



Comox Valley Schools

A Community of Learners

INNOVATIVE • INQUISITIVE • INCLUSIVE

Board of Education

Regular Public Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

7:00pm

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)
607 Cumberland Road, Courtenay, BC V9N 7G5
250-334-5500

A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS - INNOVATIVE ♦ INQUISITIVE ♦ INCLUSIVE

Vision

An inclusive learning community that embraces diversity, fosters relationships and empowers all learners to have a positive impact on the world.

Mission

To inspire engaged, compassionate, resilient lifelong learners and cultivate a collaborative community together.

We Value and Believe In

Trusting relationships based on respect, integrity and ethical behaviour

A commitment to Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples

Equity, inclusion, dignity, and acceptance for all

Global awareness and environmental stewardship

Innovation, creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking

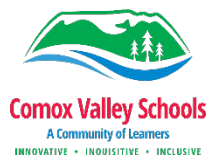
Accountability and shared responsibility

Open and engaging communication

Celebration of learning

Strategic Priorities

Educational Excellence
Community Engagement
Organizational Stability & Environmental Stewardship
Physical Health & Mental Well-Being



REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 27, 2021
7:00pm

In Attendance Via Virtual Zoom Meeting:

Trustees:

Sheila McDonnell, Board Chair
Michelle Waite, Vice Chair
Janice Caton, Trustee
Tonia Frawley, Trustee
Kat Hawksby, Trustee
Sarah Jane Howe, Trustee
Cristi May Sacht, Trustee

Staff:

Tom Demeo, Superintendent of Schools
Brenda Hooker, Secretary-Treasurer
Geoff Manning, Assistant Superintendent
Candice Hilton, Director of Finance
Ian Heselgrave, Director of Operations
Esther Shatz, Director of Instruction (Student Services)
Allan Douglas, Director of Instructional Services K-12
Josh Porter, Director of Information Technology

Regrets: Paul Berry, Director of Instruction (Health & Safety)

Recording Secretary: Marlene Leach, Sr. Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

Board Chair, Sheila McDonnell called the meeting to order at 7:02pm and acknowledged that the meeting is being held on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education adopt the April 27, 2021 Regular Public Board Meeting Agenda as amended.

[Caton/May Sacht]

CARRIED

3. Board Meeting Minutes

Pg.6

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education adopt the March 16, 2021 Regular Public Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

[Caton/Howe]

CARRIED

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education adopt the April 06, 2021 Special Public Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

[Waite/Howe]

CARRIED

4. Unfinished Business

None

5. Report on In-Camera Meeting

- Personnel
- Other

6. Board Chair's Report

Pg.12

Board Information - see attached, reviewed by the Board Chair.

7. Presentations / Delegations

None

8. Education Committee Meeting – April 13, 2021

Pg.14

Next Education Committee Meeting:

TOPIC: TBD

DATE: June 08, 2021

TIME: 6:30 pm

LOCATION: Zoom Meeting (live and recorded)

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education receive the Education Committee Board Report as presented.

[Waite/Hawksby]

CARRIED

9. Strategic Direction

A. Superintendent

i. District News

Pg.16

- General

Board Information - see attached, reviewed by the Superintendent.

B. Assistant Superintendent

None

C. Secretary-Treasurer

- i. **Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) Update** Pg.18
Board Information - see attached briefing note reviewed by the Secretary-Treasurer.
- ii. **2021-22 Preliminary Budget Information Town Hall Meeting – April 20, 2021** Pg.19
Board Information – see attached briefing note reviewed by the Secretary-Treasurer. Online feedback closes on May 07, 2021.
- iii. **Vancouver Island School Trustees' Association (VISTA) President Announcement** – Verbal Update
The Secretary-Treasurer advised that Trustee Caton had been elected as president of VISTA and that as such, our Secretary-Treasurer serves as the branch Secretary-Treasurer. Trustee Caton spoke about the great work VISTA does and her pleasure as serving the branch as president.

D. Human Resources

- i. **Retirements and Recognition** Pg.20
Board Information

10. Board Standing Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Board Report – April 19, 2021 Pg.21

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education receive the Finance Committee Board Report as presented.

[Frawley/May Sacht]

CARRIED

B. Policy Committee Board Report – No Meeting in April

- i. **Ad Hoc Anti-Racism & Inclusion Policy (Sub) Committee Meeting Board Report - April 12, 2021**
Kat Hawksby, Trustee – Verbal Update
Trustee Hawksby reported that the committee has met several times and work on the revised policy is progressing.

C. Facilities Committee Board Report

Sara Jane Howe, Committee Chair – Verbal Update
Trustee Howe advised that the April 27, 2021 meeting had been cancelled.

11. Board Business

A. Trustee Report: Columbia Institute High Ground 2021 - Be bold! Pg.36

Sheila McDonnell, Trustee

Board Information - see attached report that Chair McDonnell spoke to.

B. Trustee Report: BC School Trustee Association (BCSTA) AGM Pg.38

Janice Caton, Trustee

Board information – see attached report. Trustee Caton asked the Board to consider, a Notice of Motion for an upcoming Board meeting, requesting the Board write a letter to the Ministry of Education supporting BCSTA's 2021 AGM motion in regard to the 0-5 Early Learning Years.

C. Follow-Up from the LUSH Valley Food Action Society School Foods Program presentation from the February 23, 2021 Regular Public Board Meeting Pg.40

Sheila McDonnell, Trustee

Board Information – see attached. LUSH Valley Food Action Society's request for endorsement of The Coalition for Healthy School Food that Trustee McDonnell spoke to and answered questions.

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education endorse The Coalition for Healthy School Food.

[Waite/May Sacht]

CARRIED

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education refer to Senior Leadership the following two LUSH Valley Food Action Society requests from their presentation at the February 23, 2021 Board meeting:

- 1. Enter into conversations on how to get more local food into classrooms/homes for students; and*
- 2. Enter into a conversation with LUSH and other partners regarding a regional food literacy coordinator.*

[Caton/Frawley]

CARRIED

D. Notice of Motion – Farm to School BC Grants

Cristi May Sacht, Trustee

Trustee May Sacht advised the Board of her intention to present a motion regarding applying for a grant at the May Board meeting.

E. Notice of Motion – Mental Health and Addictions Services

Sarah Jane Howe, Trustee

Trustee Howe advised the Board of the upcoming community meetings and her intention to present a motion regarding advocacy in the opioid crisis at the May Board meeting.

12. Board Correspondence

- A. Correspondence: from The Board of Education to Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education – Mental Health Education and Services** Pg.50
Sheila McDonnell, Board Chair
Received and attached.
- B. Correspondence: from Wendy Kotilla, Youth & Ecological Restoration to The Board of Education – Funding request to support a youth referral increase to Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER).** Pg.52
Sheila McDonnell, Board Chair
Received and attached.

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education refer to Senior Leadership, the Youth & Ecological Restoration's funding request to support a youth referral increase to Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER).

[Caton/Frawley]

CARRIED

13. Public Question Period

14. Meeting Adjourned – 8:29pm

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education adjourn this meeting.

[Frawley/Howe]

CARRIED

Board Approved on:
May 25, 2021

Certified Correct:



Brenda Hooker, CPA, CGA
Secretary-Treasurer



Sheila McDonnell
Board Chair

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 16, 2021
7:00pm

In Attendance Via Virtual Zoom Meeting:

Trustees:

Sheila McDonnell, Board Chair
Michelle Waite, Vice Chair
Janice Caton, Trustee
Tonia Frawley, Trustee
Kat Hawksby, Trustee
Sarah Jane Howe, Trustee
Cristi May Sacht, Trustee

Staff:

Tom Demeo, Superintendent of Schools
Brenda Hooker, Secretary-Treasurer
Geoff Manning, Assistant Superintendent
Candice Hilton, Director of Finance
Ian Heselgrave, Director of Operations
Esther Shatz, Director of Instruction (Student Services)
Allan Douglas, Director of Instructional Services K-12
Paul Berry, Director of Instruction (Health & Safety)
Josh Porter, Director of Information Technology

Recording Secretary:

Marlene Leach, Sr. Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

Board Chair, Sheila McDonnell called the meeting to order at 7:02pm and acknowledged that the meeting is being held on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Education adopt the March 16, 2021 Regular Public Board Meeting Agenda as amended.

CARRIED

3. Board Meeting Minutes

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Education adopt the February 23, 2021 Regular Public Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

CARRIED

4. Old Business

None

5. Report on In-Camera Meeting – March 16, 2021

- Land/Property
- Other

6. Board Chair's Report

Highlights:

- Community to Community Forum, March 05, 2021, co-hosted by Chief and Council of the K'ómoks First Nation and the Comox Valley Regional District Board.

7. Presentations / Delegations

- A. Building Connections for Valley Families Project** – Live via Zoom, presentation by Kris Johnson, Building Connections for Valley Families Coordinator for the Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative, and Joanne Schroeder, Connections Steering Committee Member & Director of External Partnerships with HELP (UBC).
Board Information

8. Education Committee Meeting

No meeting in March

Next Education Committee Meeting:

TOPICS: Early Years Education, Foundations Skills Assessment (FSA)
DATE: April 13, 2021
TIME: 6:30 pm
LOCATION: Zoom Meeting (live and recorded)

9. Strategic Direction

A. Superintendent

- i. District News**
- General
 - COVID-19 Update
 - Foundations Skills Assessment (FSA)
- Board Information

- ii. **Huband Boundary Recommendation Update** - Verbal Update
Board Information

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Education rescind the motion passed in February 2020 for September 2021, in that all current cross boundary students enrolled at Huband be allowed to remain there until they complete their elementary education and that Huband continue to remain closed to all new cross boundary transfer requests including siblings.

