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Always growing
Grandissons ensemble

**Qualicum School District
Education Committee of the Whole Report
Tuesday, November 21, 2023
Via Video Conferencing
2:30 a.m.**

Facilitator: Trustee Julie Austin

Mandate:

To discuss and make recommendations to the Board on aspects of teaching, learning and educational equity. We will strive to have all students receive whatever they need to develop to their full academic and social potential and to thrive every day.

SCHOOLS AND/OR PROGRAMS

Teaching and Learning Team – Denise Spencer-Dahl/Ruth Stefanek

What we did...

Over the course of two weeks the team went in and observed every Kindergarten and K/1 class in the district.

Approx. 350 students

Denise presented on the Kindergarten snapshot. This year there was one team comprised of the school based learning support, teacher, the school based speech and language pathologist, Ruth Stefanek, Denise Spencer-Dahl, Miranda Agostini and Colleen Burke, EAs and Kindergarten teachers. The process this year was streamlined to five areas: numeracy, oral language, social emotional learning, physical literacy and gross motor skills. As Denise says, "Other districts do things like DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) three times a year, Nanaimo does literacy screeners, some do the CHEK to gather information along with a screener they have developed...Our district has taken the approach of meeting

students where they are at and welcoming them rather than focusing on what they "can't" do. The concept of the snapshot is to have multiple sets of eyes on a student so that nobody slips through the cracks. It also promotes collaboration between district and school staff so that people are aware of all the supports and resources. It is pretty cost effective given how many resources go out of the DRC as a result of the snapshot. It also frees up teachers to think about how to use resources rather than having to always create them."

What we noticed...

- **Numeracy skills** were strong overall and many students reported playing games at home that involved dice/counting.
- **Fine Motor Skills** was an area that some found challenging. Hand strength/familiarity with materials/pincher grasp.
- **Oral Language:** Articulation appeared initially to be a high concern but this has now proven to be within norms. Peer to peer communication needed encouragement.
- **Balance** was the weakest fundamental skill overall in the cohort
- Use of **visuals** in the classrooms was high and students were using the tools successfully
- **Physical features** in some rooms were barriers (tables, visual overload)



Action items...

- Two fine motor kits and one more play-doh kit was created
- Kindergarten meeting coming up has learning with OT and SLP on what is developmentally appropriate and whole class strategies to support
- Initiative with PASS students to create play-doh for classes
- Furniture being replaced in some classrooms that is more appropriate
- Hallway pathways and movements breaks that support fundamental movement skills
- Higher circulation of DRC items that promote oral language (felt boards, puppets, loose parts bins-more being created).
- Continue to support putting items in WTK bags that demonstrate what we value in a district (dice, loose parts, books, play-doh, games etc...)

Ruth then gave an update on the school movement paths. Thanks to the Operations & Maintenance department, decals are on the floor in all our schools facilitating fun activities such as hopping, jumping, etc. on the way to class. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties attendees were unable to watch the video, but attendees did hear from one student who loved the opportunity to get her wiggles out.

Denise and Ruth also reminded parents that the Teaching and Learning Teachers are hosting a Family Literacy and Numeracy Games event at Winchelsea Learning Centre on Tuesday, December 5th from 5:30-7:00 pm. The target audience parents/caregivers and their children in grades K to 9.

Resources:

Sensory Paths article [Huff Post Canada](#)



SHARED LEARNING

Learning Grants

Associate Superintendent Gillian Wilson gave an update on the \$100,00 learning grant applications. There are numerous applications from the elementary level and also many from the secondary level. The diversity of applications include proposed ways to improve reading through co-learning and co-teaching, environmental inquiry, looking at cross curricular content at the senior level, Indigenous learning, cross cultural inquiries through the International Students Program (ISP) social emotional robots and so many more. This is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration within a school, between schools and for our educators. Applications have come in from teachers, administrators, the Learning Support team, the District Resource Centre and administrators. We look forward to the presentations of findings in June where the applicants share their learning with other district educators.

INFORMATION

Feeding Futures Funding Update



Sheila Morrison, District Principal of Childcare and Feeding Futures, and Gill Wilson, Associate Superintendent, are keeping trustees informed on the funding from the provincial government for the Feeding Futures program. Needs are looked at for each of the different schools and delivery of food programs are developed from liaising with the District 69 Backpack Program to food programs in the schools to provide breakfasts and lunches. With about \$500,000 over 3 years of funding the district has been able to assist in expanding the District 69 Backpack Program and provide more and relevant food for our families.

Delivery systems are being created, though are still a work in progress. Networking has begun with local community groups to help expand food services and delivery. A special thanks to Virginia Worcester, a community member who founded the backpack program over 15 years ago and continues to coordinate and support the provision of food to families in our school community with the help of staff and community volunteers.

Resources: [District 69 Backpack Program](#)
[BC Government- Feeding Futures Funding](#)

Follow Up from Parent Information Panel at Ballenas

Trish Cathrine, Principal of Ballenas Secondary School, gave a review the Parent Information Night hosted at Ballenas Secondary in October. The event was well attended by parents who learned a lot about the challenges being faced by youth in the community as well as the resources and supports available to youth and families within the school district. The District is considering hosting another information evening, perhaps in the spring.

UBC-PSYT Younger Minds Project & Pilot Study - App for Youth

Gillian shared the district's involvement in a pilot study through its Youth Development Instrument (YDI) group. The district is part of a research project with the University of British Columbia (UBC) and its Younger Minds app, a youth app that has been used in colleges and universities in prior years. From the UBC Younger Minds Project "The Younger Minds project will leverage ongoing screening tools and administrative data to ascertain substance use and mental health needs at the neighbourhood, school, district and regional levels and develop an evidence-based digital intervention to increase coverage, acceptability and utilization of services that promote wellbeing, build resilience and prevent disordered substance use and mental health problems ". A more detailed review of the app will be included as a topic on the agenda for January's Education Committee of the Whole and it is hoped that some time can be spent exploring the app.

Resources: [UBC Younger Minds Project](#)

Coffee with Trustees



Trustees will be visiting one school per month during the school year to make themselves available to parents/caregivers, staff and students for information sharing...please join them for coffee/tea and goodies. Trustees will arrive shortly before each school's end of day bell to set up where the school administrator has a space arranged. The 2023-2024 schedule is as follows:

COFFEE WITH TRUSTEES SCHEDULE	
SPRINGWOOD	DECEMBER 6 @ 2:45
WINCHELSEA LEARNING CENTRE	JANUARY 10 @ 2:57
QUALICUM ELEMENTARY	FEBRUARY 7 @ 2:40
BALLENAS SECONDARY	APRIL 3 @ 3:05
KWALIKUMM SECONDARY	MAY 1 @ 3:00
BOWSER ELEMENTARY	JUNE 5 @ 2:48

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION TO MOVE TO THE BOARD MEETING

No items were brought forward for discussion.

UPCOMING TOPICS

FESL Achievement Updates (Grad Rates/Provincial Assessments/Others)
 Report Out on Artificial Intelligence (AI) conference
 Review Younger Minds App

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 2:30 p.m. via video conferencing

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