



## Board 2024 Advocacy Action Plan

### Purpose

The purpose of a board Advocacy Action Plan is to articulate what we are working to achieve, and ensure that our advocacy efforts are strategic, coordinated, and consistent.

### Strategic Plan

We are proud of the work of our District focused on achieving the strategic priorities in our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. Those priorities were developed after extensive and wide consultation with our community and inspired by our Vision --- A place where students love to learn. Our strategic priorities:

- *Transform the student experience*
- *Build meaningful relationships*
- *Lead into the future*
- *Ensure full participation in learning*

### Annual Board Self-Assessment and strategic plan implementation

The board retained BCSTA trainer and facilitator Rick Price to lead a board reflection, during summer 2023. Trustees reflected individually on several aspects of board governance effectiveness, including:

- Knowledge of the board's oversight role
- Strengths of the district, and the board
- Challenges facing the district, and the board
- Board's oversight of Superintendent and senior staff
- Knowledge of strategic plan
- Alignment of structures, policies and processes with strategic plan
- Use of data and evidence in decision-making
- Independence from outside groups or political pressures
- Having difficult conversations while maintaining a disciplined, respectful tone
- Having a consistent protocol for handling expressions of concern from the public

The board gathered early in September 2023 with the consultant and senior staff to review compiled results. One concern that emerged was the desire for bigger picture advocacy, particularly around education funding.

The Board met again in November 2023 to review its Objectives and Key Results related to implementing the district strategic plan. Focusing on its advocacy role, the board reviewed recent advocacy efforts against critical district needs. The board prioritized areas of focus, and ways to have the most impact. This advocacy action plan is the result of these conversations.

[The Board's Advocacy Action Plan is a guide for us as we work to ensure student needs are met in both the short and long term. This Plan may evolve and be updated regularly but will serve as a framework to help ensure we continue fulfilling our mandate to advocate for the needs of all students.](#)

### Advocacy Action Plan framework

The board's role includes advocacy for public education and the needs of our district.

This work is outlined in Policy 2 *Role of the Board*:

#### Political Advocacy

The Board shall

- 5.1 Make decisions regarding BCSTA and BCPSEA issues.
- 5.2 Advance District positions and priorities through relevant provincial organizations and associations.
- 5.3 Act as an advocate for public education and the district.
- 5.4 Develop an annual plan for advocacy including focus, key messages, relationships and mechanisms.**
- 5.5 Promote regular meetings and maintain timely, frank and constructive communication with locally elected officials including representation on municipal committees.
- 5.6 Arrange meetings with elected provincial government officials to communicate and garner support for education.

The School Act also sets out a co-governance relationship between the Ministry of Education and school districts.

Board advocacy activities will be coordinated in line with this Advocacy Action Plan. With the exception of emerging issues discussed at the board table, all activities should be in support of this plan and be executed in a coordinated fashion.

### Advocacy Goals:

The Board has identified the following goals we want to achieve through advocacy.

- 1. Raise awareness of the need to increase basic per student funding** from the Province of BC to adequate levels, to be able to meet the full range of student needs.
- 2. Expedite approval of capital funding** to fulfill our long range facilities plan and manage exploding enrollment and the district's capacity crisis.
- 3. Secure capital funding needed to begin equipping schools for the demands of extreme weather and climate resilience**, starting with cooling infrastructure.



4. **Increased funding from the Province of BC to meet needs of diverse and ELL students.**
5. **Increase access to adequate mental health, wellness, and safety supports** for students, including staff training, support from provincial ministries and the health region.
6. **Expand access to child care for district families, and increase district readiness for shared responsibility of child care responsibilities.**

## Objectives, Engagement and Tactics

### 1. INCREASED BASIC PER STUDENT FUNDING

GOAL: To raise awareness of the need to increase basic per student funding from the Province of BC to adequate levels, to be able to meet the full range of student needs.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- To raise awareness and identify the impact of underfunding
- To get support of local provincial elected officials
- To collaborate with partner organizations at district levels
- To get support from other school districts
- To engage families in advocacy
- To continue to build confidence in public education and the district

#### ENGAGEMENT / INFORMATION GATHERING:

- Direct staff to provide a report about budget pressures and the amounts the districts funds over and above provincial formulas
- Request meeting with representatives of CUPE 409, New Westminister Teachers Union, Principal/Vice Principals Association and DPAC to invite their participation and understand their advocacy priorities and capacity Engage BC School Trustee Association Metro Branch

#### TACTICS:

- Bring forward or support motions to BC School Trustees Association on Increased Per Student Funding
- Briefing with New Westminister MLAs on the pressures faced by schools
- Develop a communications and engagement plan for families and the community to ensure coordinated advocacy.

