

Sarah's Summit

BC Student Voice Rep

Sarah Seymour

Shares an Outstanding Leadership Experience

Sarah Seymour found out the good news when she was helping with parent-teacher interviews at her school, Sa-Hali Secondary. "I was walking back from helping a parent. I ran into my Principal Mrs. Sdoutz: she had her phone and she showed me the email. I started crying tears of joy! And, well, I know I'm not supposed to run in the hallway but this was so exciting, I was running."

Sarah – a grade eleven student who is part of the BCPVPA-sponsored BC Student Voice



initiative – had just been selected to attend the inaugural Canada Youth Summit in Ottawa where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would host 300 young leaders from across Canada.

As leadership opportunities go, this was a home run.

Sarah is no stranger to leadership: she is a member of the Principal's Advisory Committee at her school; a Link Leader, working as a mentor and role model for grade eight students; part of the Sa-Hali Secondary School Leadership team; and helped with the redesign of the school's website.

We sat down with Sarah at the BC Student Voice Spring Forum in April:

What are three words your friends would use to describe you?

"Weird, funny, outgoing ... and kind – that's four!"

What are three words that your Principal would use to describe you?

"A leader, outgoing, reliable"

What are three words you would use to describe yourself?

"Funny, weird, a leader"

Why is it important to be funny?

"You can't live a life without humour, you have to have fun. We listened to (Olympic medalist) Brent Hayden at BC Student Voice this morning, and he talked about how important it is to live your life. You can't worry about what other people think of you."

What motivated you to join BC Student Voice?

"I've only been part of BC Student Voice since last October. Mrs. Sdoutz had asked me, and then Mr. Comita came to my English class and asked me to check it out. I'd heard about it, but hadn't really thought about joining."

What's the best thing about BC Student Voice so far?

"The October forum was so much fun, we got to meet kids from all over the province, the larger centres and also places like Fort St.



BC Student Voice

The mission of BC Student Voice is to empower students, and to address their needs, interests & concerns by strengthening links both with their partners in education and with each other.

The BCPVPA, with the support of the Ministry of Education, launched BC Student Voice in 1990 to help enhance student leadership in the province. Representatives have participated in Ministry of Education committees and regional and provincial meetings.

The representatives meet with their Principals & Vice-Principals to discuss student involvement, and methods of networking with other schools.

Students in grades 10 - 12 are selected as representatives by their local Principal or Vice-Principal.

A regional advisor supports the students at the two annual provincial forums, and in student-led regional Student Voice events.

Contact emily@bcpvpa.bc.ca

John. There are so many different experiences and viewpoints. It was great to find out what life in larger and smaller towns is like, I'm from Kamloops and it's in the middle that way."

What motivated you to apply to be a delegate to the Canada Youth Council?

"Honestly, it was Mrs. Sdoutz! She's a great leader for me to look up to, and she's always very honest with me. She gave me guidance in working on my application letter, and encouraged me to highlight my strengths and achievements and be really clear about my goals for attending the summit."

Principal Rachael Sdoutz sees enthusiasm and leadership in Sarah. What *are* the three words that she would use to describe Sarah?

"Energetic, enthusiastic, positive! Sarah has been a core member of all the leadership initiatives at Sa-Hali Secondary School," says Rachael. "The enthusiasm that she brings to each task is infectious and inspiring. Sarah was my go-to person when I added new members to my Student Voice team for the BCPVPA, she was one of the first I approached when I developed a Principal's Advisory Group at the School, and she was a natural fit for the opportunity to go to the Youth Summit. Sarah engages in a collaborative fashion with her peers. She truly listens to what they are saying, and she is willing to use her own voice and share her thoughts and feelings. This takes a level of bravery in a young person, and I admire Sarah for her willingness to take these risks."

And what does the opportunity mean to Sarah?

