

# WEST HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## ANNUAL REPORT TO FAMILIES

### OCTOBER 2007

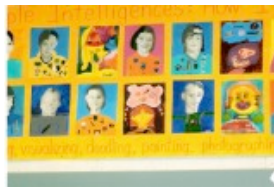


**West Heights Elementary School** is a great community of diverse learners. We value our multicultural community with its rich heritage. Students are encouraged to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes to the best of their ability and strive for personal excellence.

A hardworking, knowledgeable and caring staff provides students with a variety of educational opportunities as they work alongside committed and energetic parents. As our motto states: *If you believe it, you can achieve it!* At West Heights School, we believe every student can achieve success. Each child has a multiple of intelligences and is encouraged to extend these intelligences on their life long journey. Many students are great readers and writers, while others can build incredible projects or demonstrate their intelligence through art, drama, music and athletics. Some students are super leaders while others are solid followers or work well on their own. It is with great pride that we provide you with our celebration of learning in our Annual Report.

#### **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

West Heights students take the lead in many areas of their learning. There is a series of seasonal murals which highlight the halls and demonstrate the heritage and community pride that is part of our school.



A beautiful aboriginal signpost welcomes visitors to the halls of West Heights School. The signpost was a collaborative project completed through Artist in the Schools program and is spectacular example of west coast aboriginal carving and artistry.

A Multiple Intelligence project completed in past years, profiles students' strengths in their particular areas of expertise.

Our senior students lead our Presenters' Assembly, where students share a piece of written work. Students are proud to read their stories aloud and learn to comment about ones they have heard. Grade 7 students lead the bimonthly assemblies, and there is a variety of student recognitions with a consistent *Student of the Week* celebration. Senior students set up our gym events and are always eager to help. Grade 5 students act as Crosswalk Patrols. Sports Day is an incredible family team event where the grade 6 students

organize the participants and grade 7 students plan and run the stations. The cooperatively created cheers, banners and costumes are always a *hit* and an integral part of the day's highlights. Extracurricular sports are co-coached and refereed by senior students. Mathematics problems for all students have been included in monthly newsletters for families to solve.

Some classes participate in a Salmon Enhancement Program. An *egg take* occurs in late winter. Students raise the *take* in a school aquarium, learning about this essential cycle, and then young fry are released every spring. Other field studies, such as visits to Xa:ytem, Fort Langley, the Burnaby Village Museum, and Westview Farms, play a key part in our students' learning.

The school participates annually in a Pitch-In program where students, staff and parents clean up the surrounding community. Their efforts are greatly appreciated by neighbours and wildlife in the area. Classes complete a weekly clean up on a rotational basis. West Heights also participates in the Walk to School program and celebrates Earth Day as we strive toward environmental stewardship and promoting awareness in the community.

#### **WHIN PROJECT**

The introduction of the West Heights Inclusive Neighbourhood Project

(WHIN) has provided a number of key programs for students in the area. A subsidized preschool and after school program, as well as the summer program are well attended and facilitate access to services for families. Literacy plays a key component in the offered programs. Other partners, besides the School District to support this vital project, are the Fraser Health Authority, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Mission Community Services, Mission Parks and Recreation, Youth Unlimited, Sto:lo Nation and Big Brothers and Sisters. The project is a huge success and continues to grow in its programming and participation.

### **STRONGSTART CENTRE**

The StrongStart centre offers a free drop-in program for parents or caregivers and their preschool children. A qualified early childhood educator leads activities including stories, music, and crafts to help children grow linguistically, physically and socially, and become comfortable in a school-like environment. This early learning centre in West Heights School helps preschool children develop reading skills and get ready for kindergarten. Parents and caregivers attending StrongStart BC centres can expect to participate in organized sessions like story time, play activities, and serving a healthy snack.

### **SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

Our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and School Planning Councils (SPC) have supported many initiatives here at West

Heights School. PAC sponsors a daily lunch program and is always willing to support those in need of a daily snack.

Staff and PAC sponsor a multicultural week where much good food is enjoyed by all. West Heights is proud of their Indo-Canadian and Aboriginal heritage which is prominent in the school. Newsletters include a portion of Punjabi information and bulletin boards continually display aboriginal art and upcoming workshops.

