14

**Q8: Many schools hold May Day assemblies. Do you believe school-based May Day events should replace the district-run May Day ceremony at Queen's Park? Why or why not?**

- No: 40%
- Yes: 39%
- Community-run only: 13%
- Gone completely: 8%

**Q9: Do you view the school district's May Day ceremony at Queen's Park as an important annual event that should be continued? Why or Why not?**

- No: 72% (127/176)
- Yes: 16% (28/176)
- Maybe: 11% (21/176)
- No response: 27

**Q10: In your opinion, should a May Day ceremony in the park be a community-run event?**

- Yes: 77% community only
- No: 9% (should be a district-only event)
- Other: 2%
- Both: 10%
- 2% wanted the event gone completely



### Draft Summary of Findings

The open-ended survey questions resulted in many thoughtful, honest and wide-ranging assessments of the issues at stake. These can help inform recommendations and possible strategies for the future. Responses to the survey questions, in general, fell into two broad camps: roughly 20 to 30% who feel the ceremony could be adjusted to meet concerns, and a majority who feel the district's role in organizing and managing the event should be turned over to the community or discontinued.

- **72% of total respondents stated that May Day was no longer an important annual event for the school district.**

The majority felt what one summed up as *“a generalized unhappiness and concern over the cost, the educational time lost in preparation for the event, the amount of preparation work involved in addition to an already challenging workload and the current relevance the existing May Day program has in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.”* For many, the May Day event *“feels archaic, outdated and paternalistic.”* Of the 21% who view the school district's May Day ceremony as an important annual event, nearly half wanted the park ceremony to continue because it was ‘tradition.’ A number of respondents said they supported the May Day ceremony in the park primarily because they valued the fact that it was the only event that *“brings all the schools in this small district together in one place.”* Several suggested bringing back track meets and other strategies to *“connect across schools and grades.”*

- **77% of respondents believe that a May Day ceremony in the park should be exclusively run by the community.**

Respondents stated:

- that the event takes learning time away from the classroom;
- uses up resources;
- causes stress for students, teachers and the district;
- does not align with either the curriculum or the district's vision, mission or values.

A number of teachers and principals/vice-principals described tension within schools and between staff and community members over how things should be done, and suggested polarized views and inflexibility led to missed opportunities to compromise with solutions everyone could accept. The result, as one principal/vice principal summed up, *“the event was fraught. Too much politics, too much time diverted from teaching and learning. Too much energy and time reinforcing colonial traditions instead of embracing a more inclusive world view...”* Another principal/vice-principal found that the tension in the schools over the years means it has *“become easier to continue with the event to avoid conflict rather than re-evaluate our purpose behind it.”*

The majority stated that if the ceremony in the park is an important part of New Westminster’s history, then *“the community can continue the event and the public can choose to take part.”* Several made the observation that a community-run event based on voluntary, rather than required, participation would have positive outcomes, similar to community-based May Day events in Port Coquitlam, Burnaby or Abbotsford. A community event could take place in the evening or a weekend, allowing more parents to see their participating children; it could be run by the city or Hyack Festival Association or both, while enthusiastic teacher volunteers and community members could coach dancers as an extracurricular activity similar to other sports and arts pursuits. *“Make it fun, not forced,”* said one teacher.

➤ **Tension between community/district:**

Several respondents described what they saw as polarized perspectives of the ceremony and noted that the inflexibility between the two views of May Day (“those who love it and those who hate it”) had taken a toll within the district and between the district and the community. One respondent concluded that *“whenever changes have been suggested for May Day, it creates controversy.”* Another said the district’s attempts in 2017 to change the traditional clothing of the Royal Suite, *“although done out of a concern that it was not modern enough or inclusive enough”,* was an overreach: *“I do not think it is the school district’s place to make those type of changes.”* An email sent to staff and quoted in another survey response suggested that *“school district staff are responsible for May Day curriculum, and administering and organizing the celebrations; however, the May Day traditions belong to the citizens.”*

- **65% felt that the May Day event did not promote critical engagement with the province's history, while another 14% had mixed feelings the event could continue without substantive change.**

Respondents stated that the May Day event does not acknowledge the role of marginalized groups in the history of the province or historical injustices in relation to First Peoples. Many respondents also felt the event does not reflect the current diverse community. *"I think the May Day is an event that was designed for one cultural group only. It does not look at first contact, the role of immigrants in the formation of BC, the contributions of women, the development of political parties, the creation of infrastructure, the creation of Indian reservations, residential schools, etc."* said one survey participant. A principal/vice-principal felt *"[May Day] should not be a school-based event AT ALL. It does not fit with our redesigned curriculum. It does not fit with our multicultural focus and our First Nations lens. And it doesn't fit with our need actually to teach children."* Those respondents with mixed feelings about the event concluded the ceremony would require substantive change to meet curriculum requirements, such as broadening the event to include other cultural perspectives.

