



Immaculate Conception

V A N C O U V E R

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

Annual Report

2014/2015



Note from the Pastor

The Lord give you Peace!

This year (as always) I was deeply moved to see how well our Immaculate Conception Parish School families *Celebrate* together. How a Community comes together in celebration is a wonderful measure of the vitality of *Soul* within a Community. Just think about our recent Confirmation Celebration, the Chow and Cha-Cha for Parents and our First Communion Celebration. (And we all know that this is the short list of Celebrations here at Immaculate.) The way we celebrate together reveals that the *Soul* of our Parish School family is brimming over with goodness, a vitality of life and that this is a Blessed place for our children and families.

As Roman Catholics we see our Parish School as a living Sacrament - a community and family where we all are empowered to grow in knowledge, the love of God and in service to others. As a *Faith based School* our School and Parish Celebrations generate a sense of belonging and self within our children. Authentic celebration energizes the soul of each child to mature in *Confidence, Grace and Competence*.

As we gather for our AGM this year let us be sure to *Ponder and Treasure* that how we celebrate together at our Little Blue School House is essential to the human, social, academic and religious formation of our children. The Celebrations we experience here at our Parish School are but a glimpse of what God and our families desire for our children's future – a future that is not yet but which we glimpse into each time we Celebrate together...

Peace and all Good

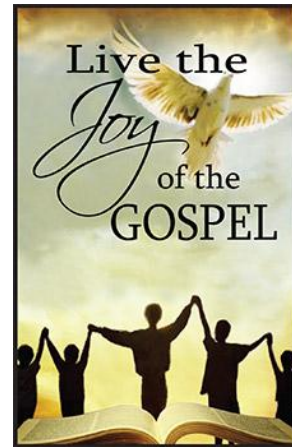
Fr. Paul ofm



Note from the Principal

This year, as our Catholic schools' theme calls us to "Live the Joy of the Gospel," the students of Immaculate Conception School have been doing just that as they grow in knowledge, love of God and service to others.

Two particular areas of focus in the classroom have been strengthening students' writing skills and integrating our newly acquired technology across the curriculum, and staff members have received professional development in these and other areas. Students have also participated 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 Paralitury and the Holy Thursday retreat, everyone at ICS recognizes that this dimension makes us truly special.

Our students continue to 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. A variety of outreach projects throughout the year remind us how fortunate we are and that we have an obligation 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

Note from the PEC Chair

Gratitude - it's the word that comes to mind immediately when I think of Immaculate Conception School (ICS). There are so many things I am very grateful for; our wonderful Pastor, Father Paul, who provides invaluable spiritual advice, practical common sense and wisdom; our amazing Principal, Miss Foran, who cares so much for each and every child and defines servant leadership; our hard-working, dedicated teachers and staff; our committed, tireless parents and guardians; and last but absolutely not least our precious students so full of joy. It is ultimately for the students that we do what we do and we could not do it without the support of the entire parish and school community.

Here we present our first ever Annual Report; it is a summary of some key areas of our work this past year. We trust that it will provide you with a clear picture of how the school is governed, to meet our vision of a thriving faith community that as a core ministry welcomes every child as a gift from God; growing in knowledge, love of God and service to others.

With gratitude,

Gina Bestbier
Parish Education Committee, Chair

Introduction to the Parish Education Committee

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

- The Pastor is responsible for faith development and is the Archbishop's Representative.
- The Principal is responsible for the administration and educational component of the school community.
- The PEC is responsible for the business operations of the school; it prepares the budget for the operation and maintenance of the school, ensures the school maintains accurate records, hires teachers and staff with the approval of the Pastor, and more.

The PEC does not work in isolation. ICS is one of 46 parochial schools within the Catholic Independent Schools of the Vancouver Archdiocese (CISVA). The CISVA governs both elementary and high schools within the Catholic schools in Vancouver. The PEC makes decisions and sets policy to govern the school, providing these decisions fall within the CISVA Board's policies and regulations.

The PEC is composed of active members of the Immaculate Conception Parish (not necessarily parents of students) and the Pastor. Members serve two year terms (up to a maximum of four terms).

