

Annual Report 2018/19



Immaculate Conception
V A N C O U V E R

Today, I will grow in knowledge, love of God and service to others

Message from the Pastor

Dear parents – welcome back to school. It is a delight to behold the joy within you and your children as our new school year begins.

As pastor of the parish I feel blessed every day to behold the ‘delight’ that shines forth from your children’s faces. It tells me that they are happy and that they love Immaculate.

Mom and dad, as the new year begins I pray that delight may fill your soul as you witness your child mature in wisdom, grace and stature over this school year. The delight you show toward your child is a wonderful prayer of blessing over them. Your child is hungry for your delight and blessing. It is what awakens within them that they are your beloved child and God’s beloved child. Your blessing empowers your child to desire to grow in stature and wisdom. It is what sets the stage for your child to have their teacher build upon and deepen your blessing. As we begin a new school year may we be a school community where we delight in the sacredness of the relationship between parents and teachers so that every child at Immaculate may experience learning, study and play as a blessed joy!

Peace and all good,
Fr Paul, ofm



Message from the Principal

The CISVA theme for 2018-2019 asked, “What Do You Want of Me, Lord?” and the students of Immaculate Conception School continue to focus on this question as they grow in knowledge, love of God and service to others. As we work within the concept-based, competency-driven B.C. curriculum, teachers and students are looking at learning in new and exciting ways. To supplement this learning, students also participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities in the areas of athletics, academics, and the arts.

Nurturing students’ faith development permeates everything we do. Whether it is attending mass, preparing to receive the sacraments, or participating in events such as the Living Rosary, the Advent Paraliturgy, or the Holy Thursday retreat, everyone at ICS recognizes that this dimension makes us truly special.

Our students serve others in many ways, both within the school and in the wider community. Relationships are developed through buddy activities, peer helping, and interaction with the seniors of the parish. Various outreach projects throughout the year remind us how fortunate we are and that we are called to help those in need.

On behalf of the students and staff, I would like to thank the parent and parish communities for their continued support of our Little Blue School. We are all blessed to be part of this wonderful community.

Yours sincerely,

Colette Foran
Principal



Message from the Chairperson

In a recent meeting, Father Paul suggested that parents who send their children to school at ICS are “investing in our families, through school.” A huge investment in the school was our seismic upgrade, completed in September 2018. Other initiatives were completed during the school year and in the summer months of 2019. With this capital investment, we hope to ensure that our school buildings provide a safe, welcoming place in which our children can “grow in knowledge, love of God, and service to others”—for many years to come. We are so very grateful to the fundraising, the donations, and the many people who work tirelessly on behalf of our children to make this possible.

Christine Lee
Chairperson, PEC

2018/19 PEC Members

Elected and appointed PEC members for the 2018/2019 school year were:

Christine Lee, Chair
Laura Williams, Vice-Chair
Grace Huang (Wright), Treasurer
Lesley Jackson, CISVA Delegate
Calvin Leong, Secretary
Bosco Li, Grounds & Maintenance
Adriana O’Malley (Peralta),
Member at Large

What does the Parish Education Committee do?

Together with our Pastor, Father Paul Smith, and Principal, Ms. Colette Foran, the Parish Education Committee (PEC) is responsible for the running of the school.

The PEC is responsible for the business operations of the school and for ensuring that the educational policy of the CISVA is followed in the school; it prepares the budget for the operation and maintenance of the school, ensures the school maintains accurate records, oversees the day-to-day operations of the school (including grounds and infrastructure maintenance) and hires teachers and staff with the approval of the Pastor, and more.

The PEC does not work in isolation. ICS is one of 47 schools within CISVA, which governs both elementary and high schools within Vancouver. The PEC makes decisions and sets policy to govern the school, providing these decisions fall within the CISVA Board’s policies and regulations. Structurally, each PEC is a sub-committee of the CISVA Board of Directors.

The PEC is composed of active members of Immaculate Conception Parish (not necessarily parents of students) and the Pastor. Members serve two-year terms (up to a maximum of four terms). The PEC meets once a month with Father Paul, Ms. Foran, and a representative from the teaching staff. Meeting minutes are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway and are kept in a binder in the school office. Parents are always welcome to join the meeting as observers. If parents wish to present an issue of concern to the PEC, they may do so with seven-day written notice to the Chairperson.

