

Greater Victoria School District No. 61 Strategic Plan 2016-2018

How was the plan developed?

The plan was developed on the basis of extensive discussions by Trustees and Senior Staff at Workshops on August 25 and October 27, 2015, and several meetings of the Drafting Group – Jordan Watters, Shelley Green and the facilitator/consultant, Malcolm Weinstein. The plan is also based on an Environmental Scan and SWOT Analysis carried out by the Board and Senior District Leadership, 1154 stakeholder responses to a brief survey prior to the workshops, and several other documents including 'Basic Principles', prepared in 2014 by the District's Culture and Community Committee.

Components of the Plan:

- District Facts
- Mission
- Vision
- Values
- Tag Line
- Strategic Issues
- Strategic Goals
- Strategic Objectives

District Facts

The Greater Victoria School District serves students from Victoria, Esquimalt, View Royal, Oak Bay, parts of Saanich and the Highlands, the City of Victoria, and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. Schools draw from urban, semi-urban and suburban areas.

Students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds with 21 schools qualifying for CommunityLINK (Learning Includes Nutrition and Knowledge) funding. Of the families living in the District, 17.43% are considered low income.

Enrollment 2015 - 2016

- 8549 Full Time Equivalent Kindergarten through Grade 5 students
- 3970 Full Time Equivalent Grade 6 through Grade 8 students
- 5972 Full Time Equivalent Grade 9 through Grade 12 students
- 28 Full Time Equivalent Adult students
- 90.5 Full Time Equivalent Distributed Learning Students
- 1475 Aboriginal ancestry students
- 966 International students
- 16 Home-school students
- 1653 students with English Language Learning or English as a Second Dialect
- 3583 Early French Immersion students
- 233 Late French Immersion students
- 2123 students designated for Special Education services
- 176 Children in Care

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

We nurture each student's learning and well-being in a safe, responsive, and inclusive learning community.

Vision

Each student within our world-class learning community has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and pursue their aspirations.

Values

- **Engagement** – Students are actively engaged in their education and connected to our learning community.
- **Equity** – We give each student the opportunity to fulfill their potential.
- **Innovation/Positive Change** – We are innovative. We constantly seek ways to make positive change.
- **Integrity** – We are ethical and fair.
- **Openness and Transparency** – We are open about the decisions we make and how we make them.
- **Partnerships** – We create open and respectful partnerships with each member of our learning community.
- **Respect** – We respect ourselves, others, and our environment.
- **Social Responsibility and Justice** – It is our shared responsibility to work with and inspire students to create a better world.

Tag Line

“One Learning Community”

Strategic Issues, Goals, and Objectives

Strategic Issues

Strategic Issues are issues that will be given special focus over the next 3 to 5 years. This does not mean that other work will be ignored; everyday District operations will still be undertaken with diligence and a commitment to excellence. Following are the “big five” Strategic Issues for the District.

1. Learner Success

Our top priority is clear – learner success. This means we do everything we can within our means to address each learner’s needs and to create physical and emotional environments that support our learners and our staff.

2. Aboriginal Learners

The Greater Victoria School District is committed to closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. The unique needs and strengths of Aboriginal learners must be addressed with sensitivity and vigour.

It is our shared responsibility to continue to have respectful dialogue and build positive working relationships with our Aboriginal partners and to honour the cultural differences and diverse needs of Aboriginal learners.

The Board of Education is firmly committed to meeting the four goals of the Enhancement Agreement.¹

3. Vulnerable Learners

Many community respondents, as well as Trustees and Senior Staff, expressed concern about the shrinking levels of support for vulnerable learners, particularly those with learning and mental health challenges. As a result of budget reductions and the requirement to fund new provincial initiatives from existing resources, the District must continually find new and creative ways to meet the needs of our learners.

¹ 1 - To provide a sense of place, caring, safety and belonging for Aboriginal students in the Greater Victoria School District.

2 - To honour, nurture and support relationships between the Greater Victoria School District, local First Nations, Aboriginal Nations families and the community.

3 - To continue raising awareness and understanding of Aboriginal history, traditions and culture for all staff and students in the Greater Victoria School District.

4 - To increase success of all Aboriginal students.

Income disparities across the District, lack of resources to implement Individual Education Plans, and other constraints place increasing numbers of children in a vulnerable position. This affects not only their ability to learn but also the quality of learning for everyone. These challenges also place additional pressure on teachers.

4. Community Engagement

The District has strong relationships with many partners including six municipalities, First Nations and other internal and external communities, including students, families, and staff. We will broaden and deepen relationships with our partners and also develop new partnerships.

Senior staff and Board engagement with our internal community is also critical to learner success. We will ensure stronger ties between students, communities, teachers and staff so all parties feel valued and play a significant role in realizing our dream of being “one learning community.”

5. Exemplary Governance

Exemplary governance by the Board is essential to the District’s success. The benefits of exemplary governance are clear; strong leadership and community support for public education.

Strategic Issues, Goals and Objectives

Strategic Issue #1: Learner Success

Strategic Goal: Create a Long Term Plan to Enhance Learner Success

Strategic Objectives

- 1.1 Increase student literacy
- 1.2 Increase student numeracy
- 1.3 Provide clear opportunities for students to identify life pathways
- 1.4 Support the mental health needs and well-being of students
- 1.5 Continue to develop appropriate and ethical use of technology
- 1.6 Increase student engagement

Strategic Issue #2: Aboriginal Learners

Strategic Goal: Address the Unique Needs and Build on the Strengths of Aboriginal Learners

Strategic Objectives:

- 2.1 Engage effectively with Aboriginal communities in our District
- 2.2 Improve the success of Aboriginal learners
- 2.3 Support the implementation of the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement

Strategic Issue #3: Vulnerable Learners

Strategic Goal: Provide Greater Support for Vulnerable Students with Diverse Needs

Strategic Objectives

- 3.1 Develop a District Plan for vulnerable learners
- 3.2 Provide support and educational opportunities to teachers and staff who work with vulnerable learners
- 3.3 Continue to develop respect for learning differences

Strategic Issue #4: Community Engagement

Strategic Goal: Actively Engage with our Communities

Strategic Objectives

- 4.1 Develop a District Communications and Engagement Plan
- 4.2 Create more effective ways to bring student voices and parent perspectives to our schools and to the Board
- 4.3 Create more effective ways to bring staff voices and perspectives to the Board

Strategic Issue #5: Exemplary Governance

Strategic Goal: Strengthen District Governance Practices

Strategic Objectives

- 5.1 Create District long-term plans including:
 - District Facilities Plan
 - District Information Technology Plan
 - District International Education Plan
 - District Environmental Plan
- 5.2 Increase the District's capacity for evidence-based decision-making by making better use of data
- 5.3 Develop a plan to assess the effectiveness of the Board and the Superintendent