

## **Principal Sabbatical Report**

**Iva Ropati**

**Howick College, Auckland, NZ**

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### **Topic**

Research how schools change or adapt school systems and structures to deliberately support the achievement of boys.

### **Acknowledgements**

My sincere thanks to all those people who made my sabbatical possible. I have learnt so much from the opportunity and believe our school community will benefit from my new learning.

### **Executive Summary**

I set off with the greatest intention of finding the silver bullet to raising boys' achievement for our school. For many years, our girls had consistently out-performed their male peers and my hope was that I would discover what Canadian teachers and leaders were doing in the classroom that made their system work for their students.

What seemed annoyingly apparent, was that none of the schools had any special programme for boys' acceleration. Instead, they seemed to focus entirely on good teaching for all. Whilst there were some minor variations from year to year, none of the schools had any serious concerns about the underachievement of boys. The data they collected seemed to confirm that achievement for boys and girls was about the same. My investigation, from then on was about the 'system' of education that may explain why there didn't seem to be obvious signs of boys underachievement or any other group for that matter.

New Zealand has a great education system but, in the words of a former All Blacks captain, we have a 'game of two halves'. Based on my visits to systems in Canada and Australia, I believe that the structure of education in New Zealand can and should change to achieve excellence for all.

Many New Zealand students achieve as well or better than those of other countries. Our teachers, leaders and researchers are respected and sought after globally. Our curriculum, pedagogy, leadership and physical resources are world-class. Yet, we are divided between the outcomes of our best and weakest students, and between schools and the Ministry of Education. Based on my school visits to Canada, I saw evidence that their system was working in complete harmony specially between schools and their school districts, If we are truly desire our system to be world leading, then I believe that it's time to rewire our system. Key to this is building trust and seeking excellence for all.

### **Governance**

Thirty years ago 'Tomorrow's Schools' was introduced in New Zealand with the promise of better educational outcomes for students and their families. Having visited schools through Canada, I believe the 'Tomorrow's Schools' model is flawed. It is a low trust system that is

inequitable and over regulated in its design and implementation. I believe that we must rewire it to better tap into our teachers' and school leaders' ability and experience, and improve outcomes for all students.

As part of this, we must re-imagine how our Ministry of Education can support a new process of delivery. Currently, the organisation lacks the sector's trust and confidence, and over the last 30 years has not always been effective in leading the system to achieve equitable outcomes for all students. We can build trust across our system by modelling our system on those in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. This includes making the central administration reflect the profession, modifying principals' remuneration and tenure, improving teachers' professional autonomy, moderating school choice, and making the ministry closer and more responsive to schools and their communities.

### **Assessment**

High school assessment in the British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario is almost entirely school based and highly effective. In contrast, NCEA dominates NZ education with no clear evidence that, as a system- wide intervention, it improves students' learning. What is supposed to be a flexible, personalised framework to identify individual students' unique abilities and knowledge, has become a complicated and competitive maze for students and teachers to navigate. Like its counterparts in other parts of the world, NCEA narrows curriculum and pedagogy, and unnecessarily burdens teachers, driving them from the profession

### **Summary of visits**

- Canada: Visited 14 schools in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto  
Visited 3 District Boards; Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto  
Attended 'Ulead' school leaders conference in Banff
- Australia: Attended 'NBEC' in Sydney
- NZ: Attend SPANZ conference in Wellington

### **As a result of my trip student achievement (boys' achievement) will improve if:**

- Strengthen a 'high trust' environment at Howick College so that staff who clearly appreciate the vision and purpose can just get on with achieving excellence
- Trust staff that they will always have best interests of students at heart
- Reducing aspects of our work that weigh staff down but satisfy other non-urgent priorities
- Reduce the need to be data obsessive and accept data aware is more appropriate
- Un-complicate the school system to make teacher time more efficient

## Visits

### **VANCOUVER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD 1580 West Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia**

**Date of Visit: 6 May 2019**

The Vancouver School Board (VDSB) is a large, urban and multicultural school district. The VDSB established its by-laws in 1974 to comply with the Ministry's Manual of School Law, which includes the School Act.

The Vancouver School district is among the most diverse public school systems in Canada with an annual enrolment of around 50,000 students from Kindergarten up to grade 12. The VDSB employs approximately 9,000 staff.

The VDSB also provides education programs to full-time Adult Education students.