Christine Lee
Chairperson, Parish Education Committee

Major Projects

We started school on schedule, with all the students and teachers in their classrooms, on September 17, 2018. A simple statement, but one that is quite amazing considering the work that went on during the extended summer break in 2018. As the Seismic Committee's presentation showed us, walls were strengthened, foundations anchored, steel beams were installed, and floors were dug up and restored. It was a major undertaking and, thanks to the dedication of the Parish Seismic Committee, as well as the hard work of the contractor, Ventana, the project ended on time.

Teachers were able to get into the school a few days before school started to begin the work of unpacking and setting up, albeit co-existing with the painters and carpenters still putting on various finishing touches. We are so grateful to the staff for their hard work in getting their classrooms up and running – and for the smiles on their faces on the first day of school.

First day back also meant the opening of our much-anticipated new play structure, for which fundraising had already been completed. This project required installing a new retaining wall and moving our fence to the actual property line, gaining back some land. We were also able to install planters along the eastern property fence, which the Grade Five class will tend in 2019/20.

The seismic upgrade project impacted not only the physical buildings, but it affected school years 2017/18 and 2018/19 with adjustments to the school calendar. These adjustments were needed in order to gain a three-month window for construction. We know that this presented parents with scheduling problems, and we appreciated the cooperation shown by all. As we look forward to 2019/20, we are back to the usual schedule and a two-week Spring Break!



Grounds and Maintenance is an essential PEC Role. This school year, we undertook a significant number of projects. Some of these had been postponed until the completion of the seismic upgrade, and some were follow-on projects as a result of issues discovered during the construction and restoration.

The roof of the school building was replaced in the summer 2019.

Existing classroom lights were replaced with LED fixtures that generate more light, less heat, and are energy efficient.

The school drinking fountains were replaced with water bottle filler stations that filter and chill water.

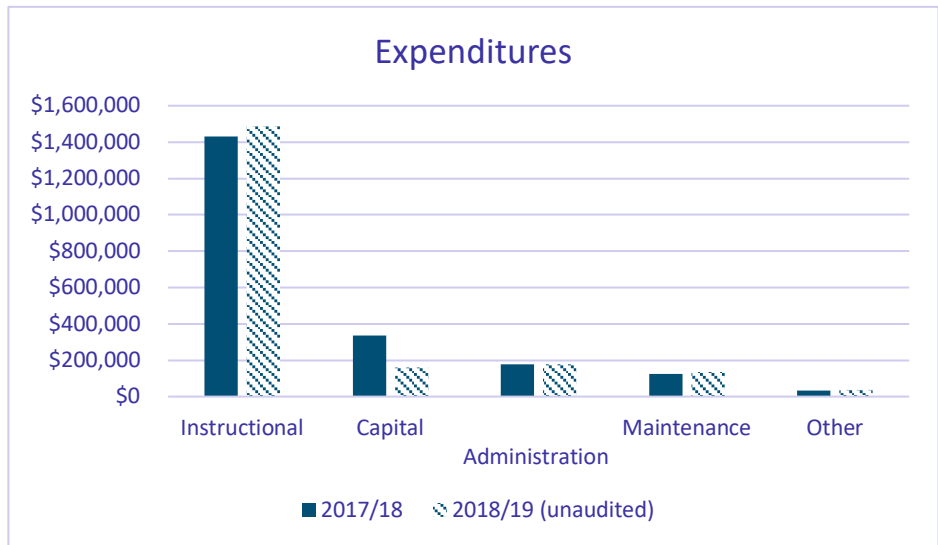
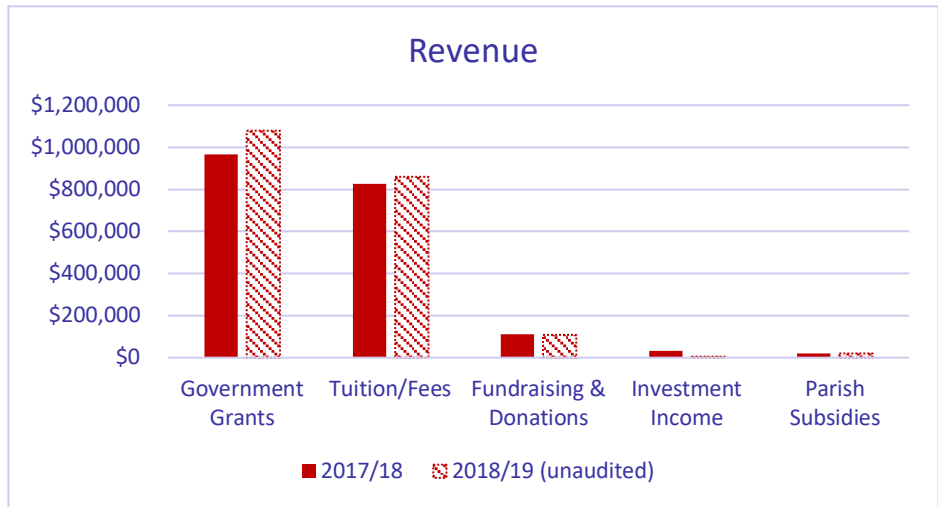
New bulletin boards were installed throughout the school, classroom cubbies were built and installed, our new flagpole was put up, window screens were replaced or repaired, and carpeting in the upper classrooms was replaced.