Among those who did not see a conflict with the curriculum, one nevertheless felt that the "efforts involved did not balance the benefits," while several expressed concerns that May Day "does not warrant the amount of time taken away from other curricular areas." While many respondents felt that May Day was an aspect of history, and was therefore important, others said that tradition alone did not justify the time, money, and challenge to personal values that it embodied. A principal/vice principal noted that the event does a "poor job" reflecting the redesigned curriculum and is "not relevant." *"It is simply a tradition we have not questioned."* And because the event is *"imposed [on] the students (and teacher) there is no critical engagement."* Some supporters of May Day struggled with a sense of loss and recognition that the time for change had come. *"It saddens me to think we will just get rid of May Day. I agree it is time for change so let's work together to make it effective such as connecting more to our community and history in New Westminster."*

Other comments:

- *"This is not the only event that celebrates BC's history, and I don't think it is fair for grade 3 and 4 teachers and students especially to be forced to put so much emphasis on this one event. I feel that the redesigned curriculum promotes engagement with all histories of BC, and I've been confused for a long time as to why New Westminster teachers have their autonomy restricted when it comes to our professional judgement to teach BC history when May Day is NOT in the curriculum specifically. ( grade 4/5 teacher)*

- *“The Queen’s Park ceremony is not reflective of the redesigned curriculum. In fact, it is completely the opposite. Critical engagement with BC’s history involves moving away from colonialist perspectives on the development of this city, province and country... Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair states that Canada’s public education system has taught citizens that Aboriginal people, languages and culture were inferior, and that citizens were implicitly ‘taught to believe in their superiority if they came from White European stock...and we need to correct those perceptions. (TRC, 2013). Public education in BC has a responsibility to address these injustices.... The May Day event perpetuates the notion that European settlers are superior, and that Aboriginal and students of colour are not important.”*
  - *[May day] reinforces a patriarchal, settler-dominated and exclusive culture that does not reflect the values of the District’s mission or vision.”*
- **72% of respondents felt the Royal Suite does not align with the school district’s values of inclusion and diversity.**

Respondents consistently raised concerns about the Royal Suite’s role in promoting elitism, emphasizing popularity over achievement, entrenching ‘forced’ and stereotypical gender roles, celebrating one culture at the exclusion of other cultures, excluding those with disabilities, and conflicting with educational curriculum in representing the “British colonialism that we are now trying to reconcile in our schools.”

One respondent noted that in each of the four schools [they] had taught in, *“the whole Royal Suite election process has been a popularity contest that has caused social problems and conflicts within the grade 5s. It is divisive and unhelpful. It is particularly divisive in a dual track school.”*

Another concerned about the need for modernization stated: *“I also do not like the idea of the whole royalty piece. It brings to mind the concepts of ‘princesses and commoners’ and British history. Neither are inclusive nor reflect diversity.”*

Three respondents pointed out that the relevance of, and support for, the royal suite is diminishing. In one school, *“the Royal Knight won the nomination by default this year and was the only boy who put his name forward.”* Another noted *“10 years ago we had 10 more students running for May Queen. This year we had 1.”* Still another said: *“this year only two students applied for May Day Queen and royal Knight at the school that I am in.”*

A teacher noted the inclusion of students with disabilities was dependent on the school and teacher *“to see that students with special needs are included in learning the dance - and as long as I have been in the district I can’t remember a child with a visible disability being a May Day rep.”*

Another asked how the Royal Suite can be reconciled with the BC Human rights Code protecting gender identity or expression, or with Ministry of Education requirements for school districts to have policies that explicitly reference sexual orientation and gender identity.

- **84% of respondents felt it was not a good use of district staff time and resources (estimated at a value of \$50,000) to organize and stage the May Day ceremony.**

Said one respondent: *“Many people have little understanding of what happens to make this event happen. It is not ‘just one day.’ All staff and students are affected by this event.”* Regarding instructional time to teach the May Day dances, Grade 3 and 4 teachers cited anywhere from 15 to upwards of 35 hours devoted to practice; the typical time involved was about 16 hours over 8 weeks.

Time commitments also involve attending assemblies to select the Royal Suite, as well as the day of school missed for the May Day event itself. *“For the [grade 3 and 4 teachers], this is a HUGE amount of time to not have your class together,”* said one teacher. Several teachers and principals/vice-principals noted the use of the gym infringes upon others classes’ gym blocks and learning times. They also described further disruption for split classes, when *“students lose hours of instructional time”* and are *“negatively affected as teachers have to arrange their placement during dance instruction. It is not always educationally ideal.”* The event places great demands on other staff as well: as one principal noted the involvement of CUPE work at school sites inevitably ends up being neglected in the weeks before and after May Day.

