

For immediate release

23 September 2022

### **Comox Valley Schools to mark Truth and Reconciliation Week**

**COMOX VALLEY B.C.** – Schools throughout SD 71 will be holding a week of activities for Truth and Reconciliation Week from September 26 to 30. This will be a time for students and staff to recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools and honour survivors, their families and communities.

In December 2021, the Board for Comox Valley Schools passed a unanimous motion to make the last week of September Truth and Reconciliation Week in SD 71. This week will be a kickoff point to honour Orange Shirt Day, followed by the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Red Dress Campaign, and the Walk for Wenjack Secret Path week in October.

“All schools in SD 71 are hosting events to commemorate Truth and Reconciliation Week to revisit the truth of our history, honour residential school survivors, and learn from Indigenous knowledge keepers,” SD 71 Board Chair Tonia Frawley said. “It’s crucial that all students in SD 71 learn about the tragic history of residential schools and understand their intergenerational impact – this recognition and commemoration are essential in working toward meaningful reconciliation.”

Comox Valley Schools is committed to recognizing and acknowledging this important week and to building awareness and increasing understanding of the different experiences that have shaped both our past and our future.

Recently, Comox Valley Schools signed an important Local Education Agreement with K’omoks First Nation that will help guide the district in supporting local K’omoks First Nation students. A highlight of the agreement is the appointment of a K’omoks success advisor — a position aimed at helping students have a positive school experience and to graduate successfully.

This past summer, teachers and staff began developing new Indigenous focussed coursework to help meet the new graduation requirements. Introducing this full, Indigenous-focused course requirement will provide all students with an opportunity to develop deeper understanding and a broader knowledge base of Indigenous worldviews, histories and cultures. This change will come into effect next school year.

This is the sixth year of Comox Valley Schools Ni'noxsola program which partners an Indigenous Wise-One with a school in the Comox Valley. An Advisory Committee guides the work of this beautiful program. The Ni'noxsola provide the presence of calmness, wisdom, and cultural strength by sharing stories and traditions with their host schools while they connect with students, staff and administration on their visits.

Comox Valley Schools Indigenous Education Department team consists of 40+ staff who work alongside school-based staff to enhance educational services and outcomes for our 1600+ Indigenous students throughout SD 71. Indigenous students in SD 71 self identify as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit from all across Canada.

The Board of Education acknowledges that we are on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation. We would like to thank them for the privilege of living on their land and the gift of working with their children.

-End-

A backgrounder follows.

### **Media Contact**

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Indigenous Support Workers and Ni'noxsola JoAnn Restoule perform a Jingle Dance for student at Mark Isfeld Secondary School on Indigenous Peoples' Day in June 2022.