CARRIED

B. Assistant Superintendent

- i. **School Calendars Update** - Verbal Update
Board Information

C. Secretary-Treasurer

- i. **Preliminary Grant Funding Announcement** - Verbal Update
Board Information

D. Human Resources

- i. **Retirements and Recognition**
Board Information

10. Board Standing Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Board Report

No meeting in March

B. Policy – Ad Hoc Committee Board Report

No meeting in March

C. Facilities Committee Board Report

No meeting in March

11. Board Business

A. Motion: Janice Caton, Trustee (City of Courtenay) – Briefing Note

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Education write a letter to the Ministry of Education to consider enhancing mental health services and education for all K-12 students and to provide school districts with the necessary resources and funding to support the students and teachers.

CARRIED

B. Notice of Special Public Board Meeting

TOPICS: School Calendars
DATE: April 06, 2021
TIME: 7:00 pm
LOCATION: Zoom Meeting

12. Board Correspondence

None

13. Public Question Period

14. Meeting Adjourned – 8:33pm

Board Approved on:
April 27, 2021

Certified Correct:

Brenda Hooker, CPA, CGA
Secretary-Treasurer

Sheila McDonnell
Board Chair

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 06, 2021
6:00pm

In Attendance Via Virtual Zoom Meeting:

Trustees:

Sheila McDonnell, Board Chair
Michelle Waite, Vice Chair
Janice Caton, Trustee
Tonia Frawley, Trustee
Sarah Jane Howe, Trustee
Cristi May Sacht, Trustee

Staff:

Tom Demeo, Superintendent of Schools
Brenda Hooker, Secretary-Treasurer
Geoff Manning, Assistant Superintendent
Ian Heselgrave, Director of Operations
Esther Shatz, Director of Instruction (Student Services)
Allan Douglas, Director of Instructional Services K-12
Josh Porter, Director of Information Technology

Regrets:

Kat Hawksby, Trustee
Candice Hilton, Director of Finance
Paul Berry, Director of Instruction (Health & Safety)

Recording Secretary:

Marlene Leach, Sr. Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair, Michelle Waite called the meeting to order at 6:07pm and acknowledged that the meeting is being held on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education adopt the April 06, 2021 Special Public Board Meeting Agenda as presented.

[Howe/Frawley]

CARRIED

3. Board Business

A. School Calendars

Assistant Superintendent, Geoff Manning provided information and feedback about the school calendars that were posted for review on the school district website over the past 30 days.

Motion:

THAT the Board of Education approve the 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 regular school calendars and Distance Learning (Navigate) calendars as presented on the school district website over the last 30 days and make this the official document to submit to the Ministry of Education.

[Frawley/May Sacht]

CARRIED

4. **Public Question Period**
5. **Meeting Adjourned – 6:13pm**

Board Approved on:

April 27, 2021

Certified Correct:

Brenda Hooker, CPA, CGA
Secretary-Treasurer

Sheila McDonnell
Board Chair

BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

TO: Board of Education

DATE: April 27, 2021

FROM: Sheila McDonnell, Board Chair

As we enter the second year of the COVID pandemic, with ongoing shutdown measures and increased stress on our communities and institutions, I want to speak to recent events of concern.

On Saturday, April 17, conflict occurred at a gathering of young people in the Valley, resulting in serious injuries and trauma to participants. While the RCMP have lead responsibility on this matter, district staff mobilized immediately to work with the RCMP and other parties and to provide support for students, parents and staff beginning first thing on Monday. School principals, teachers, counsellors and support staff responded quickly to the address the range of emotional reactions and ensure the safety and well-being of our students and families impacted by this terrible event.

I want to extend our best wishes for a safe and speedy recovery to those affected and their families. We want to thank the RCMP, fire, ambulance and health workers who were there to support these young people. Thank you to our staff who are working to make all our students feel safe and supported. In the coming months, we know there will be conversations about what we can do, collectively, to help our students be safe at school and out in their community.

It is important to know that stress and trauma from incidents like this can cause a wide range of reactions, immediate and longer-term. We encourage families to support their children, seek information and support from school counsellors and other staff. None of us expect our children to encounter tragedy when they go out. We can give them resources to help them be prepared and cope with emergencies. Talk to them about safety plans and when to call you or another adult. Make sure they can identify one or more "safe adult(s)" to talk to about their feelings. Let them know to speak up and ask for help if they remain troubled by what occurred.

School Boards around the province are also concerned about increasing hostility in the public sphere, often facilitated by social media platforms. Following a recent decision made at a New Westminster School District committee meeting, the chair received anonymous threats of violence. Our Board joins districts around the province in denouncing these responses. We echo the New Westminster Board's statement: "We welcome healthy debate and discussion on issues that affect students, schools, and the community. But there is zero tolerance or space for reactions that become abusive or threatening."

With the signs of hope coming with the spring flowers and vaccination rollout, we know that we will not be in this state forever and will find our path, not back to "normal", but to a new "Now". We celebrate our resilience and our strength in collaboration, we invite all to work with us to overcome all forms of hate and violence. Let us Be Kind, Be Calm and Be Safe.

As Michelle Waite, Vice Chair sincerely communicated at the Board meeting, in early April we lost a former trustee to our District, Wayne Bradley. Wayne served as a trustee from 1982-1986. Wayne continued his passion for change through education in many ways, including the World Community Film Festival, which has educated hundreds of people in our community. It is difficult to find the best words to capture Wayne, but our current Mission statement comes close – to inspire engaged, compassionate, resilient life-long learners and cultivate a collaborative community together. On behalf of our Board of Education we acknowledge Wayne’s service to our District and our community and extend our condolences to his family.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila McDonnell

Sheila McDonnell
Board Chair

Education Committee Minutes April 13, 2021

We gratefully acknowledge that we are on the traditional, unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. We are thankful for the opportunity to work with their families and teach their children.

FSA & Early Years

1. **Welcome** Michelle Waite

2. **FSA** Allan Douglas (Director of Instruction K-1)

Allan reviewed the Foundation Skills Assessment purpose and procedures for School District 71. He took the trustees through a Grade 4 and Grade 7 numeracy example and had them solve the problem as well as guide them through the rubric used to assess the student's answers. He also answered questions the trustees had regarding the assessment.

3. **HELP** Joanne Schroeder (HELP: Director of External Partnerships)

Joanne reviewed the Human Early Learning Partnership program housed at the University of British Columbia. She detailed the various programs that HELP operates and focused on the Early Years Development Instrument (EDI). She presented the results of this assessment for the Comox Valley and shared the vulnerability index for the Comox Valley regarding Kindergarten age students. She also took questions from the trustees and reminded everyone that the most recent wave of EDI results should be out soon.

4. **Early Years** Jacquie Anderson (Early Years Lead Teacher)

Jacquie reviewed her role as the Early Years Lead Teacher and detailed all the programs that we currently have running in SD71. She spoke about Strong Start, Welcome to Kindergarten, Early Learning Framework (ELF), Strengthening Transitions (SEY2K), Changing Results (CR4YC) and the work the district does with the Early Learning Community Collaborative.

5. Conclusion/Question & Answer Session

Michelle Waite facilitated a question-and-answer period where trustees asked a variety of questions to the guest presenters. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Next Education Committee Meeting:
June 8, 2021
Location: Zoom
Topic: TBA



Spring Mental Wellness Challenge

Tara Ryan, District counsellor has resurrected the Spring Mental Wellness Challenge to encourage students and their families to keep healthy by participating in a number of activities including playing games, visiting local beaches, sports, cooking, riding bikes, taking a hike, and many more. Each completed activity earns an opportunity to enter into a draw to win prizes, including packages donated from recreation organizations such as Mount Washington and Wild Play. The challenge runs until April 30th and the draw for prizes will take place on May 7 to coincide with Child and Youth Mental Health Day.

More details online at

www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/spring-mental-wellness-challenge-2021/



Destination Imagination Championship

G.P. Vanier Secondary students captured top placement for the province and landed in the top three at the national Destination Imagination virtual competition. In The Fine Arts Challenge, Poison Apples and Final Brain Cell finished 2nd and 3rd respectively - 1st and 2nd in B.C. Team Chance captured 1st place in the Improv Challenge - the team that won the Global DI three years prior.

Full details of winning teams in our District News story online

www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/destination-imagination-students-shine-in-first-online-national-tournament/

Students featured in art exhibit & online auction

Fine Art students from Highland and Vanier currently have their photography artwork on display in a unique virtual exhibit, Capture Photography Festival, an integral part of the Flash Forward Incubator Program. Following the exhibit, the featured artwork will be available for auction online between 19 and 25 April. Photography artwork can be viewed or bid on at www.32auctions.com/Incubator2021. Proceeds raised are returned to the students' respective school art departments.

Read story details online at

www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/students-art-on-display-in-prestigious-vancouver-exhibit/



SCHOOL STORIES



OUTDOOR EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

The first District snowshoe program wrapped up April 12th. A total of 30 classes participated this winter, as well as two BCWF and HCTF Below Zero activity workshops. As we transition out of winter into spring, schools are getting very active with more outdoor learning activities.

Three programs kicked off in early April – two at Courtenay El. The first is the Bike Riding Program with Patricia Hart's class. More biking opportunities for all schools will continue throughout the school year now that the District has taken receipt of several additional bikes.

The Outdoor Story Walks – one of five story walk – are taking place on the school ground. Walk kits were created as a collaborative project by Carol Walters, Jacquie Anderson, and Serina Allison. Story Walk kits are available at the LRC.