### 2. CAPITAL PROJECTS - NEW SCHOOLS AND SPACES

GOAL: **Expedite approval of capital funding** to fulfill our long-range facilities plan and manage exploding enrollment and capacity crisis.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- To continue to demonstrate to municipal, ministry and provincial government partners the urgency of the capacity crisis in New Westminister
- To ensure that the Ministry of Education's Capital Branch provides a mechanism to fund purchase of air space parcel in new developments



- To ensure that schools / school sites and child care sites is a priority in the City of New Westminster's Official City Plan and ongoing planning work
- Identify partner for implementation of the Memorial Park vision on the NWSS site
- To continue to build confidence in public education

**ENGAGEMENT / INFORMATION GATHERING:**

- Chair's regular meetings with New Westminster MLAs and staff to ensure they are familiar with the needs and priorities of the district and status of current projects
- Continue regular Joint City and School Board Working Group meetings focused on understanding district enrollment growth, gaining support for capital projects needed to fulfill our Long Term Facilities Plan as well as address short term capacity issues, and facilitate the most efficient processes to move through the development process in capital projects
- Continue School Board and City Council meetings at least twice annually to ensure district needs are understood by municipal government

**TACTICS:**

- Send correspondence from the board about the need for a funding mechanism for air space parcel purchasing
- Support Trustee participation on the BC School Trustees Capital Working Group
- Engage BC School Trustee Association Metro Branch
- Continue to engage community partners and the public on our capital crisis
- Send a brief about the Memorial Park vision to provincial, federal and local government and pursue support and partners, including a long-term steward for the site

**3. CAPITAL PROJECTS – CLIMATE RESILIENCY AND EXTREME WEATHER**

**GOAL:** To secure funding needed to equip schools for the demands of extreme weather and climate resilience, starting with cooling infrastructure

**OBJECTIVES:**

- To receive funding for NWSS cooling infrastructure which has been initiated by the district to be in place for summer of 2024
- To receive funding to increase the HVAC capacity of Skwo:wech Elementary School to provide cooling
- To advance the vision of schools as community gathering spaces and part of bigger community emergency response planning

**TACTICS:**

- Focus on climate resilience in our Minor Capital Project requests
- Include climate resilience projects in update meetings with provincial MLAs
- Engage BC School Trustee Association Metro Branch



#### 4. DIVERSE LEARNERS / ELL STUDENTS

GOAL: Increased funding from the Province of BC to meet the needs of diverse and ELL students, either as targeted funds or as part of increased per student funding.

##### OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the current wait times for assessments and services within the District
- To understand the unmet needs of families
- To understand how much out of pocket expenses (assessment, professional services including counselling, Occupational Therapy, tutoring, etc.) families are expending to meet the needs of their learner
- To raise awareness of the needs of ELL students

##### ENGAGEMENT / INFORMATION GATHERING:

- Engage families as part of the next phase of work in our delivery of inclusive education
- Invite community organizations with relevant expertise to brief the Board Education Policy & Planning Committee
- Support Trustee participation in the BCSTA Metro region's ELL Consortium

#### 5. MENTAL HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY

GOAL: Increase capacity to provide adequate mental health, wellness, and safety supports for students, including staff training, support from provincial ministries and the health region.

##### OBJECTIVES:

- To engage staff to understand increasing rates of mental distress and serious behaviour among some learners
- To engage families to understand how much out of pocket expenses (assessment, professional services including counselling, Occupational Therapy, tutoring, etc.) families are expending to meet the needs of their learner
- Learn about pressing needs from relevant service delivery and advocacy organizations

##### ENGAGEMENT / INFORMATION GATHERING :

- Examine results of Student Wellness surveys conducted within the district and brought to the board in February
- Discuss with DPAC and PACs ways to engage families
- Learn about pressing needs from relevant service delivery and advocacy organizations
- Identify relevant organizations to provide updates on current and future services and to better understand the state of mental health, wellness, and safety with school aged children

#### 6. CHILD CARE

GOAL: **Expand access to child care for district families, and increase district readiness for shared responsibility of child care responsibilities**



OBJECTIVES:

- To continue to secure funding for increased child care spaces on school sites
- To clarify expanded, shared responsibility between Ministry and school districts for child care
- To ensure we are equipped and resourced to meet expectations of families

TACTICS:

- Send correspondence to the Ministry of Education and Child Care about child care capital and operating needs and shared responsibility
- Continue to engage in conversations about child care with BC School Trustees Association and Metro Branch
- Continue to prioritize child care expansion in new capital projects
- Include child care project updates in meetings with provincial MLAs
- Pursue opportunities to convene relevant levels of government and child care providers and collaborate on meeting the child care needs of working families for all ages of care