Elected and appointed PEC members for 2014/2015 school year are:

- G. Bestbier, Chair
- F. Blazich, Vice-Chair, Fundraising & Events
- S. Wong, Treasurer
- R. Tarves, Secretary and CISVA Delegate
- S. Frost, Grounds & Maintenance
- M. Shuttleworth, Parent Participation

The PEC meets once a month with Father Paul, Miss Foran and a representative from the teaching staff. Mrs. Weaver has been the staff representative for the 2014/2015 school year. Meeting minutes are posted on the secure section of the school website. 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 Chair.

This report is a summary of a few key areas of the PEC's work this past year, namely:

- Operating revenue and expenses.
- Changes to the Parent Participation Program.
- Outcomes of fundraising efforts.
- Ongoing grounds and maintenance.
- Strategic Plan.

Parent Participation ~ spirit of community

One of the biggest reasons our community is so strong, and our school has so many programs, given its size, is because of parent participation. Active participation provides positive role modelling for our students, while teaching them the value of helping others, as in our motto "service to others". Most importantly, parent participation makes enrollment at Immaculate Conception a family affair.

The Parent Participation Program is an integral part in the operation of our school. The aim of the program is to create a spirit of community among families and staff as we work together to provide the best education for our students.

There are countless opportunities for families to participate in our school community. Some examples of these opportunities include playground supervision, being a garden buddy or a class parent, baking, coordinating class special events, Walkathon volunteer, Sports Day volunteer, and the list goes on and on.

This year we implemented a few changes to make the Parent Participation Program more equitable, run more smoothly, and increase parent participation opportunities. The main changes include an additional three mandatory hours for the grade event; limiting the numbers of hours that can be claimed for specific jobs/events, and required approval by the class parent or coordinators for submission of hours. These changes made a marked difference as we saw a significant increase in participation over the last year, with 96% of families now actively involved. While the parent participation requirement is 40 hours per family per year, most of families go above and beyond, with some families logging more than 120 hours. This highlights one of our key strengths as a community. We aim to match families' talents with the school's needs and we will continue to solicit input from families to make this program even stronger.

THANK YOU!

Extra-curricular programs

Basketball
Badminton
Chess Club
Choir
Math Challenge Club
Track and Field
Volleyball

Co-curricular / Enrichment

Cross-country
Earth Rangers
Garden Buddies
Intramural Hockey (ICHL)
Music (including guitar program)
School & Community Garden
Speech Arts
Sports Day*
Tennis*
The Bluesberries Show*
Theatre Production (*At the Bandstand*)
Vancouver Aquarium Aquavan

*These programs were funded by a Community Gaming Grant which is administered by the Parent Support Group.

New Uniform

This year we introduced a uniform at ICS as opposed to a dress code. We thank you all for your patience as we transitioned to the lovely Marian blue and navy blue uniform. This year was a transition year with some Grade 7s still wearing the old sweaters. Next year the uniform will be fully implemented. We also arranged delivery of our old burgundy school sweaters to the school in Vietnam that we support annually.

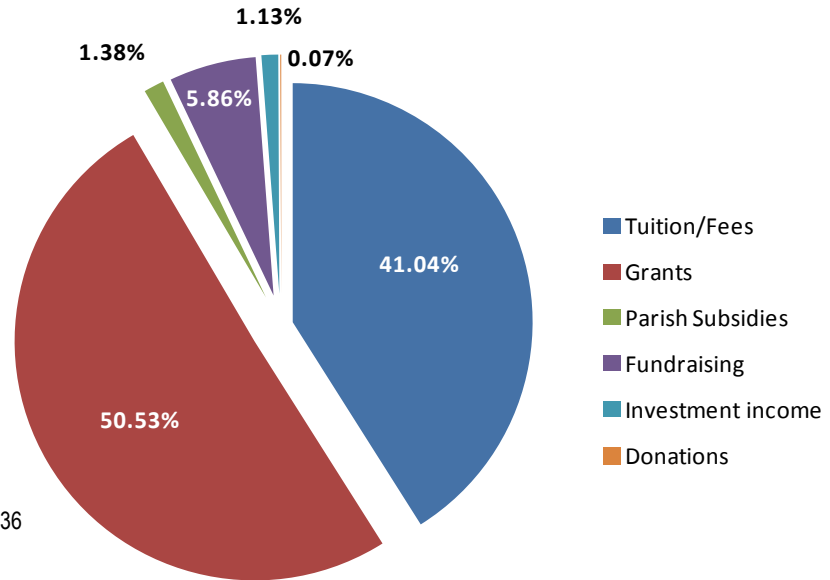
New website

We have launched a new website (www.icschoolvancouver.com) to reflect the spirit of our little blue school. The new site is more dynamic than the old site, and we are using it to share the latest happenings at ICS and to provide a fuller picture of all the wonderful things going on in our school.