The VDSB comprises of:

- 89 Elementary schools including 12 elementary annexes
- 1 Middle school
- 18 Secondary schools
- 2 Adult Education centres
- Distributed Learning School – Vancouver Learning Network
- District programs including French immersion, Mandarin Bilingual, Fine Arts, Indigenous Focus School, IB and Montessori
- 56 District programs connected to secondary schools ranging from remedial to enrichment
- 12 Community school teams

The Vancouver Board of Education is comprised of nine elected trustees and a student trustee who will serve learners and their families and the public education system for a four year term.

Students are expected to attend their catchment area school. Students in the Vancouver School District are allowed to register at a school outside of their catchment area as a "cross boundary applicant." These will only be considered after all in-catchment students have been accommodated. First, they must register at their English Catchment School before submitting a cross boundary application.

Language diversity range with 160 languages being identified in the VDSB schools with 48% speaking a language other than English at home. 10% of students are French immersion learners.

Rental of facilities go through the VDSB by application, not the individual school. Schools attached to the VDSB can concentrate and focus on student learning. Schools in the VDSB have a Parent Advisory Council which covers fundraising, events, contacts, school life, volunteer opportunities and parent resources. Every parent is automatically a member.

**LORD BYNG SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**3939 West 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, British Columbia**

**Established:** Officially opened in 1925  
**Roll:** 1297  
**Type:** Grade 8 to Grade 12 - Co-Ed  
**District:** Vancouver District School Board, BC  
**Principal:** Mr G Taylor  
**Date Visited:** 6 May 2019



Lord Byng is located on a nine acre site at the Western end of the Vancouver peninsula in an area called West Point Grey.

Lord Byng is a comprehensive secondary school offering a full program with high enrolment in both academic and elective areas. The school incorporates a Learning Assistance/Life Skills class. The school has an Arts Academy which offers an outstanding program to 450 students from across the school district with a Fine Arts orientation. Entry to the Byng Arts Academy is by audition.

The school has an active Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC hold monthly meetings which cover fundraising, events, contacts, school life, volunteer opportunities and parent resources.

**VANCOUVER TECHNICAL SECONDARY**  
**2600 East Broadway,**

**Established:** 1916  
**Roll:** 1800  
**Type:** Comprehensive – Co-Ed Grade 8 - 12  
**District:** Vancouver District School Board, BC  
**Principal:** Moro Roberto  
**Date Visited:** 7 May 2019



Vancouver Technical Secondary school is one of the largest schools in Vancouver with teaching staff of over 100 plus support staff. The school started in the basement of King Edward High School in 1916. The school later moved to more spacious quarters and major additions were built in 1954 and in 2011. Originally it was strictly a boys' school. In 1940 Girls were also admitted to the Technology school.

Unique to Vancouver Technical Secondary school are their annual focus weeks (Literacy, Indigenous Awareness, Fine Arts, Applied Skills and Wellness Week), schoolyard garden projects and their strong social justice and indigenous focus.

**BRITANNIA SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**1001 Cotton Drive, Vancouver, BC**

**Established:** 1908  
**Roll:** 758  
**Type:** Grade 8 - 12  
**District:** Vancouver District School Board, BC  
**Principal:** Alec MacInnes  
**Date Visited:** 7 May 2019



The school was founded in 1908 as the second high school to be built in the city; it is now the oldest remaining.

Britannia Secondary School offers a broad diversity of learning opportunities with the academic and elective departments as well as alternative programmes.

**SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**7055 Heather Street,**

**Established:** 1956  
**Roll:** 2100  
**Type:** Grade 8 - 12  
**District:** Vancouver District School Board, BC  
**Principal:** Annett Vey-Chilton  
**Date Visited:** 8 May 2019



The school offers an International Baccalaureate Programme and full French Immersion. Students in French Immersion can also participate in the International Baccalaureate programme and receive a bilingual IB diploma.

Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School offers one of only two District Autism Resource Programmes.

**KING GEORGE SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**1755 Barclay Street, Vancouver**

**Established:** 1956  
**Roll:** 500  
**Type:** Grade 6 - 10  
**District:** Vancouver District School Board, BC  
**Principal:** Jason Lauzon  
**Date Visited:** 8 May 2019



King George School's small size is one of its biggest assets. The school provides leadership in technology through its Technology Immersion Programme. King George offers the International Baccalaureate Middle years Programme which runs for 5 years.

