




SelfDesign Learning Foundation Community Report 2025



It is with gratitude that the SelfDesign community respectfully acknowledges the many traditional, ancestral, unceded treaty territories that we learn and grow on throughout this diverse continent. We honour and thank the many Nations whose voices and footsteps marked this territory for millennia in recognition of their continued stewardship of the land. We also look forward to many collaborations and meaningful exchanges to create a shared vision for the future.

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Message from the Interim CEO

Nikki Kenyon, Interim CEO
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

**“If I were to equate 2025 to a season,
I would call it winter.”**

Much of the work that happened at SelfDesign in 2025 took place quietly, underground and out of sight. Winter is a time for rest and care—a time to slow down, look inward and rejuvenate. It is a season of deep introspection and reflection on who we are, where we’ve been and where we are headed.

It was a year of preparing the ground, of tending to what needed attention so that renewal and new growth could emerge in the seasons ahead.

2025 was marked by significant transition. In November 2024, SelfDesign experienced a leadership change, and I stepped into the role of interim CEO to help steward the organization through this season. Moments like this invite reflection. When there is major change, it is wise to pause, to look closely at our practices and policies, and to navigate the path forward with our eyes wide open—seeing change not only as disruption, but as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Throughout 2025, we engaged in deep listening across the community. Through public forums, anonymous surveys, one-on-one conversations and our in-person

Collaboratory (Collab) event, we listened carefully for what was working, what was not and what we were being asked to attend to next. Maintaining stability throughout this process was essential, ensuring that day-to-day we continued to support learners and families as consistently and thoughtfully as possible.

Collab, an in-person contractor community event held mid-year in Kelowna, BC, was a particularly meaningful time. It brought together many of our contractors in person at one location for the first time in eight years. Being together allowed us to reflect collectively on the culture of SelfDesign, to reconnect through shared meals and conversations, and to ask, together, an important question: ‘Where do we need to go from here?’

Much of the work in 2025 focused on building and strengthening organizational culture. Regular, direct communication helped create visibility across the organization, while deep listening enabled us to better understand the lived experiences of our contractors. From this listening, we gained greater clarity about what is working well and where change is needed, and we are beginning to take those learnings into more action-oriented steps.

For the first time, all area leads across SelfDesign Learning Foundation and SelfDesign Learning Community are meeting regularly. These gatherings are beginning to create new connections across teams and reduce silos that have formed over time. Leaders are coming together to collaborate on shared priorities such as continuous improvement, inclusion and accessibility and psychological safety. This work is helping us build alignment and ensure that we are, quite literally, rowing in the same direction.

Throughout a year that has not always been easy, what has stood out most clearly is the resilience and commitment of our community of contractors. Even as the ground felt unsteady at times, educators and the teams of contractors that support them continued to show up consistently and with care for our learners and families. When challenges arose, people stepped forward, made space, and ensured that learners remained supported. That dedication has been a steady anchor through a season of change.

At times, the work of 2025 may not look like progress in the traditional sense. There were few visible milestones, and much of the effort happened behind the scenes. But this kind of work matters. It is how trust is built. It is how alignment forms. It is how foundations are laid for healthier systems and stronger relationships.

As we move toward 2026, it feels as though we are emerging from winter. The rest, reflection and care of this past year are preparing us for renewed movement guided by our values of integrity, relationship and curiosity, and grounded in our shared philosophy of learning.

Nikki



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When there is major change, it is wise to pause, to look closely at our practices and policies, and to navigate the path forward with our eyes wide open—seeing change not only as disruption, but as an opportunity to learn and grow.

—Nikki Kenyon



Message from the Board

Verena Gibbs, Chair, Board of Directors
SelfDesign Learning Foundation

“Much of the work we did this year happened quietly, behind the scenes.”

As we reflect on 2025, it feels like a year that asked us to pause, listen deeply and ask important questions, especially during a time of significant transition for our organization.

Last year brought a major leadership change for SelfDesign, and navigating that transition required adaptability, patience and care. As a Board, we focused on staying aligned with the organization as a whole—matching pace, timing and intention—while holding steady to our responsibility to support the long-term health of SelfDesign.

Throughout the year, governance returned again and again to our core questions: ‘Are we living our values? How are those values showing up in our decisions, relationships and strategies?’ Beyond the formal values we hold as an organization, we continued to reflect on trust, transparency, equity and fairness, and asked ourselves how these are embodied within the Board and across the wider community.

One way this took shape in 2025 was through the introduction of “Connectors.” In place of committees, a Board member and a leadership team member met regularly to share insight, surface challenges and reflect together. These conversations helped us

better understand what was working well, where support was needed and how we could strengthen the connective tissue between governance and leadership. Relationship-centred governance, grounded in conversation and care, remains essential to the health of our organization.

In 2025, we held a Board-only retreat, where some members met in person for the first time. Being together allowed for a different kind of work to unfold, through both structured dialogue and informal moments. Time spent building trust, aligning perspectives and listening closely led to greater clarity and concrete next steps.

Much of this work may not be immediately visible from the outside, but it is foundational. Taking time to pause and listen is how we tend the soil for what comes next. Without that careful attention, the right kind of change cannot emerge.

As we look toward 2026, it feels like we are preparing the conditions for movement, grounded in reflection, shared understanding and trust. Growth often requires regrouping and recentering, and this year offered us that opportunity.

Verena



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Beyond the formal values we hold as an organization, we continued to reflect on trust, transparency, equity and fairness, and asked ourselves how these are embodied within the Board and across the wider community.

-Verena Gibbs

Board of Directors



Carlos da Ponte



Devon Girard



Frank Heinzelmann



Lara Kehler



Marianne Bach



Verena Gibbs

Leadership team



Nikki Kenyon
Interim CEO



Dave Conroy
Chief Information Officer



Catherine Dinim
Principal, SelfDesign
Learning Community



Shirley Smith
Chief Financial Officer



Debra Sigfusson
Director of
Human Relations



Mara Hawkins
Chief Administration &
Services Officer

Our Programs

1

SelfDesign Learning Community

A technology-enabled school for learners from kindergarten to grade 12, where learners with disabilities or diverse abilities are integrated with other learners, and all learners are supported to succeed.

**2**

SelfDesign Home Learning

A flexible option for parents who wish to homeschool their child.

**3**

HomeLearners Network

Live, online activities designed by certified educators to help children and youth pursue their passions, learn new things, build relationships and have fun.



Education for the 21st century

At SelfDesign Learning Foundation, we support learners of all ages and abilities in authoring their own lives and designing their own learning.

We are a registered Canadian charity, incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the province of British Columbia.

We are your foundation for lifelong learning.

We are a global leader in the development of programs and initiatives that foster personalized and life-long learning.

Our model and philosophy set us apart, drive every initiative and fuel our passion as leaders in education. We believe that learning is unlimited, ageless and continuous.

Mission

We facilitate lifelong learning and holistic personal growth through programs, opportunities, and support for people of all ages, with an emphasis on choice and self-direction.

Vision

A world deeply rooted in curiosity, compassion, and learning.

Values



**LIFELONG
LEARNING**



RELATIONSHIPS



INNOVATION



INTEGRITY



ACCOUNTABILITY



QUALITY



Our Philosophy | The art and science of lifelong learning

We believe...



Learning is ageless

That every learner, regardless of age, brings a unique contribution to the world. SelfDesign ensures that the learning environment becomes the vehicle rather than the obstacle in making those contributions come to life.



Learning happens everywhere

That people learn everywhere and in every moment, and learning is enriched and amplified through conversations and relationships with others.



Learning is inclusive and safe

In the safety, acceptance and inclusion of all learners in regard to ability, learning style, culture, race, personal or spiritual beliefs, gender identity and expression.

Learn what you love, love what you learn



Learning is a continuous and accumulating process that lasts a lifetime, rather than a product or set of outcomes.

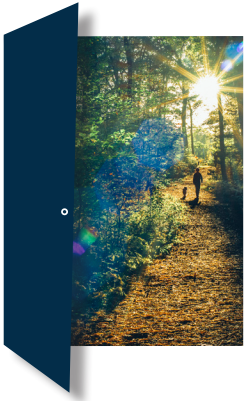


Learners are positioned at the centre of their individualized learning path.