Audited operating revenue and expenses

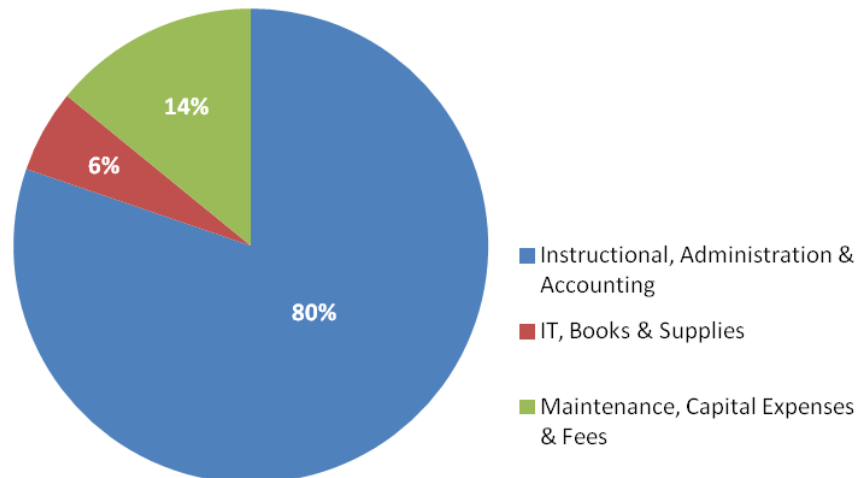
ICS' revenue is made up of three parts: the Ministry of Education grant (51%, based on number of students), tuition fees (41%) paid by families, and funds raised (6%). As a non-profit we budget to break even every year but if revenues come in ahead of the budget we may choose to spend some of the extra revenue and/or save it for future years. The charts below are based on audited 2013/2014 financials (2014/2015 audited financials are not available as of this Annual Report's print date).

Total Audited Revenue (2013/2014)



Total Revenue (2013/2014 audited): \$1,726,036

Total Expenses (2013/2014)



Total Expenses (2013/2014 audited): \$1,651,607

Administration, instructional staffing and direct instructional expenses account for 80% of total school expenses. Capital expenditures in 2013/2014 (\$38,415) included upgrades to furniture, as well as purchase of additional Macbooks.

Outreach Projects at ICS

Giving (of time, talents and treasure) doesn't just happen at Christmas time at ICS - it's a year round endeavour. Throughout the year each grade works towards raising funds or goods for various charities, locally and globally.

The following have been supported by students and their families in 2014/2015:

Agape Street Ministry
Archdiocesan Refugee Sponsorship Program
BC Children's Hospital
Catholic Charities Men's Hostel
Chalice
Covenant House
Development and Peace
Missionary Childhood Association
Prison Ministry
Terry Fox Run
The Door Is Open
Vancouver Food Bank

Grounds and Maintenance

Grounds and Maintenance is an essential role of the PEC - to ensure that the school facilities and grounds are safe and functional. In addition to the routine maintenance (janitorial services, painting, pest control, etc.) many necessary upgrades and renovations were done throughout the school in the past year. With the help of many parents, we installed benches and hooks in the gym change rooms, installed Kindergarten cubbies and hooks, upgraded the Grade 6 classroom, renovated the school office, upgraded the school security camera, upgraded the sound system, installed a big screen projector in the gym, installed signage outside the school, removed the sandboxes, upgraded the vegetable planters and sprinklers, installed a compost area for the ICS community garden and installed pigeon strips to prevent roof roamers.

Fundraising and Donations ~ reflection of a generous community

The ICS community raises funds to supplement the excellent academic, sport and cultural programs we provide for our students and to cover many of the operating costs of our school. Our two biggest annual fundraisers are the Walkathon and the Christmas Fair. Not only do these events raise much needed funds for our school but they help us build a strong and vibrant school community. We also raise funds throughout the year for our many outreach projects.