Full details of the District Environment and Outdoor Learning activities and how teachers can request equipment is online at <http://learn71.ca/environmental-outdoor-learning-eol/>

The third outdoor activity involves school gardens. Royston Elementary formed a Garden Club after students enthusiastically went to work weeding their outdoor garden. Kids meet daily at play time to weed, water and plant, and have discovered previously planted potatoes and a strawberry plants. A planting party is scheduled for April 23, close to Earth Day, using seeds and plants donated by the Indigenous education department, as well as parent contributions.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ACADEMIC MEDAL

Olivia Annau, Mark R. Isfeld Secondary is the proud recipient of the Governor General's Academic Medal, which she was presented with in the form of a certificate by principal Sean Lamoureux. Medals are currently on hold until the installment of the next GG.

Details regarding this award of education excellence online at www.gg.ca/en/honours/governor-generals-awards/governor-generals-academic-medal

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Brenda Hooker, Secretary-Treasurer
RE: Long Range Facility Plan (LRFP) Update

DATE: April 27, 2021

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update on the LRFP update process.

Background

The Board authorized funds to contract an update to the LRFP in the 20/21 budget.

Analysis

The consultant, Cascade Facilities Management Consultants Ltd. has been gathering information and developing options. The report will provide updated enrollment projections and scenarios to consider based on a 10-year planning window. The consultant has been working with Facilities and Education senior staff to analyze the data and prepare feasible options for the Board to consider. There have been numerous meetings and the work is progressing.

Future Meetings

Senior staff hopes to have a draft report to present to the Board at the May Board meeting. We will recommend a Committee of the Whole meeting where the consultant can present the findings to the entire Board and senior staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Hooker

Brenda Hooker
Secretary-Treasurer

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Education **DATE:** April 27, 2021
FROM: Brenda Hooker, Secretary-Treasurer
RE: **2021/22 Preliminary Budget Information Town Hall Meeting – April 20, 2021**

Purpose

To update the Board on the 21/22 Preliminary Budget process.

Background

The Budget Advisory Committee is working with staff to prepare a draft 21/22 preliminary budget for the Board to consider at its May Board meeting.

Analysis

As part of the process, an online public consultation evening was held. There was not significant attendance outside of the committee and the Board. However, the video presentation and PowerPoint are available for viewing on the District website. The consultation/feedback link will be open until May 7th and is available here: <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/budget-feedback/>

Future Meetings

The Budget Advisory Committee's next meeting is on May 11th followed by an In-Camera Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled with the Board on May 18th.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Hooker

Brenda Hooker
Secretary-Treasurer

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Education

DATE: April 27, 2021

RE: Human Resources - Retirements and Recognition

Retirements

Andrea Frederiksen, Custodian, Miracle Beach Elementary, will retire effective June 29, 2021 after 7 years of service with the district.

Andrew Black, Teacher, Highland Secondary, will retire effective June 30, 2021 after 30 years of service with the district.

Barbara McInnes, Education Assistant, Student Services, will retire effective June 30, 2021 after 14 years of service with the district.

Catherine Akerley, Learning Support Teacher, Mark R. Isfeld Secondary, will retire effective June 30, 2021 after 20 years of service with the district.

Jane Reimer, Education Assistant, Student Services, will retire effective June 29, 2021 after 25 years of service with the district.

Karen Eigler, Education Assistant, Student Services, will retire effective July 30, 2021 after 21 years of service with the district.

Lorraine Ledgard, Education Assistant, Mark R. Isfeld Secondary, will retire effective June 30, 2021 after 31 years of service with the district.

Nancy Ryan, Teacher, Ecole Robb Road Elementary, will retire effective June 30, 2021 after 27 years of service with the district.

Russell Dunkley, Senior Custodian, Miracle Beach Elementary, will retire effective June 30, 2021 after 17 years of service with the district.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
BOARD REPORT**

Date: Monday April 19, 2021
Time: 3:00 – 4:00pm
Venue: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Committee Members:

Tonia Frawley, Chairperson
Janice Caton, Trustee
Cristi May Sacht, Trustee
Brenda Hooker, Secretary-Treasurer

Candice Hilton, Director of Finance
Tom Demeo, Superintendent
Ian Heselgrave, Director of Operations

Regrets: Geoff Manning, Assistant Superintendent
Guests: Cathie Collins, Manager of Finance
Recording Secretary: Marlene Leach, Senior Executive Assistant

A. WELCOME

Committee Chair, Tonia Frawley welcomed the committee and called the meeting to order at 3:04pm.

B. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. 2021-22 Budget Advisory Committee Report

Secretary-Treasurer, Brenda Hooker provided a brief review and summary of the annual preliminary budget information package discussed at the April 13, 2021 Budget Advisory Committee meeting. A public Preliminary Budget Information Town Hall Meeting takes place on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 6:00pm.
Received for information.

C. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Financial Update

a. Capital Fund Update – March 31st

Director of Finance, Candice Hilton reviewed the capital fund update as at March 31, 2021 with the committee.
Received for information.

b. Operating Fund Projection

Director of Finance, Candice Hilton reviewed the operating fund projection with the committee.

Received for information.

D. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. 2021-22 Preliminary Budget Recommendations

E. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:33pm.

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT TO FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021
Time: 3:00pm – 5:00pm
Venue: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Committee Members:

Tonia Frawley, Trustee
Janice Caton, Trustee
Cristi May Sacht, Trustee
Brenda Hooker, Secretary-Treasurer
Tom Demeo, Superintendent
Geoff Manning, Assistant Superintendent
Allan Douglas, Director of Instruction
Esther Shatz, Director of Instruction
Candice Hilton, Director of Finance
Ian Heselgrave, Director of Operations
Lynda-Marie Handfield, Director of Human Resources

Catherine Manson, Principal
Brian McAskill, Principal
Sherry Dittrick, CDTA
Karla Neufer, CDTA
Spring Halasz, DPAC
Jennifer Fisher, DPAC
Denise Bullock, CUPE
Susan Hansen, CUPE
Bruce Carlos, IEC
Kelly Shopland, IEC

Regrets: Josh Porter, Director of Information Technology

Guests: Cathie Collins, Manager of Finance

Recording Secretary: Marlene Leach, Senior Executive Assistant

A. WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS

Trustee, Tonia Frawley commenced the meeting at 3:07pm, acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation and welcomed the Committee members.

B. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. 2021 Annual Budget Information Package

Secretary-Treasurer, Brenda Hooker reviewed section one of the budget information package and highlighted the remaining sections that provided further detailed information from section one. The Secretary-Treasurer and Director of Finance received and answered questions from the Committee members and partner groups and offered to answer any other questions in the coming weeks.

Received for information.

2. Partner Group & Department Budget Requests

The CDTA, CUPE 439, DPAC, and IEC partner groups presented their budget requests (attached to this report). Director of Operations, Ian Heselgrave spoke on behalf of the Operations department's staffing requests around HVAC/electrical, carpentry, and custodial staff.

3. Public Consultation Process During COVID19

Secretary-Treasurer, Brenda Hooker and the Committee discussed the feasibility of having a draft preliminary budget ready for tentative approval by the board at the May 25, 2021 regular public Board meeting or the option to delay it until the June 22, 2021 meeting. This will be reassessed at the Committee's May 11, 2021 meeting. The Committee also discussed and made recommendations regarding holding the public budget consultation meeting scheduled for April 20, 2021. Given the uncertainty around upcoming information from the Ministry and the cost pressures around COVID, it was recommended and decided that the public budget consultation meeting will be a public budget information meeting. A further suggestion was to follow the current timeline and adjust the schedule later if needed.

C. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None

D. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. 2021-22 Preliminary Budget Balancing Options

E. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:11pm.



CDTA Budget Recommendations to SD71 for the 2021-2022 School Year

Given that at the present time a surplus for next year is questionable, the CDTA would like to highlight on-going areas of need and concern that we would like addressed if the district ends up in a surplus situation.

1. Student Services:

Every year it is reported to us that non-enrolling teachers experience high caseloads that do not allow them to meet the needs of the students. To quote one teacher, "Student service caseloads are unrealistic and are creating a burn out situation. The job is an impossible task."

Counsellors report a significant increase in the number of students dealing with anxiety and other mental health issues, especially in this pandemic. They do not have the time needed to have a significant impact on helping these students in their schools. Recruitment and retention of counselling staff also seems to be an issue, perhaps reflective of these concerns.

The collective agreement uses district ratios to set minimums for teachers in some non-enrolling student services categories, (LST, counsellor). We want to emphasize that these are minimums and there is nothing stopping districts from exceeding those minimums for the purposes of meeting the needs of students. The CDTA would encourage the district to use additional funds to significantly go above and beyond the collective agreement ratios to support students and their teachers in the area of student services: LSTs, SLPs, Counsellors, School Psychologists, ELL, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Vision and Behaviour Support Teachers.

2. District Health & Safety Budget:

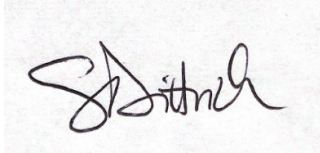
Allow members of the joint health and safety committees at each site to complete site inspections during normal school hours for the purposes of identifying workplace hazards as per WorkSafe regulations. Provide release time for training opportunities for members of JOHS to meet once a month for half a day to go over investigation reports, look for patterns/trends and to plan for meaningful health and safety training of staff during the monthly staff "health and safety" meeting.

3. Support for classrooms at maximum composition/size and/or classes with high incidence designations or pending designations.