A generous donation let us do extra gardening, as well as improve the look of the playground. We wrapped our emergency supplies container in a laurel print, repainted the playground lines and created a discreet garbage enclosure for our bins.

Statement of Operations

The charts below are based on audited 2017/2018 financials for the year end June 30, 2018. Unaudited numbers for the most recent school year (2018/19) are included for reference.

A complete copy of the school's audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2018 is available for review upon request at the school's administrative office.



Our largest sources of revenue are tuition and the provincial government grant. Our tuition is fixed within a range set by the Catholic Schools of the Vancouver Archdiocese (CISVA). The government grant we receive per student is calculated as 50% of the operating cost for a child in the public system.

The revenue categories are consistent with those presented in previous years. Maintenance expenses combine janitorial, utilities and repairs costs.

By far, our largest expense is salaries and benefits, categorized in the instructional category. Teacher and staff salaries are set by the CISVA and are consistent among our schools. Tuition and government grant monies are used for operating expenses. Capital expenses are paid for by school and parish fundraising, as well as donations.

Because it was Immaculate Conception Parish that incurred a significant mortgage to finance the school's seismic upgrade, this cost is not reflected in the school's revenue and expense statements. As direct beneficiaries of this generosity and sacrifice, however, the school community recognizes our obligation to help the Parish with the burden of debt repayment. Thus, our fundraising efforts are more important than ever in the coming years.



Fundraising and Donations

We are so thankful for your hard work fundraising and for the investments you make in our school! Donations and fundraising allow our school to continue to deliver the exceptional academic, sport, and cultural programs that our school community has come to expect. Given that our two major sources of income (tuition, which CISVA limits, and government grants) do not provide all the money needed to operate the school, the shortfall is made up through fundraising.

Fortunately, our ICS community is extremely generous in supporting our two major annual fundraising events, the Walkathon and the Christmas Fair. Last year we again experienced amazing success through the hard work of dedicated volunteers, who all gave so very much of their time to make sure that these events were successful. The Walkathon raised \$25,519. Our Christmas Fair, with its raffle, silent auction, booths and activities on the day of the Fair, raised \$49,564 (net profit).

Each year, regardless of how much we raise at the Walkathon, we donate to Catholic schools outside Canada. These schools are so thankful for the donations we make each year, as their school communities are not fortunate enough to be able to raise these kinds of funds themselves. They rely on donations like ours to provide education to their children. Last year, we donated \$3100 to an elementary school program in Vietnam. We also donated \$3100 to the Sisters of Saint Ann for their Haitian schools.

Walkathon 2018

Students and parents walk 10km to Locarno Beach and back. The Kindergarten class walks a one-way route to the Jericho Beach Duck Pond.



We have a special connection with the Sisters of Saint Ann, as this was the teaching order that first started our school. Not only that, but the Sisters of Saint Ann in BC very generously gave our Parish a \$500,000 donation in support of our seismic upgrade.

A third, but very important, fundraiser is our Hot Lunch program. We offer hot lunch options on Wednesdays through the school year. The proceeds of this fundraiser enable the school to subsidize the cost of the Grade 7 Outdoor Education by 50%.

