



floreat 2030

St. Michaels University School
Year End Report - June 2023





Reflections from Mark Turner, Head of School

Vision and Mission confirm our commitment to providing outstanding preparation for life and 'seeking the excellence' in all of us. When employing the 3A classification, encompassing academics, arts, and athletics, there is a significant amount of excellence to be highlighted and shared.

Academically, outstanding progress was made at all three schools. The acknowledgment of SMUS students' accomplishments, evaluated through their performance in external competitions and exams, has culminated in what could be considered our most remarkable year to date. Leading universities across the world have shown that our graduates are much in demand. Scholarship money has been earned and sporting talent recognized.

Within the realm of music, remarkable concerts were held, including the concerto concert showcasing the exceptional abilities of our most talented solo musicians. Furthermore, a jazz tour to Cuba was organized, alongside numerous concerts and opportunities aimed at enabling our prominent musicians to showcase their skills before a live audience.

A wonderful Senior School Art Exhibition held in Brown Hall this spring demonstrated the progress students make from grade to grade. An excellent collection of artistic talent is displayed in the [SMART Magazine](#). Well worth viewing.

In athletics, results show that we have enjoyed arguably the best-ever year in terms of girls' sports. The record books were filled with a combination of achievements, including two Provincial Banners, a closely contested basketball final that narrowly slipped away, and numerous other triumphs. Worthy of mention as well, were some epic boys' performances, a fitting tribute to Ian Hyde-Lay, who retires after an extraordinary career encouraging our athletes to aspire to the highest standards over almost four decades.

Mark Turner

Head of School



Capital Projects

The Junior School Annex
nears completion, and
will be ready for the
2023-24 school year.

This year our main aim has been the completion of the long-awaited Junior School Annex Project. This facility will transform our ability to offer the best possible environment for both teaching and learning and is on course to open in September. We look forward to an official ceremony on September 21 when generous donors and other guests will celebrate its construction... and tribute will be paid to the leaders who have maintained momentum from design to delivery. On opening, we will remove the portable classrooms, which was a key aim at the start of *Floreat 2030*.

Plans are also being advanced for a once-in-a-generation strategic expansion and refurbishment of the Middle School. In addition, SMUS teams have been travelling the world, quite literally, across Canada, the US, and the UK, to identify best practices in the delivery of STEAM facilities. More than thirty schools have been visited, meticulously documenting and gathering best practices from each of them. We aim to move on with the planning of our new STEAM facility in the next few years.

Another piece of good news is that the Wenman Pavilion Project, after some delay, will be completed and available for reoccupation at the start of the new academic year. Work will also begin on a four-year phased plan of refurbishment to ensure our boarding facilities remain amongst the best in Canada. Funds have also been identified and dedicated to the improvement of security of the Richmond Road campus.

Sustainability

When *Floreat 2030* was launched in 2020, one of the key pillars on which it was constructed was sustainability. The Sustainability Committee, under Chair, Karen Jawl, has moved forward an agenda which has researched and set carbon reduction targets through to 2030. Good progress has been made. We were delighted that our efforts were rewarded with the confirmation of the receipt of the Platinum Award, the highest level, School Eco-status.

The vertical farm project has also captured the imagination of students and will lead to further investigation of opportunities to focus on sustainability within the earth-to-plate food cycle.



Advancement

Under our ‘rallying cry’, the power of participation, this has been a busy year for Advancement. In her first full year as Director of Advancement, Shara Campsall has been rebuilding her team. We have been pleased to welcome Joanna Verano as our new Annual Fund Manager, who is already getting to know our community and setting targets for 2024.

As a result of some exceptionally generous leadership gifts, we have now raised over \$5 million toward the Junior School Annex Project. The Annual Fund target of \$1.2 million for the year was exceeded, which will make it possible to move forward with many key projects. We have also been grateful for the fundraising contributions of the Parents’ Auxiliary, who do so much to support culture, both emotionally and materially. SMUSAA has also offered enthusiastic support.

For the first year since the pandemic, the Advancement team travelled internationally. Trips to Hong Kong and Japan, Washington, New York, and London were the most productive. In particular, we were delighted to receive an unexpected commitment to a \$2 million gift supporting the refurbishment of our boarding facilities. This has allowed us to move on immediately in support of a key strategic aim. Work on an ambitious four-year refurbishment has already begun!

Boarding

This year, our boarding community has been the beating heart at the centre of the school’s circulation system. Our boarding community is vibrant and helps foster the SMUS culture beyond the confines of the school day. Boarding has returned to full operation this year, with international trips to Hawaii and long weekends spent in Whistler and elsewhere.

I am most grateful to Keith Driscoll, Director of Boarding and Student Life, and to the house teams that prompted such enthusiastic feedback as students departed for their homes around the world. Unlike the picture in some parts of the world, boarding at SMUS is thriving with growing demand for the next few years.

Exit interviews with graduating Grade 12 students confirmed much progress toward the key strategic aim of seamless integration of boarding and day communities.



