

Learning Without Boundaries: Success in Life for All

A Framework for Strategic Vision to Strategic Action

Developing shared leadership through innovative, sustainable professional learning

Creating a culture of care and shared responsibility where every learner matters



Providing flexible, integrated, diverse and active learning environments

Engaging and empowering lifelong learning



Strategic Vision to Strategic Action

Introduction

Context

Learning Without Boundaries is both a product and a process. It is designed to anchor the decisions that are made each and every day in SD 43: those made at the individual level between teacher and student; those made at the classroom or whole school level; and those made at the district level.

*“Education is the
kindling of a flame,
not the filling of a
vessel.”*

- Socrates

Developing School District 43’s Learning Without Boundaries [LWB] has involved the collective wisdom of over 4000 individuals: educators, students, parents, district leaders, support staff and community members. What began as a simple strategic planning exercise soon evolved into something much greater, and more complex. Learning Without Boundaries is designed to respond to the ever-changing intricacies of Coquitlam’s public school system. It is not an end-point in and of itself; nor is it merely another plan.

Its goal is simple – to increase the learning of ALL students in SD43. With that being the focus it will be founded on clear evidence that relates to Learning Without Boundaries’ four Guiding Principles:

- Creating a culture of care and shared responsibility where every learner matters
- Engaging and empowering lifelong learners
- Providing flexible, integrated, diverse, and active learning environments
- Developing shared leadership through innovative, sustainable professional learning.

Anchoring these four ‘actions’ is LWB’s decision-making cycle which is outlined in detail in the section entitled “Inquiry to Action Process”.



Why Strategic Process?

The decision to employ a strategic process rather than a strategic plan is deliberate and breaks with the historic approach used in SD43. Whereas a strategic plan typically fixes a course that leads to pre-defined goals or outcomes, a strategic process is based on the reality that goals change as our understandings change. It is dynamic versus static.

Systems that endure share many traits. They are adaptive, responsive and resilient. They invite multiple perspectives that lead to innovative solutions. They respect the individual while acknowledging the importance of the group. They encourage risk-taking: action cycles which include feedback loops designed to ensure efficacy. In short, they are designed to deliver 'best practice' on a consistent and ongoing basis without falling prey to rigidity.

Equally important, effective systems invite ideas from without as well as within. Whether internal or external, the ideas are readily recognized, tested, developed and disseminated. If effective, they are retained. If ineffective, they are jettisoned.

School District 43 already has a deep culture of 'inquiry', the formal and informal processes of ideas, action and evaluation. It makes eminent sense not only to retain this 'system strength' but to enhance it. Learning Without Boundaries blends inquiry, a dynamic process, with the four overriding action statements that are fixed and against which the process is constantly judged.

The following framework provides a set of lenses – a common approach to looking at key educational issues – for use by all members of SD 43's diverse community. Whether it be community members, parents, professional staff or, most importantly, students, LWB invites participation. In this respect, it is no different from good classroom practice. It engages the learner. It is a living and breathing approach to learning rather than a well-intentioned binder gathering dust on a shelf.

“Dreams are where we’re going; work is how we get there.”

- unknown



*“Go confidently
in the direction of
your dreams. Live
the life you have
always imagined.”*

- Henry David Thoreau

Intent

Learning Without Boundaries is generative. It is a set of guidelines rather than a set of prescriptions. While the collective wisdom and experience of staff and stakeholders cannot – and should not – be dismissed, Learning Without Boundaries invites constant reflection designed to stimulate new and exciting approaches to learning. At the same time, it recognizes the need for responsible practice – managing risk, respecting traditionally effective pedagogy, and giving a wide berth to unproductive areas of focus.

LWB is intended to enhance the decision-making processes that already exist in the Learning Community that is School District 43. It is not designed to replace these.

Other defining characteristics of LWB include its portability, its practitioners and its potential. It can be applied to a variety of situations in a variety of settings for a variety of effects. It can be used by everyone: administrators, teachers students, parents and members of the community. It can guide formal as well as informal conversation and decision-making; policy and practice; and even specific learning strategies for individual students.

In short, the intent of Learning Without Boundaries is to provide clear and compelling process anchored to clear and compelling action statements. Used wisely, it will make a positive difference for each and every learner.

Application

There are two aspects to LWB, the Framework, consisting of the four Guiding Principles, and the Process whereby inquiry leads to critical decisions which in turn lead to strategic action.

What is truly unique about this model is that it will differ depending on context. Rather than a rigidly-adhered to set of strictures that lead to constriction rather than expansion of thought, LWB is designed to open up possibilities: paraphrasing Matthew Arnold, to stimulate the best that can be thought and said within students.



The Learning Without Boundaries Framework

The LWB Framework consists of the aforementioned Guiding Principles:

- Creating a culture of care and shared responsibility where every learner matters
- Engaging and empowering lifelong learners
- Providing flexible, integrated, diverse, and active learning environments
- Developing shared leadership through innovative, sustainable professional learning.

*“Education happens
when hope exceeds
expectation.”*

*- Andy Hargreaves
and Michael Fullan*

