Vancouver School Board

Board Meeting Report by Mia Liu

Feb 27th, 2023

February marks a busy month for the VDSC Executive team, with members participating in provincial sports championships, scholarship interviews, film competitions, and debate tournaments. Aside from our personal projects, VDSC Executives has worked with our members to come together and further initiatives related to the student voice, as I will summarize in this report.

VDSC is now in the final stages of preparation for our next initiative: Sister School Switch (SSS). In its 16th year of operation, SSS allows students to be paired and experience a day at each other’s schools, building interschool connections. Applications have now been collected, and the SSS orientation will take place on the first day of March for this year’s 70 participants to familiarize themselves with their partners.

As an extension of VDSC’s gender-neutral/universal bathrooms discussion, the Exec team reported a summary of student observations and opinions related to this issue to District staff responsible for SOGI and Student Voice. Some items of discussion include the accessibility of universal bathrooms, the clarity and inclusiveness of bathroom signage, the appropriate use of universal bathrooms by students themselves in terms of honouring the purpose of these spaces, as well as single vs. multi-stall bathroom options.

As such, some potential projects to consider include maps that indicate the positions of universal bathrooms to increase awareness for students, integrating universal bathroom locations into Grade 7 orientation tours, as well as student-led awareness campaigns related to the appropriate use of school bathrooms, which will be further deliberated at the next VDSC general meeting.

Additionally, as a result of VDSC’s continued advocacy for student input in the SLO program’s reimagining process, the Vancouver Police Department has offered to set up a special focus group consultation to hear from VDSC on the 28th of February. The focus group will comprise approximately 20 students, with one representative from each school and VASS to shine light on a multitude of student voices. VDSC representatives have been asked to consult students in their respective communities on their experiences with the past SLO program and what they value in a newly designed program that aims to protect their safety and well-being. In particular, VDSC hopes to hear from students of traditionally underrepresented backgrounds, so that the perspectives reported to the VPD can adhere to the council’s value of inclusivity and reflect the diversity within Vancouver student population.

VDSC appreciates this opportunity for students to be heard in projects deeply related to their education, and we look forward to updating the Board on our discussions.

Thank you.