Admissions

Since the end of the pandemic and the completion of the first Admissions 3-year Plan, it is pleasing to report that interest in our school has never been higher. This year has record applications and attrition is at an all-time low. This rising demand for places has meant that we have been able to achieve the target of full enrollment by May 31. With wait pools at most points of entry, we appreciate that this can be a nerve-wracking time for those who wish to secure places at SMUS.

Another aim was to launch our first-ever Junior Kindergarten Program, made possible by the expansion of facilities through the Junior School Annex. We are pleased to announce that the demand for Junior Kindergarten exceeded our initial expectations, and the available spots in our inaugural cohort were swiftly occupied. We look forward to launching this new program in September, which will represent the achievement of another *Floreat 2030* target.

My travels to Hong Kong and Japan confirmed that Canadian education, in general, is held in high esteem around the world, and the demand for places in our boarding program looks set to be healthy for the foreseeable future.

Financial Foundations

As part of our commitment to be sustainable into the future, our strategic plan aims to secure the financial foundations on which the school is built. At the end-of-year review, I was delighted to confirm that our CFO and her Finance team have met all targets, which will ensure that the school is in the best possible shape as we gear up for the financial commitments that will be necessary if we are to deliver the full objectives of *Floreat 2030*.

As the summer approaches, the Finance team faces their annual fiscal year-end audit, and External Programs is gearing up for this busiest season since the pandemic. Our school truly never sleeps. We will be playing host to over 1000 students on multiple courses, both boarding and day, over the summer. All this generates necessary revenue streams for Financial Aid and the aforementioned capital developments.

Indigenous Liaison and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

As a key part of our strategic plan *Floreat 2030*, we stated our commitment to moving forward with both these important agendas. The Board of Governors were pleased to receive the recommendations of the EDI Advisory Group at their Board Retreat last October. Since then, we have already implemented some key recommendations. One was to complete an externally commissioned EDI audit of our faculty and staff. This provided us with an important benchmark against which to monitor progress in the future.

Hot off the press, I am delighted to report that Dacia Douhaibi has been appointed as our first-ever EDI Coordinator. We look forward to welcoming her in September.

Also, after a competitive process, we are pleased that David Lynch has been appointed as our Indigenous Liaison Coordinator, to continue the pioneering work over the last few years of both Keven and Jenn Fletcher.

At every step, we consulted closely with our Elders and Indigenous Guides. Bill White, our Indigenous Guide and Titumels/Teacher was involved in the hiring process, both in commenting on initial applications and as the final stage conversation, conducted separately from the interview panel. We feel it is important that you hear directly from him.

"My experience with traditionally trained Old People/Sulsalewh leaves us with questions like, 'What do you bring, how have you prepared yourself, how have you demonstrated your interest in our people?' In this light, I am very pleased with the appointment of David Lynch. As a historian, he trained under John Lutz, whom I respect, and knows the history of British Columbia, including the time before European settlement and the relationship since. He has demonstrated leadership and understanding through the way he has approached his ongoing learning and the way he has built curriculum with others. From the first stage of the application process, he exhibited unique respect for traditional ways and protocols. Along with being committed and passionate, David is wonderfully humble. I look forward to working with him."

- Snuneymuxw Elder Bill White





Evolution not Revolution... the impact of STEAM and AI

As one of the principles of *Floreat 2030*, we committed to a process of evolution, not revolution. We have always tried to build on the best of the past with a forward-looking approach designed to harness changing technology and capture trends to benefit our students.

Having committed to investment in our STEAM programs and launched international research, visiting 31 schools and institutions to identify best practices in science facilities, we have also made strides toward developing a formal response to artificial intelligence. Fortunately, with Dave Hlannon, Director of Education Technology, and Chets Sondagar, Chief Information Officer, we have expert guidance in-house. I have enjoyed attending lectures for Heads of School across BC at which Dave has been presenting as a key authority in this area. Our end-of-year professional development was devoted to exploring responses to AI. We predict this will form a key theme as we plan for the new academic year. Our primary strategic objective to prioritize STEAM has never held greater significance or importance.

Human Resources

To move forward with our strategic objectives, we are actively seeking to recruit a Project Manager to provide the professional expertise to support the Middle School Project and the planning of our STEAM facilities. We are also committed to launching a search for a Human Resources Director. The search will begin in September. Both appointments exemplify our unwavering dedication to upholding the highest standards in these crucial aspects of school life.

I hope this board summary will have brought you up to date with some of the key aims and objectives that our School has been progressing toward, always focusing on providing excellence in education that benefits our students. We understand that aiming to deliver outstanding preparation for life is a huge challenge, but we are committed to confronting that challenge head-on.

Next year I will hold several in-person briefing sessions to provide more information, take questions, and encourage discussion on the future evolution of *Floreat 2030*.

In the interim, we extend our gratitude for your support, which has enabled us to make positive initial progress.