



# SD43 International Education

*Creating opportunities for everyone to learn and benefit.*

**Report to the Community – May 2018**

## Teachers Find Common Ground a World Away

SD43's International Education Programs are intended to achieve the goal of internationalization for the benefit of all students and employees, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to be leaders in the globalized world of today and the future. In support of this goal SD43 provides opportunities for teachers, administrators and students to travel abroad and engage with our sister schools.

Over the 2018 spring break five administrators and 20 teachers visited 15 sister schools in six school districts where they engaged with 12,500 students and created thousands of memories all in 10 days during a whirlwind trip that has left them amazed, enlightened and informed.

This remarkable journey to China was another opportunity to provide administrators and teachers with once-in-a-lifetime professional development and cultural exchange experiences that will benefit their students and themselves - now and throughout their entire educational careers.

Teacher professional development trips like this one occur annually in SD43 and provide significant professional and personal growth for administrators and teachers through their engagement with fellow Chinese educators. Even though the language can be a barrier, it becomes quickly evident that regardless of what country teachers are from, what political climate their country has, or how different some educational systems appear on the surface, all educators have common ground - they all wish to provide the best education and support for their students.



To that end the SD43 group found many similarities in teaching and school leadership between the two countries but were also able to learn from the Chinese administrators and teachers while helping them learn about B.C.'s curriculum, teaching strategies and best practices. It was an exchange of knowledge that makes the world much smaller and reminded them that as educators they are engaged in life-long learning.

Another benefit of the trip was that it provided significant hands-on understanding of the challenges that SD43's international students from all countries face when they come to B.C. This also helps administrators and teachers better support our Canadian students and their parents, many who are originally from Asian countries.

Nothing speaks louder than the words of those who were on the trip and learned first-hand the many important aspects of diversity and inclusiveness in other cultures and countries around the world. The trip provided invaluable hands-on lessons to be used in SD43 and those on the trip grew in their leadership capacity and abilities enriching themselves for existing and future teaching and leadership opportunities.



These positive outcomes also benefit students as our educators gain more worldviews, cultural experiences and a compassionate understanding of all students and the learning challenges they may face.

*“Our school district has increasing diversity. Going to China allowed us to continue to learn and gain new perspectives from the inside out rather than trying to teach and reach our diverse population from the outside in. As an outsider to them, I appreciated how that feels for our students. It reminds us that kindness is the greatest wisdom.”* **Lisa Dubé, Pinetree Secondary School Vice-principal**

*“The continued collaboration between the Zhejiang province and SD43 has given me the opportunity to connect with amazing educators in our district and in China. Every time I visit, I am overwhelmed by the generosity of spirit and compassion for learning and for supporting all students in global awareness and understanding.”* **Bryn Williams, Westwood Elementary School Principal**

*“It was a professional development of a lifetime to be able to travel to another country to learn about their education system and the creative systems they have put in place to ensure success for their students. I learned that we have more things in common than differences. I was reminded of how difficult acquiring a language can be and have renewed respect for my EAL students.”* **Allison Knowles, Banting Middle School Teacher**



Teachers and administrators from SD43 visit countries around the world on similar educational trips to immerse themselves in other cultures and education systems. Likewise, teachers and administrators from other countries visit schools in SD43 to learn about our education, culture, and lifestyle.



Sister schools in China invite administrators and teachers from SD43 who are considered leaders and experts in education to share their experiences and learn new ideas also. The trip is an important part of the outreach for SD43 to maintain relationships with sister schools and school districts in support of the district’s overall International Education Programs.

