

BCSTA'S BC GENERAL ELECTIONS FORUM ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

Issue 15 Public Education is the Key Resources What's New

May 4, 2017

BCSTA's election campaign "Public Education is the Key" continued with an all-candidates forum featuring representatives from the BC Green Party, BC Liberal Party and BC NDP at the BCSTA Annual General Meeting in Richmond, BC last April 20-23, 2017. Candidates answered questions submitted by BCSTA members about important issues surrounding public education in British Columbia.

In attendance were Jonina Campbell for the BC Green Party, Rob Fleming for the BC NDP and Don McRae for the BC Liberal Party. It was moderated by television host and interviewer Maria LeRose.

We recorded the candidates' closing statements and, for Key Action 8, we invite you to view the video.

STUDENT VOTE: BUILDING FUTURE CITIZENS

Issue 14 Issue 15 Resources

March 30, 2017



Teachers play a vital role in building future citizens. Preparing young Canadians for the voting process can – and should – start at an early age.

Student Vote is a parallel election for students under the voting age coinciding with general elections. Students learn about government and the electoral process, research the political parties and platforms, discuss relevant issues and cast ballots for the official election candidates. The Student Vote results are shared publicly and with the media for broadcast and publication.

The Student Vote program applies the concept of the ‘teachable moment’ and uses the election as a springboard for discussing current affairs and practicing the skills and competencies of responsible citizenship. The real-life aspect of the parallel election enhances their interest to learn, discuss issues and become acquainted with the process. The publication of the Student Vote results allows students to feel that their voice matters and that they are part of something larger than their school.

“This has had a profound effect on my students and their families. The frequency with which students are following the media, discussing current events and demonstrating a commitment to being active citizens is amazing.” (Student Vote Team Leader, British Columbia, 2015 federal election)

An independent evaluation commissioned by Elections Canada found that Student Vote had a positive impact on student knowledge and understanding of politics and elections, on their interest and confidence in discussing politics and on their future voting intentions. The program was also found to foster dialogue and learning about the election at home, and 28 per cent of parents surveyed said their child’s participation positively impacted their decision to vote.

CIVIX will be offering Student Vote for the 2017 provincial election in partnership with Elections BC and with support from the Vancouver Foundation and the Government of Canada.

Registration for Student Vote BC is open until Friday, April 21. Participating schools receive educational resources, posters, ballots, ballot boxes and voting screens. The program is offered at no cost and open to all schools in the province.

Schools can sign up today by visiting www.studentvote.ca/bc2017 or by calling 1-866-488-8775.

ELECTION PARTY PLATFORMS AND THE 2017 BC LEADERS' DEBATE

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Get informed and read up on your candidates' party platforms. Find out what their plans are for public education by checking out the links below:

[BC Green Party Platform](#)

[BC Liberals Platform \(p. 78 addresses education\)](#)

[BC New Democratic Party Platform \(p. 48 addresses education\)](#)

On Wednesday, April 26, Liberal Leader Christy Clark, NDP Leader John Horgan and Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver faced off for a televised debate ahead of the 2017 BC General Election. Over the weekend, a number of columnists and pundits have written their analyses of the debate but we've linked to the full debate below for you to view and form your own opinions on whose platform best responds to your school districts' values and needs.

HIGHLIGHTING THE ARTS IN THE LANGLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Issue 15 Success Stories What's New

May 4, 2017



The Langley School District's reputation of supporting creativity and emphasizing the importance of artistic culture amongst its student body is well-deserved. With an approach that promotes the development of required learning outcomes through various forms of the arts, the district is making waves in BC's K-12 public education system.

Three schools within the district have provided BCSTA with glances into their unique approaches, all of which seek to elevate the arts in public education while providing students with the skills and abilities they require.

BLACKLOCK FINE ARTS ELEMENTARY

The mission statement at Blacklock Fine Arts Elementary is "academic excellence through artistic experience."

At Blacklock, we believe in our children and work towards creating hope and opportunity for all. Together, we hope to inspire all learners to reach their full potential and create a positive legacy for the future. Our school is a place that promotes respect, responsibility, and artistic & academic excellence in a safe, caring, learning environment.