Learning and personal development occur within nurturing, relational environments.

Open the door to lifelong learning



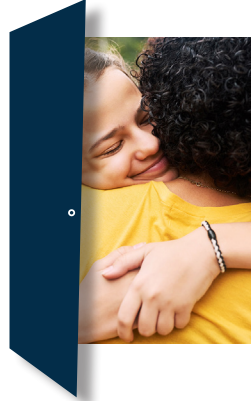
Autonomy

Author your own learning journey



Innovation

Innovative education for people of all ages and abilities



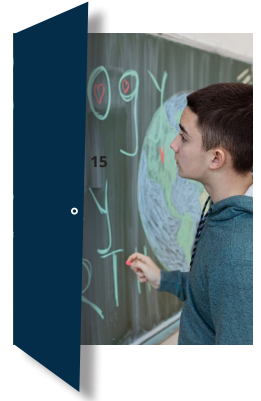
Connections

Learning through relationships with parents, peers, educators and community



Curiosity

Learning is everywhere, curiosity is the beginning



Responsibility

Fostering personal, social and global awareness and responsibility

Our Partnerships

At SelfDesign Learning Foundation, we are all about forming partnerships and relationships with people and organizations that align with our values and vision for personalized lifelong learning for all.

We are proud to be affiliated with these organizations:



Ministry of Education and Child Care



SelfDesign by the Numbers

Statistics from our 2024/25 learning year

2,003

Kindergarten to grade 12 learners were enrolled in SelfDesign Learning Community

937

Learners with disabilities or diverse abilities

1,401

External service provider contractors supported our learners through Learning Resources and Services and individual education plans

302

Home learners from **224** families were registered with SelfDesign Home Learning

146

B.C. certified educators supported our learners

141

New activities were created for HomeLearners Network

112

Learners completed their learning journeys with the SelfDesign Learning Community

952

HomeLearners Network activities were offered by **19** guides

118

Contractors supported SelfDesign administration and operations



SelfDesign Learning Foundation - 2025 Highlights

A year of reflection, listening and groundwork



Deep listening across the community

Throughout 2025, SelfDesign engaged in intentional listening across the organization. Public forums, anonymous surveys, one-on-one conversations, and in-person gatherings created opportunities to hear from contractors and educators about lived experience, culture and what support is needed moving forward. This listening helped clarify areas of strength, tension and opportunity.



Collab: reconnecting in person

In June of 2025, SelfDesign hosted Collab in Kelowna, bringing contractors from across the organization together in person for the first time since 2016. The gathering created space for relationship-building and reflection.



Strengthening organizational culture

In 2025, SelfDesign invested in strengthening organizational culture by establishing the Organizational Learning and Culture Coordinator role, held by Marianne Butler. This work focused on stewarding SelfDesign philosophy, supporting shared values, encouraging two-way communication and helping sustain belonging and connection across the community.



Board governance renewal

Our board of directors focused on reflection, regeneration and alignment in 2025. New governance practices were introduced, including a “connector” model that paired board members with leadership to deepen understanding and support. A board retreat provided space for relationship-building and behind-the-scenes foundational work.



Accountability and quality assurance

SelfDesign Learning Community continued its work within the Ministry of Education and Child Care’s Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA) framework. In 2025, a cross-functional team prepared and delivered a comprehensive presentation demonstrating how the school meets quality indicators, strengthening shared understanding of standards, processes and working towards continuous improvement.

★ FEATURE: Collab 2025: reconnecting the SelfDesign community in person



For the first time in nearly a decade, contractors from across SelfDesign gathered in person for Collaboratory (Collab) in June of 2025 in Kelowna, BC.

The last Collab took place in 2016 at Quest University in Squamish. In the years that followed, SelfDesign remained connected through LocalLabs (in-person regional gatherings) and in the virtual world. But Collab 2025 offered something different: time and space to reconnect as a whole community.

At its core, Collab is about relationship. While the gathering includes structured sessions, open conversations and shared learning, its purpose goes beyond formal programming.

As Collab Facilitator Michelle Buck explains, “It’s an opportunity for an online community to get together in person. At its core and its essence, that’s what’s most important, because we could do workshops and keynote speakers online. Really, Collab is about being in person.”

The moments in between

Michelle often describes Collab not by its agenda, but by what happens around it.

“For me, it’s the moments in between all of the activities. It’s being together, sitting at a table, sharing how your day was, or walking back to the residences together. That, to me, is the essence of what Collab is,” she says.

Throughout the year, many SelfDesign contractors work closely within their teams. Collab creates space to step outside familiar circles and meet people across roles and areas.

“It gives us an opportunity to wander throughout the organization, where you might be walking side by side with a board member, or a support provider you’ve never met before,” says Michelle. “It re-establishes the fabric of our community and helps make sure it’s still integrated and intact.”

A balance of structure and openness

Collab 2025 was intentionally designed to meet a wide range of needs across the community. The agenda included keynote sessions, open sessions proposed by participants, team gatherings and time for informal connection. Open sessions allowed anyone in the community to suggest a topic—whether a focused workshop or an open conversation—creating space for organic, community-led dialogue.

This balance between structure and openness reflected the diversity of the SelfDesign community itself. Some participants valued clear schedules and shared learning, while others found meaning in unplanned conversations, shared meals and the chance to simply be together without an agenda.



Rebuilding connection after years apart

For many attendees, Collab 2025 was the first time meeting colleagues face-to-face after years of working together remotely. That shift, from virtual interaction to in-person presence, had a powerful impact.

Wyatt Miller-Unser, Video Content Specialist for SelfDesign's HomeLearners' Network, reflected on how quickly connection can form when people share time and space.

"I spent my first two hours at Collab playing frisbee with Steven and Anastasia. Anastasia didn't mention that she had been an ultimate frisbee player for years, but while she blasted 60 km/hour frisbees into my weak video editor hands, I got to know them both a little. They've both been working at SelfDesign since before I started as a learner in 2006, as Steven put it, they really were "OG" LCs.

As I spent time with them, I saw this great relationship they had together; they were laughing, telling stories, sharing updates on their lives, and obviously very comfortable with each other. I thought this was the result of those 20 years of working together, of many, many Collabs, of a connected career across decades.

But I was wrong.

72 hours later, I was talking to Molly from IT right before I left for the airport. We were laughing together, sharing stories, joking about the sandwiches, and telling each other about our summer plans. We were comfortable with each other.

And I realized that maybe Steven and Anastasia hadn't built their friendship over 20 years like I first thought, maybe they had built it in 72 hours, like I had just done with Molly.

Maybe 20 years ago they went to their first Collab, and made some awkward introductions, and told some bad jokes, but still found a connection with



each other, and then had twenty whole years to enjoy that friendship together.

Maybe I had just done something similar in those three days, and to be honest, I didn't talk to Molly the first day, so it was more like 48 hours.

Except really, it wasn't 48 hours at all. It was one open session together, a few meals, and a couple of hours one evening.

It was a tiny investment of a few stumbling minutes of conversation with someone I didn't know, and the return was the start of a friendship, and a connection that I hope, in another twenty years, can be seen and appreciated by someone else over a game of frisbee.

So thank you, to Steven, Anastasia, Molly, and everyone else at Collab, who showed how special 72 hours really can be."

Space for reflection and shared learning

For many attendees, Collab 2025 was the first time Participant Molly Lydon described the impact of these conversations:

“In that session, Nikki asked us to bring to mind when we had felt a true sense of community. What elements made up that experience? What feelings did it bring up?”

Later, Wyatt from HLN shared about his experience with SelfDesign, and how supported and seen he felt during his time as a learner.

To me, that moment felt like an answer to the earlier question. Here was someone who had grown up within the SelfDesign community, now working alongside us as a colleague, and who could share the positive, lasting impact of the organization.

Amidst big changes in the organization, some tension about the future, and years without time together in person, we were all being brought together in that moment to connect over the positive impact this community had on Wyatt.

In the future, if someone were to ask me again to bring to mind a time when I felt a sense of community, this particular afternoon would definitely come to mind. So, shout-out to Wyatt for the vulnerability, and to River and Nikki for creating that space.”