***SD43’s International Education Programs create opportunities for everyone to learn and benefit.***

# SD43 China Spring Break trip

*March, 2018*



## **Presented by:**

**Bryn Williams**, Principal,  
Westwood Elementary

**Pamela Becker**,  
Principal, Blakeburn  
Elementary

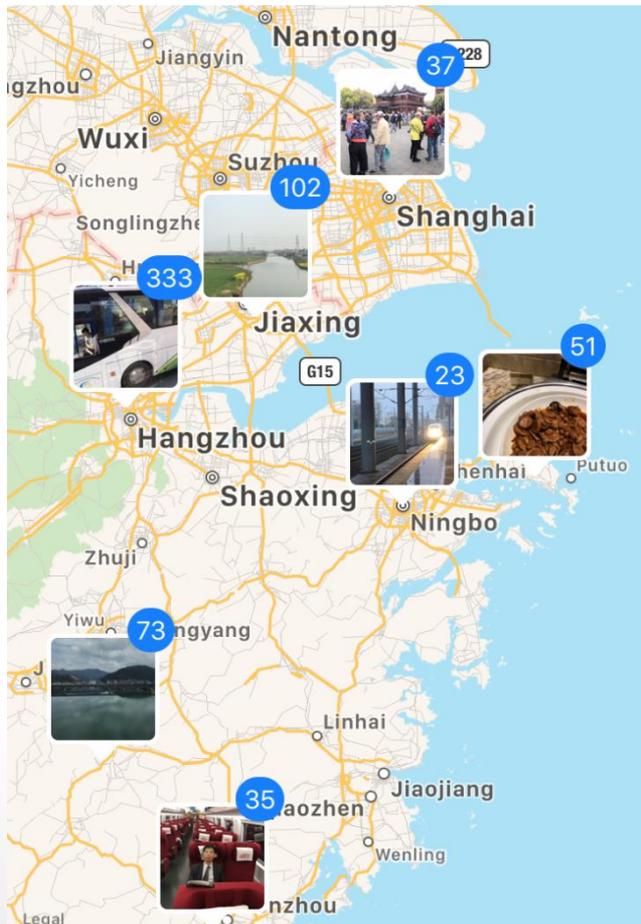
**Lisa Dubé**, Vice-  
Principal, Pinetree  
Secondary

**Sharon Starr**, Counselor,  
Pinetree Secondary

**Megan Weeks**, Teacher,  
Westwood Elementary

**Allison Knowles**,  
Teacher, Banting Middle

# SD#43 China Spring Break trip



- Twenty teachers
- Twenty schools
- Twelve thousand five hundred students taught
- Five administrators
- Six Education Bureaus
- Fifteen Sister Schools
- Ten days
- Thousands of memories

# Bryn Williams

## Westwood Elementary



The continuation of collaboration between the Zhejiang province and Coquitlam School district has given me the opportunity to connect with the amazing educators in our district and those in China. Every time I have been, I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of spirit and compassion for learning and for supporting all our students in global awareness and understanding.

# Pamela Becker

## Blakeburn Elementary

I had the fortune of attending this trip with three of my Blakeburn teachers. There were so many takeaways it is hard to pick just a couple. First, our trip to China reaffirmed my belief that, as educators, we all take great pride in our schools and we strive to foster the very best learning environments for our students. I was extremely proud to discuss the work the district and my schools (past and present) are engaged in. In turn, my favorite part was definitely visiting schools, seeing the amazing work of educators reflected on the faces of their students, and having the opportunity to share and to learn from each other.



# Pamela Becker

## Blakeburn Elementary

I came back with a notebook full of ideas and photos. One of the things that stood out to me was the commitment, by many of the schools visited, to focus on self-regulation, positive mental health, and student wellness, goals not unlike our own in SD43. A number of schools had spaces intentionally carved out and thoughtfully constructed for this very purpose. These spaces provided chances for all students to connect, destress, and engage in a wide variety of wellness based strategies. There was an opportunity there for us, as administrators and educators, to continue to learn and to reflect on how we can further support our own students in these areas.



# Lisa Dubé

## Pinetree Secondary



One thing I learned from the trip was that every place we went to in China, administration, teachers and students demonstrated a most genuine appetite to share with us how they do what they and how it connects to the big ideas we are working with within our revised curriculum. With equal vigor, they are intent on learning the same from us; to extend our collective knowledge and to build friendships as we do this.

# Lisa Dubé

## Pinetree Secondary

Coquitlam teachers were extraordinary in every sense of the journey. It was most exciting for me to see their energy transpire and transform and as they worked so seamlessly together, learned from each other, built and shared with others; I was reminded why we work where we do and with the teams we have.



# Sharon Starr

## Pinetree Secondary

SD43 has amazing, caring, talented educators willing to share their expertise. I was so proud to hear about and see first-hand the amazing expertise of our teachers. We should feel so proud of the work we do with our students here at home. I felt both proud and humbled by the level of talent and expertise of our administrators and teachers. Our students are in such good hands.



# Megan Weeks

## Westwood Elementary



My experience in China was invaluable. As I have recently moved into Learning Services and am working with EAL students, I am able to better understand the similarities and differences in our education systems and help my students adjust to school in Canada. This has also helped facilitate my communication with parents because I have a genuine understanding of the adjustments the student and their families have to make. This experience also connected me with numerous compassionate, intelligent, and admirable teachers and administrators from around the district.

# Allison Knowles

## Banting Middle

I think it was a professional development of a lifetime to be able to travel to another country to learn about their education system and the creative systems they have put in place to ensure success for their students. I learned that we have more things in common than differences. I was reminded of how difficult acquiring a language can be and have renewed respect for my EAL students. I also enjoyed learning about other ideas and advances they have regarding self regulation and technology.



# Thank You

