

**Denman Island Community School PAC Meeting Minutes -
June 9, 2026 in the Denman Island Community School Library and via ZOOM**

Meeting Minutes: Kristen Wright

Chair: Emily Anderson

Vice Chair: Becky Nykwest

Treasurer: Kristen Wright

Secretary: Vacant

DPAC Rep: Sara Schouten

Members at Large: Lleilah Chernovsky, Will Lepore, Tahiti Rey, Quinn Lundberg, Leanna Pugsley, Mitch Dublanica

Regrets: Quinn Lundberg, Gracie MacDonald, Karla Neuffer, Mitch Dublanica, Will Lepore, Tahiti Rey, Leanna Pugsley

Attendance: Becky Nykwest, Kristen Wright, Emily Anderson, Olena Starchuck, Keith Porteous, Sara Schouten, Valerie Goudreau, Gerli Metsar

ZOOM participants: Lleilah Chernovsky

Guests: None

Meeting Called to Order at 5:31pm

Agenda Item	Action Required
<p>Welcome and Recognition of Traditional Territories We acknowledge that our community lies in the beautiful unceded and traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, who have been the caretakers of the land that we live, work and play on since time immemorial.</p>	Completed
<p>Introductions of all meeting attendees</p>	N/A
<p>Confirmation of Quorum with three officers present</p>	Completed
<p>Assignment of the Meeting Timekeeper</p>	ACTION: Becky , 5 min/topic
<p>The Secretary explains the Consent Agenda (Pages 12-15)</p>	

<p>which includes reports from various officers and committees. The Consent Agenda aims to streamline meetings by including reports that don't require further discussion.</p> <p>Call to remove any items from the Meeting's Consent Agenda for further discussion or clarification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School plan for next year? 2025/26 school growth plan set forth by Amei was, decolonization & indigenizing, Inclusion, Social Emotional Learning were the design principles. - Not to vote on the C&B as it needs to be discussed with the entire PAC community <p>Motion to accept all written reports on the Consent Agenda dated June 9, 2026</p> <p>Motion moved by: Becky</p> <p>Seconded by: Sarah</p> <p>Motion: Carried</p>	
<p>Motion to approve the Meeting Agenda for June 9, 2026</p> <p>Motion moved by: Kristen</p> <p>Seconded by: Sarah</p> <p>Motion: Carried</p> <p>Motion to approve the April & May Meeting Minutes</p> <p>Motion moved by: Keith</p> <p>Second: Becky</p> <p>Motion: Carried</p>	
<p>New Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding Request - Grade 7 Graduation Reception (Emily) 	<p>ACTION: Re 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristen : find out who to transfer funds to. Lindsey or Taina for approval of \$300 for

- Request from grad 7 graduation ceremony organizers for financial support from PAC for food and drinks. They are requesting between \$200-\$300.
- **Vote** to allocate funds
- From the floor: \$300 is an appropriate amount
- **Motion moved by: Sarah**
- **Second: Becky**
- **Motion: Carried/Unanimous**

2. Supporting Hornby Middle School Program (Emily)

- An alternative Middle School Program has been running at Hornby Community School, and may not receive funding next year due to enrollment - see letter from Hornby School in Consent Agenda
- Discussion and vote to write letter in support of program continuation

Discussion:

- Olena: Short on enrollment for the program, which is why they cannot keep the program running. The program can run between both islands so that there can be cross enrollment. Olena has wanted to have the program for years, but sadly not as much interest from Denman in the past. Olena's blended home learning program is open to Hornby as well. Olena has also been trying to get flex days similar to Hornby. Alternative education options can be discussed with Olena if parents are curious.

funds for the grad celebration & send funds

ACTION Re 2:

- **Emily**- to draft the letter of support on behalf of PAC. Help from **Becky and Kristen**
- **Sara**- Email template to how to inform parents and let them know how to show their support

- Kristen: Another reason to further support this program is that it keeps an island staff member employed.
- Keith: It offers the choice for Denman kids to be crossed enrolled. Historically, blended programs in the past were met with obstacles.
- Sara: This appears to be an Island supported NIDES like program
- **Decision**: Draft a letter to emphasise that this is a rural equity opportunity, support from PAC and Denman School. Publish this as well and make it public

3. Fundraising and Dragon Spirit-Spreading (Spirit Committee)

- o Spirit Booth (Iron-on and decal sales) - Cross Pollination? Summer Markets?