These sessions reinforced the role of Collab as not just a professional gathering, but a space for finding meaning, where individual experiences could be shared and held within the broader story of the community.



More than an event

Across participant feedback, relationship-building consistently emerged as the most meaningful aspect of Collab 2025. Whether through open sessions, shared meals or spontaneous conversations, the gathering helped re-weave connections that can be difficult to sustain through virtual work alone.

While Collab does not aim to resolve every challenge or answer every question, it plays a vital role in maintaining the social fabric of SelfDesign, reminding people that behind every email and meeting is a human being in relationship with others.



Looking ahead to Collab 2026

The return of Collab in 2025 marked a renewed commitment to in-person connection within the SelfDesign community. Building on that momentum, Collab 2026 is scheduled once again for June 2026 in Kelowna, BC.





As SelfDesign continues to navigate reflection, transition and growth, Collab remains a meaningful touchstone, offering space to slow down, reconnect and remember what holds the community together.

★ FEATURE: Building organizational culture at SelfDesign through relationship and care

In 2025, SelfDesign Learning Foundation placed renewed focus on strengthening organizational culture during a period of significant transition. This work centred on deep listening and intentional efforts to support belonging and cohesion across the community.

A key part of this work was the establishment of the Organizational Learning and Culture Coordinator role. The role was designed to steward SelfDesign philosophy, support a shared understanding of values, and strengthen relational connections with families, learners and contractors.

Marianne Butler stepped into this role in 2025, bringing many years of lived connection within the SelfDesign community.

Stewarding philosophy and continuity

To prepare for the role, Marianne completed a three-month mentorship with former Director of Organizational Learning and Culture, River Meyer. This mentorship focused on ensuring continuity of philosophy during a time of organizational change.

River has been a mentor to Marianne for many years, after the two first met at a SelfDesign Collab in 2008. Their relationship has grown ever since.

“River has mentored me through communication, parenting and SelfDesign philosophy,” Marianne shares. “Anyone who spends time with River has an opportunity to connect more deeply with themselves. She’s actually beyond words. I find that being with her feels like an all-enveloping hug.”

As part of the process, Marianne engaged in an intensive review of more than 150 archival materials, including writings, videos and audio recordings documenting decades of lived SelfDesign philosophy and reflection.



Marianne Butler,
Organizational Learning and Culture Coordinator

“I would read, watch, listen and then we would meet and discuss what I had watched and listened to,” Marianne explains. “It was a really deep dive.”

She describes how this process deepened her understanding over time.

“At the end, I went back and looked at some of the things I had looked at at the beginning, and I could see things I hadn’t seen before. I could answer questions myself that I couldn’t when we started.”

This work helped support shared language, historical continuity and philosophical grounding as the organization navigated transition.

Culture as relational practice

In 2025, organizational culture work focused on strengthening relationship and belonging across the SelfDesign community.

“Organizational culture is important work,” Marianne says. “It’s a very wide-open role, and a big part of learning how to be in this role is figuring out how to best serve the entire SelfDesign community.”

When speaking about culture, Marianne consistently returns to SelfDesign philosophy and values.

“Organizational culture is about fostering a community that reflects SelfDesign’s philosophy and values,” she explains. “Based on respect and creating a space for people to fully be themselves. Relationship and caring would really be at the base.”

Without intentional culture-building, she notes, people can begin to feel separate from the community rather than part of it.

“I think it’s the difference between people feeling like they belong in the community and feeling comfortable showing up as themselves, creating, collaborating and learning from one another,” she says.

Supporting culture through change

This focus on organizational culture was particularly important during SelfDesign’s leadership transition in 2024. During times of change, returning to shared values and maintaining open communication helps support trust, learning, and continuity.

“Two-way communication is so important because that’s where we learn,” Marianne explains. “We learn through exchange and reflection. It’s also the foundation of community and respect.”

By creating space for listening and reflection, this work helped support the organization as it navigated change while remaining grounded in its philosophy.



Looking ahead

The organizational culture work undertaken in 2025 has laid important groundwork for continued learning, connection and alignment. Looking ahead, this work will continue to support opportunities for meaningful connection across SelfDesign—bringing together families, learners and contractors in ways that reflect shared values and strengthen community.

The intention is that every interaction with SelfDesign reflects a culture where people feel seen, supported, and valued for who they are and where they are in their learning journey.

★ FEATURE: Building belonging through IDEA at SelfDesign



Much of the work to strengthen inclusion, equity and belonging at SelfDesign happens behind the scenes. For the past three years, Administration Lead Paula Sobie and her team have been guiding SelfDesign's Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) work, supporting the organization as it moves from listening and reflection toward intentional, structured action.

In 2024, IDEA work focused on active listening and internal assessment. By 2025, the emphasis shifted to laying the foundations for long-term change.

IDEA's strategy is organized around four interconnected focus areas. While presented as distinct pillars, these areas often overlap and evolve together:

1. Governance and accountability
2. Education and communication
3. Systemic changes
4. Community engagement

Much of the work in 2025 focused on governance, accountability and education, creating the structures needed to support deeper systemic change over time.



From listening to informed action

In 2024, the IDEA team conducted a survey, hosted focus groups and held internal interviews with contractors to better understand lived experiences across the organization. These conversations surfaced both strengths and areas for growth.

“Overall, contractors feel supported and that the organization is fair,” Paula shares. “But it also showed that they didn’t feel they had the voice they wanted in decisions that affected them. We also learned we have a slightly larger proportion of contractors than a typical workplace who identify as neurodivergent. While we do a strong job supporting learners with diverse abilities, we want to do more to support contractors, including raising awareness within the organization.”

These insights directly shaped the direction of IDEA work in 2025. Education and engagement opportunities expanded through Lunch and Learns, well-attended webinars and an open space session at Collab that invited reflection and conversation across teams.

Establishing governance and accountability

As IDEA work evolved, the need for clear structure and accountability became increasingly evident. In the summer of 2025, a small team assisted by our consultants from Inclusivity Insight, began establishing formal governance structures to ensure IDEA was supported as a board-directed priority rather than informal or ad hoc work.

The Board formally endorsed IDEA as a strategic direction. Roles were clarified from the Board to the CEO, with the CEO responsible for resourcing and removing barriers, while the IDEA leadership group took responsibility for implementation.

“A legal requirement under the Accessible BC Act is to create an accessibility committee,” Paula explains.



Paula Sobie, SelfDesign Administration Lead

“Because we framed the work as IDEA, integrating accessibility with equity, diversity, and inclusion, we created the IDEA Advisory Committee. This ensures input from all levels while reinforcing that this is a Board-supported priority.”

Education as a foundation for culture change

Education and learning were central to IDEA work throughout 2025. The team expanded learning opportunities for contractors through webinars, Lunch and Learns, and facilitated community conversations designed to encourage shared reflection and dialogue.

One example included a webinar on interrupting ableism delivered by Untapped Accessibility, followed by a facilitated community conversation to unpack and reflect on the content together. Participation increased significantly over the year.

“A session on psychological safety drew approximately 47 participants,” Paula notes, “and the strong interest led to follow-up conversations and additional sessions for those in leadership roles.”

Education efforts also extended to leadership, with equity-focused training for leads and foundation leadership to help distribute responsibility across the organization.

Laying the groundwork for systemic change

Systemic IDEA work in 2025 focused primarily on policy development and review. This included creating a non-discrimination policy that addresses microaggressions and outlines clear reporting pathways.

Another major initiative began in October 2025 with an accommodations audit. This work examined existing supports, identified gaps and informed the development of a soon-to-be published policy, procedures and orientation so contractors understand how to request and receive accommodations.

Additional systemic work also included developing improved reporting and feedback mechanisms. These efforts respond directly to earlier feedback from contractors who expressed a desire for a stronger voice and clearer pathways for input.

Impact beyond policy

IDEA work extends beyond internal policy and governance. Paula emphasizes that accessibility and equity initiatives influence organizational culture on a broader level.

“Education and systemic changes help reframe thinking and create more space for difference,” she explains. “Most importantly, they foster inclusion. This cultural shift directly benefits learners and families.”