Although our collective agreement provides limits regarding composition and class size, this is not a guarantee of adequate support levels, nor is it guaranteed after October 1st. Classrooms where children are awaiting designation or that have high incidence designated students need support even though the ministry does not provide funding. The CDTA requests that the district use any extra funds next year to support these classrooms knowing that student and teacher needs are not always met with or in the absence of, ministry designations.

If we have the opportunity to better support students brought to school based teams, the CDTA would like the district to consider additional teacher staffing with “boost” teachers who can coordinate with the non-enrolling and classroom teacher to support these classrooms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sherry Dittrick", is centered below the word "Sincerely,". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sherry Dittrick
CDTA President

April 13, 2021

Budget Committee Presentation

We have carefully considered our budget recommendation this year as we all do not know exactly what the funding will look like from the ministry. In no order of priority:

We would request allocated funds for the following for 2021/2022 SD71 Budget.

- We would like to see allocated funds for all daytime custodial staff as a status quo to continue with the high standard of cleanliness, within our school sites and continue with the enhanced cleaning standards. We have all seen firsthand the importance of clean and healthy sites.
- We would like to see allocated funds for the 3 Youth and Family Program Workers and the 1 Indigenous Youth and Family Program Worker that were hired from federal funding continue.
- In discussions we have recognized that EA's have been using their own money to purchase supplies such as graphing calculators, pens, pencils, binders, erasers etc. We would like to see a site budget set up for EA's to be able to utilize for these supplies rather than using their own money.
- We would also like to see all of our members working 8 hours a day 5 days week.
- We request an on-call floater for each department at maintenance for support when staff is away, so they have a small amount of coverage.
- We respectfully request the amount of all costing for all outside contractors occurring within the district for 2020/2021 school year to date.

We also request in the chance that there is a huge surplus any positions that have been lost through attrition in the past that they be reinstated. We thank you in advance for the opportunity to share and although we could have requested millions of dollars' worth of budget items, we felt it was important to focus on only a few.

Respectfully Submitted, Denise and Susan

SD71 2021-22 Annual Budget

Submission by DPAC – April 2021

DPAC requests that the SD71 2021/22 budget include the following:

1. Funding for the establishment a full-time physical health & mental well-being coordinator. Such a position is in keeping with the district's Strategic Plan (for 2019-2023)'s 4th priority (physical health & mental well-being) and specifically its intended action of "implement[ing] a district-wide mental health initiative". It would also support its intended action of "continu[ing] to build capacity in sexual health education" This person would oversee mental/emotional health, sexual health, physical well-being and could also incorporate active transportation goals within the context of physical health.

Our district has stated for years that this is a district priority, and it is now enshrined in our district's Strategic Plan (for 2019-2023). If there was ever a time to move forward with this goal, it is now. With the ongoing pandemic and expected aftermath, we need to be fully resourced in this area.

This position is crucial as experiences of anxiety, depression, grief, and trauma etc., are expected to increase due to isolation and increased stress. The coordinator should oversee all aspects of mental, physical, emotional, and sexual health of our students, including acting as a liaison between the District, schools, VIHA, families, and other community groups. Secondary students will likely require additional supports due to additional stress, anxiety and depression associated with the uncertainty of their foreseeable futures (graduation, start of college/university, entry into a limited and changing workforce). The coordinator could also work closely with the Foundry when it is established in the Comox Valley.

2. Funding for **one** full time counsellor at each school, who **would** work with teachers and EAs **at the individual schools** to support students **as well as with the health and well-being coordinator to implement a district-wide approach.**

Students will need access to more resources delivered consistently by the same professional school counsellors **who are available to the students year after year and who the students grow to know and trust.** No more roving counsellors who cover multiple schools and are only in some schools a couple days a week, counselors are needed as a full time resource to students.

3. Continued funding to **keep the existing Youth and Mental Health Workers in the high schools**

would be a valuable asset to the school community. With the third wave of the pandemic underway, students are suffering pandemic fatigue and parents and teachers are seeing an increase in stress and anxiety amongst their students. With populations well over 500+ in each of the high schools, the **number of students who need support (now and in the future) could rise, making the roll of the youth worker, more crucial than a year ago.** Their ability to connect with more students is an added bonus in the school's arsenal of existing resources.

4. White Hatter Professional Development for Staff

Internet Safety and Digital Literacy For Educators and the addition of Module 2 Cyberbullying & Sexting as a follow up to the White Hatter education series schools are doing right now. 3 hour program with a cost of \$450.00

5. Professional Development for Staff and Admin around Bullying, with follow up Parent education. There can be a disconnect between Home and School regarding processes, expectations, problem solving and communication.



To: SD71 Budget Committee

Re: Recommendations for 2021-22 School Year Budget from Indigenous Education Council

The following recommendations are provided from the SD71 Indigenous Education Council and are based on the Ministry of Education policies around the purpose and use of Indigenous Education Targeted Funding in Public schools in BC.

Policy statement - The Ministry of Education provides enhanced funding to school age students of Indigenous ancestry. Enhanced funding provides culturally-appropriate educational programs and services to support the success of Indigenous students.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/k-12-funding-indigenous-education>

These recommendations are based on current programming or staffing funded with Targeted Funding meant for indigenous students but instead provides support to all students or teachers.

1. **Indigenous Education Teacher Liaison Meetings** (Elementary / Secondary teachers)
Funds provide release time (Teachers on Call) so teacher representatives from each school can attend afternoon meetings five times per school year to learn about Indigenous curriculum, new resources, and cultural teachings. Portions of funds cover meeting materials/supplies and resources for teachers to take back to their schools to share with colleagues.
\$15,000.00
1. **Youth leadership / Reconciliation gathering** (any Secondary youth)
Funds provide resources to hire keynote speaker, provide food and materials for one large of two smaller Youth gatherings focussing on reconciliation and ReconcillIACTIONS within our school district. Some funds provide release time (Teacher on Call) so secondary teachers can attend the full day with their leadership classes.
\$5,000.00
2. **Cultural Programming** - District-wide initiatives
Funds support the feels connected with bringing in keynote speakers, cultural performers or special guests into our District. Past highlights are Moccasin Trek performance tour, Phyllis Webstad (Orange Shirt Day) tour, Hoop Dancer tour, partnership with Legacy Schools (Downie Wenjack Fund cultural performances).
\$20,000.00

3. Indigenous Education Cultural Grants

Annual small grants provided to teachers / schools (each grant up to \$500) to enrich Indigenous culture and teachings in schools. Funds are accessed through a digital application and vetted through a committee of InEd staff.

\$10,000.00

4. Indigenous Education District Teacher

Indigenous Education currently supports three teachers to provide support to SD71 teachers in implementing Indigenous curriculum and worldview into classrooms. This recommendation is asking for the school district to fund one of these positions.

\$100,000.00

Submitted on behalf of the Indigenous Education Council,

Sent via email

Kelly Shopland, IEC Chair

Subject: FW: Operations Department budget request

From: Ian Heselgrave <Ian.Heselgrave@sd71.bc.ca>

Sent: April 15, 2021 5:23 PM

To: Brenda Hooker <Brenda.Hooker@sd71.bc.ca>; Candice Hilton <Candice.Hilton@sd71.bc.ca>

Cc: Ian Heselgrave <Ian.Heselgrave@sd71.bc.ca>

Subject: Operations Department budget request

Hello Brenda and Candice,

The Operations department requests funding for two additional positions:

1. One FTE Carpenter to assist with the additional tasks associated with increased work orders, COVID adjustments to schools and aging infrastructure; and
2. One FTE electrician to support the HVAC/DDC work for the district. There is an overwhelming amount of work to keep the ventilation systems running properly and increased filter changes and other related work are overwhelming the existing staff capacity. An electrician is often required to assist with HVAC work and they are a natural fit for learning the DDC systems.

Thanks

Ian

Ian Heselgrave

Director of Operations

Comox Valley School District

<http://www.sd71.bc.ca>

Phone: 250-334-5516

Email: ian.heselgrave@sd71.bc.ca



Comox Valley Schools

A Community of Learners

INNOVATIVE • INQUISITIVE • INCLUSIVE

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 71 (COMOX VALLEY)

CAPITAL FUND UPDATE - March 31st

CAPITAL FUND		BUDGET	EXPENDITURES to Mar 31st	Variance \$	Expenditures to Date %
--------------	--	--------	-----------------------------	----------------	------------------------------

Capital Assets	Local Capital	\$ 8,090,257	\$ 2,456,331	\$ 5,633,926	30%
	Bylaw Capital	\$ 36,685,043	\$ 26,216,294	\$ 10,468,749	71%

LOCAL CAPITAL		BUDGET	EXPENDITURES to Mar 31st	Variance \$	Expenditures to Date %	Notes
---------------	--	--------	-----------------------------	----------------	------------------------------	-------