4. Teacher and staff thank yous (Emily)

- o Traditionally, the PAC organizes end of year teacher and staff thank yous. What would we like to do this year? How much would we like to spend? Who has capacity to lead this?
- o **Vote** to allocate funds: \$300
- o **Motion made by: Keith**
- o **Second: Emily**
- o **Vote: Carried**

Discussion: Cards, Melissa (Dad hands leather) leather book marks, key chains. Locally made if possible, need list of staff(20), small pottery, consumables (honey), local denman art, Denman Chocolate Bar

Keith: stated that this is the best staff in a long time at the school

ACTION: Re 3

- **Val**: Offer honey as a fundraiser if needed
- **Sarah**: email parents to offer dates for saturday market days. Email contact for **Sarah** to help on her already dates
- **Becky, Kristen** can do a weekend and will submit her date

ACTION: Re4

5. Looking Ahead to Next School Year (Emily)

- Next regularly scheduled meeting - September
- set a date: September 15 2026 @ 5:30pm

- Do we want to have anything in place at the start of the school year?
 - i. Position Guides
 - ii. Orientation/Welcome
 - iii. Summer check in

Discussion:

i. Welcome package and orientation for new staff and students. With information such as, school culture, what's it like at Denman School, what to do on Denman, DICES to offer a plan for what afterschool programs are like, other afterschool program opportunities with IIDC or BBL.

Sarah: Given my experience, it is hard to plan for kids, as the first 3 weeks are chaotic,

Emily: Basic introduction: DICES intro, School info, option to involve community to offer. Information package to new students, planning PAC member to be here on the first day

- ii. Muffins & coffee, welcome snacks for the first day of school
- iii. Unofficial PAC meeting “unPACKing” during the summer to ensure we are set up for a successful school year

6. School plan for next year? (Kristen)

2025/26 school growth plan set forth by Amei was, decolonization & indigenizing, Inclusion, Social Emotional Learning were the design principles.

- Leather book marks to: Ms. B, Kareen, Jenn, Natalie (new staff)
- **Val:** to donate mini jars of honey and will wrap them
- **Final Gift:** Honey, Chocolate Bar and Cards from Denman Craft store
- **Sara:** To get cards and Chocolate and deliver to Val to wrap

ACTION: Re 5

- **Emily, Becky, Kristen, Sarah:** Create the package, sarah to make the graphics
- **Emily or Sara to:** Grab DPAC and make it denman for orientation for next PAC members
- **Emily:** Set a date for a Summer unofficial meeting
- **All PAC,** Would be nice to have a PAC

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Olena</u>: (Spoke on behalf of the teachers and in the absence of Karla.) Karla has stated that the school plan is in the works and is set to be submitted on July 1, 2026 to be approved by the district. It is a different format than before and Karla seems excited about it. Not 100% sure but, and it is typically shared online? Olena also mentioned that a new staff member has been hired and there is another one set to be hired in the next few weeks - <u>Kristen</u>: Will this be sent to families or how will we be informed? - <u>Keith</u>: Noted that the teachers union is the ones responsible for who has seniority within the school district and the blame is usually put on the district - <u>General discussion</u>: Would like to see some consistency in staff and not have new teachers every year. We get incredible teachers and they only stay for one year before they are replaced with others who have seniority, but we have had a lot of great teachers come but the consistency would be most beneficial. How can PAC show their support towards the union or the district to highlight the importance of continuity of staff as well as island local staff? - <u>Becky</u>: PAC can send a letter of support asking for this as it has been done in previous years. 	<p>member be present on the first day of school as a show of community and school spirit</p> <p>Action: Re 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None
<p>Old Business</p> <p>1. <u>End of Year Community School Spirit Event</u> (Lleilah and the Spirit Committee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning and assigning tasks 	<p>ACTION: Re: 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Becky: to get more volunteers ● All PAC executives to help ● Val, Keith can help