Through 2025, IDEA at SelfDesign continued to evolve as a board-supported, organization-wide strategy. With governance structures in place, education and training underway, and systemic work emerging, SelfDesign is laying the foundations for more inclusive practices grounded in reflection, accountability and shared responsibility.

IDEA in 2025: Key accomplishments

- ✓ Updated brand standards to include accessible design guidelines
- ✓ Embedded accessibility into the HomeLearners Network website
- ✓ Developed an IDEA governance structure
- ✓ Created Terms of Reference for IDEA advisory committee and leadership group
- ✓ Established the IDEA Advisory Committee (Accessibility Committee)
- ✓ Developed an 18-month IDEA work plan
- ✓ Published an Accessibility Policy
- ✓ Published a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy
- ✓ Published Accessibility Resources in the Contractor Resource Centre
- ✓ Hosted equity, accessibility, neurodiversity and psychological safety learning sessions for contractors and leadership





“

Because we framed the work as IDEA, integrating accessibility with equity, diversity, and inclusion, we created the IDEA Advisory Committee. This ensures input from all levels while reinforcing that this is a Board-supported priority.”

–Paula Sobie



Message from the Principal

Catherine Dinim, Principal
SelfDesign Learning Community

“My word for this year is ‘flux.’”

Looking back on 2025, I see a year of re-centering, with a focus on returning with care to our philosophy and values. We reflected on how we show up for learners, families, and the contractors who sustain this model, refining our commitments in a spirit of togetherness.

SelfDesigning is rooted in movement. Flux is like a river: bending, flowing, sometimes slow, sometimes forceful, always reshaping the landscape. This year, our pace has been intentional. We slowed down to listen, reflect, and ensure we are moving in alignment with our purpose. Depth and clarity mattered more than speed.

What anchors me is the professionalism and care of our educators and those that offer services that support the program. Their connection to learners and families is the heart of SelfDesign. Even during change, their consistency reflects the strength and integrity of our community.

A highlight of 2025 was Collab, our largest in-person gathering of educators and contractors in many years. Around 120 people came together in Kelowna, BC. Beyond the sessions, the informal moments (walks, meals, hallway conversations) were so meaningful.

These moments of relationship pull the thread through our online work and remind us of the ties that hold this community together.

I also feel very proud of the continued growth of our Indigenous Education team. This is now the third year that Elder-in-Residence Michael Harris has been part of our community. He is a deeply valued voice, and I see how learners and families connect with him in ways that extend well beyond circles and commencement. Amy Kealey has returned as an Indigenous Educator, and we have also welcomed two new support administrators. In addition, a new role, the Family Liaison Educational Assistant, has been introduced to support direct outreach and sustained connection with families. This role is still emerging, and we are learning what it can become as we move into 2026.

This year, we engaged in accountability and quality assurance through the Ministry of Education and Child Care’s Accountability and Quality Assurance (AQA) framework. A team of ten SelfDesign representatives came together to create and deliver a 90-minute presentation demonstrating how we meet the AQA quality indicators to a panel that included Ministry

officials and other online school principals. For many involved, it was their first time participating in a process like this, and while we await formal feedback, the experience itself was deeply affirming and collaborative.

Reflection is a natural part of organizational life. It reminds us to live our mission and values, guides how we communicate, and sustains trust within our community. Right now, we are collectively breathing; we are reestablishing, reflecting, and preparing to move forward with shared understanding and purpose. The river flows, and we move with it, thoughtfully, together, and with care.

Catherine



“

One of our key goals right now is to bring consistency to the standards by which we assess ourselves – creating a framework that reflects our philosophy and serves as a foundation year after year.”

—Catherine Dinim



Our Learning Approach

An innovative and personalized approach to learning.
We go above and beyond the walls of a classroom.

1. **We offer a unique, personalized and inclusive approach to education** for more than 2,000 learners from kindergarten to grade 12 each year.
2. **We follow the curriculum of the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care.**
3. **Our B.C. certified educators provide personalized one-to-one learning.**
4. **Learners can graduate** with a Dogwood Diploma (Certificate of Graduation), Adult Dogwood Diploma (Adult Graduation Diploma) or Evergreen Certificate (School Completion Certificate). They have the same opportunity to apply for university or college as a child in a brick-and-mortar school.
5. **Our inclusive education program provides equal access to learning opportunities** for all learners by providing personalized support services to learners with disabilities or diverse abilities.
6. **We receive funding from the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care** and are a Group 1 Independent School in the province of British Columbia.
7. **The BC Ministry of Education and Child Care inspects our program annually** inspects our program annually to ensure our programs and processes meet our obligations as a B.C. Group 1 Independent Provincial Online Learning School (POLS-I).
8. **With SelfDesign Learning Community, learners and families experience a supportive learning experience in their home, online and in their community:**
 - Each learner takes the lead in their own learning guided by one of our B.C. certified educators.
 - We engage professional service providers to support learners in areas such as music, art, speech and occupational therapy, physical education classes, and more.
 - Families are experts in knowing their children and are a valued part of the circle of relationships that supports learners.

How it works

We place learners at the centre of their learning journeys

We recognize that not all children learn in the same way, at the same pace, in the same learning environment. Personalized learning at SelfDesign Learning Community means each child takes the lead in their own learning. It is a 21st-century approach to education that puts the needs of each child first, because they are a unique individual with their own learning style, interests and goals.

We put the learner at the centre of their own learning experience and allow them to determine the pathway they will take towards meeting the required BC Ministry of Education and Child Care competencies. A family with a learner enrolled in SelfDesign Learning Community is supported along that pathway by a B.C. certified educator.

The educator works with the family and learner to develop a personalized learning plan tailored to the learner's own interests and passions. The educator then helps to guide the learner and family throughout the year through reflective observations of learning as it occurs and suggestions for learning and opportunities that can be explored at home, in the local community and online. This is very different from classroom-based personalized learning. Classroom-based personalized learning involves customized educational lessons to support learners' needs, but the lessons occur within a fixed curriculum and learning schedule.

Learning takes place at home, in the local community and online

Learning at SelfDesign means that learning happens everywhere — at home, in the community and online — and we use technology to support and facilitate the unique opportunities that presents. SelfDesign educators, learners and families also tap into technology to find the resources they need to pursue learning in the way that best suits them.



SelfDesign uses online technology to facilitate learning

Our educators, learners and families use technology to create supportive, relationship-based spaces online where connection and learning happen. Communication, sharing and connection at SelfDesign can happen in many different ways online, including in online discussion rooms, in collaborative working spaces and in virtual meeting and sharing spaces. Technology allows our educators to communicate and interact with learners and caregivers, and it allows our learners to communicate and interact with each other. We also use technology to create unique and innovative learning opportunities of our own.

Our Learning Experiences Library offers learners and families a diverse and extensive collection of high-quality learning resources tailored specifically to our learners' own interests, passions and needs. The appropriate and ad-free resources are specially curated to link learners' personalized learning paths to the B.C. curriculum in a holistic and unique way.

We assess learners based on competencies

Because our kindergarten to grade 12 program is based on competencies, we communicate about and assess learning through a process we call Observing for Learning. Our B.C. certified educators participate in ongoing weekly conversations with family members and their children.

Why families choose SelfDesign

- ✓ We provide an accepting and inclusive learning environment.
- ✓ Our program is structured flexibly.
- ✓ Our program allows families to adventure, explore and travel with their children —and to integrate that exploration as part of their child’s education.
- ✓ Our program honours and values families’ beliefs and philosophies, which may not align with the approach or philosophy found in brick-and-mortar schools.
- ✓ We support and integrate learners who have learning challenges in our program.

What sets us apart

 Learning happens everywhere	 Prepared for success	 Personalized learning	 A supportive approach
 BC Ministry of Education and Child Care approved	 Indigenous Learning	 SelfDesign Learning Experiences Library	 Inclusive education



What it means to be a SelfDesign parent

You, as a parent, are a vital part of your child's learning team here at SelfDesign Learning Community. You get the chance to help guide your child's education and have the freedom and flexibility to live and travel where you want.

Each member of your child's learning team – you, the **learning consultant**, **learning specialist** and **service and support providers** – is there to facilitate and support your child's explorations of who they are, what their interests are, and their day-to-day experience of learning.

