

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE TO THE BOARD

February 13, 2024, Public Board Meeting



KSS UFV Trades Sampler Program Update

Enclosed is an update regarding the KSS UFV Trades Sampler program from KSS UFV Trades EA James Braun. Mr. Braun is a passionate, dedicated Education Assistant who has been with every student cohort since the creation of the program by the previous principal, Chuck Lawson. The program has been a success due to Mr. Braun tirelessly championing the program. Thank you, James, for your dedication and commitment to the students at Kw'iyeqel Secondary School.

Update:

The Trades Sampler Program is designed to give students the opportunity to gain basic introductory knowledge and hands-on experience in several industrial trades. Upon completing the program, students will be able to evaluate their suitability for working in the trades and determine a trade they may want to pursue as a career choice. This 12-week program gives the students a hands-on approach to experience the following: safety of tools, forklift training, carpentry, blueprint reading and drafting, electrical, plumbing, pipefitting, automotive, and welding. This program gives students certificates for First Aid, forklift training and WHMIS. This year, students had the experience of learning how to use a computer drafting program called Auto-CAD, which is widely used in today's industry.



In carpentry, students were given the task of building a 40-foot-long wall out of 2 x 4s using hammers and nails. In the construction process, students were instructed on how to follow specific instructions from a drawing and given measurements to build the structure. Once the students completed the wall structure, they divided the wall into 5-foot cubical sections, which each student would be responsible for.

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In this section, the students would be responsible for putting up the two partitions on either side and a front section for a door. If some students finished their section before others, they would use a team approach and help each other so that everyone would be able to move on to the next section together to ensure no one fell behind.



In plumbing, students learned the different types of piping and how to assemble them. Students were given the task of measuring and cutting the pipe at the correct angles needed for Plumbing in a sink and toilet for their section. Students then learned to run cold and hot water lines to a sink. These lines were also pressure tested to make sure that there were no leaks throughout.

In piping, students learned about the different types and how to measure, prepare, and fasten connections with a torch and solder. Students also learned how to connect black metal pipes with a specific machine called a threader.

Parent Rights, Inclusion and Gender Identity

In January 2024, Harris and Company provided the Chilliwack Board of Education with information about Parent Rights and Gender Identity. Later in February 2024, the same information was presented at the "All Partners" meeting where all board chairs, superintendents, and secretary treasurers from all 60 school districts were in attendance. Included below is a summary of the information.

Ministry of Education - Diversity in School Framework:

The School Act articulates the purpose of the British Columbia school system: to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic, and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy. To achieve this purpose, the school system must strive to ensure that differences among learners do not impede their participation in school, their mastery of learning outcomes, or their ability to become contributing members of society.

The school system is expected to promote values expressed in the Constitution Act, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Official Languages Act, the Multiculturalism Act, the BC Human Rights Code, the Employment Equity Act and the School Act, respecting the rights of all individuals in accordance with the law.

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Human Rights Code:

The Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination on the grounds set out in the Code in the provision of services customarily available to the public – including schools.

Similarly, the Human Rights Code prohibits discriminatory publication or display of statements, emblems, or other representations that indicate discrimination against a person or class of persons and is likely to expose that person or group to hatred or contempt because of a protected characteristic.

- Section 8: prohibition against discrimination in the delivery of services (education).
 - Protects rights of students, including those with diverse abilities and exceptional needs.
- Section 13: prohibition against discrimination in employment.
- Inherent protection against harassment on protected grounds, and duty to accommodate.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Background:

- January 2016: Special report published identifying sexual and gender minority youth as particularly marginalized, vulnerable and in need of support.
- July 2016: BC Human Rights Code amended to include gender identity and expression as a protected ground.
- September 2016: MOE directed all school boards to expressly reference sexual orientation and gender identity in district and school codes of conduct.

SOGI 123:

- Created by ARC Foundation in collaboration with MOE, BCTF, BC school districts, UBC and other community organizations.
- Provides educational resources and support for teachers to create SOGI-inclusive classrooms and schools.
- Research shows that discrimination and risky behaviors* are reduced among all students when:
 - Schools create a sense of belonging in classrooms.
 - Schools teach about valuing diversity and respecting differences.
- SOGI 123 resources help schools to implement and support these methods.
- They help schools create safe, caring and inclusive learning environments for all students.

Understanding and respect for diversity is embedded in the BC Curriculum. This includes diverse forms of gender identity and expression:

Chamberlain v. Surrey School District No. 36, [2002] 4 S.C.R. 710 –

- Parents need not abandon their own commitments, or their view that the practices of others are undesirable. But where the school curriculum requires that a broad array of family models be taught in the classroom, a secular school system cannot exclude certain lawful family models simply on the ground that one group of parents finds them morally questionable.

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- ...Parental views, however important, cannot override the imperative placed upon the British Columbia public schools to mirror the diversity of the community and teach tolerance and understanding of difference.

There is no parental right to exempt students from discussions regarding gender identity and expression:

E. T v. Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, 2017 ONCA 893) –

- Exempting some students on a regular basis from classroom discussions touching on diversity, inclusivity and acceptance, within a public-school program designed to promote precisely those principles, would run a serious risk of endorsing the non-acceptance of students of other family backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender expressions and gender identities.
- ...That principle would be contradicted and undermined if, every time certain students' families and/or identities were discussed as being healthy and acceptable, they saw some other members of their class leave so that they would not be exposed to such statements of honour and respect.

Cognitive dissonance is part of learning:

Chamberlain v. Surrey School District No. 36, [2002] 4 S.C.R. 710 –

- The argument based on cognitive dissonance essentially asserts that children should not be exposed to information and ideas with which their parents disagree.
- ...The number of different family models in the community means that some children will inevitably come from families of which certain parents disapprove. Giving these children an opportunity to discuss their family models may expose other children to some cognitive dissonance. But such dissonance is neither avoidable nor noxious. Children encounter it every day in the public school system as members of a diverse student body.
- ... The cognitive dissonance that results from such encounters is simply a part of living in a diverse society. It is also a part of growing up. Through such experiences, children come to realize that not all of their values are shared by others.

Basic Principles:

- Under the BC Human Rights Code and the Charter, Boards must provide meaningful access to educational programs for all students, including students with diverse gender identities and expression.
- Students must feel welcomed and included in school, regardless of gender identity or expression.
- Schools must respect student's choice of pronouns, and preferred name.
- Where student does not want parents to know:
 - we will work with student to determine whether, with appropriate support, disclosure to parents is possible;
 - if communication with parents would compromise health or welfare of student, privacy will be respected.
- Forcing a child to choose between suppressing their identity or compromising their safety or welfare is not consistent with the duty to accommodate, or the value of inclusion.