○ Set a date: **June 22, 2026 at 4:00pm?**

- **Vote:** \$1,200 for inflatables, cotton candy/snow cones +\$150 ferry cost-previously agreed

Discussion: Lleilah has sent a quote from bounce around to approve, and has met with a few volunteers to discuss the event.

Things that are needed to continue and move forward:

- Approval from PAC to secure booking: -Not needed as it was previously approved at the last PAC meeting

Ideas for the event:

- **(Sara)**, facepainting/bedazzled section, Iron-ons, Denman Dragon apparel. **(Sherry):** Tie-dye for free, popcorn machine, cake walk **(Sara)**, Games: Beanbag toss **(Becky)**, sponge water fight **(Sara)**, mini golf?, photo booth **(Sheldon and Donna)** have something, polaroids **(Lleilah)** will purchase and donate if **Sara's** camera can be used). Food trucks/vendors set up

Date: June 22 2026 at 4:00pm

Location: School grounds, would need to contact DIRCS to use the soccer field or undercoverd space

Who can attend: School age kids (free entry +1-2 tokens each), open to the public (entry by donation & purchase of tokens) Waivers are needed for non school registered children.

Cost: Free for school aged kids, by donation for the public and additional tokens can be purchased, \$5/token

Information regarding quote for inflatables:

- There was thought to be more insurance through PAC for inflatables as we assumed DPAC/school district (zero liability for the district), have been in touch with

as well

- **Denman PAC** has to set up the agreement, **Lleilah** to send the details to PAC
- Waiver needed
- Time: 4:00pm
- **Sara:** White shirts needed or white fabric for tie-dyes. Facepaint, cakes/ baked goods/ sponges, **Sara** to take things over.
- **Becky:** to ask Karla to ensure insurance is ok, and lend beanbag bards from TONY
- **Meeting, Sara:** to inform other volunteers: June 16, 2026 at 5:30pm, Location: Outdoor classroom at the school

Karla for rules and what's needed. Denman Community school has secured insurance through Acera Insurance and the Bounce-A-Rama Rentals for certification of 5million for commercial general liability, liability on school grounds, full details available if parents request. Good news, school's insurance covers things (PAC does not need additional insurance). Their own staff (3) will need to be there, with the addition of parent volunteers to help with things. Total time: 4 hours set up, 2 hours for transportation, \$1,142.86 + \$57.17 GST, total= \$1,200. NOT including the insurance. We will receive 60 tokens for snowcones & cotton candy. What has been quoted on and requested, *40 foot inflatable obstacle course, bounce house with a slide, high striker as well as snowcone machine & cotton candy machine*. The quote does not include the cost of the ferry, typically a PAC member pays with their own experience card. This would be for a truck & 40' trailer and 3 adults, estimated amount \$101.40 (based on an under 7' in height vehicle and 40' trailer). We are not allowed to have dunk tanks or slip and slides on school grounds.

2. **Constitution and By-Laws Update** (Emily)

- Presentation of updated document
- Vote to adopt

3. **PAC sponsored Experience/Passion Funds**

(Emily)

- **Continue discussion:** How do we want funding allocation to look in future years?
- We want to be ready to allocate next year's

Action: Re 2.

- Voting will be done in September, **Emily** to send out with minutes

ACTION: Re.3

- **None**

funds at the September PAC meeting.