During this year's Walkathon we raised \$35,197 - with an amazing 97% family participation. This high level of participation qualified us for the additional anonymous donation of \$5,000, bringing the total to over \$40,000. Each year, regardless of how much we raise at the Walkathon we always donate \$3,000 to two school-related projects, one in Vietnam and one in Haiti. \$1,500 is donated to the Nguyen Tat Thanh School in Vietnam, which we have been supporting for more than a decade. Another \$1,500 is donated to the Salesian Missions which focus on supporting youth in Haitian schools.

The very popular Christmas Fair is not just a school event, it has become a Dunbar community event. In 2014 it attracted over 500 attendees and we raised a record breaking \$76,962! A truly remarkable effort by all.

While most of our fundraising money is allocated to covering our operating costs, it has allowed us to take on larger projects such as the staff room and office renovations, and providing Macbooks, iPads and document cameras (digital overhead projectors) for the students and teachers in the last two years. This year, necessary upgrades were also made to the library database management system.

It is worth noting that occasionally the school also receives gifts and donations from sponsors, alumni and families. In the past few years, these donations have helped with the purchase of computers, building the school garden, setting up a guitar program, providing additional enrichment opportunities for the students such as the Vancouver Aquarium Aquavan, and upgrading the general facilities. The school is very grateful for the generous support from the school and parish community through giving of time, talents and financial resources.

Strategic Plan ~ building a thriving community

At the beginning of the year the PEC had a half day facilitated workshop to clarify and align our understanding of the key issues, opportunities and challenges facing the school, using prior SWOT¹ analyses to inform the process. We agreed on four key strategic imperatives (critical areas of concern and/or opportunities - top row of table below) and developed a strategic plan for addressing them. We then defined and prioritised goals and have been developing action plans to implement them. The PEC is using this plan as a key tool to achieve our vision for the school in the medium to long term. Please note that while these imperatives are not directly related to educational programming (which is the purview of the Principal) they strongly support it. Progress has been steady and we hope to have much to report in the upcoming year.

VISION

We are a thriving Catholic community that as a core ministry welcomes every child as a gift from God; growing in knowledge, love of God and service to others

Key strategic imperatives and goals

Nurture Faith Life	Increase engagement within an inclusive community	Build capability and capacity (sustainability)	Deepen collaboration and visible accountability
Catholicity***	Enrolment *	Address fatigue & staffing challenges *	Effectively address stakeholders' concerns*
Increase level of understanding, commitment and practice (of parents and guardians) of an integrated faith	Increase student enrolment to 210	Identify and address the causes of fatigue (in staff, parents and other stakeholders) and factors underlying the challenges related to staffing	Ensure visibly improved communication, and effectively address stakeholders' concerns
	Aboriginal relationships**	Ensure effective Seismic Plan*	Sustained Leadership*
	Revitalise relationship with and participation by Aboriginal families	Meet requirements for an effective Seismic Plan - to be submitted to Archdiocese by Nov 2015	Develop appropriate Succession & Transition Plan to ensure sustainable leadership
	Parent Participation***	Operating principles & processes **	Fundraising *
	Increase quantity and quality of ongoing participation by all parents	Develop PEC Operations Manual that establishes roles, responsibilities, decision-making principles & practices, priority setting principles and practices, etc.	Ensure focused, accountable and credible fundraising (to sustain and support school's needs).

Immediate PEC focus with * high priority **medium priority ***continued focus

¹ SWOT - A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of/to an organisation.

Farewell, Au Revoir...

We would like to take this opportunity to wish our 2015 graduating students the very best for their future and pray that they will carry our motto in their hearts *Today I will grow in knowledge, love of God and service to others.*

Our graduating students will be attending numerous schools around the city in 2015/2016, namely: Kitsilano Secondary, Little Flower Academy, Lord Byng, Magee, Point Grey, Prince of Wales, St Patrick's, Vancouver College, West Point Grey Academy and York House.

We also want to thank all the families that are "graduating", some of them leaving us after more than a decade. You will be missed! Your contributions over the years have been invaluable and we are truly grateful...





Immaculate Conception
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