



New Westminster School District

Strategic Plan 2025–2030





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Letter from the Board

Dear students, teachers and staff of New Westminster Schools,

This plan is for you.

When we sat down to start developing a new strategic plan for our next five years, we asked ourselves some hard questions.

- **What matters most** at school? Is it feeling accepted, or the best instruction, or removing obstacles?
- How can we make sure **everyone** learns to read, write, and **work with numbers** to the best of their ability?
- How do we know students are graduating with the **skills for the world ahead** like critical thinking, communication and problem-solving?
- How can we set our sights high for **every single student**, even with limited resources?
- When we don't control how much funding we get to work with, what **promises** can we make?
- What are we **committed to changing**, to improve learning?
- What do **teachers and staff** need from us and each other?
- **What goals** can be set that are concrete, so it's clear whether we meet them or not?

This plan is the result of those and many conversations.



Many of you helped create this plan through discussions, surveys, emails and conversations. In addition to that engagement we drew on our data – like student assessments, report cards and Child Development Monitoring System data. We asked experienced educators who have been in the classroom to guide our solutions. We drew on what was learned in the District's Anti-Racism Action Plan. These are the commitments we are making as a District.

The plan reflects the core value of public education – opportunity for *everyone*, not just a few.

It's about making sure children's needs are met so they can think deeply, stretch their wings and try different things, to find what makes them uniquely capable. It's about meeting these special years of childhood and youth with inspired teaching that challenges easy ideas and builds stronger thinkers. It's about creating learning communities where we show care, and take care of each other.

There are systems that measure and judge people harshly; where if someone struggles they are left out or left behind, and the contributions they could have made are missed. That's not what we do here. In New Westminster schools, we don't give up on children. And we won't give up on our goal to deliver the very best education possible.

About the process

New Westminster Schools undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process to define its vision and priorities for 2025–2030. In collaboration with Roots & Rivers Consulting, and guided by a commitment to engaging diverse voices, the district invited input from families, students, staff, and community partners through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Over 350 participants contributed to shaping the district's future direction, ensuring the plan reflects the unique needs, aspirations, and challenges of the community.





Following these engagements, we hosted a town hall open to past participants of the strategic planning engagements and the New Westminster Schools community as a whole. This session provided an opportunity to share key findings, gather feedback, and validate insights to ensure they accurately captured community perspectives.

We brought together leadership, the Board, and our community for in-depth strategy sessions to shape priorities and meaningful goals based on what we heard from our community. This effort centered community voices in discussions to address key challenges, such as staff retention, infrastructure needs, and mental health support, ensuring our collective vision reflects the needs of our school community.

A high-level report of what we heard in the engagement process is available here: <https://newwestschools.ca/strategic-planning/>. A summary is provided in the following section of this document.

The resulting strategic plan reflects a shared vision rooted in community input, designed to drive meaningful and sustainable change. This plan complements other district initiatives and plans, including the [Long-Range Facilities Plan](#), which focuses on future infrastructure needs.

What we heard

Our community came together to share their experiences, concerns, and hopes for the future of our schools. Through thoughtful conversations with families, students, staff, and partners, key themes emerged that highlight what's working and the areas where we need to grow. These reflect the top priorities we heard from our community for the future of the district.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Targeted interventions, such as the implementation of literacy and numeracy frameworks, early assessment tools, and expanded inclusive education supports, have contributed to positive gains for many students. However, challenges persist, particularly in closing equity gaps for students with diverse abilities and needs.



EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Families, educators, and students all voiced concerns about overcrowded classrooms, growing enrollment, and the strain on school facilities. The reliance on portables—often lacking essential amenities—has made it clear that long-term solutions are needed. There is strong support for securing funding and land to build new schools, ensuring that every child has access to a learning environment that meets their needs.





MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SUPPORT

Mental health is top of mind for our community. Families worry about the growing emotional and social pressures students face, while staff see the increasing need for better training and counseling support. Expanding access to school-based mental health resources, social-emotional learning support, and wellness initiatives is seen as critical to ensuring students and staff feel supported, safe, and ready to learn.



TEACHER AND STAFF CAPACITY

Our educators and support staff are the backbone of our schools, but many are stretched thin. Teacher and EA shortages are leading to larger class sizes, fewer specialized supports, and increased workloads for existing staff. Many educators are covering multiple roles, which is causing burnout and affecting student learning. The community is calling for stronger recruitment and retention strategies, competitive salaries, and professional development to ensure staff feel valued and supported.



EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION

While progress has been made, many families and students emphasized the need for deeper commitments to equity and inclusion. Barriers still exist for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and Indigenous and Métis students. Families expressed a strong desire to see more representation in the curriculum, inclusive classroom practices, and culturally responsive supports that reflect the diversity of our schools.



SAFE AND WELCOMING SCHOOLS

Students and families expressed safety concerns, including bullying, racism, and vaping. Some students report avoiding certain spaces in schools due to these issues, and many feel that current anti-bullying measures are not as effective as they could be. There is a call for stronger accountability and more proactive approaches to creating safe and welcoming school environments.