Being the parent or guardian of a SelfDesign learner requires time, involvement and commitment. Your main role is to support your child as they learn. This includes:

- Working with your child's learning consultant and support providers to determine your child's learning plan for the year (and, if needed, their individual education plan).
- It involves **observing, documenting and sharing** your child's learning on a weekly basis with the learning consultant. Your shared input and observations help to further shape the learning path ahead and allow the learning consultant to direct and assess learning.

From Kindergarten to grade 9, you will be significantly involved with Observing for Learning with your learning consultant and then in grades 10-12, the parent is less involved and your child becomes more directly involved.

The benefits of being a SelfDesign parent

- ✓ You have flexibility to travel as a family & live anywhere in BC
- ✓ You get quality time with your child
- ✓ You're a part of your child's education
- ✓ You are fully supported by a B.C. certified educator and resources
- ✓ You choose your educator, if possible



How you are supported as a SelfDesign parent

We offer a multitude of resources to help your child pursue their passions while achieving educational outcomes. We're also here to help them build relationships. From in-person camps, peer-to-peer opportunities and supporting learners with disabilities or diverse abilities, to our Learning Experience Library, and our HomeLearners Network program, we're here to help your child succeed.

Learn more about [how we support parents](#)



Spotlight on Family Services

Supporting safety, belonging and learner wellbeing

At SelfDesign Learning Foundation, the Family Services team plays a central role in fostering a school culture grounded in safety, acceptance, respect, and encouragement.

This work supports all members of the SelfDesign community—learners, families, educators and contractors—across differences in ability, learning style, culture, race, personal or spiritual beliefs, and gender identity and expression.

The foundational goal of Family Services is to ensure that learners and families have the supports they need to participate successfully in SelfDesign. This work is guided by the wisdom strategy approach to addressing questions, working through problems or resolving conflicts.

Learner safety and wellbeing

Family Services supports the [Educational Environment of Safety, Acceptance and Respect Policy](#) and the [Emergency Preparedness](#) Policy.

They work to provide learners, parents/guardians, caregivers and educators with access to information, support, policies and procedures about learner safety, inclusion and diversity, and a school culture of safety, acceptance and respect.

Throughout the year, Family Services publishes Bulletin articles and resources on key safety and wellbeing topics, including:

- Fire and earthquake emergency preparedness
- Shelter-in-place and lockdown emergency preparedness
- Online safety and digital literacy
- Bullying prevention
- Mental health and suicide awareness and support

These resources are designed to provide learners, families, caregivers and educators with clear, accessible information and guidance.

Strengthening learner safety awareness

In 2025, the Principal Team identified learner safety as a key theme for the annual contractor orientation, reflecting its importance across the school community.

During the orientation, contractors engaged in facilitated discussions focused on learner wellbeing and safety, strengthening shared understanding and consistency in how learner safety is supported across SelfDesign programs.

To extend this work beyond the orientation, Family Services developed a centralized learner safety document outlining crisis response numbers and key safety resources. This resource was made available to all members of the SelfDesign community through the Learning Platform.

In addition, Family Services created a dedicated collection of educator-focused resources to support learning consultants and specialists in navigating complex learner safety situations.

These resources include guidance on mental health conversations with learners, recognizing and responding to abuse and neglect, suicide prevention and roles and responsibilities related to suicide ideation and self-harm.

Counselling services

Family Services continues to offer counselling support to the SelfDesign community. Franya Jedwab, a registered clinical counsellor, receives referrals from Learning Consultants when learners or families may benefit from additional clinical support.

Working in consultation with learners and families, Franya provides counselling sessions as appropriate or connects families with relevant clinical resources and supports within their local communities. This service plays an important role in strengthening learner wellbeing and supporting families through complex or challenging circumstances.



The Contact Assistance Team

The Contact Assistance Team (CAT) has supported SelfDesign families and contractors for over 17 years and is an integral part of the Family Services area. CAT provides support when families experience challenges meeting program agreements or when unexpected circumstances arise.

On average, CAT receives approximately 2,000 support requests each year. Learning consultants may reach out to CAT for a variety of reasons, including:

- Late or missing Observing for Learning communications
- Family or learner illness
- Extended gaps in communication
- Grade 10–12 course submission challenges
- Learner mental health concerns

CAT collaborates with educators and families to develop supportive plans when challenges arise. The team can provide direct assistance to learners in grades 10–12 who may need additional support in submitting Observing for Learning communications or completing coursework.

When participation concerns persist, such as continued inactivity or lack of communication, CAT follows a structured and transparent process. This may include reminder messages, assigning non-communication weeks in the Learning Platform, and outlining clear expectations for participation. Throughout this process, the focus remains on supporting learner engagement wherever possible.

Provincial Graduation Assessments

To earn a Dogwood Diploma, all Grade 12 learners in British Columbia must complete three provincial graduation assessments in numeracy and literacy. These supervised assessments are typically held in person at brick-and-mortar schools.

As an online school, SelfDesign Learning Community collaborates closely with brick-and-mortar schools across the province to secure assessment placements for learners. In communities with a higher concentration of SelfDesign learners, the school also hosts SelfDesign-run assessment sessions.

These assessment events are held in welcoming, thoughtfully-designed spaces intended to reduce stress and support learners in having a positive and supported assessment experience in 2025.

SOGI Education and Inclusive Practice

Family Services continues to support the implementation of SOGI 1 2 3 (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity 1 2 3) across SelfDesign programs and offerings. This work supports learners and community members who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, queer, intersex, two-spirit, or who may be exploring their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Learning about sexual orientation and gender identity is supported in age- and developmentally appropriate ways. Through the Learning Platform, learners and families can access curated SOGI resources via:

- Rainbow Hubs for learners in kindergarten to grade 7
- SOGI Hub for learners in grades 8 to 12

An additional resource, *Getting Started: An Introduction to SOGI at SelfDesign*, provides parents, caregivers and contractors with clear introductory information about how SOGI education is approached and supported within the SelfDesign community.

SOGI Education and Inclusive Practice

Now in its third year, the SOGI Newsletter continues to support learning and dialogue across the community. Published every six to eight weeks, the newsletter shares SOGI-related news, events, resources and feature stories.

The newsletter includes regular contributions from a SelfDesign learner writer and other community members, amplifying diverse voices and lived experiences. Each issue is housed in the Resources section of the Learning Platform and shared through the Bulletin.





Family Services continues to support the implementation of SOGI 1 2 3 (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity 1 2 3) across SelfDesign programs and offerings.



Spotlight on Indigenous Education

Deepening connection, listening to families and expanding culturally grounded learning in 2025

In 2025, Indigenous Education at SelfDesign continued to evolve through intentional listening, relationship-building and the expansion of culturally grounded learning opportunities.

Guided by Indigenous ways of knowing and shaped by family feedback, the focus of the year was on strengthening connection, increasing access to Indigenous knowledge and responding thoughtfully to the needs of Indigenous learners and families across the province.

Strengthening the Indigenous Education team

A key part of this work was the growth of the Indigenous Education team. In response to family feedback and continued growth within Indigenous Education, two new roles were added in 2025. Kate Fleming joined the team as Indigenous Education Administrator, supporting coordination and the

expanding scope of programming. In addition, Katie Wheeler joined the team as Indigenous Family Liaison and Educational Assistant, working alongside the Indigenous Education team and Elder-in-Residence to strengthen connection, communication and relational support for Indigenous learners and families. As a new role, this position continues to evolve in response to community needs.

Family voice and program development

Family voice continued to play a central role in shaping the program. In 2025, families participated in SelfDesign's annual Indigenous family survey. Survey responses highlighted a desire for more culturally-specific and locally-grounded content, increased access to Indigenous role models and Elders, and more opportunities for language and cultural teachings.

This feedback directly informed program planning and resource development.

Expanding Indigenous learning resources

One area of focus in 2025 was the continued development of Indigenous learning resources within SelfDesign's Learning Experiences Library. Drawing on family input, the Indigenous Education team worked to expand resources grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and aligned with the First Peoples Principles of Learning. These resources support learners in engaging with Indigenous perspectives through storytelling, reflection, creativity, land-based and experiential learning.