Discussion: Should we decide at the September meeting? How do we split the funds? Is it per class, split the sound given, per semester?, General school based passion fund to be shared and then each class gets an amount to use

- Plan: Split it into 2 separate amounts, one in September and again after the gaming grant comes in. The second amount will be based on what the remainder would be after the remaining amount is noted.
- **Motion moved by: Keith**
- **Second: Kristen**
- **Motion: Carried/Unanimous**

4. Cross-Pollination

- Call for volunteers to connect to Leanna

5. Correspondence

- Hornby Letter attached

Information items & Events:

“Establishing Safe, Caring & Respectful Digital Communities”
Mar 11, and May 13

<https://pages.saferschoolstogether.com/erase-family-session>

“Establishing Family Practices for
Safeguarding Against Cyberbullying”

Apr 8, June 10

<https://pages.saferschoolstogether.com/erase-family-sessions>

Even if you are not sure if you can make it, we encourage you to register as you will receive access to resources following the event via email.

ACTION: Re. 4

- Leave for DIRCS as PAC volunteers are at capacity.

<p><u>6.Creative Ideas Parking Lot :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
<p>TABLED TO NEXT MEETING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>NONE</u> 	

Meeting Adjourned at 7:10pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 5:30 pm in the Denman Island Community School Library

Additional Meeting: FunFair volunteers: Tuesday, June 16, 2026 at 5:30pm in the outdoor class room at the school. Unofficial unPACKing meeting during the summer: TBD by **Emily**

Motion to Approve these Minutes:

Made by:

Second:

Motion:

PAC Consent Agenda - June 9, 2026

PAC Coordinator Report - Emily Anderson

End of Year Celebration! Planning and preparation are underway for our end of year Fun Fair Celebration. This will happen during the last week of school, and will be an opportunity for our whole school community to have some fun together - stay tuned for details! If you are able to volunteer to support this event with even a small contribution of time, energy or resources, please email Lleilah: lleilahchernovsky@gmail.com

Contribute to our Community Cultural Narrative! - What is a Denman Kid? We are collecting stories and words about what it means to be a Denman Kid, and about the positive

experiences and learning that our school brings to our community. If you have something to contribute, please email it to: denmanpac2021@gmail.com

PAC Processes, Organization and Governance: We have a revised constitution and by-laws document, based on what we learned at the last meeting. This will be shared at the meeting. We continue to work on building a library of “living supporting documents” to help us put our Constitution and By-Laws into action.

Connecting School and Community: Our community offers fantastic potential for student enrichment. Our PAC continues to support efforts to enhance these connections and relationships, including supporting the development of a Community Member Directory. If you are interested in participating in community education, please add yourself to this directory through this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfsgNW8UyBaVkWE2HVEqvathrL__nbEXHyhp6Ha2hqjISl9Hg/viewform?usp=header

PAC Treasurer Report - Kristen Wright

Accounts as of June 7 2026

General Chequing: \$7,830.99 (+ \$2,000.00 from gaming account)

General Savings: \$2,500.62 **Shares:** \$100.00

Gaming Chequing: \$0.00 **Gaming Savings:** \$0.01 **Shares:** \$25.00

Remaining amount from donations since 2024: \$10, 688.08.

→ \$650 was used in June 2025 for DICES homework club

Outgoing Funds since last report:

→ 0.00

Incoming Funds since last report:

→ \$2,000.00 from the gaming account for grant purposes

→ Pre-done clothing still has not been paid for, if you see kids wearing them, please remind the parents to send money to PAC.

Completed Action Items:

→ Gaming Grant Application submitted! Standard request of \$2,000.00

→ E-transfer of \$1,662.80 for the year end event, has been transferred to Lleilah, This is out of the 2024/2025 gaming grant received

Pending/Ongoing Tasks:

- “What makes a Denman Kid” facebook post, this will go out in this upcoming week and will also be asked to be included in the weekly newsletter
- Collectively working on a budget for PAC.
- Forever improving and updating our PAC ledger to be able to track finances in a more efficient manner and then be able to pass the ledger template on to future PAC treasurers.

