

First Impressions of PCS: Early Learning Program Report 2016

On February 25 & 26, 2016, an external review team from the **Society of Christian Schools in BC** came to PCS to conduct a review of our **Pre-School and Junior Kindergarten** early learning program. The review team included teachers with extensive experience in pre-schools and early childhood education in other Christian school settings. The process included significant preparation of documentation and materials by our pre-school staff, plus surveys distributed to all the parents of pre-school children in recent years and also to selected staff members who have worked in our early learning environment.

In April, the chair of the review team, **Greg Gerber, Director of Learning at the SCSBC**, came to present a very positive and complimentary summary report first to the pre-school and junior kindergarten staff and the administration, then later in the evening to the **PCS Education Committee**. Here are some of the key summary comments: commendations and recommendations.

The Review Team commends the PCS Pre-School and Junior Kindergarten for:

- *Providing an exemplary and authentic Christian, play-based pre-school program. The staff exude a high level of care and compassion for the children while encouraging play and following curiosities.*
- *Well-established and seamless transition routines –effective and developmentally appropriate.*
- *Creating an inviting learning space with a variety of play and learning centers and activities to meet the various learning styles of students.*
- *Creating a friendly, welcoming atmosphere for both parents and students.*
- *An intentional priority of introducing early literacy and numeracy in a fun, age-appropriate manner.*
- *The strong working bond of the Pre-School/Junior Kindergarten staff which helps to create a safe and loving environment for children and their families.*

Some recommendations included:

- *Improve and redesign outdoor playground space focusing on ways to promote connections with nature.*
- *Consider adding multicultural items to the housekeeping area to expand in the area of cultural diversity.*
- *Increase visual appeal of sidewalk area directly in front of the early learning center.*
- *Consider the addition of early learning centre signage to increase perception and awareness.*
- *Consider specific advertising campaigns and activities to promote the early learning center.*

We are very appreciative of the praise and positive commendations for our early learning program and staff, and have already implemented several of these recommendations.

Here are some changes you may have noticed that we have already made! Perhaps as a result, we now have the largest registration in the history of our Pre-School and Junior Kindergarten programs, with more expected in January, which will likely fill at least two of our three classes to full capacity!

- *Did you see that the garbage bins were moved from beside the early learning facilities this spring, creating three additional convenient parking spaces?*
- *By September, did you notice our new playful sign, new seating benches and interlock brick surfacing, an outside glassed-in lobby area for children and parents, and other “curbside appeal” items?*
- *Have you watched our new promotional video, commissioned by our Development office, and now posted on our website? We are working on more ways to enhance our online Pre-School/Junior Kindergarten website presence.*

- *When the new gymnasium is built next year, look for our playground equipment being relocated closer to the early learning facility, with the addition of landscaping with trees and shrubs.*
 - *With our ever-changing enrolment, did you notice the inclusion of multicultural items like food, people, figurines, and dress-up materials, to better represent the increasing ethnic diversity of our children?*
 - *Did you notice indoors that there is a new child-friendly kitchen, improvements to the washrooms, new counter tops and new carpet, and several other minor facility improvements?*
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- *Stay tuned; we are taking this report seriously and will strive for continual improvement and continue to celebrate the wonderful things already happening.*
 - *Ultimately, “whatever we do, we want to do it to the glory of God”!*