

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
Reporting to Public Session on Tuesday, January 28, 2020

1. Social Emotional Learning

According to the Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” It consists of five competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Social Emotional Learning is foundational to our District’s Mental Health and Well-being Framework, and mental health and well-being is an objective in the Board’s Strategic Plan.

A. Roots of Empathy

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based classroom program that has shown significant effect in reducing levels of aggression, including bullying among primary and elementary school children while raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy. Currently, the Burnaby School District offers 14 programs in 12 schools, kindergarten to grade 7.

At the heart of the program is a neighbourhood infant and parent who visit the classroom nine times over the school year. A trained Roots of Empathy Instructor coaches students to observe the baby’s development and to label the baby’s feelings and intentions. In this experiential learning, the baby is the “teacher” and a lever that the instructor uses to help children to identify and reflect on their own feelings and the feelings of others.

This evening, Sheri Brattston, Coordinator Community Services will provide an overview of Social Emotional Learning. Lisa Pitt, Principal of Morley Elementary School, along with her team will show the connection between Roots of Empathy and the school goal and outline components of the Roots of Empathy program. Grade 6/7 students Hadya Arziab, Liezel Baquiran and Angela Dragutinovic will talk about how this experience has impacted their learning.

B. Boys Club

The Boys Club at Byrne Creek Community School began in September 2019. It is a flex time program and a Board / Authorized Authority (BAA) course that provides boys the platform to engage in topics around self-awareness, mental health, and school connection. Students have the opportunity to connect with peers, teachers, support staff, community partners, mentors, and visiting speakers. Each week a guest visits the school to tell their story and offer their insights. The boys learn through story, exploring behaviours, attitudes,

accountability, mental health, addictions, career paths, and decision making models that will affect their future.

The idea was inspired by a school goal in the area of Social Emotional Learning recognizing a need to re-engage the most disengaged learners. Connecting and collaborating with the Boys Club Network, a privately-funded registered Canadian charity, a group was assembled that acts as a 'living library', with speakers from local community partners and Byrne Creek alumni as well as a vast network of speakers accessed from the Boys Club Network. Between September 2019 and January 2020 interest has grown initially from 15 boys to now 70 boys for the speaker series, with 18 boys who have registered for the BAA course.

This evening, Nick Christofides, Vice-Principal of Byrne Creek Community Secondary School will provide some background on the learning that happens in the course and in the speaker series, while Bal Dhillon, Community Coordinator and Constable Mathieu Lesquelin from Burnaby RCMP will speak about the impact this is having on students. Joining them to share their thoughts are Boys Club Members, Semir Hasic, Simon Tewdoros and Bobby Mabeny.

Recommendation: THAT the Board of Education receive this information.