Denman Island Community School DPAC Representative - Sara

Thank you to everyone who was able to join us this past Monday for the last DPAC meeting of the 2025/26 School year

You will find the Minutes [HERE](#)

You will find the Quick Reference Sheet [HERE](#)

Spirit Committee Report - Kristen Wright

School Spirit

- The meeting date is in the works with Mr. Farrow and the Div 3 class to plan for the 2026/2027 spirit days.
- We need to find a weekend to do some fundraising to recoup some of the cost of the stickers and iron-on's that Sara ordered. They look incredible!

Principal Report - Karla Neuffer

June, 2026

Thank you everyone for attending the PAC meetings this year. Thank you to PAC for supporting field trips and for giving money to each division for classroom costs. The support for our school activities is very appreciated.

The Strathcona field trip was a wonderful experience for the students, many happy and tired kids shared they had a really good time.

We enjoyed Ballet Victoria, thank you to Joni Daniels for inviting us and organizing the opportunity. We were complimented for our excellent audience behaviour and really good

questions for the dancers.

The concert by local band Polsen Moose was a lovely event, and many of the students enjoyed dancing in the field. Thank you to Bethany Ireland and all the band members for sharing your music with us.

We enjoyed the author presentation by Kallie George, it is always a treat to connect a book to an author.

We have a UBC student joining us for the next two weeks. You will most likely see Sarah helping in classrooms, on the playground, and participating in DICES activities. The focus of her practicum is on our Community School model and small, rural school culture.

There are still Denman phone books available for purchase, if you would like one with your child's art on it.

Our Fillongley field trip permission slips have gone home, as have the permission slips for the grade sevens to visit Vanier.

The last day of school for students is Thursday, June 25, dismissal time is 11:30. The bus will run at 11:30. The grade seven grad ceremony will take place at the community hall at 10:00 that day, the whole school will be in attendance.

The district is extending the school day at the elementary level next year by adding five minutes of instructional time. This is to balance the addition of a non instructional day to the calendar.

Our school start time next year will be 8:40 am, this will not impact the bus schedule.

Clarification of May Minutes

Inspection by Child Care Licensing: We were told that the finding would be taken before a board and the board would make a decision.

No water at school: Plumbers were clear and professional and worked hard at fixing the water issues, they shared information that was timely. No complaint was logged to WorkSafe about the lack of water.

Wishing you all a lovely summer ahead!

DICES Executive Director's Report - Gracie MacDonald

- soccer game with Hornby students was a great success, thank you to Sam B and Enrico and the Hornby staff for making it happen!

- Last after school lunch is June 24. Thank you to Jane, Gerli, and Lindsay for your volunteering!
- Last after school program is June 19 (some have wrapped up already)
- There is no summer camp this year (not enough room in the budget, sadly!)
- Thanks to the DICES volunteers and donors who made the plant sale a success, it will help keep the cost of after school programs down next fall!
- A Denman student has been invited to read at the writer's festival this summer, more information coming. Another great example of what community collaborations can do!
- June 27 is an all day first aid course here on island, we need a minimum number of participants to run it, contact us for the link to register, \$125.
- Daycare licensing investigation: based on two unannounced inspections, it is "concluded that the premise at 1100 Northwest Road, Denman Island, did not meet the definition of a Community Care Facility under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act." Thank you to officers Kristina and Candy for their thoroughness and excellent questions!