Students are encouraged to participate in community service and are encouraged to become contributing members of their local communities through volunteering their time.

**CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**1221-8 Street SW Calgary, Alberta**

**Date of Visit: 10 May 2019**

Founded in 1885 as the Calgary Protestant Public School District No 19.

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) is the largest school district in Western Canada. The CBE consists of over 245 Schools, more than 121,000 students and over 14,000 employees. Schools consist of pre-school through to senior levels.

The CBE is guided by an elected board of seven trustees. Trustees are elected every four years during the municipal election. Day to day operations are led by a team of superintendents who are responsible for meeting the expectations of the Board of Trustees.

Service Units form part of the CBE which provide support to all their schools by:

- Looking after schools and buildings
- Hiring and developing the skills of employees
- Assisting teachers develop the best teaching methods and tools required
- Maintaining and improving learning technology
- Managing finances
- Providing other services such as legal and communication support

To manage the needs of such a large area, the CBE has divided their district into seven administrative areas in Calgary. Each Area is led by two education directors who provide leadership support to Principals in 17 - 20 schools.

Each school is led by a Principal who is responsible for meeting the learning needs of each student.

Fundraising is taken care of by Parent societies. These are a formal group of parents, incorporated under the Societies Act for the purpose of raising funds for the schools.

A French immersion programme is offered in a limited numbers of schools for mainly English-speaking families who wish their children to become fully fluent in French.

Busing and other transportation for students to their local school is arranged by the CBE for a yearly fee of \$365 which covers any school in their district.

**NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL**  
**11900 Country Village Link N.E., Calgary, Alberta**

**Established:** 2005  
**Roll:** 1700  
**Type:** Grade 10 – 12 Catholic  
**District:** Calgary Catholic School District  
**Principal:** Frank Durante  
**Date Visited:** 9 May 2019



Focused on providing a Catholic Academic Education, Notre Dame comes under the Calgary Catholic School District Board funded by Alberta Initiative for School Improvement.

It's the largest Catholic school in the area employing over 130 staff.

They offer a wide range of well-rounded faith-based education programmes.

**ROBERT THIRSK HIGH SCHOOL**  
**8777 Nose Hill Drive, Calgary, Alberta**

**Established:** 2013  
**Roll:** 1286  
**Type:** Grades 10 - 12  
**District:** Calgary Board of Education  
**Principal:** Matt Christison  
**Date Visited:** 9 May 2019



Robert Thirsk High School runs an Advance Placement Dual Credit Programme. This allows the student to study in an area of passion and interest and get a jump start on post-secondary learning.

Each year the school prepares a development plan with input from staff, students and parents. It focusses on specific areas for improvement. School results show that students' achievement and progress is meeting the goals and outcomes as set by the CBE and Alberta Education.

**CRESCENT HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL**  
**1019 1 St NW, Calgary, Alberta**

**Established:** 1915  
**Roll:** 1600  
**Type:** Grade 10 - 12  
**District:** Calgary Board of Education  
**Principal:** Mike Wilson  
**Date Visited:** 9 May 2019



Crescent Heights High School is a school of choice as nearly 40% of it's students come from outside the immediate area. Over 75% of graduates go on to attend post-secondary education both locally and abroad.

Students are encouraged to enrol in their dual credit programmes in partnership with the University of Calgary and the Alberta University of the Arts.

The school is well equipped and has two modern gymnasiums, an updated fitness centre, technical shops, multi-functional theatre and two story learning areas.

**TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario**

**Date of Visit: 15 May 2019**

Founded in 1953 / 1998 in its current form.

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is the largest and one of the most diverse school boards in Canada.

- They have 582 schools in total throughout Toronto
- 111 Secondary Schools including 1 Elementary/Secondary Alternative School, 20 Secondary Alternative Schools, 4 Caring and Safe Schools Programs, 5 Adult/EdVance Programs, 2 Native Learning Centres and 6 Special Education Self-Contained Schools
- 471 Elementary Schools
- The Toronto District School Board serves approximately 246,000 students each year (73,000 high school)
- The total schools employ 17,000 permanent teachers, 5,800 occasional teachers, 15,500 permanent support staff and 4,000 casual employees



The Leadership of the Toronto District School Board serves students and the communities by improving academic performance, manages business services, provides staff support and maintains all school buildings in the District.

They operate by a Board of Trustees who represent the families in their wards and ensure that all concerns of their communities are brought to their attention.

