

My name is Marnie McGrath. I'm the Career Planning Assistant for Thomas Haney Secondary and I'm speaking on behalf of our District Career Planning Assistants.

We thank you for this opportunity to speak to item 12 on page 24, that is, the proposed elimination of "the Career Planning Assistant positions in all secondary schools."

Our #1 goal is to keep the services we provide to high school students in District #42. They must not lose them. We recommend that monies be found to ensure this.

Our job description on page 24, states: "The assistants are responsible for keeping the Career Centres open and working with students to explore post-secondary possibilities, scholarships available and providing current information on entrance requirements to institutions."

This does not begin to cover all we do.

The proposed budget justifies eliminating our jobs because "students can readily access this information on their own". This paints a false picture of what students go through when they're getting ready for post-secondary.

Students can access the sites but honestly, the post-secondary process is overwhelming. There's too much information and too many factors to consider. It's confusing and inconsistent. As Career Planning Assistants we have learned how to navigate it, so when students come to us, we can guide them to programs and institutions that are a fit for them. And we have contacts at the post-secondary to make sure. As a result, they're better informed about their options and better prepared to make decisions – about post-secondary, their life, their career - and they can make an action plan. It's a tremendous relief for them.

As for scholarships, they tell us they and their parents have no idea where to begin. We do and we guide them through that too.

So, what all do we do?

On a daily basis, we manage all incoming information to the Career Centre.

- Volunteering
- Work experience
- Youth programs
- SD 42 ACE IT Partnerships
- Apprenticeships and Trades
- Work, Jobs and Industry Trends
- SAT/AP Tests
- Post-secondary Ed/Scholarships

There's a lot of it, we keep it current and it comes to us because of the relationships we have with local, national and international program partners.

We then fan the information out to students or keep it on file. When they come to the Career Centre and tell us what they need, we're ready with whatever information, program or opportunity fits for them. This is what students want in their Career Centre – a knowledgeable person who can connect them with what they need. (Thomas Haney did a survey that proves it.)

Examples of the opportunities we're talking about here are ones that get them involved in community volunteering, connected to District ACE IT, to Work Experience, the Apprenticeship system, post-secondary youth & local youth programs, career prep, travel education, leadership – things that build their skills, knowledge and experience outside the classroom.

They might learn a trade, what it's like to work at a Vancouver Engineering Firm, how to produce an opera, how to teach others about marine life or what it feels like to make a meaningful contribution to their community and the lives of others.

Whenever we assist a student, we build a relationship. We know how important this is for student success.

In turn they trust us to give them effective help that is meaningful. This is extremely relevant. When kids are engaged in what's meaningful to them, they stay in school, they graduate and transition more successfully to PSI and the working world. We see 20 to 30 students a day. That's a significant impact.

It's really important for us to also stress that we actually bring revenue into School District 42. We assist with student registration in Career Prep, ACE IT and in Work Experience courses (through 1701's). We find "hidden apprentices" for the Secondary School Apprenticeship courses.

We also:

- Organize Field Trips
- Lead Group Information sessions
- Run Post Secondary Fairs
- Present to parent groups
- Recruit student volunteers for community groups and special events
- Conduct student interest surveys; track their involvement
- Do Planning 10 Interview Fairs

We have great community partnerships. There are close to 20 examples here – not a complete list - but two I want to point out are:

- RCMP's new SPURS program, which is getting recognition across Canada & North America after only 1 year in operation! 32 kids signed up – far more than constable Herman originally intended - and they love it! It's been an extraordinary year for them.
- Ridge Meadows Hospital - Our current hospital Volunteers accumulated almost 5000 hours in the last two years alone.

As well as:

- Ridge Meadows Fire Academy
- Ridge Meadows RCMP Youth Camp
- Ridge Meadows Home Show
- Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows Parks and Recreation
- District 42 Elementary schools
- District 42 Summer Programs
- North Fraser Therapeutic Riding Academy
- Terry Fox Run
- Ghost Ridge and all the local Festivals and Festival Societies
- Downtown Business Improvement Association
- Vancouver Aquarium
- The Vancouver Opera
- BCIT Broadcast Career Prep Program
- Telus World of Science Work Experience
- The Art Institute Structured Work Experience and Training
- Mining and Engineering Firms
- Encounters With Canada

If our positions are cut, counselors, teachers and staff won't be able to replace what we do – it will be lost. The community will lose significant student volunteer involvement and some programs won't run. ACE IT programs will lose their primary recruiters. Fewer students will sign up for Work Experience or Secondary School Apprenticeship.

In closing, I'd like to point out that together, we represent over 30 years of cumulative experience as Career Planning Assistants and in Community Employment Counselling. We ask that you please retain our knowledge, experience and training so we can continue to help students succeed in District 42.

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