- **Respondents were split evenly (40% no, 39% yes) over the idea of replacing the May Day in the park ceremony with school-based May Day events.**

Those in favour of school-based events suggested assemblies would be less expensive, take pressure off student performance expectations, result in more student-centered celebrations with greater school participation, and require fewer instructional hours. School-based events could also be tailored to each school's unique community. Others felt that May Day was critical as a larger community experience and that it would be *"diminished beyond recognition"* if not held at Queen's Park as a district event, with numerous respondents emphasizing the importance of a district event. Another cohort of respondents felt school-based events would involve the same amount of teaching time and that the time had come to turn the event over to the community and make it entirely voluntary. *"The idea [of a school-based assembly] might look good from the perspective of someone who does not teach or work in an elementary school, but from our perspective it is not a solution AT ALL,"* said one grade 3-4 teacher.

- **78% respondents described "low," "minimal," or "poor" student engagement with the event; the majority of respondents also (57%) described minimal engagement from the community.**

Respondents noted community engagement has *"dwindled considerably over the past few years"* or had *"decreased dramatically."* Spectators were mostly parents who came to see their children dance; community participation was described as minimal or *"virtually non-existent."* Some suggested the weekday event made it impossible for greater community support. *"If you removed the school involvement....there would not be a big audience."* A principal/vice-principal noted the challenge in getting enough family members to walk students to the park and back and said this was *"indicative of the community and their minimal engagement...Once the dancing is finished, many of our parents left the stadium – they weren't interested in the program."* Said another: *"This is not a community priority. The community may want it, but they do nothing to back it."*

With regard to student engagement, several respondents commented that the proceedings are *'boring'* and too formal. A number cited problems with the sound system at the 2017 event and suggested engagement could be improved if the 1,000 student spectators in the stands could both see and hear better – although others suggested student engagement has, in fact, been a longstanding problem. Some expressed regret that many of the components of the ceremony that were engaging for students had been eliminated over time and felt these could be re-incorporated to re-establish the *"joy of May Day"* - i.e. activities such as pancake breakfasts, relay races, goody bags, police dog performances, etc.

Several described the lack of engagement resulted in behaviour issues that had to be managed in the stands; as well, many students bring homework, games and activity booklets to amuse themselves during the event and minimize disruption. *"This is a concern that bothers me tremendously. It's an exercise in crowd control; it's a ridiculous use of teacher and student classroom instructional time, and I feel very strongly that we would better otherwise engage students in a school learning environment working on creative academics, or interest-focused end-of-year projects."* Absenteeism has been noted as an issue; one teacher said *"an increasing number of families now choose to keep their grade 5 students home on May Day because they feel it is very repetitive after going to May Day in grades 2,3, and 4, which shows that the event doesn't have full parent support..."* Similarly, another respondent said that *"by grade five [students] have been through May Day assembly six times and learned the dances twice, once in grade three, then again in four."*

From a student perspective: One elementary school student who was excited about the first experience of the May Day event recorded impressions in a journal:

- *Wednesday May 24, 2017: OMG! today is May-day! today is actually May-day! This is my first time going to May-day which is really awsom[sic].  
Back from May Day: Status: boring. OMG! boring. is the only word to describe how boring May Day was. Well at least my BFF (xxx) was there to entertain me."*

# May Day Task Force

## APPENDIX B

### May Day Task Force Terms of Reference



**Board of Education for School District No. 40 (New Westminister)****May Day Task Force****Terms of Reference**

The Purpose of the May Day Task Force is to review the nature and scope of School District No. 40's participation in the annual May Day celebration. This review shall include a process for gathering feedback from parties with an interest regarding matters pertaining to the school district's participation in May Day. Recommendations from the school district's May Day Task Force will be brought to the Board of Education no later than the fall of 2016 so that any accepted recommendations may be implemented for the 2017 May Day celebration.

The decision-making model to be used for this task force is the consultative model. As per Policy 206 Decision-Making Process, the consultative model is defined as follows:

"Consultative Model (taking into consideration). A consultative committee or working group provides expertise, but is not a decision-making body. Their input is taken into consideration by a person or persons who have decision-making authority."

In the case of this task force, the persons who have decision-making authority are the Board of Education for School District No. 40 (New Westminister).

The Decision-Making Guidelines, (please see attached), will be used by the task force to make recommendations for the Board's consideration.