Blackberry Lane Children's Center Report - Brittany Smith, Past in-term President

- Open Mon to Fri, 8am to 4pm, closed for Stat. Holidays.
- Total of 32 children registered in daycare programs each week this month.
- Operating 3 licensed care programs per day; infants & toddlers in a Multi-Age program called Little Explorers, kids 18 months to 30 months in a Multi-Age Program called Junior Adventurers, and kids 30 months to school age in a Group Childcare program called Creative Learners. We care for 11-15 children each day.
- Captain Goose - Caregiver & Tot program runs Fridays at 9:30am with ECE Basil for music and movement.
- Canada Summer Jobs recipient for 2 positions with a focus on outdoor education.
- Currently not offering before school care, but after school care available.
- 4 ECE's, 1 ECEA and 5 RA's on staff. Basil and Susanna Jackael are Center Co-Managers
- AGM took place June 8. Poppy Edwards and Becky Kaulback are Co-Presidents of the new Board.

Letter from Hornby School PAC about Hornby Middle School Program

To: School District 71 Leadership, Trustees, and Ministry Partners

Re: Supporting a Sustainable and Equitable Middle School Program on Hornby Island

We are writing as parents, caregivers, community members, educators, alumni, former students, and supporters of Hornby Island Community School to express our strong support for the continued development of the middle school program on Hornby Island.

This conversation is about far more than a single cohort or a single school year. It is about the wellbeing of our children, equitable access to education for rural students, and the long-term sustainability of island communities like ours. For many decades, Hornby Island families have faced an exceptionally difficult reality: students as young as 12 leaving home before daylight, navigating ferries and long bus rides, and returning home exhausted at the end of the day simply to access secondary education. Families have quietly adapted as best they can, but many have also questioned whether this is truly equitable or sustainable for young adolescents. The physical, emotional, social, and academic strain of this commute is real. For some students it becomes overwhelming. Over the years, families have not only considered leaving Hornby to make secondary education more manageable for their children — some have ultimately made the difficult decision to move away from the island altogether. At the same time, Vanier Secondary is increasingly operating under significant enrolment pressure, with concerns about overcrowding and limited capacity already affecting students and staff. While families may technically have other educational pathways available — including distributed learning or remaining within broader multi-age classroom structures — many families are specifically seeking a distinct, developmentally appropriate middle years program that allows students to remain connected to their community while learning alongside peers at a similar stage of adolescence. Supporting sustainable local middle years programming on Hornby helps relieve pressure on larger schools while creating more supportive learning environments for rural students. The current middle school program at Hornby Island Community School has shown that another path is possible. Families involved in the program have consistently reported improvements in student wellbeing, engagement, confidence, attendance, and connection to learning. Students who were previously spending hours commuting each day have instead been able to learn in an environment where they feel known, supported, and connected to both their learning and their community. What has been created is not simply a “small rural class.” It is a thoughtful approach to middle years education that reflects many of the qualities educators increasingly recognize as essential for adolescent success:

- experiential and outdoor learning,
- mentorship and leadership development,
- integrated academics,
- strong community partnerships,
- culturally responsive education,
- and meaningful student-teacher relationships.

Families understand that rural schools cannot offer every elective, sport, or specialized service available in larger urban settings. Most are not asking for a replica of a large high school experience. What many are asking for is a stable, well-supported middle years program that reflects the realities and strengths of rural community education. Importantly, programs like this require continuity in order to succeed. While there has been a long history of occasional offerings beyond Grade 7 on Hornby Island, uncertainty around year-by-year decision-making has made it difficult for families to rely on local secondary programming with confidence. Building trust in local educational pathways takes time and continuity. Several community members have also noted that uncertainty around whether the program will continue may itself affect enrolment decisions, as families are understandably hesitant to commit to pathways they fear may not remain stable from year to year. Families have also expressed concern that combining increasingly broad grade and age ranges within existing staffing structures may unintentionally undermine the very goals the program is trying to achieve. Middle years students are at a unique stage socially and emotionally and often strongly value having an identifiable transition into adolescence, with peers and programming that feel age-appropriate and socially cohesive. In small rural schools, thoughtful program design and adequate staffing support are especially important to maintaining student engagement and long-term confidence in local education. Community members have also noted that limited local middle years options can disproportionately affect students who face barriers within large secondary school environments, including some students with learning differences, developmental disabilities, mental health challenges, or other support needs. The current middle school program has helped create a more inclusive and age-appropriate learning environment where a wider range of learners are able to remain connected with peers, community, and meaningful educational opportunities during an especially important stage of development. We also want to recognize the extraordinary educator who has made this program successful. Teachers who are able to build strong connections with students, inspire engagement, and create meaningful learning environments are invaluable — particularly during the middle years. The experiences students have had over the past two years have clearly supported not only academic learning, but also confidence, personal growth, leadership, and self-esteem. We recognize that rural education presents real logistical and financial challenges. At the same time, we believe decisions about the future of this program should be guided not only by