Occasionally, the school also gratefully receives gifts and donations from sponsors, alumni, and families. In the last few years, these donations have contributed towards the purchase of computers and iPads, improving the school garden, setting up a guitar program, providing additional enrichment opportunities for the students, school signage and upgrading the general facilities. This year, donations enabled us to replace the school's flagpole, purchase new reading resources, sponsor a "Writer In Residence" program and improve the appearance of our playground. The school is very grateful for the generous support from the school and parish community through the giving of time, talents, and financial resources.



Christmas Fair 2018

Our busy and joyful Christmas Fair fundraiser has become a neighborhood event that serves to raise funds but also bring together our community.



Parent Participation

Our vibrant parent participation program is key to the operation of our little blue school. The parent participation requirement is 40 hours per family per year, yet most families go above and beyond. We can't thank you enough for what you do for the school.

Our volunteer hours speak to the commitment of our families to our school and our commitment as parents to teach our children the value of putting into action the words of our motto: "service to others." Parent participation is the main reason that our small school is able to offer so many programs. And we must not forget the time and talents our parent community devotes to fundraising.

*Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy.
You vote in elections once a year but when you
volunteer you vote every day about the kind of
community you want to live in.*
Marjorie Moore

There are countless opportunities for families to participate in our school community. Our Parent Participation Coordinator is available to assist families in finding meaningful ways to volunteer that work with a variety of schedules. We also welcome grandparents and parishioners to contribute their time and talents!

As opportunities for events and programs arise, the PEC is committed to being careful and smart about the use of volunteer time. Recognizing that volunteer fatigue can become a real problem, we worked this year to review our biggest uses of volunteer hours. Adjustments were made to make better use of volunteer talent and reduce unnecessary activity. We have more work to do in this important area, so it remains something we will focus on in our strategic planning process.

Thank you for all that you do for the school!



Extra-curricular programs

Did you know all these programs were happening in the school?

- Basketball
- Badminton
- Chess Club
- Choir
- Cross-country Running
- Drama Club
- Marian Prayer Group
- Math Challenge Club
- Open Gym Night
- Track and Field
- Volleyball



Co-curricular / Enrichment

- Coding
- Cross-country Skiing
- Garden Buddies (Grade 4)
- Indoor Planting (Grades K-3)
- Orange Shirt Day
- Speech Arts
- Spirit Day
- Writer In Residence*



*The Writer In Residence program was sponsored by a generous donation.

Our Parent Support Group applies annually for a provincial government gaming grant. This year, the grant enabled them to bring the following enrichment programs to the school:

- Golf and Tennis
- Financial Literacy sessions (intermediate grades)
- Performance by the jazz group "Tiny Islands"



Enrichment Highlight: Garden Buddies

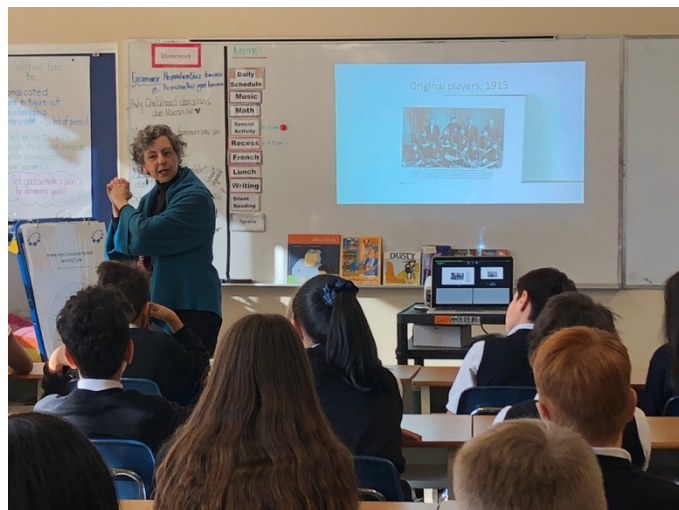
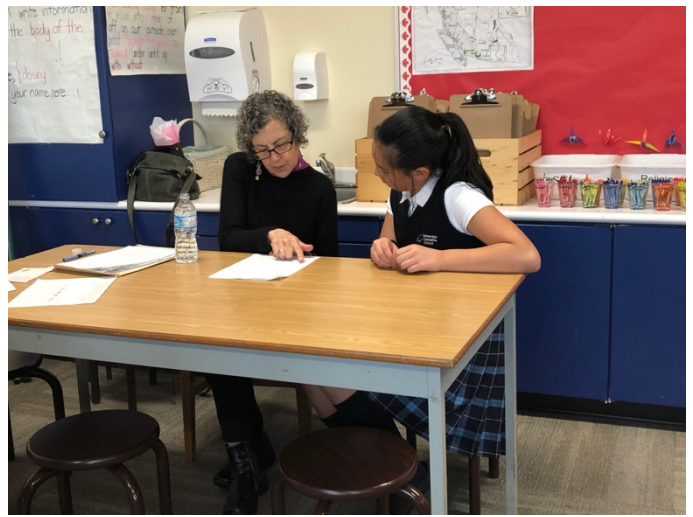
Garden Buddies is a program that offers the Grade Four students at Immaculate Conception School an opportunity for hands-on experimental learning that can be integrated into a wide variety of subject areas. Students learn that healthy and sustainable living starts with our soil as they make their own compost and study the organisms working in it. Teamwork, relationship with others, physical activity, and improved life-skills are all benefits from the activities of designing a garden plot, to building a trellis, to harvesting potatoes, to tending the gardens. Best of all – the students eat what they grow! Good nutrition is reinforced as students are introduced to new tastes, smells and textures picked straight from the gardens. Their produce is proudly made into delicious food by the Garden Buddy students to share amongst all the students at Immaculate Conception School.