Lake Trail Seismic - Board Contribution	1,000,000	-	1,000,000	0%	Capital Project Funding Agreement
Modulars	698,014	698,014	-	100%	Completed
Modulars	670,000	47,988	622,012	7%	Ongoing
Vehicle/Fleet Replacement	154,622	154,622	-	100%	Completed
Photocopier Fleet Replacement	50,000	33,932	16,068	68%	Ongoing
Printer Fleet Replacement	35,000	2,692	32,308	8%	Ongoing
Trades Equipment	77,506	7,925	69,581	10%	Ongoing
Custodial Equipment	15,000	15,000	-	100%	Completed
Laptop Carts	44,817	44,141	676	98%	Completed
Classroom Renovations	200,000	41,888	158,112	21%	2019/20 Board Surplus Spending Plan
Facility Reserve	1,300,000	-	1,300,000	0%	2019/20 Board Surplus Spending Plan
Washrooms	100,000	100,000	-	100%	Completed
Accessibility	29,441	7,222	22,219	25%	2019/20 Board Surplus Spending Plan
Music/Fine Arts	30,862	-	30,862	0%	2019/20 Board Surplus Spending Plan
Furniture & Equipment	94,242	2,440	91,802	3%	2019/20 Board Surplus Spending Plan
21st Century Learning Equipment Initiatives	19,138	9,660	9,478	50%	Ongoing
Land Swap - Prepaid Rent	265,000	-	265,000	0%	Reserve
Land Swap - Proceeds	600,000	-	600,000	0%	Reserve
Board Office Reno	1,015,598	-	1,015,598	0%	Reserve
Future Information Technology	1,395,348	1,259,988	135,360	90%	Ongoing
VOIP Systems	50,000	-	50,000	0%	Ongoing
Contingency Reserve Fund	245,669	30,819	214,850	13%	Reserve

TOTALS	\$ 8,090,257	\$ 2,456,331	\$ 5,633,926		
---------------	---------------------	---------------------	---------------------	--	--

BYLAW CAPITAL PROJECTS		BUDGET	EXPENDITURES to Mar 31st	Variance \$	Expenditures to Date %	Notes
------------------------	--	--------	-----------------------------	----------------	------------------------------	-------

Annual Facilities Grant	1,372,146	1,244,020	128,126	91%	Ongoing
Lake Trail Seismic Upgrade	24,597,381	18,714,589	5,882,792	76%	Ongoing
Hornby Island Replacement	8,312,996	4,572,707	3,740,289	55%	Ongoing
Mark Isfeld Mechanical Upgrades	420,000	282,847	137,153	67%	Ongoing
Cumberland Community School Mechanical Upgrades	990,000	585,501	404,499	59%	Ongoing
Denman Preschool	992,520	816,630	175,890	82%	Ongoing

TOTALS	\$ 36,685,043	\$ 36,216,294	\$ 10,468,749		
---------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	--	--

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 71 (COMOX VALLEY)
OPERATING FUND - YEAR END PROJECTION
As at March 31, 2021

	2020-21 AMENDED ANNUAL BUDGET	2020-21 ACTUAL Revenues & Expenditures to March 31st	2020-21 PROJECTED Revenues & Expenditures to June 30th	2020-21 PROJECTED Revenues & Expenditures for the year	VARIANCE from Amended Annual budget	
OPERATING FUND						
REVENUE						
Provincial Grants						
Ministry of Education	94,008,867	66,839,828	28,256,431	95,096,259	(1,087,392)	1
Other						
Tuition	1,404,000	1,834,992	(155,000)	1,679,992	(275,992)	2
Other Revenue	691,990	616,504	152,486	768,990	(77,000)	3
Rentals and Leases	36,000	23,004	12,996	36,000	-	
Investment Income	180,000	137,830	74,212	212,042	(32,042)	4
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	96,320,857	69,452,158	28,341,125	97,793,283	(1,472,426)	
EXPENSES						
Salaries						
Teachers	39,906,305	27,605,624	11,398,608	39,004,233	902,072	
Principals/Vice-Principals	5,370,410	3,944,804	1,296,647	5,241,450	128,960	
Educational Assistants	6,306,411	4,101,720	1,744,652	5,846,372	460,039	5
Support Staff	8,539,127	6,116,690	2,216,577	8,333,267	205,860	
Other Professionals	3,071,031	2,343,539	781,180	3,124,719	(53,688)	
Substitutes	2,774,695	2,055,947	881,120	2,937,067	(162,372)	6
Total Salaries	65,967,979	46,168,323	18,318,784	64,487,108	1,480,871	
Employee Benefits	16,060,813	11,047,414	4,734,606	15,782,021	278,792	7
Total Salaries and Benefits	82,028,792	57,215,738	23,053,390	80,269,128	1,759,664	
Services and Supplies						
Services	3,157,357	2,285,198	660,371	2,945,569	211,788	8
Student Transportation	2,063,962	1,125,556	860,000	1,985,556	78,406	
ProD and Travel	625,260	259,443	111,190	370,633	254,627	9
Dues and Fees	83,400	54,755	28,645	83,400	-	
Insurance	202,800	203,845	0	203,845	(1,045)	
Supplies	6,303,673	3,629,126	1,619,709	5,248,835	1,054,838	10
Utilities	2,063,692	1,386,032	565,523	1,951,555	112,137	11
Total Services and Supplies	14,500,144	8,943,955	3,845,437	12,789,392	1,710,752	
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	96,528,936	66,159,693	26,898,827	93,058,520	3,470,416	
Surplus Appropriation	2,333,079		(500,000)	(500,000)	(2,833,079)	
Transfer to Local Capital	(1,560,000)	(1,560,000)	(500,000)	(2,060,000)	(500,000)	
Tangible Capital Assets Purchased	(565,000)		(565,000)	(565,000)	-	
OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ -	\$ 1,732,465	(122,702)	\$ 1,609,763	\$ 1,609,763	12

Variances from budget greater than 5% are explained on following page.

Results may vary from actual.
Each successive projection will be more reliable as the period being projected becomes shorter and there is more time spent understanding the underlying reasons for emerging trends.
For discussion purposes only.

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 71 (COMOX VALLEY)
OPERATING FUND - YEAR END PROJECTION
As at March 31, 2021

- 1** Ministry of Education February Distributed Learning Enrolment Count increase and adjustments to Special Needs Enrolment, Ministry Holdback funds announced April 1, 2021.
- 2** International Tuition homestay and application fee revenue is exceeding the value included in the amended budget.
- 3** Industry Training Authority (ITA) funding is exceeding the value in the amended budget.
- 4** Increase in investment income is due to shifting increased funds to the Ministry Central Deposit system as the current interest rate is higher than the general financial institution rate.
- 5** Education Assistants salaries are under budget as there are a number vacant positions including elementary behaviour EA's and ISW's. There were also a number of positions that have been filled throughout the school year as not all positions can be filled in advance of September.
- 6** Substitute salary costs are more than what was budgeted for due to an increase in the number of absences and resulting replacement costs. This can be attributed to a rise in employee LTD claims and the COVID-19 pandemic as employees are adhering to protocols and staying home when unwell.
- 7** Employee Benefit costs are naturally reduced in relation to the overall salaries underspent.
- 8** Services accounts are typically assumed to be fully spent during the year, however, the trend in the past prior to COVID19 has been that approximately 97% of the budgets are spent, leaving surpluses in school and district service accounts. COVID19 has impacted some services and as a result we have experienced less expenses.
- 9** Costs associated with Professional Development and Travel have been reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic as out of District conferences and events are currently held virtually, put on hold or cancelled.
- 10** Supply accounts are typically assumed to be fully spent during the year; however, the trend in the past has been that budgets are not 100% expended, leaving surpluses in school and district supply accounts. As a result of COVID19 we anticipate less spending in the supply area and a surplus of resource budgets relating to our current level of programs and services.
- 11** Digital Services estimated recoveries charged to the district by the Province have come in \$57,000 less than what was budgeted.
- 12** Projected accumulated operating surplus at March 31, 2021 is approximately \$1,609,763, which is approximately 1.67% of the total operating budget.

TRUSTEE REPORT

TO: Board of Education **DATE:** April 27, 2021

FROM: Sheila McDonnell, Trustee

RE: **Columbia Institute High Ground 2021 - Be bold!**

Trustee Sarah Jane Howe and I attended Columbia Institute's virtual High Ground 2021 - Be bold! conference on March 24, 26, and 27. This is an annual gathering that brings together elected Municipal Mayors and Councillors, First Nations leaders and School District Trustees to learn, share and be inspired by progressive initiatives that are making differences in Health, Safety and Quality of Life in our communities.

The conference always includes presentations from government Ministers and this year there were Q&A sessions with Ministers Bowinn Ma, Infrastructure; George Heyman, Environment and Climate Change Strategy; Josie Osborne, Municipal Affairs; and Ravi Kahlon, Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation. Minister of Education, Jennifer Whiteside was occupied with the legislative session but sent a short message.

The Plenary on Perspectives on a Just, Equitable and Accessible Public Education included messages from Jennifer Reddy, Paul Shaker and Patti Bacchus and the video was shared by another valley participant. Education was also the focus of the break-out Vision for Public Education, moderated by Dan Raitch of SFU and the Institute for Public Education in BC. Owen Ebose was an extremely articulate and compelling student advocate who argued that the system is not meeting the needs of students. His vision for education 10 years ahead included a comprehensive Anti-racism Curriculum; the integration of hands-on reimagined science learning in nature rather than from books and lectures; and gives students power to learn through their own practice and to connect with community. He has been working with leaders in his Burnaby School to re-imagine student government that is more than "school spirit" and stressed the importance of students creating schools that are inclusive, welcoming and support students to shape their own educations. Making this happen will require us to really LISTEN, to create opportunities for students to sit down with people in power and have a role in decision-making; this is more than surveys, consultation meetings and token presence. The onus is on the adults, not students, to make this happen. Jamie Smallboy, a First Nations parent noted that "giving every child a piece of chalk is not enough to ensure their success. Many need much more in order to be able to use that piece of chalk". She asked that we are realistic, that it is not the same "ideal" world for all students, especially for many First Nations children.