COMMUNICATION AND FAMILY & CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

Many families expressed a desire for more open and transparent communication with the district. While there are opportunities to provide feedback, some parents and caregivers feel their voices are not always reflected in decisions. There is a strong interest in building more two-way engagement – ensuring that families and caregivers not only receive information but also have meaningful opportunities to shape the future of students' education.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ACCESSIBILITY

Families highlighted the importance of expanding early learning and childcare options to support young learners and working parents. Access to pre-kindergarten programs, seamless school transitions, and culturally inclusive early learning experiences were identified as key priorities for ensuring every child gets a strong start.

TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL EQUITY

Not all students have equal access to technology, and this gap is impacting their ability to engage fully in learning. Families and educators emphasized the need for updated devices, reliable internet access, and assistive technologies to ensure that every student, regardless of their background, has the tools they need to succeed in today's digital world.



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Our community recognizes the value of strong partnerships. There is enthusiasm for deeper collaborations with local organizations, businesses, and post-secondary institutions to expand student learning opportunities, mentorship programs, and wraparound support. By working together, we can build a more connected, resource-rich environment for all students.



Our foundation

VISION

An inspired learning community.

MISSION

Champion lifelong learning through enriching educational experiences.

VALUES



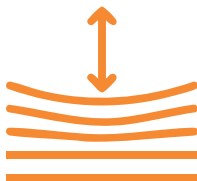
Connection

We foster meaningful relationships to achieve shared goals and a sense of belonging.



Empathy

We care for and respect one another, and celebrate the unique experiences each of us brings.



Resiliency

We equip people with the skills to navigate challenges, adapt to change, and turn obstacles into opportunities for growth.



Curiosity

We inspire exploration and make space for play in learning.

2025–2030 Strategic Plan

This section outlines the Focus Area, Objectives, and Visions of Success for New Westminster Schools between 2025 and 2030.

The focus areas include:

- 1. Student Experience**
- 2. Caring and supportive systems**
- 3. Sustainable organization**



Focus Area 1. Student experience

GOAL

Foster an inclusive learning community where every student has the opportunity and supports to reach their full potential.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide innovative and relevant learning experiences that develop critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills.
2. Promote educational and school experiences that reflect and respect the diversity within our community.
3. Equip educators and teaching staff with the tools, training, and resources to enhance their teaching practices and contribute to an effective learning environment.
4. Strengthen transitions into school, between grades, and into post-secondary to ensure well-supported progression for all learners.



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- Students across all grade levels show improved outcomes in core competencies and demonstrate deeper learning.
- Graduation rates increase for all student groups.
- All students have access to the opportunities and resources they need to grow and learn.
- Educators access relevant professional learning, leading to more engaging and effective teaching.





Focus Area 2.

Systems of care and support

GOAL

Cultivate a healthy school community for students, staff, families, and caregivers.

OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen mental, social, and emotional well-being through evidence-based programs and social-emotional learning strategies.
2. Foster a sense of belonging for students and staff, ensuring every school is a safe, inclusive, and welcoming space.
3. Draw on resources and expertise of our community to build a stronger network of supports for students.
4. Ensure students, staff, families, and caregivers understand their role in shaping a supportive school culture.
5. Prioritize play-based early learning to provide a strong foundation for lifelong growth and development.



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- Schools are places where strong, supportive and caring relationships are built.
- All identities and communities feel welcome, represented, and safe.
- Accessibility needs of students are being met.
- Students are regularly attending school.
- Every student and staff member has someone they can turn to for support.
- Codes of conduct for an inclusive, healthy and safe school community are followed and respected.
- Student indicate increased feelings of safety and belonging.
- Families and caregivers are actively engaged in student learning.
 - All families have access to quality early learning and childcare programs.

Focus Area 3.

Organizational capacity

GOAL

Enhance organizational resilience and adaptability that results in thriving school communities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Reduce environmental impact by increasing climate readiness and environmental sustainability efforts.
2. Adapt and create school spaces to meet the evolving needs of students, staff, and the wider community.
3. Broaden and deepen leadership capacity at all levels of the District, including students, staff and educators.
4. Improve staff recruitment and retention.



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- Every school has a climate plan to reduce environmental impact.
- Year-over-year reductions in the district's carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Facility upgrades and expansions align with the Long-Range Facilities Plan and adapt to enrollment needs.
- High staff retention and a workplace culture where people want to stay and grow.



Conclusion

The New Westminster Schools' 2025–2030 Strategic Plan embodies our collective vision, shaped by the voices of our students, families, staff, and community partners.

With a steadfast commitment to equity, inclusion, and excellence, this plan charts a clear path forward to empower every learner and strengthen our district's capacity to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

To bring this vision to life, New Westminster Schools will implement **annual plans** throughout the strategic plan period and **evaluate success through key indicators**.

Grounded in shared values and strengthened by meaningful collaboration, we are ready to continue cultivating an educational environment that inspires, empowers, and uplifts every learner.



*This strategic plan was developed with the
support of Roots & Rivers Consulting.*