short-term enrolment numbers, but by a fuller understanding of the realities island families face:

- educational equity for rural students,
- student mental health and wellbeing,
- transportation challenges,
- retaining young families in rural communities,
- and the opportunity to support strong rural education models that may serve as examples elsewhere in British Columbia.

We also believe families would benefit from clearer communication and stronger district leadership around what educational options are available to them. Many families do not fully understand what pathways, alternatives, or rights exist within the public education system. Greater transparency, outreach, and collaborative planning from SD71 would help families make informed decisions and better support the long-term success of programs like this one. SD71 has demonstrated a willingness to support alternative educational models elsewhere in the district. We believe the Hornby Island middle school program deserves the same opportunity to grow, stabilize, and demonstrate its long-term potential. We also believe this program has the potential to become a meaningful model for rural and alternative middle years education. Hornby Island offers unique opportunities for experiential learning, environmental stewardship, arts integration, leadership development, and community-connected learning that cannot easily be replicated elsewhere. Hornby Island is also home to many long-standing non-profit organizations and community initiatives focused on environmental stewardship, arts and culture, food security, health, social justice, and community wellbeing. The presence of a local middle years program has created new opportunities for meaningful engagement between young people and these organizations through mentorship, hands-on learning, volunteerism, and community participation. These connections benefit students, but they also strengthen the long-term sustainability of community organizations themselves by helping foster future generations of engaged citizens, volunteers, leaders, and caretakers. Community members have also noted the importance of intergenerational learning opportunities that help strengthen social connection, reduce age-based divides, and build a culture of mutual care and participation across generations. Many of these relationships and opportunities are only beginning to take root, and community members are concerned about what may be lost if local middle school programming is not allowed the continuity needed to grow. Community members have also expressed concern that young people and families are already navigating unprecedented levels of uncertainty related to housing affordability, economic instability, climate change, and the lasting social and mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, many feel it is especially important to preserve and strengthen the stable, supportive community-based educational environments that families and educators have worked so

hard to build. Community resilience is strengthened not by repeated disruption and uncertainty, but through continuity, connection, and long-term investment in local supports for children and youth.

We respectfully ask School District 71 to:

1. Commit to a multi-year plan for the Hornby Island middle school program, rather than evaluating its future year-by-year.
2. Continue investing in the staffing and programming needed to allow the program time to grow sustainably.
3. Work collaboratively with families and the broader community to strengthen awareness and enrollment over time.
4. Provide clearer communication and guidance to families regarding available educational pathways and options.
5. Recognize that strong rural education programs require patience, continuity, and long-term vision in order to succeed.
6. Consider the broader educational, social, emotional, and community-wide impacts of losing local middle school access for island youth. Strong communities depend on strong schools.

When families cannot envision sustainable educational pathways for their children, communities themselves become less sustainable. Schools are often at the heart of rural communities, helping keep young families connected and rooted. Supporting local education is therefore not only an investment in students — it is an investment in the future resilience and vitality of Hornby Island itself.

We are asking for thoughtful leadership, long-term vision, and continued partnership in building an educational model that reflects both the needs of island youth and the values of this community.

Sincerely,

Laila Peterson (Parent of Anneke, Grade 7/current middle school program student, and Oskar, Grade 1; Hornby School PAC President)