Colleen Sturrock, a Kindergarten teacher in Langley, shared her experience with the crucial need to support connections with families and agencies for success in the early years. She shared about students who were taken into care and received assessments and supports from MCFD, which were not maintained when children were returned to their parents. Systemic barriers and biases reinforce the challenges. The system is about power, about access, rewards for winners and punishments. It creates competitive situations that leaves the vulnerable behind. Sturrock stated, “Lots of children are hungry. They go to bed hungry, they come to school hungry, they are hungry on week-ends. This is something we could fix.” The call for action from the presenters was clear.

The Saturday Plenary was on the Vital Role of Civil Society in our Communities. The presenters discussed the strengths of the non-profit sector, the challenges experienced due to COVID and the supports needed to make sure agencies recover fully as we re-open. Racialized, culturally-specific and disenfranchised/ equity-seeking groups are particularly significant if we hope to progress in building inclusive, thriving communities. Long-term, multi-year funding is needed to give time to build; successful projects are relationship-based and take time to develop. The non-profit sector asks government to “treat us respectfully as partners that make a difference every day”. We need to understand their impacts and see them as true partners. The speakers challenged the view that volunteer organizations are nice because they can do something cheaper – but instead we should value that what they do is BETTER – deeper, more connected, more sustainable. They often mobilize volunteers, generate energy and support, but their work needs sustainable structure and skilled well-paid staff. The Key Question – What would be possible if we trusted Non-profit partners? What do they contribute and how much more is possible? I felt this resonated strongly with our Strategic Direction of Community Engagement – our PACs and DPAC, Community Schools, Environmental, Arts, Sports, Mental Health and other service groups are all crucial components of programming that supports our students’ success.

Trustee Howe and I appreciate the opportunity to attend the conference. A variety of resources are available from the event; please contact me about reports, PowerPoints and videos.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila McDonnell

Sheila McDonnell
Trustee

TRUSTEE REPORT

TO: Board of Education **DATE:** April 27, 2021

FROM: Janice Caton, Trustee

RE: **BC School Trustee Association (BCSTA) Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

I recently attended the 117th (BCSTA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) from April 15-18, 2021 via zoom due to the current COVID-19 restrictions. The theme was building connections. The speakers included Jennifer Whiteside (Minister of Education), Carole James (former BCSTA president, Deputy Premier and MLA), Andy Hargreaves (Director of Change, Engagement and Innovation in Education) at the University of Ottawa and Research Professor in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College) and Kevin Godden (Superintendent, Abbotsford School District).

The Minister of Education spoke about the government's commitment to public education and the important work that still needs to be done around racism, inclusion and student mental health and wellbeing. While she indicated that boards of education would be pleased regarding funding when the budget came down, it was a disappointing provincial budget announcement for public education, as it is not apparent at this time that the extra funds that districts will need, will be available as we move forward to the next school year.

Carole James spoke about the importance of school boards, school trustees and her time as both a school trustee and MLA, including her time as Minister of Finance. She was frank and very refreshing in her honest assessment of how at times we don't have to always agree with people, but the opportunity to connect and learn from others is critical and we can move forward by working together. Her comment on how we shouldn't be afraid to admit when we have made mistakes and admit when we have learned from them (as that is what we teach our children and what we should model as adults) is something I think we should always remember.

Andy Hargreaves spoke about class, race, equality and diversity and questioned how do school districts lead inclusively amid white privilege and wealth privilege? He talked about how you don't need to give up who you are to fit in and become a valued part of the community, how there is no simple answer to equality and inclusion, because when values collide, we need to acknowledge the issue, be open to learning and empathetic. We need to continue to think about how class and race intersect to contribute to marginalization in schools. These were some of his topics and themes as to why districts need to

continue to hold and steer all kinds of difficult conversations as we continue to listen and create a safe space for conversations and address concerns around inclusion, racism, and diversity in our schools.

The business session of our AGM dealt with over 40 motions that ranged from advocating that districts have the necessary funds to ensure all districts can support all students, look at charging those individuals who run school bus flashing red lights, physical literacy, and ensuring districts are included in the integration of child care and early learning into the K-12 sector. Additionally, mental health funding for schools, inclusive schools and safety were just some of the many advocacy motions debated and discussed.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Caton

Janice Caton
Trustee

FOR A UNIVERSAL HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

Presented by the Members and Supporters of
The Coalition for Healthy School Food



THE COALITION
FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD

MEMBERS OF THE COALITION FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD



THE COALITION FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD is seeking an investment by the federal government in a cost-shared Universal Healthy School Food Program that will enable all students in Canada to have access to healthy meals at school every day. Building on existing programs across the country, all schools will eventually serve a healthy meal or snack at little or no cost to students. These programs will include food education and serve culturally appropriate, local, sustainable food to the fullest extent possible.

DID YOU KNOW?

Canada remains one of the few industrialized countries without a national school food program. Canada's current patchwork of school food programming reaches only a small percentage of our over 5 million students. Only federal government policy can ensure universal coverage of the population.

WHY?

All children should have access to healthy food at school. We need to lay the foundation for healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime and ensure that learning is not hindered by a lack of access to good food.



HEALTHY EATING CHALLENGES

Only about 1/3 of children between the ages of 4 and 13 years eat **five or more** servings of vegetables and fruit daily.

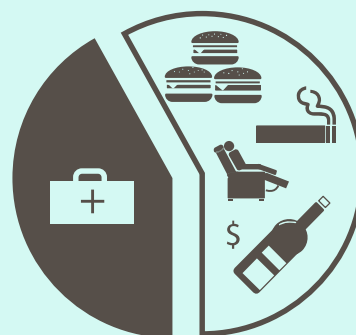
1/3 of students in elementary schools and 2/3 of students in secondary schools do not eat a nutritious breakfast before school, leaving them at risk for learning, behavioural and health challenges at school.

The prevalence of diabetes and obesity are at all-time highs particularly amongst Indigenous peoples, for whom prevalence is higher than in the rest of the population.

About 1/4 of children's calorie intakes are from food products not recommended in Canada's Food Guide.



More than half (58%) of all annual healthcare spending in Canada is for the treatment of chronic diseases for which the main risk factors are unhealthy eating, physical inactivity, smoking and the harmful use of alcohol.





SCHOOL FOOD FACTS

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS SUPPORT STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS AS WELL AS SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS.

- School food programs have been linked with positive impacts on children's mental health, including reductions in behavioural and emotional problems, bullying, aggression, anxiety, and depression as well as fewer visits to the school nurse.
- Children who eat a morning meal are sick less often, have fewer problems associated with hunger, such as dizziness, lethargy, head aches, stomach aches and earaches and do significantly better than their peers in terms of cooperation, discipline, and interpersonal relations.

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS INCREASE THE CONSUMPTION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AND OTHER HEALTHY FOODS.

- Studies have shown that school food programs can contribute to reducing the risk of cardiovascular events and chronic disease such as stroke, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer by increasing the intake of vegetables, whole grains, and macro- and micronutrients.
- Research from northern Ontario and British Columbia found that students that who participated in a school food program reported higher intakes of fruits and vegetables and lower intakes of "other" (i.e., non-nutritious) foods.
- Students who participate in school food programs consume more fibre and micronutrients and consume less saturated and trans fat, sodium and added sugars.

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS ASSIST WITH STUDENT LEARNING AND SUCCESS AT SCHOOL.

- An evaluation of a morning meal program in the Toronto District School Board found that students who consume a morning meal most days show at least a 10% increase in skills such as independent academic work, initiative, conflict resolution, class participation and problem solving at school.
- When children attend school hungry or undernourished their energy levels, memory, problem solving skills, creativity, concentration, and other cognitive functions are all negatively impacted. They are also more likely to repeat a grade.
- Food insecurity is an urgent public health challenge in Canada, affecting 1.15 million, or one in six, Canadian children under age 18. Not all populations are affected the same. Two in three Inuit children experience food insecurity, where the household food insecurity rate for Inuit is the highest amongst any Aboriginal population living in an industrialized country.



SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY DUE TO THE HEALTH BENEFITS AND INCREASED SCHOLASTIC SUCCESS ATTRIBUTED TO SUCH PROGRAMS.

- 78% of students in Grade 10 at a Toronto District School Board school who ate breakfast most days were on track for graduation compared to 61% of those who did not have breakfast.
- It is estimated that each 1% increase in graduation rates could result in a \$7.7 billion savings per year in Canada since high-school graduates earn higher salaries, pay more taxes, have lower healthcare costs, are less likely to encounter the justice system, and are less dependent on social assistance.
- Supporting a Universal School Food Program reduces the financial burden on our healthcare system by reducing the risk of diet-related chronic disease and mental illness, which are some of the most costly and long-term health problems to treat.

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO SUPPORT NATIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIES BY INCREASING JOBS AND THE DOMESTIC MARKET FOR FRESH LOCAL FOOD

- A Universal School Food Program in Canada has the potential create thousands of new jobs in communities across Canada.
- When local food is served, the local multiplier of the increased local food purchases will impact regional food production, household and business earnings, long-term gross domestic product, and part-time jobs created or sustained.

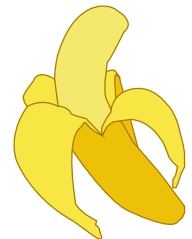
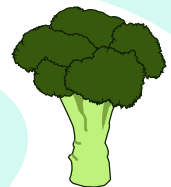


A HEALTHY WAY FORWARD

School food programs are increasingly seen as vital contributors to students' physical and mental health. Growing research demonstrates the potential of school food programs to improve food choices and support academic success for all students. Our schools can become places that model healthy living. Eating healthy meals together is an important, hands-on experience through which children can learn healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Many leaders and experts have called for a universal school food program, including the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, the Ontario Healthy Kids Panel and Dr. David Butler-Jones, former Chief Public Health Officer for Canada.