Elder support and community connection

Access to Elder support remained central to Indigenous Education at SelfDesign. Elder-in-Residence Michael Harris continued to be a valued presence for learners, families and educators. In 2025, opportunities to connect with Elder Michael were further strengthened through regular gatherings, including monthly sessions for educators and learners. Families consistently identified Elder Michael's teachings as one of the most meaningful aspects of Indigenous Education programming.

"Families and educators really love Elder Michael's teachings and the access to Elder Michael," shared Janice Green, Educational Program Lead for Indigenous Education. "He is providing some of those cultural teachings and connections that families are asking for."

Storytelling and cultural learning

Storytelling also emerged as an important area of growth in 2025.

Beginning in the fall, learners and families were invited to participate in a regular storytelling hour featuring recordings by Kung Jaadee, following an earlier live session. These gatherings created space to listen to stories, reflect on traditional teachings, explore shared themes across Nations, and engage in simple creative activities that deepen understanding and connection.

In September, SelfDesign also hosted Kung Jaadee for a Truth and Reconciliation-focused workshop, where storytelling was used to share not only traditional teachings but lived experiences and historical context. These offerings reinforced the role of storytelling as both a teaching method and a pathway to deeper cultural understanding.

Looking ahead

Throughout 2025, Indigenous Education at SelfDesign remained grounded in relationship, respect and responsiveness. By listening closely to families, expanding culturally grounded resources, strengthening Elder access and growing the team, SelfDesign continued to support Indigenous learners and families in ways that honour identity and connection.

Meet the Indigenous Education Team



Michael Harris
Elder in Residence



Amy Kealey
Indigenous Educator



Kate Fleming
Educational
Administration Support



Katie Wheeler
Educational Assistant &
Indigenous Family Liaison



Spotlight on Inclusive Education

SelfDesign's approach to Inclusive Education

In 2025, SelfDesign's Inclusive Education Services continued to support a growing and diverse community of learners across British Columbia. Over the course of the year, approximately 937 learners with disabilities or diverse abilities accessed Inclusive Education support.

These learners were supported by approximately 92 Learning Consultants working with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), alongside approximately 1,401 external support provider contractors who contributed specialized services through individualized support and resource plans.

At SelfDesign, we believe learning should be as unique as each child. Our entire approach is built around personalized learning—recognizing that every learner has their own way of seeing, understanding and engaging with the world. This makes SelfDesign a welcoming space for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities who may not thrive in traditional education environments.

Everyone's voice matters when it comes to learning

We see parents and families as experts in their children's lives. That's why parents and caregivers are essential members of each learner's support team at SelfDesign. Together with certified educators and professional support providers, families co-create a personalized education plan that reflects each learner's strengths, challenges and goals.

At SelfDesign, we also honour the many ways learners communicate and express themselves. We take time to understand each learner's needs and design flexible pathways to help them thrive—academically, emotionally and socially.

Who can benefit from SelfDesign’s Inclusive Education Services?

Inclusive Education Services are available for full-time enrolled learners who qualify under the BC Ministry of Education’s criteria for low- or high-incidence special needs.

Low-incidence needs may include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Blind or visually impaired
- Intellectual or physical disabilities (moderate to profound)
- Medically fragile conditions
- Severe mental illness or behavioural challenges

High-incidence needs can include:

- Learning disabilities
- ADHD or anxiety
- Mild intellectual disabilities
- Speech or language impairments

We recognize that the path to success for learners with diverse abilities must involve a personalized approach and strong support. Whether a learner has a formal diagnosis or is just beginning to explore what supports might help them succeed, we’re here to meet them where they are.

“Just getting my son up in the morning is ten times more difficult than a child without special needs. He has massive meltdowns over and over. Flexibility is the key thing I really like about SelfDesign. Having the ability to tailor Marcus’s education based on what we need and where we are is so important.”

– SelfDesign Parent



Learners, families and educators collaborate to design an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Personalized support is founded on teamwork. Every learner who qualifies for Inclusive Education Services receives an Individual Education Plan or IEP—a customized plan developed collaboratively by educators, the family and the learner. Depending on a learner’s needs, this plan may also involve additional specialists such as:

- Speech-language pathologists
- Occupational therapists
- Mental health counsellors
- Behaviour interventionists

Educators check in weekly, review progress, offer learning suggestions, and connect families with appropriate supports. Support providers—contracted and paid for by SelfDesign—are carefully selected in partnership with families to align with the learner’s needs and values.

SelfDesign believes that identifying and building on the learner’s strengths is the best way to support growth and development.

The benefits of technology add to overall learning success. Learners and families have access to the B.C. curriculum-aligned Learning Experience Library—a collection of digital resources including videos, book lists, activities and more, curated to complement their real-world learning. Also included are subscriptions such as Discover Education and BrainPop.



Flexible pathways for all abilities

SelfDesign supports multiple paths to completion:

- **Dogwood Diploma:** Equivalent to the standard BC Certificate of Graduation.
- **Adult Dogwood Diploma:** For learners enrolled before age 19 who continue learning past age 19.
- **Evergreen Certificate:** For learners with IEPs or diverse learning needs, this certifies the successful completion of a personalized K–12 learning program.

“SelfDesign Inclusive Education Services has been shown to be very effective at helping learners and families who need additional support to achieve their learning goals,” says SelfDesign Interim President and CEO, Nikki Kenyon. “Our Support Services team includes more than 60 educators with training ranging from advanced university degrees in special education to certifications in specific learning techniques.”

Educators, parents and support providers all play an important role in inclusive learning

LEARNING CONSULTANTS

The SelfDesign educator helps to create and maintain the IEP and support services budget. Along with their role in the weekly Observing for Learning where the parents, support providers and educators review the week’s learning progress, they provide a more in-depth learning review twice a year. They help to find the best support providers to meet the needs of the learner, with input from parents and community professionals already working with the learner. They also communicate with parents once a week, providing ideas and suggestions when needed.

PARENTS

SelfDesign parents and caregivers know exactly what their child needs to thrive. They are valued members of a learner’s support team, consulting with Support Services to choose a support provider for their child and individualizing the support process. Parents’ insights regarding their child inform the child’s learning and Individual Education plans. They also provide weekly Observing for Learning insights and counsel with the learning consultant.

SUPPORT PROVIDERS

SelfDesign contracts with professional support providers that fit the SelfDesign philosophy and meet Ministry criteria on behalf of learners. Both the parents and the educator help choose the best support provider for the child.

The many branches of the inclusivity tree

Our commitment to inclusion goes beyond learners with diverse abilities. We foster an environment that welcomes learners of all identities—regardless of race, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation and gender identity learning are integrated into SelfDesign programs, and a wealth of resources are available for learners, including over 150 Learning Experiences and 1,700 content pages on gender identity, relationships, and sexual health. A Virtual Brochure Rack provides materials for families. The [Gender Sexual Orientation Alliance \(GSA\)](#) for grades 8–12 and [Rainbow Hubs](#) for younger learners provide safe spaces for learners to connect, learn, and grow.

“We are committed to providing a learning and working environment that supports all learners, families and contractors and provides equitable opportunities to support our diverse community,” says Kenyon. “We recognize accessibility benefits not only those with disabilities but also our entire community.”





Wyatt Miller-Unser

★ Feature: Learner voice: why it matters and how we support It

If you've ever listened to a child speak their mind, you know they often say things that are profound, hilarious and refreshingly honest. Kids see the world differently—and their perspectives matter. At SelfDesign Learning Foundation, we believe those perspectives should not only be heard but honoured.

We treat learners' ideas, opinions and questions with the same respect we give to parents/guardians and educators. That's because at SelfDesign, learners take an active role in shaping their own learning journeys, with the guidance of their family and educator. This unique approach allows learners to design their own path based on their individual strengths, interests and passions.

Learner-led projects lead to real-world impact

Katherine Muncaster was one of the first students in SelfDesign's original high school program, known as Virtual High. She joined a learner-led initiative called VillageQuest, which imagined a sustainable eco-village in Vancouver's False Creek. That project would go on to inspire aspects of the Olympic Village built for the 2010 Winter Games.

