

Education Programs and Planning Committee
February 18, 2020
Gillian Burnett

This was another fabulous meeting! As usual, the meeting started with the approval of the agenda and previous minutes.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation from Norm Monroe on the expansion of the David Douglas Botanical Garden located at UNBC. We were treated to the drawings that have been prepared that outline what the expansion will look like and what it would include. It's very exciting work. You may be wondering what this has to do with SD57? Well, education is what separates a Botanical Garden from an ordinary display garden. It is anticipated that research would be undertaken by UNBC students at the garden and SD57 students would have the opportunity to come visit, explore and learn about the initiatives being taken. There is even plans to have an Indigenous Garden which would showcase and "teach" about important fauna in our region and its traditional uses. We wished them luck with their fundraising efforts to make these plans a reality.

Next up was a Fine Arts Update from Learning Innovations. Julie Fisher presented what initiatives have been taking place around the district to "Bridging & Rebuilding the Arts in our District". I took this opportunity to provide two pieces of input. One, that parents and the larger community need to learn about all the exciting work that takes place within the district. We do a reasonable job of communicating these within our closed community, but the larger community needs to hear about them. If this doesn't happen from within, then the only public messages that get out about the work in SD57 are the negative ones. The second piece of input was that the district needs to find a better way of funding the Arts, because when the district asks parents to pay a fee for a program (used the recorders as an example), they unintentionally create barriers. Discussion ensued.

This was followed by a Rural Education Update. We heard from L'Donna Lynds, Hixon Elementary, and Jason Schwartz, Giscome Elementary. Significant work has been done to ensure that the equity gaps that existed for rural students are narrowing. It was exciting to hear about all the initiatives taking place in both schools. The placement of teaching Vice Principals at both schools has had a significant, positive effect on the school communities.

Debbie Kaban's Report on Research was postponed to the next meeting.

That concluded the meeting.