For more information:
<http://foodsecurecanada.org/coalitionforhealthyschoolfood>



REFERENCES

- ¹ Garriguet, D. (2006, July 6). Canadian community health survey: Overview of Canadians' eating habits. *The Daily*. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/060706/dq060706b-eng.htm>
- ² Langlois, K. & Garriguet, D. (2011). Sugar consumption among Canadians of all ages. *Health Reports*, 22(3). Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2011003/article/11540-eng.pdf>
- ³ Public Health Agency of Canada. (2011). Diabetes among First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations [chapter 6]. In *Diabetes in Canada: Facts and Figures from a Public Health Perspective*. Retrieved from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/publications/diabetes-diabete/facts-figures-faits-chiffres-2011/chap6-eng.php>
- ⁴ Butler-Jones, D. (2008). Social and economic factors that influence our health and contribute to health inequalities [chapter 4]. In *The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cphorsphc-respcacsp/2008/fr-rc/cphorsphc-respcacsp07c-eng.php#2>
- ⁵ Public Health Agency of Canada. (2011, September 19). United Nations NCD Summit 2011 [backgrounder]. In *Canada Signs UN Declaration on Preventing and Controlling Chronic Diseases*. Retrieved from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/media/nr-rp/2011/2011_0919-bq-di-eng.php#ftii
- ⁶ Kleinman, R. E., Hall, S., Green, H., Korzec-Ramirez, D., Patton, K., Pagano, M. E., & Murphy, J. M. (2002). Diet, breakfast, and academic performance in children. *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism*, 46(1), 24-30.
- ⁷ Murphy, J. M., Pagano, M. E., Nachmani, J., Sperling, P., Kane, S., & Kleinman, R. E. (1998). The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning: cross-sectional and longitudinal observations in an inner-city school sample. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 152(9), 899-907.
- ⁸ Bernstein, L. S., McLaughlin, J. E., Crepinsek, M. K., & Daft, L. M. (2004). Evaluation of the school breakfast program pilot project: Final report. *Nutrition Assistance Program Report Series*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED486532.pdf>
- ⁹ Alaimo, K., Olson, C. M., Frongillo, E. A. Jr., & Briefel, R. R. (2001). Food insufficiency, family income, and health in U.S. preschool and school-aged children. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(5), 781-786.
- ¹⁰ Alaimo, K., Olson, C. M., & Frongillo, E. A. (2002). Family food insufficiency, but not low family income, is positively associated with dysthymia and suicide symptoms in adolescents. *Journal of Nutrition*, 132, 719-725.
- ¹¹ Casey, P. H., Szeto, K. L., Robbins, J. M., Stuff, J. E., Connell, C., Gossett, J. M., & Simpson, P. M. (2005). Child health-related quality of life and household food security. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 159(1), 51-56.
- ¹² Weinreb, L., Wehler, C., Perloff, J., Scott, R., Hosmer, D., Sagor, L., & Gundersen, C. (2002). Hunger: Its impact on children's health and mental health. *Pediatrics*, 110(4), e41.
- ¹³ Brown, J. L., Beardslee, W. H., & Prothrow-Stith, D. (2008). Impact of breakfast on children's health and learning: An analysis of the scientific research. *Sodexo Foundation*. Retrieved from http://www.sodexofoundation.org/hunger_us/Images/Impact%20of%20School%20Breakfast%20Study_tcm150-212606.pdf
- ¹⁴ Robien, K., Demark-Wahnefried, W., & Rock, C. L. (2011). Evidence-based guidelines for cancer survivors: Current guidelines, knowledge gaps, and future research directions. *Journal of the American Dietetics Association*, 111(3), 368-75.
- ¹⁵ Dalen, J. E. (2013). Diets to prevent coronary heart disease 1957-2013: What have we learned? *American Journal of Medicine*, 127(5), 364-369.
- ¹⁶ Heflin, C. M., Siefert, K., & Williams, D. R. (2005). Food insufficiency and women's mental health: Findings from a 3-year panel of welfare recipients. *Social Science and Medicine*, 61, 1971-1982.
- ¹⁷ Seligman, H. K., Bindman, A. B., Vittinghoff, E., Kanaya, A. M., & Kushel, M. B. (2007). Food insecurity is associated with diabetes mellitus: Results from the National Health Examination and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 1999-2002. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 22(7), 1018-1023.
- ¹⁸ Seligman, H. K., Laraia, B. A., & Kushel, M. B. (2010). Food insecurity is associated with chronic disease among low-income NHANES participants. *Journal of Nutrition*, 140(2), 304-310.
- ¹⁹ Siefert, K., Heflin, C. M., Corcoran, M. E., & Williams, D. R. (2004). Food insufficiency and physical and mental health in a longitudinal survey of welfare recipients. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 45(2), 171-186.
- ²⁰ Skinner, K., Hanning, R. M., Metatawabin, J., Martin, I. D., & Tsuji, L. J. S. (2012). The impact of a school snack program on the dietary intake of grade six to ten First Nations students living in a remote community in northern Ontario, Canada. *Rural and Remote Health*, 12(3), 1-17.
- ²¹ Mässe, L. C., & de Niet, J. E. (2013). School nutritional capacity, resources and practices are associated with availability of food/beverage items in schools. *International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 10, 26.
- ²² Affenito, S. G., Thompson, D. R., Barton, B. A., Franko, D. L., Daniels, S. R., Obarzanek, E., Schreiber, G. B., & Striegel-Moore, R. H. (2005). Breakfast consumption by African-American and white adolescent girls correlates positively with calcium and fiber intake and negatively with body mass index. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 105(6), 938-945.
- ²³ Kerver, J. M., Yang, E. J., Obayashi, S., Bianchi, L., & Song, W. O. (2006). Meal and snack patterns are associated with dietary intake of energy and nutrients in US adults. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 106(1), 46-53.
- ²⁴ Crepinsek, M. K., Singh, A., Bernstein, L. S., & McLaughlin, J. E. (2006). Dietary effects of universal-free school breakfast: Findings from the evaluation of the school breakfast program pilot project. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 106(11), 1796-1803.
- ²⁵ Dalen, J. E. (2013).
- ²⁶ Muthuswamy, E. (2012). Feeding our future: The first- and second-year evaluation. *Toronto District School Board*. Retrieved from <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/docs/SupportingYou/EvaluationFOFProgram19Mar12.pdf>
- ²⁷ Taras, H. (2005). Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health*, 75(6), 199-213.
- ²⁸ Kleinman, R. E., Murphy, J. M., Little, M., Pagano, M., Wehler, C. A., Regal, K., & Jellinek, M. S. (1998). Hunger in children in the United States: Potential behavioral and emotional correlates. *Pediatrics*, 101(1), 3.
- ²⁹ Murphy, J. M., Pagano, M. E., Nachmani, J., Sperling, P., Kane, S., & Kleinman, R. E. (1998). The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning: cross-sectional and longitudinal observations in an inner-city school sample. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 152(9), 899-907.
- ³⁰ Alaimo, K., Olson, C. M., & Frongillo, E. A., Jr. (2001). Food insufficiency and American school-aged children's cognitive, academic and psychosocial development. *Pediatrics*, 108(1), 44-53.
- ³¹ Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., & Dachner, N. (2012). *Household Food Insecurity in Canada 2012*. PROOF Research to Identify Policy Options to Reduce Food Insecurity. Retrieved from http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Household_Food_Insecurity_in_Canada-2012_ENG.pdf
- ³² Council of Canadian Academies. (2014). *Aboriginal Food Security in Northern Canada: An Assessment of the State of Knowledge*. The Expert Panel on the State of Knowledge of Food Security in Northern Canada. Retrieved from http://www.scienceadvice.ca/uploads/eng/assessments%20and%20publications%20and%20news%20releases/food%20security/foodsecurity_fullreporten.pdf
- ³³ Lafayette, B. (2014). Economic Impacts of Federally-Funded Food Support Programs on the Franklin County, Ohio, Economy. *Regionomics*. Retrieved from <http://hungerhub.org/images/images/report/ImpactofFoodAssistanceonFranklinCountyEconomy.pdf>
- ³⁴ Muthuswamy, E. (2012). Feeding our future: The first- and second-year evaluation. *Toronto District School Board*. Retrieved from <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/docs/SupportingYou/EvaluationFOFProgram19Mar12.pdf>
- ³⁵ Hankivsky, O. (2008). Cost Estimates of Dropping out of High School in Canada. *Canadian Council on Learning*, 1-85. Retrieved from <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/OtherReports/CostofdroppingouthankivskyFinalReport.pdf>
- ³⁶ Lafayette, B. (2014).

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

School food programs have the potential to improve children's lives, to strengthen communities, and to transform food systems. Several principles based on [best practices](#) can ensure these programs live up to their full potential.



UNIVERSAL

School food programs welcome all students in a school community. They are offered at no cost or subsidized cost to families, and administered in a non-stigmatizing manner. In a shared cost model, payment is made in a way that ensures privacy. Programs are promoted to ensure that all students have access to healthy food in school daily.



HEALTH-PROMOTING

School food programs focus on the provision of whole foods, and in particular vegetables and fruit. A focus on the provision of a variety of vegetables and fruit (such as requiring lunches to include a minimum of two servings daily with variation) helps to simplify the task for schools and districts. Focusing on the foods that do fit within a healthy diet also provides an important modelling opportunity.