That hands-on experience ignited Katherine's passion for environmental issues and set her on a path that led to her current role as Director of Energy Efficiency Policy for the BC government.

"[At Virtual High] I could pursue my passions and interests, and everyone was supportive and non-judgmental," Katherine reflects. "It was a really supportive environment for people to flourish in."

Wyatt Miller-Unser customized his entire SelfDesign high school journey around his passions for photography, videography and graphic design. Wyatt was given the flexibility to create his own courses and opportunities to work with experts, as well as explore real-world learning experiences.

"I could write plans for solo courses and get those approved," Wyatt recounts. "I just kept doing them, and they kept approving them."

Wyatt even brought together groups of peers and arranged for local instructors (including college faculty) to teach specialized topics. He learned the

full process of filmmaking from scripting to editing, through a course he initiated and co-designed, and he benefited from being able to try different paths without fear of failure.

“I had a lot of responsibility early on.” Wyatt shares. “I could follow my interests and create courses if I wanted to. There was so much stuff I would do just to try it to see if I liked it.”

After commencing from SelfDesign, Wyatt studied digital arts, co-founded a video production company, and now freelances in video and design. He’s also come full circle—he now creates video content for the HomeLearners Network, part of the SelfDesign family.

Learners lead with their voices

SelfDesign actively uses learner feedback to improve and evolve its programs. Course design is often informed by learner feedback from other courses, as learners are surveyed by SelfDesign’s Education Program team at the end of courses, themes or events.

Learner feedback helps SelfDesign remain transparent and accountable, and shows learners that having a voice is their right and often leads to significant changes. Courses like grades 8-9 Thinking Classroom Math, grade 12 Digital Media and grades 11-12 Chemistry were developed based directly on learner suggestions.

Turns out that learners are really into speaking up and sharing their thoughts. In May of 2025, 72% of grade 10-12 learners responded to surveys and empower themselves in the process. As team lead Janice Green puts it: “The learners are leading the change.”

SelfDesign puts learners in the centre of their learning path

The entire SelfDesign philosophy is centred around listening to learners and encouraging self-direction:

- Learning is shaped around a child’s own interests, curiosities and passions.
- Learners imagine, plan, explore and reflect to build their own knowledge—rather than passively receive it.
- SelfDesign honours each learner’s unique abilities, learning styles, gender identity, cultural and spiritual beliefs, and pace. Learners follow paths appropriate to their own phase of life and personal development.
- Learners are encouraged to develop self-agency, confidence, authenticity and resilience.
- Learning evolves through cycles of imagining, planning, experiencing, reflecting and reimagining.

By allowing learners to look within and guide the evolution of their learning, critical personal qualities are cultivated:

- Self-awareness
- Responsibility
- Reflection
- Presence
- Flexibility
- Openness to multiple perspectives

SelfDesign is a process and a practice, with an evolving outcome of increasing self-determination, self-responsibility, and awareness of social and global interdependencies,” explains River Meyer, former Director of Organizational Learning at SelfDesign.

“The beauty of our philosophy is that it encourages each and every learner to develop and follow their own enthusiasms, trusting in their innate ability to learn from what we call a curriculum of life experiences. It supports them as designers of their own personalized learning journey.”



★ Feature: From provincial champion to Olympic dreaming, this SelfDesign learner is making strides in youth wrestling

Most high-school level wrestlers join a school team. At SelfDesign, Tristen Beaudry is the team. As the only wrestler representing the SelfDesign Learning Community team created specifically for him, Tristen proves that not even politics or injury can hold him back from realizing his dreams.

Tristen is a top-level youth wrestler who made the switch from public school to SelfDesign a year ago because his dad wanted a healthier environment for him. SelfDesign didn't yet have a wrestling team, so they created one just for him, but not without some hurdles.

"In BC school sports, there's a thing called team stacking where teams try to take athletes from other teams," Tristen explains. "To prevent that, there's a 12-month sit-out period for zone and tournament matches if a student switches schools. So I had to sit out for a year, but I ended up wrestling a lot anyway."

During the wrestling season, Tristen wrestles five days per week, with tournaments on most weekends. He trains hard year-round and, including training intensively in Las Vegas for a few weeks every year. His dedication to wrestling has led him to win third place in the Canadian finals and first in B.C.

Growing up with an athletic dad who earned a scholarship to Simon Fraser University through wrestling, Tristen spent his childhood exploring different sports, and eventually chose to pursue the one his dad excelled at, too.

"Wrestling just sort of clicked with me", Tristen shares. "I was pretty good at it, so I stuck with it."

Tristen plans to continue his wrestling career after graduation. "In the future, If I could join a club team through a University, I could work my way up from club team to Junior Cadets, then to Worlds, then to Olympic trials, and finally, maybe, to Team Canada," he says.

"Tristen has been an incredible advocate for himself," says SelfDesign vice principal Clarissa Tufts. "He found extremely supportive coaches in his community and was able to facilitate good communication with SelfDesign's head coach, vice principal, Vanessa Kuran. It was a team effort to connect all the dots and take care of the administrative procedures that would allow Tristen to represent SelfDesign. Now we have our very own SelfDesign Wrestling team! We're proud of Tristen for being curious, pushing the boundaries to make this happen for himself and seeing the result of his hard work—he's achieved some amazing accomplishments so far."

Tristen appreciates the flexibility and approach of self-directed home learning through SelfDesign, because it allows him to maintain his demanding wrestling schedule.

“My days feel perfectly manageable,” Tristen shares. “It works really well because I do all my work before 3pm, which is when I usually leave the house for wrestling practice. I like the work format and I’d rather do the work on the computer. I also like how each week you just have one big assignment, and I don’t have to worry about three or more different subjects at once. I can just focus on one subject, and then switch my mindset to something different the next week.”

SelfDesign’s whole philosophy is based around supporting learners to follow their passions and natural gifts, and this is reflected in Tristen’s own experiences with the school.

“SelfDesign has done very well in supporting me, and I really appreciate it,” Tristen says.

“They help by doing things like writing letters and advocating when I’m fighting. My learning consultant, Patricia, is awesome. She’s always helping and checking in and pointing us in the right direction. My grades have gone up 100%. I’m excited because it’s my last year in school. Even though I’ve had a lot of ups and downs in the past, I feel like everything’s falling into place.”

Winning first place in western Canada and third in the country is no small feat for this young athlete, who is coached by the former coach of the Cleveland State University wrestling team.



“I was really pumped [when I won],” Tristen shares. “I even beat a guy that nobody else could beat that year. I was so happy because I had put a lot of time and effort into everything. That was also the first year my coach really pushed me, and he helped a lot. He’s always been there to support me.”

Despite suffering an injury this year, Tristen has stayed involved with wrestling in every way possible.

“This year I won the zones tournament and went to provincials, but in my first provincial match, I dislocated my shoulder and tore other ligaments,” Tristen explains. “I missed nationals and I’m waiting for surgery. I still go to practice, just keep in contact and stay connected with everyone. I also watch videos and old matches. Really, I just want to get out on the mat again.”

For learners following their dreams, coming up against demanding schedules and needing to cultivate more discipline, Tristen offers advice and encouragement.

“Just don’t quit,” he says. “You just can’t let one difficult time ruin your future. If you have a hard week, remember that it’s just one week. Sure, it’s really hard, but you gotta think, next week might be easier. If you just do a little bit more hard work in the moment, it’ll be easier in the long term.”





Pursuing learning independently

SelfDesign Home Learning provides an alternative for families across British Columbia who wish to have their children learn independently at home. As a homeschooling program, as defined by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, it is the most flexible learning program we offer at SelfDesign Learning Foundation. It best suits families where the parents wish to take on the responsibility for their child's education and do not wish to follow BC Ministry of Education and Child Care requirements.

To enrich the homeschooling experience, we provide learners and families with access to a suite of subscriptions to high-quality online learning opportunities, such as HomeLearners Network, BrainPop, Go Zen, and Enchanted Learning.

We also share information about key resources and supports for learning at home — including Indigenous Education resources, information on SelfDesign camps and gatherings that are open to SelfDesign Home Learning families, and information about free online learning resources.

