

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The educational landscape in BC's K-12 education system is changing. Over the past three years, new directions have emerged that are transforming learning in our schools.

In this current transformation process, the BC Ministry of Education is redesigning all provincial curricula simultaneously under a common 21st Century (21C) Learning framework. This 21C framework emphasizes learning that is more student-initiated, self-directed, inquiry-based, and interdisciplinary.

In this provincial context, Science World convened the **Supporting Schools Project**, a focused inquiry that facilitated the engagement and collaboration of key individuals and stakeholder groups toward the development of a 21C education strategy that supports Science World's educational and organizational objectives. Responding to directions in curriculum will position Science World as current with respect to educational trends, attuned to the needs of teachers, eager to build

new collaborative partnerships and prepared to develop programs and resources that emphasize core, cross-curricular competencies and other aspects of 21C Learning.

The overall goal of the *Supporting Schools Project* was to facilitate a lead role for Science World in enhancing engagement and collaboration to support teaching, learning and leadership in science education for BC schools in the 21st Century. Through both internal and external engagement and collaborative activities, the organization will continue to build on its strengths in supporting schools, establish priorities for resource redesign and development, and grow new and existing partnerships with community organizations to support science education.

PRIMARY PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND SOURCES OF DATA

Science World Education Assets Audit

Science World 21C Focus Group

School Support Survey

Teacher Focus Group Meetings

Community Consultation Meetings and Pro-D Events

PROJECT ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS

3600 AWARE OF THE PROJECT
3000 Received Promotions
600 Attended Community Events

476 DIRECT PARTICIPANTS
326 Survey Participants
25 Focus Group Participants
125 Workshops and Meetings



The *Supporting Schools Project* included four phases of activity. **Phase I** included initial research and the development of a design and all plans for the project in close collaboration with Science World.

Phase II of the project focused on the engagement of Science World staff. At Science World, management and staff became aware of the project and participated as strategically and organizationally appropriate. Selected Science World staff and Robertson & Associates Consulting specialists convened a *Supporting Schools Project Working Group* to lead, facilitate, and engage in project activities.

During Phase II, the Science World *Education Assets Audit* was also initiated, which investigated and prioritized all resources, programs and educational assets offered by Science World (currently or historically) in the context of curriculum transformation. Overall, the *Education Assets Audit* identified numerous strengths of Science World assets and educational offerings, with respect to 21C Learning and new curriculum, as well as various gaps/opportunities. The audit is intended to be a 'living document'.

To extend internal engagement, the 21C Learning Focus Group for Science World staff was convened in November 2014 at TWOS. In addition to exploring 21C learning and other new directions in curriculum, focus group participants completed selected parts of the *Education*

Assets Audit to familiarize staff with the process. Participants engaged in a visioning session to help identify strategies to refresh, realign and re-articulate Science World offerings with regard to new directions in curriculum.

Phase III of the project, initiated in October 2014, focused on engagement and collaboration with external participants, including teachers and other education partners. This phase of the project directly involved over **475 teachers** and other education stakeholders from **38 school districts** and **73 communities** across BC. Indirectly, outreach and promotions about the project reached several thousand educators, and the project was presented or featured at community events in the Lower Mainland in the presence of several hundred more teachers and stakeholders. In sum, the project reached over **4000 individuals and organizations**, and directly engaged over **475 education stakeholders**.

The *School Support Survey*, offered in late 2014, invited the participation of teachers and other stakeholders in the K–12 education system in a survey to explore Science World's role in supporting teachers, students and schools with science education. The survey investigated current practices in teaching science, perceptions of Science World's current approaches to supporting schools, and insights on opportunities and the needs of teachers related to the upcoming

curriculum redesign in BC. Overall, the survey engaged over 325 teachers and education stakeholders across the province and the findings further increased our understanding of best practices and trends related to science education in BC's schools and communities.

Building on the success of the *School Support Survey*, the *Supporting Schools in the 21st Century Focus Groups* were held in January (Elementary) and February 2015 (Secondary) at TWOS. These events provided rich opportunities for local K–12 teachers and the *Supporting Schools Project Working Group* to collaborate and explore the current landscape of 21C science education in BC. The focus group meetings engaged 20 educators from 9 local school districts and 3 independent schools, and extended on the findings of the survey, audit and other activities of the project in important ways. Notably, five clear Areas of Opportunity were confirmed.



Given the extended timeframe of the *Supporting Schools Project*, various community events and activities were strategically integrated into our engagement, consultation and collaboration process, as Science World continues to support the needs of schools and communities across BC. Community meetings were held concurrent to the project in Fort St John, Dawson Creek and Fort Nelson in Northeast BC, as well as in Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. These meetings further confirmed the needs of our schools and communities, and provided numerous strategic directions with regard to science education at a provincial scale.

The *Supporting Schools Project* also benefited from strategic integration into additional professional development events and activities from Oct 2014 to March 2015. The project was promoted at several professional development events, and additional teachers and stakeholders were engaged in meetings, workshops and presentations at TWOS and around the Lower Mainland.

The final phase of the *Supporting Schools Project* shifted focus from data collection and analysis to strategic planning. Based on the findings from all activities over the course of five months, a process to recommend priorities for action and next steps was convened. This process, involving close collaboration with the *Working Group* as well as

engaging staff involved in outreach and partnership initiatives, developed action priorities in five Areas of Opportunity emerging from project findings. The clear linkages among activities in these Areas of Opportunity led to the formation of Strategic Initiatives, each with a bundle of integrated activities suggested for further strategic planning and implementation. Recommended Strategic Initiatives also include suggested priority actions.

With an exemplary track record of success in supporting teachers and learners across the province, Science World can play a critical role in helping schools, the Ministry of Education and other education partners by providing resources and programs, and nurturing partnerships that model the implementation of newly revised curricula and other aspects of the exciting changes in our education system. In doing so, Science World will help to lead the transformation of teaching and learning in our province. The remarkable engagement of teachers and education partners in the *Supporting Schools Project* bodes well for ongoing collaboration in activating strategic initiatives, and more effectively supporting science education for the 21C in our schools and communities.

“Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and for your commitment to enhancing science-based education.”

—Participant, School Support Survey

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFIED IN SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

Visits to Telus World of Science

Resources for Teachers

Professional Development

Mentorship and Leadership Opportunities

Community Partnerships

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS PROJECT - STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

21C Science Education

Professional Development

Secondary Students/Youth

Mentorship and Leadership

Provincial Engagement

Enhanced Access and Funding