SUSTAINABLE

Programs are sustainable financially and in terms of capacity-building. This means ensuring that school food program staff and volunteers receive adequate training to ensure they understand their role in teaching and role modelling for students. Funding at the local level is stable and partnerships to support the program are created. Critical to the success of school food programs is regular monitoring and evaluation. This includes ensuring financial transparency and accountability for programs at the federal and more local levels.



RESPECTFUL

Programs respect local conditions and needs so as to be culturally appropriate and locally adapted. Programs in diverse inner cities will look different from those in remote Northern communities, for example, and involvement by stakeholders with local experience is critical to success.



CONNECTED

Programs are connected to local communities and work towards drawing upon local food resources where possible, supporting local producers and creating economic multipliers. Programs also engage the broader community including parents, grandparents, local businesses, and community leaders to foster sustainability.



COMPREHENSIVE

Programs work towards integration with curricula to incorporate food literacy, nutrition education and food skills. Students are involved with school food programs through hands-on food growing, preparation, budgeting, management and other learning to foster experiential learning (learning by doing).

These principles have been informed by the article "[The case for a Canadian national school food program](#)" in the Canadian Food Studies Journal Vol 5 No 3 (2018).

Download a [summary of qualities](#) that members of the Coalition would like to see in a School Food Program for Canada.

Coalition for Healthy School Food
At Food Secure Canada
4067 Saint-Laurent, Suite 305
Montreal, QC, H2W 1Y7
schoolfood@foodsecurecanada.org

CONNECT WITH US



[CONTACT US](#)

[SIGN UP FOR UPDATES](#)

Developing a Healthy, Universal, Cost-Shared School Food Program for Canada

A successful National School Food Program will be:



Health-Promoting

Serve tasty and culturally appropriate whole foods, focussing on vegetables and fruit in line with the revised [Canada's Food Guide](#) that models healthy eating habits.



Universal

Ensure that ALL children in a school can access the program in a non-stigmatizing manner. Over time, all children in Canada will participate in a school food program.



Cost-shared

Use federal funding to both expand on current provincial, city, parental and community funding and to initiate new programs in a cost-shared model.



Flexible and Respectful

Successful school food programs reflect the context of the school and region. Ensure that funding supports different food service models, from breakfast to lunch to snacks. Programs should respect local conditions, be culturally appropriate and locally adapted.



Connected

Build on existing programs, local knowledge, skills and relationships. School food programs can support local food producers where possible and set local and sustainably produced food purchasing targets.



Comprehensive

Promote the values of food literacy and explore how school food programs can be integrated into the curriculum through nutrition and hands-on food systems education.



Guided by National Principles

Ensure that programs are guided by Canada-wide program evaluation; a national multi-sectoral advisory body with community/cultural leadership; and conflict of interest safeguards that prevent programs from marketing unhealthy food and specific products.



Committed to Indigenous Control over Programs for Indigenous Students

Ensure Indigenous Food Sovereignty in a School Food Program for Canada.



THE COALITION
FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD



Endorse the Coalition for Healthy School Food's Position

** If you are a Member of the Coalition you do not need to sign up to be an Endorser

The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form.

[Switch account](#)

*Required

My organization has read and agrees with the Coalition's call for the development of a National School Food Program for Canada *

Find the position paper here: <https://bit.ly/2GAwmyh>

☐ Yes

☐ No

Name of organization *

Your answer

I give the Coalition permission to include my organization / government body's name and logo on the Coalition's website *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please download your logo here (jpeg or png)

[Add File](#)

Contact name *

Your answer

Email address *

Your answer

Phone number to reach the contact person *

Your answer

Website of your organization / government body *

Your answer

Submit

ENDORSERS

Add your voice to those who support our call for the development of a universal, cost-shared School Food Program for Canada!

We are seeking endorsers from government bodies and non-profit organizations who prefer to endorse rather than become members.

[Become an endorser](#)



British Columbia School Trustees Association
BC



Cheakamus Centre
BC



Family Services of Greater Vancouver
BC



IUOE Local 963
BC



Mount Paul Community Food Centre
BC



Vancouver (City of)
BC



Vancouver DPAC
BC



Victoria BC (City of)
BC



Victoria BC School Board
BC



Young Agrarians
BC



Kingston/Greenwood Community Health Board
NS



The Central Kings Community Health Board
NS



Western Kings Community Health Board
NS



Canadian School Boards Association
National



United Way
National



CommUnity Partnership
ON



Halton Food for Thought
ON



Helderleigh Foundation
ON



Ottawa Food Policy Council
ON



People for Education
ON



Toronto Board of Health
ON



Windsor Essex Food Policy Council
ON

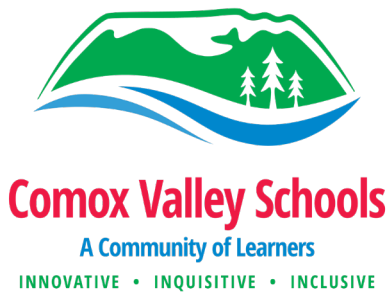
Coalition for Healthy School Food
At Food Secure Canada
4067 Saint-Laurent, Suite 305
Montreal, QC, H2W 1Y7
schoolfood@foodsecurecanada.org

CONNECT WITH US



[CONTACT US](#)

[SIGN UP FOR UPDATES](#)



Comox Valley Schools

School District No. 71
Board of Education

607 Cumberland Road
Courtenay, B.C. V9N 7G5
Fax (250) 334 5552
Telephone (250) 334 5500

VIA E-MAIL ONLY: educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

March 23, 2021

The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Whiteside,

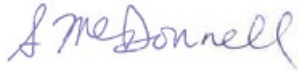
The Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) is writing to request that the Ministry of Education consider enhancing mental health education and services for all K-12 students and to provide school districts with the necessary resources and funding to support the students and staff.

When we talk about mental health, we often refer to anxiety, depression and suicidal concerns. However, mental health is not only about those mental health issues, but also about other disorders that are likewise devastating for students and their families. For example, the rise in eating disorders in younger children and adults is just one of the many serious mental health challenges children and young adults face today. Studies have shown that mental illness affects children at increasingly younger ages. We need to expand mental health literacy with resources that will inform, support and encourage all students to ask for help when they need it. The district appreciates the current targeted funding, however, additional cross-ministry, wrap around mental health supports are clearly needed.

Comox Valley Schools held an Island Health Medical Officers Town Hall meeting virtually on March 4, 2021. Island Health's Medical Health Officer, Dr. Charmaine Enns said that, "We anticipate that it's probably going to take our youth and our young adults about ten years to recover from the impacts of this past year. Their life has been put on hold, their life interrupted,

they're not in school, this includes university students and the impact has been profound, far more profound than COVID itself.” In response to the rising needs, it is important that the Ministry of Education along with school districts, ensure that the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff remains a priority. This focus will take funding, resources and training; thus, we ask the Ministry of Education to consider additional K-12 mental health supports.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sheila McDonnell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheila McDonnell
Board Chair
The Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

SM:ml

cc: BCSTA

Wendy Kotilla, Coordinator
Youth and Ecological Restoration Program
4327 Minto Road
Courtenay, BC V9N 9P7
wkotilla@shaw.ca

Sheila McDonnell
School District #71
Comox Valley Schools
Board of Education, Chair
sheila.mcdonnell@sd71.bc.ca

March 12, 2021

Dear Sheila,

Thanks so much for our conversation on March 5th and invitation to write the School District #71, Board of Education a funding request letter for Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER). YER has operated in the Comox Valley since 2004 and has worked with three hundred and eighty vulnerable youth from the ages of twelve to eighteen. These youth attend Comox Valley schools.

YER has been funded by Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) for the past seventeen years. This year, I submitted a funding proposal to MCFD for an increase to support another person to work with the youth. The proposal was denied, although MCFD continues to supply core funding. Some referrals come through MCFD, but most of them come through the Comox Valley school counsellors, teachers, and youth and family support staff. I am requesting \$8,000.00 per year from SD #71 to accommodate a youth referral increase to YER.

Since Covid-19, there is a noticeable increase in youth mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression and suicide attempts. Currently, there is a wait list of fifteen youth from Cumberland Community, Highland, Isfeld and Lake Trail schools. YER has also been in communication with the counsellors and a teacher from Vanier; worked with many Nala'atsi students; and has plans to contact the Comox Valley elementary schools. It won't take long for additional students to be recommended to the program. Getting youth outside into the natural world is a proven antidote to their mental health issues.

The twenty-hour program engages at-risk youth with one-on-one work experience and training through ecological restoration methods, ecotherapy practices and mentoring support. Youth are engaged with restoring local watersheds with community members to gain a sense of worth, belonging and place. There is a completion requirement of doing a public presentation for a community group, after which youth receive a certificate, letter of reference and a fifty-dollar honourarium. Many students obtain work experience and other school credits for participating. See these links to the YER website:

YER Website: <https://youthecology.ca/>
YER Program Details: <https://youthecology.ca/program/>
YER Film: <https://youthecology.ca/ecology-transforms-youth-35-min-2019-full-film/>
YER 2019 Annual Report: <https://youthecology.ca/youth-and-ecological-restoration-program-annual-report-2020/>
YER 2020 Covid-19 Plan: <https://youthecology.ca/covid-plan-2020/>
YER Photo Gallery: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/138263890@N08/albums>

YER has worked with three hundred and eighty Comox Valley school students for seventeen years at no charge to the school district. MCFD has denied a funding increase at a time when there is an expansion in youth who are in critical need. Please let me know as soon as possible if the Board of Education will grant the additional requested funds to provide these YER services.

Yours Respectfully,
Wendy Kotilla, Coordinator
Youth and Ecological Restoration Program
wkotilla@shaw.ca
www.youthecology.ca