Task Force Membership will be comprised of:

- Four teachers
- Two parents
- One support staff
- One Principal/Vice-Principal
- One Senior Management Team member
- Two Trustees

Representatives will be selected through an "Expression of Interest" process (with the exception of the Board and Senior Management Team members who will be appointed). Expressions of interest will be duly considered and appointments will be made by the Board of Education.

One of the Board of Education's appointed representatives will serve as the Chair of the school district's May Day Task Force.

Other District staff or Community Members may be used as Advisors to the task force as required.

Changes to the task force's composition will be subject to the approval of the Board of Education for School District No. 40 (New Westminster).

**Time Commitment:** The frequency of the meetings will be determined as the process unfolds. It is expected that the task force will meet approximately 3-5 hours per month (with the exception of July and August) according to a pre-established meeting schedule.

Action teams, or smaller working groups, may be established as needed to focus on specific projects or activities related to the work of the task force.

**Term of Appointment:** The term for all voting members will be the period from the inception of the task force up to December 2016 (or until such time that the task force has made recommendations to the Board of Education).

**Quorum:** A quorum shall consist of half the voting members plus one.

If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes following the time at which the meeting was to commence, the names of the members present at the meeting will be recorded and the meeting shall stand adjourned.

**Agenda and Minutes:** The Chairperson will take input from the task force in establishing the agenda, and District staff will ensure the agenda is sent out to the task force in advance of meetings.

A recording secretary will be appointed and they will take minutes and circulate said minutes to the task force after each meeting.

**Rules of Procedure:**

The school district's May Day Task Force procedures shall be governed by:

- Policy 402.1/502.1 District Code of Conduct  
<http://district.sd40.bc.ca/sites/default/files/5021%20District%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20DONE.pdf>
- The Decision-Making Guidelines (see attached).

**Reporting Out**

The Board of Education Trustee representative will report out on the activities of the school district's May Day Task Force at the Board meeting following each task force meeting.

**Board of Education for School District No. 40 (New Westminister)****May Day Task Force**  
**Decision-Making Guidelines**

Decision-making: The school district's May Day Task Force shall operate on the principle of seeking consensus for any recommendations put forward by the Task Force to the Board of Education.

Definition of Consensus: Consensus is a process for multi-party decision-making that synthesizes the ideas of all participants into a decision that is acceptable to all. Consensus requires high levels of commitment, time and communication. Consensus is not a compromise or form of deal-making. It involves exploring "interests" and ensuring that the decision fits with the group's purpose and values.

**Consensus Guidelines:**

- A clear proposal is put forth in advance of the meeting (with background material when possible);
- Adequate time is set aside for meaningful discussion;
- All parties are expected and encouraged to participate. If any party chooses not to participate, they give license to the group to make the decision for them and they commit to endorsing that decision;
- There may not be 100 % agreement; rather, consensus means that all parties are able to "live with" the decision provided there is the opportunity to review it after the decision has been implemented;
- Where there is disagreement, there is a commitment to:
  - Discussing the underlying assumptions;
  - Seeking differences of opinion to gain understanding;
  - A willingness to consider different points of view;
  - Clarifying the issues; for example, identifying the real issues from surface issues;
  - Listening carefully to identify interests;
  - Looking for "win-win" outcomes.
- Where there is a disagreement and a decision needs to be made, a vote will take place with the majority vote being the group decision;
- If time is not an issue, the decision may be deferred to a later date to go through the consensus process after committee members have had time to consider the issues; and, The opinions of all parties will be treated with respect.

**School District No. 40 (New Westminister)  
May Day Task Force  
Expression of Interest**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (or School if a Staff Member): \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

I am applying as the following member:

- Principal or Vice-Principal
- Teacher
- Support Staff
- Parent

Have you previously been a member of a Committee, Task Force, or Parents' Council for the New Westminister School District?

Yes      Please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

No

Why do you want to become part of the school district's May Day Task Force? (Use the back of this paper, if necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_

What skills, attributes and experiences will you bring to contribute to the Task Force's discussions (e.g. professional/work and personal experiences)? (Use back if necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to the release of information on my application and understand that it will be made available as needed to the Board of Education and District staff for the purpose of making appointments to the May Day Task Force and, if I am appointed, for contacting me regarding meetings and sending information. I have read the May Day Task Force Rules of Procedure, specifically Policy 402.1/502.1 District Code of Conduct and the Decision-Making Guidelines as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit your Expression of Interest by **January 15, 2016** to:

Janet Grant, Associate Superintendent  
1001 Columbia Street New Westminister, BC V3M 1C4  
[jgrant@sd40.bc.ca](mailto:jgrant@sd40.bc.ca)

The Board of Education sincerely thanks you for your interest in this important initiative.