Vancouver School Board

Board Meeting Report by Mia Liu

Jan 30th, 2022

In this report, I will be providing an update on VDSC’s initiatives and highlight some issues items that have been raised amongst our student stakeholders.

Notably, there are two recent initiatives to celebrate: the CANley Cup and our new VDSC Newsletter. On December 16th, VDSC announced the winners of this year’s CANley cup, with Van Tech earning third, Magee placing second, and Point Grey securing its champion title. As a team, students across the district raised a total of over 250,000 cans, demonstrating our strength as a collaborative community. VDSC’s next initiative will be the annual Sister School Switch, which strives to promote inter-school communication and will be launched in the upcoming months.

In addition, the first issue of the VDSC newsletter was published on January 21st. Through this new endeavour, VDSC hopes to reach a broader student audience, increase transparency in VDSC decision-making, and facilitate communication with students who are not formal council members. Further, the virtual Student Issues Box - a platform for students to submit questions and feedback on their learning experiences- has undergone a series of revamping, as name, email, and school are no longer required fields. VDSC has kicked off an advertisement campaign to spread awareness of the Issues Box, aiming to incentivise honest feedback from students. Common Issues Box submissions will be addressed via the VDSC newsletter following a discussion of said issues with VDSC representatives.

Speaking of student issues, VDSC engaged in a multitude of discussions this past month with a pronounced emphasis on diversity and inclusion, revolving around student access to gender-neutral washrooms and counselling resources.

To follow up with the gender-neutral washroom discussion, the VDSC Senior Executive will be meeting with District staff responsible for SOGI and Student Voice to liaise student’s thoughts and perspectives on this matter. With respect to counselling resources, the council discussed how to continue our advocacy for accessible mental health support and will be following up with District staff responsible for Counselling Services and Safe and Caring Schools.

As part of our issues discussion, the VDSC also sought to understand the Board’s decision to reinstate the SLO program and the next steps that would occur. At this time, it is my understanding that the VPD has yet to write back and express whether they would like to collaborate with the Board in this endeavour. As such, the VDSC feels that the SLO motion’s tight timeline to implement a program for September 2023 demands student-based engagement that should occur promptly. In light of the Board’s decision, VDSC conducted a blind vote on the question: Does VDSC, as a stakeholder group, want to be formally involved in the reimagining process of the SLO program? The verdict returned on a 31 to 4 decision - a decisive majority that would like to call for formal student involvement in the reimagining process. Moving forward, VDSC hopes to deliberate ways to consult students in this project with relevant VSB departments. As students, we believe that student voices are integral in creating a program that is supposed to serve, protect, and support us; VDSC looks forward to realizing this vision, together.

Finally, the VDSC engaged with the Administrative Procedures Working Group as a stakeholder, and we look forward to making continued student contributions to revised and updated VSB procedures.

Thank you.