Sarah smiles. "Wow. I get to be part of the first one of these. I've thought of topics and issues that we've explored in BC Student Voice forums, and how I want to bring them to this national discussion: vaping, cannabis legislation, technology in schools – there is so much about vaping that is unknown, why would you do it? That's a question in every school now."

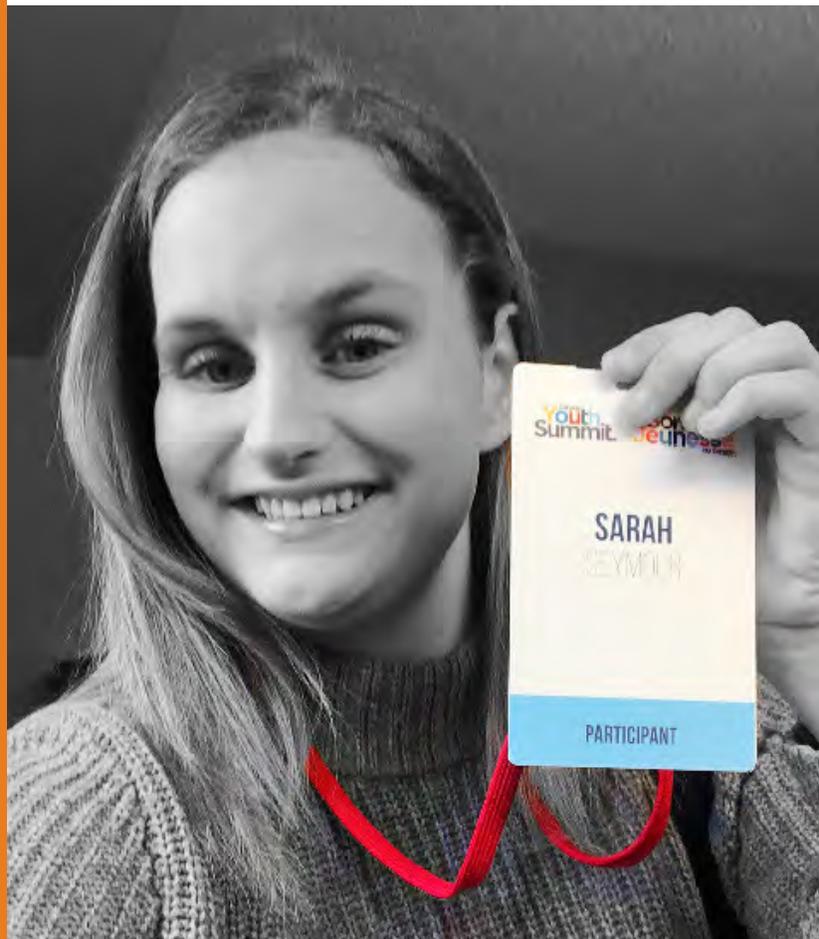


"The National Canada Youth Summit was absolutely amazing!

I benefitted so much from the experience in many ways."

Sarah checked in with the BCPVPA when she returned from the Summit.

"We talked about issues pertaining to youth and Canadians. These topics included Health and Wellness, Employment and Innovation Skills and Learning, Gender Equality, Environment and Climate Change and Leadership, Social Impact, and Democratic Participation. These topics were discussed in our Breakout Sessions, where we collaborated on our ideas in stations. We would summarize the information into a sentence or two,



and it would be sent to the Government to develop the Youth Policy of Canada!

I really enjoyed the guest speakers that came to talk to us, including an interview from space, and Luca 'Lazylegz' Patuelli who was a break-dancer who has little feeling in his legs.

The environment there consumed me. To be in a room with many empowered youth all there for a reason they are enthusiastic about, was so awesome and it made me even more passionate about my topics. When I came home I felt so empowered that I set a goal for myself, which is going to the University of Toronto. I was so lucky to participate and represent the BCPVPA, Sa-Hali Secondary, and Kamloops.



It was truly an experience of a lifetime!

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