More than 80% of TDSB graduates go on to university or further college education.

**JARVIS COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE**  
**495 Jarvis Street, Toronto**

**Established:** 1807  
**Roll:** 1020  
**Type:** Grade 9 - 12  
**District:** Toronto District School Board  
**Principal:** Michael Harvey  
**Date Visited:** 15 May 2019



Jarvis was the first public high school in Toronto and has a long tradition of academic excellence with over 90% of graduates attending university.

The school has a mix of students from over 100 countries. Jarvis offers a wide range of courses and programs. The school has a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (S.T.E.M). Further Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement classes offer students in grades 9 – 12 an enriched curriculum.

**ROSEDALE HEIGHTS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS**  
**711 Bloor Street East, Toronto**

**Established:** Amalgamated in 2005  
**Roll:** 1000  
**Type:** Grades 9 - 12  
**District:** Toronto District School Board  
**Principal:** Barrie Sketchley  
**Date Visited:** 15 May 2019



Rosedale Heights School of Arts accepts students from all over the Greater Toronto Area who has a passion for the arts. It is the only Arts school in the Toronto District School Board that does not use auditions for acceptance.

They offer a wide selection of courses in academic and artistic areas of study. Rosedale is a non-semestered school.

**MARC GARNEAU COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE**  
**135 Overlea Boulevard, Toronto**

**Established:** 1973  
**Roll:** 1800  
**Type:** Grades 9 -12  
**District:** Toronto District School Board  
**Principal:** Ricky Goldenberg  
**Date Visited:** 16 May 2019



Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute is one of the most diverse secondary schools in the Toronto District School Board. It is the only high school in Canada dedicated to helping students with careers in the space sciences.

The school offers unique programs such as horticulture, financial securities, Special Education and their TOPS program (Talented offerings for programs in the sciences).

**EAST YORK COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE**  
**650 Cosbourne Avenue, East York, Toronto**

**Established:** 1927  
**Roll:** 1100  
**Type:** Grades 9 -12  
**District:** Toronto District School board  
**Principal:** John Bratina  
**Date Visited:** 16 May 2019



**DANFORTH COLLEGIATE & TECHNICAL INSTITUTE**  
**800 Greenwood Avenue, Toronto**

**Established:** 1923  
**Roll:**  
**Type:** Grades 9 -12  
**District:** Toronto District School Board  
**Principal:** Rob MacKinnon  
**Date Visited:** 17 May 2019



Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute is a composite and specialised Maths, Science and Technology school. It is set up as a technical school with trades training and special shops for auto repair and carpentry.

Danforth supports a wide range of students with special needs.

**BIRCHMOUNT PARK COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE**  
**3663 Danforth Avenue, Toronto**

**Established:** 1964  
**Roll:** 1000  
**Type:** Grades 9 - 12  
**District:** Toronto District School Board  
**Principal:** Ellen Austrom  
**Date Visited:** 17 May 2019



Birchmount Park Collegiate benefits from the superb sports facilities that surround it. The facilities include a 1045 seated auditorium.

## U-Lead CONFERENCE Banff, Canada

### **The Hon Adriana LaGrange (Minister of Education of Alberta)**

Canada is recognised as a leading country. 5<sup>th</sup> ranked in OECD. Build strong foundation in Alberta. Government is committed to strengthening system. Protecting school choice, accountability and outcomes for students. Directing resources to where needed. Funding review but no cause to worry. Education Act is in place for the coming school year. Focus on school infrastructure. Aware anticipating 15,000 new students start in September 2019. Cause of curriculum review work is urgent and sensitive time pressures administrators. Education is challenging but excited about possibilities.



to

GK Chesterton 'education is soul of society as it passes one generation to next'.

## National Boys' Education Conference Sydney, Australia

### **Simon Brooks, Educator, Facilitator and change agent** Curiosity based learning - Stoking the fires.

Five habits of practice when teaching curiosity

1. Avoid excessive explanation
2. Encourage students to embrace the muddle.
3. Curate for incongruity.
4. Encourage diverse ideas.
5. Promote prediction.

What works in boy's education?

1. Lesson structured as games
2. Lessons that require boys to address 'open', unsolved problems
3. Lessons that introduce dramatic novelties and surprises
4. Transitivity: the capacity of some element of instruction...to arouse and hold student interest.