PAC hosts a carnival on occasion and we look forward to this year's carnival, which will reflect the school's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Students enjoy such events as, the dunk tank, pony rides, and games galore. The whole community gets into the spirit of sharing and caring. PAC has appreciated the incredible support that Mission merchants demonstrate.

PAC also sponsored a float in the Mission Candlelight Parade. Over one hundred and twenty students participated. PAC appreciates the efforts of the School District's bus drivers who are a great support.

To enhance our literacy and social emotional goals, PAC provides funds for books, field studies, technology, extracurricular sports and many other thoughtful and needed requests. PAC supported Science World coming to the school for a series of hands-on learning experiences. Our PAC is an integral part of the West Heights learning community.

SPC sponsors *Grandparent Reads* where students bring along their family members to share a wonderful book and enjoy lunch together. They also promoted a literature review

where students were given the opportunity to share their valuable thoughts about a favourite book they were reading. SPC meets regularly to continue reviewing West Heights school growth plans, suggesting and encouraging the thoughtful ongoing efforts of staff and students.

Staff and parents provide ongoing athletic support with cross country, basketball, volleyball and track and field teams. Students learn and develop new skills and have the opportunity to participate on district play-days. The Jump Rope for Heart project allows the West Heights community to share with those in need, and students love to show off their skipping techniques in the spring. It is great to see students have the chance to increase their athletic intelligences. We are proud of their efforts. Additionally, the annual Terry Fox Run is well supported and brings awareness and much-needed funds to support this important cause.

Students participate in an annual Christmas Concert and the entire community enjoys their wonderful production. Staff works collaboratively, and the musical and dramatical efforts of the students are a highlight of the season.

West Heights students are afforded many opportunities to learn about Aboriginal heritage. Classes visit Xa:ytem, a local hands-on museum, and Elders come in to the school to make replicas of Aboriginal artifacts and share stories in order for students to have a better understanding of Canadian heritage. District and school staffs provide ongoing support to our students.

As you can see, West Heights Elementary School is a community of incredible learners with a wonderful group of students, parents and staff working collectively to promote a continuous learning environment. Enriching students' experiences with activities and projects that encompass parents and the community allows for a multiple of learning experiences.

**SCHOOL GOALS**

The school goals at West Heights are to improve student literacy for writing, reading, and numeracy problems, and to enhance social and emotional growth of students.

Staff has been involved in Professional Development workshops to investigate strategies for increased learning on the part of students. By encouraging and supporting reading at home and school, children are exposed to a literature-rich environment. By encouraging dialogue, both at school and home, students are better able to express and comprehend.

Providing students with rich learning experiences, such as field studies at school and outings at home, contributes to a better understanding of written material. This background knowledge is proving to be essential in children's learning. Staff is also promoting the use of sensory imaging where students value the ongoing *movie* that is produced and directed in their imaginations as they listen, see, feel and learn. These powerful, caring conversations among staff guide instruction in the classroom.

The West Heights Code of Conduct, *Be Safe, Be Responsible and Be Respectful*, is consistently taught and supported. The code aligns with our goal for emotional and social development. Staff members use a citation system and Honeybee and Superbee awards for individuals and classes to reinforce positive choices and point out inappropriate behaviour. We are impressed with West Heights students' efforts to get along and support each

other, but realize that consistent and effective problem solving strategies need to be continually modeled for positive social development. We value our parent support as they play a key role in supporting student learning.

Our teachers use a variety of assessment tools to determine each student's level in reading, writing and numeracy. The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is one assessment tool. The Ministry of Education has schools administer the FSA to all students in grades 4 and 7. Results are indicated in the chart below.

The first chart shows the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in previous school years, while the second chart shows how students have done in the district assessments in Reading. We continue to strive towards our goals and believe we will achieve them.

***If you believe it, you can achieve it!***

Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations<sup>2</sup> (percentage), 2002/03 - 2006/07

Grade 4	School					District 2006/07	Province <sup>3</sup> 2006/07
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07		
Reading Comprehension	59	29	55	50	57	75	75
Writing	82	50	76	92	75	86	90
Numeracy	67	50	48	52	75	84	85
Grade 7							
Reading Comprehension	65	68	46	53	38	71	71
Writing	69	88	81	73	58	80	85
Numeracy	74	72	69	84	63	79	80

Percentage of Grade 3 to 7 Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Reading on the DART

Year	Meeting or Exceeding Expectations
2004	52%
2005	80%
2006	73%
2007	85%

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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