Enrichment Highlight:

Writer In Residence

Our Intermediate classes had the great opportunity to learn about the craft of writing from local and prolific author, Ellen Schwartz, during the school year. She visited each class three times to share her research, writing process, collaboration with her editors, and great joy upon the publishing of a book. She delivered engaging instruction, and came back to conference individually with each student about his or her writing. We were so lucky to have this opportunity!



Outreach Projects at ICS

Giving (of time, talents and treasure) is a year- round endeavour at ICS. Throughout the year each grade works towards raising funds or goods for various charities, locally and globally.

Our Holy Thursday Retreat for Parents and Students, joining together to benefit the broader community in which we live, was a huge success.

The following have been supported by students and their families in 2018/2019:

- Agape Street Ministry
- Archdiocesan Prison Ministry
- BC Children's Hospital
- Catholic Street Ministries
- Chalice
- Covenant House
- Holy Childhood Association
- Terry Fox Foundation
- The Door Is Open
- Saint Alban's Shower Program
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Salesian Sisters of S. John Bosco

Outreach

On Thursday, April 18, our school community shared in answering the call, what do you want of me Lord? Our students, staff, and parents took part in our Holy Thursday Retreat, supporting the needs of a variety of charities, ministries, and community groups by donating, sorting, making, creating, singing, and serving those in our midst who are in need and who we wish to acknowledge for their love and support of us. Some of the organizations we worked with side by side included St. Vincent de Paul, The Door Is Open, Covenant House, Catholic Street Ministries, and Prison Ministry. We also worked on a kindness project which extended to the Dunbar community, hosted a tea for grandparents and the senior parishioners of Immaculate Conception, and took part in a shared art experience about Musqueam culture which is featured in our main hallway, titled "We are one".



All Star Athletics

No matter the sport, ICS students demonstrated excellent teamwork, determination and sportsmanship throughout the year. Well done, All Stars! Thank you to all the parent and teacher coaches for their hard work with all the athletes!





Fond Farewells

We wish all our 2019 graduating students, and several families that also “graduated” from ICS last year, a fond farewell. We will miss you! Your contributions over the years have been invaluable and we are truly grateful for all you have done for ICS.



Saying goodbye to students and their families, many of whom have been at our school since Kindergarten, is bittersweet. We wish you many wonderful years of growth and learning in the high schools you have chosen. At the first school mass of the year we prayed for all of you that you are transitioning well and continue to **“grow in knowledge, love of God, and service to others”** no matter where you may be. We always love it when you come join us at Mass, volunteer, or visit from time to time to let us know how you are doing. You may have left our school, but you will always have a home at ICS!

After much thoughtful reflection, applications and entrance exams, our graduates have chosen their high school path. We are pleased and proud of all of them! ICS graduates have started Grade 8 this Fall at numerous high schools around the city including:



- Crofton House School
- John Paull II Academy
- Little Flower Academy
- Lord Byng Secondary
- Magee Secondary
- Point Grey Secondary
- St. Patrick's Secondary
- St. Georges School
- St. John's School
- Vancouver College
- West Point Grey Academy



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