Blacklock offers an integrated fine arts program to students in Kindergarten through Grade 5. The students work in learning pods where the BC Curriculum is taught through dance, drama, music and visual arts. Lessons and units are organized around themes, providing learning experience for all students that are meaningful, engaging and inter-connected through each art form. Learning is demonstrated in a yearly pod show. This year the K and Grade 1 students demonstrated much of their language arts learning through a show titled "Oh the Places You Will Go" a celebration of the work of Dr. Seuss. Students developed and learned great beginning reading skills through the celebration. Curricular

connections were deep and meaningful for young learners, including patterns in Math and Oobleck in Science, the concept of synergy and the fact that together is better. Applied Design Skills and Technology offered the opportunity for the students to take a design idea and then adjust it to fit with what they can do and execute the concept.

Seeing students own their art and gain confidence; hearing students talk about the friendships and trust that they have with each other because of risks taken together and from watching each other in performance; teachers report being stretched professionally and artistically, working closely with colleagues, and learning from their ideas and teaching styles; students leave the school thinking like artists with a desire to create, appreciate, and critique the arts.

Teaching in a fine arts school is magical, it is filled with emotion and both students and staff are transformed. Teachers at Blacklock believe that by weaving the arts throughout the curriculum they will provide learning opportunities to engage all students. Kindergarten and Grade 1 students have spun their own magic in the land of Dr. Seuss. It is our dream that all students would have the opportunity to experience an integrated Fine Arts Education.

D.W. POPPY MUSICAL ACADEMY

As the demographics have been shifting within the area, the D.W. Poppy community has been engaged in discussions about what would be a natural fit for students at the school.

The Musical Theatre Program gained Academy status in 2015 and has grown to over 100 students with as many as 35 fully committed academy students.

The D.W. Poppy Secondary Musical Theatre Academy offers an opportunity for students to develop their skills in music, acting, dance and technical theatre through experiential learning. The program aspires to teach and motivate students to create and inspire through artistic expression.

Under the guidance of teachers and professionals working in the fine arts, students learn about every aspect of theatrical production as they prepare for and present musical theatre performances to the Langley/Aldergrove community.

The primary goals of the academy are to provide practical skills, knowledge, and tools in the interpretation, creation and presentation of artistic works. The academy also seeks to foster well-rounded growth through creativity, skill building, social connectedness and collaborative teamwork. The promotion of self-discipline, organizational skills, self-confidence, and deeper appreciation for the arts rounds out the qualities D.W. Poppy Musical Academy seeks to instill in its students.

LANGLEY FINE ARTS SCHOOL

Langley Fine Arts is a 'choice' district school (drawing students from across the district with no catchment assigned), educating students from K to 12. It is a very popular school with a comprehensive educational program focusing on the arts.

Since its inception in 2011, the "Arts Matter Lecture/Arts Series" has welcomed 14 prominent artists and arts advocates to share their experiences, artistic journeys, words of wisdom and encouragement with the students, staff, alumni, families and community of Langley Fine Arts School. The lecture series invites

guests to talk about why the arts matter in today's world. Guest artists explore ideas about what the arts have to offer for both personal expression and social change.

During the weeks leading up to the visits LFAS is alive, with over 300 elementary, middle and secondary aged students involved in collaborative learning opportunities with staff. This learning is inspired in the style of the guest artist – whether it be through the lens of dance, drama, music, photography, visual art or writing.

During the one or two-day visits, LFAS students have access to the artists during workshop presentations, artist critiques, and/or class seminars. An evening presentation provides a celebratory culmination of learning. LFAS students perform individual and group pieces that connect with the artist's craft, as a show of appreciation and a demonstration of their own learning. The guest artist closes the evening by answering audience questions and sharing their own perceptions about why the arts matter.

By putting the focus on teaching toward the artistic strengths and inclinations of their students, the Langley School District is providing BC with a prime example of how to couple passion alongside the traditional curriculum. The resulting uptake and positive responses from students, as well as the local communities they live in, remind us of the importance the arts have in education.