SelfDesign Home Learning differs from our regular kindergarten to grade 12 program in the following ways:

- ✓ **Families do not** work with an educator.
- ✓ **Parents take responsibility** for the learning program and do not report to the school. Learners' work is not assessed.
- ✓ **Learners do not earn credit for courses in grades 10 to 12**, nor do they graduate and earn a high school diploma.

Comparing our programs

How SelfDesign Learning Community differs from SelfDesign Home Learning.

SelfDesign Learning Community



★ Kindergarten to grade 12 provincial online learning school ★

EDUCATOR LED

- 1 Learners and families work with a B.C. certified educator.

ONLINE & EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Learners and families are supported through their learning experience and have access to a wide array of resources, including our camps and gatherings and our unique Learning Experiences Library.

EDUCATOR-LED ASSESSMENT

We assess learning through a process called Observing for Learning. Our B.C. certified educators map the learning that is observed to competencies within the B.C. curriculum.

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Learners in SelfDesign Learning Community earn credit for courses in grades 10 to 12, and can graduate with a BC Certificate of Graduation, Adult Graduation Diploma or School Completion Certificate. Learners leave SelfDesign Learning Community after grade 12 with the same opportunities to apply for university or college as a child in a brick-and-mortar school does.

SelfDesign Home Learning



★ Homeschooling option ★

PARENT LED

- 1 Parents take full responsibility for their child's learning program and do not report to the school.

LIMITED ONLINE SUPPORT

Learners and families have access to a number of subscriptions to high-quality learning resources, and receive newsletters with information about resources, opportunities open to homeschoolers, and supports for learning at home.

LEARNING NOT ASSESSED

Parents take responsibility for the learning program and do not report to the school. Learners' work is not assessed.

DOES NOT GRADUATE

Learners do not earn credit for courses in grades 10 to 12, nor do they graduate and earn a high school diploma.



HomeLearners Network: deepening engagement and expanding access

In 2025, HomeLearners Network focused on thoughtful refinement and deepening impact. Building on the rapid expansion of Realtime programming in previous years, our attention shifted toward sustained learner engagement and the quality of activity offerings.

HomeLearners Network welcomed 138 new families in 2025, bringing the total to 326 families participating in live, online Realtime activities. Realties are live, educator-guided activities delivered through single or multi-session series. Learners explored a wide range of interests and learning experiences, reflecting the diversity and creativity of the HomeLearners Network community.

Throughout the year, learners filled an average of 524 Realtime registrations per month, representing a 166% increase from the previous year. This growth was supported by the continued expansion of series-based offerings and camps, which increased significantly compared to previous years. Across 287 camps and series, families engaged in learning experiences that supported deeper relationships between learners and guides and fostered curiosity and skill development over time. In total, 952 Realtime activities were delivered by a diverse team of 19 guides, including eight new educators. Guides are selected not only for their subject-matter expertise, but for their ability to create inclusive, engaging and learner-centred virtual spaces. This commitment is

reflected in consistently positive feedback from families and a high overall satisfaction rating of 4.6 out of 5. As engagement strengthened and offerings became more thoughtfully designed, activity cancellations dropped significantly, from 18% in 2024 to just 1% in 2025. This increased reliability reflects a community that is deeply engaged and excited to learn together.

Popular single-session activities included Kids Yoga, supporting movement, focus, and wellbeing; LEGO Club and Mini Crafts, blending creativity and problem-solving; Foil Animal Sculptures, where learners developed spatial reasoning and persistence; and Visits to Space, which invited learners to plan a virtual mission to the International Space Station while learning about the real-world work of astronauts.

Favourite series-based offerings included Creative Writing Club, where learners explored language through playful prompts and story-sharing; Experiment & Explore, a junior science fair series guiding learners through inquiry from idea to presentation; and Cozy Crafters Club, which brought learners together weekly to knit, sew, crochet, or embroider in a creative space centred on the joy of making.

The Heroic Journey blended storytelling and reflection as learners mapped their own goals and challenges, while ASL Sign & Story combined language learning and storytelling in an inclusive, engaging environment.

Together, these activities highlight just a small sample of the breadth of HomeLearners Network programming, spanning STEM, arts, language, movement, nature, and wellbeing.

Looking ahead

Looking towards 2026, HomeLearners Network will continue to refine and strengthen Realtime programming while expanding the ways learners can participate, connect and thrive. In the coming year, new offerings are being developed to better support a wide range of learning styles, needs, and rhythms.

Upcoming initiatives include the pilot of Anytime Activities, Adaptive Realtime Activities, and facilitated show-and-share experiences. Anytime Activities are asynchronous learning experiences that allow learners to engage at their own pace and on their own schedule.

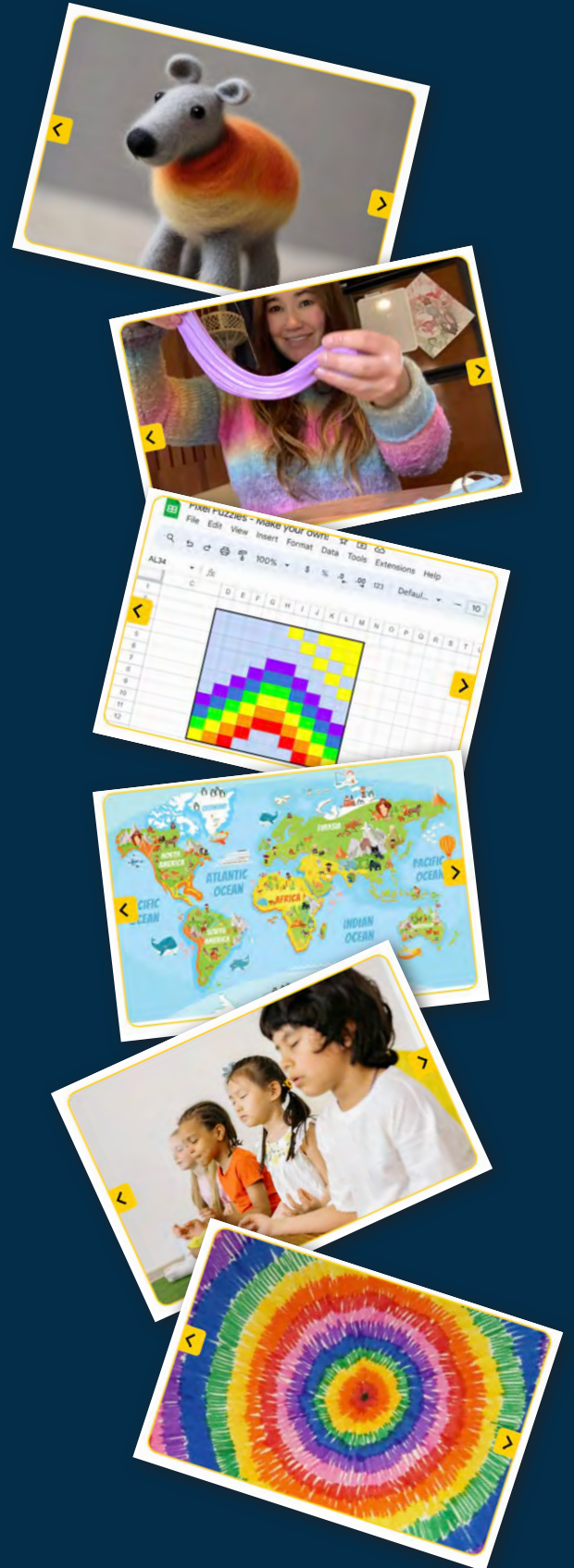
Adaptive Realtime activities are designed with flexible pacing, clear structure and supportive facilitation to ensure learners can engage in ways that work best for them. Facilitated show-and-share experiences will invite learners to celebrate their art, projects, and ideas together—highlighting the creativity, growth and joy that emerge across the HomeLearners Network community.

As always, HomeLearners Network’s direction is guided by family feedback, learner experience and a commitment to inclusive, engaging learning spaces. These initiatives reflect an ongoing focus on quality, accessibility, and meaningful connection as the program continues to evolve alongside the learners it serves.



We love the interesting topics our son learns about, as well as the way they are presented with the combination of information and hands-on projects.”

–HLN Parent





info@selfdesign.org | selfdesign.org