



Comox Valley Schools

A Community of Learners

INNOVATIVE • INQUISITIVE • INCLUSIVE

BOARD BUSINESS

April 2023

Glacier View's Leadership Group served up a tasty lunch for students and staff before Easter

Preliminary Budget 2023-2024 - feedback welcome

SD 71 is reaching out for feedback regarding our 2023-24 Budget Preparation. We value feedback regarding this process. The board will be gathering information from employees, students and partner groups. Members of the community are welcome to submit ideas. On May 9, public can attend the committee of the whole meeting to learn more and ask questions about the preliminary budget. For the 2023-2024 school year, it's projected that SD71 will receive \$111,965,273 which is up \$10.4 million from 2022-2023. However, over \$8.6 million of the increase is directly related to unionized staff wage increases. There are numerous cost pressures related to maintaining the ongoing level of programs and services in the district that need to be incorporated into our planning. The overall increase in projected costs for 2023-24 is approximately \$10,495,286. After considering all cost pressures and potential savings that are related to maintaining the ongoing level of programs and services in the district, the preliminary budget position for 2023-24 is a Net Budget Deficit of approximately \$427,583.

However, the Ministry has not yet released the funding grants for the cost of living adjustments nor made a decision on whether or not exempt compensation will be funded. As well, the Finance department is continuing to review school and department budget needs. Staff will continue to work towards presenting a draft annual budget in May. This may be delayed as several Ministry grants have not yet been finalized. Throughout the consultation process, stakeholders and the public are being provided with this opportunity to provide input on budget themes to the Board and to provide feedback on the preliminary draft information presented. Feedback regarding the 2023-2024 Budget for the board to consider can be submitted here:

<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/budget-2023-2024-consultation/>

Board adjusts calendar for next school year

The Board voted to make the following changes to the calendar next year: 1) Make October 2, 2023, a Non-Instructional Day in lieu of the Stat. Holiday (Reconciliation Day) on Saturday, September 30th in order to be in line with the Provincial stat Holiday.

2) Move the August 31st Non-Instructional Day to September 5th. This will make the first official day of school with students in session September 6th.

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.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Preliminary Budget 2023-2024

Update from Board Chair
Michelle Waite

Update from
Superintendent/CEO of Schools
Tom Demeo

District News

**WATCH
APRIL 25
BOARD
MEETING**

BOARD BUSINESS



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Board Meeting Highlights - April 2023



Board Chair Update

Board of Education Chair, Michelle Waite

Many Comox Valley Schools recently celebrated Earth Day with events throughout the week and I would like to take a moment to reflect on our district's commitment to environmental sustainability. Global awareness and environmental stewardship are key values for Comox Valley Schools. Our board understands the importance of taking action to address the urgent challenges facing our planet and are proud of the efforts we have made to reduce our ecological footprint.

SD 71 has implemented a range of initiatives to become a more environmentally conscious organization, including waste reduction and recycling programs, investing significantly in energy conservation efforts, and providing support for alternative transportation options through active travel planning. We have also prioritized education on environmental sustainability, offering numerous programs and initiatives that help our students become responsible global citizens.

As we reflect on Earth Day, I urge all members of our community to continue to take action to protect our planet. By working together, we can make a difference and create a brighter future for ourselves and future generations. I hope we can build on our success. Thank you for your ongoing support of our efforts towards environmental sustainability in our schools.

Superintendent Update

Superintendent/CEO of Schools, Tom Demeo

Most Comox Valley Schools currently have food programs that feed students. The Province of BC recently announced new Feeding Futures funding of \$1.41 million for SD 71 that will help our district further invest, build and expand food programming in schools for students. The district will be working to ensure program offerings are accessible, inclusive and without stigma. This new funding can be used for food purchases and staffing for a district level Food Program Co-Ordinator. There is also reasonable expectation to add additional kitchen staff to make and prepare additional food and meals. We will be reviewing current practices to establish the unique needs of each school and throughout the district. The district has started initial discussions and planning. School based principals and vice-principals are engaging in conversations about their current food programs and their ideas moving forward. The district will also re-convene the Steering Committee for the Student Affordability Fund to begin some in depth discussion and planning. This funding will enable our district to grow food programming in our schools and to feed more students equitably. It's exciting to be able to build on the robust food programming already in our schools.



APRIL 2023

DISTRICT NEWS



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Enrolments growing and cross-boundary requests now closed

Assistant Superintendent Geoff Manning reported that the district has exceeded enrolment projections and will be in a position of growth again next school year. There are 738 new registrations to date. The cross-boundary request process is now closed and most requests out of approximately 30 were accommodated, however there were some that could not be granted.



Student and Family Affordability Fund makes big impact in SD 71 this school year

Last summer the Ministry of Education and Child Care allocated \$60 million to BC Schools in one time funding to increase food security for students and their families. These funds made a big difference in our schools. SD 71 was granted \$980,354 dollars to help make life more affordable for families facing financial challenges and need temporary assistance with the current costs of school supplies, education related fees and dealing with food insecurity that impact children's learning. SD 71 engaged with stakeholders including Komox First Nations, the Metis Society, the Indigenous Education Council, CUPE, CDTA, DPAC and Senior District Leadership. A multi tiered system was discussed to distribute the funds. Schools were allocated funds based on a variety of factors, such as school composition and complexity. The funds have gone a long way toward supporting the following:

- Field Trips
- Supplies
- Lush Valley
- Lake Trail Community School
- Cumberland Food Bank
- Denman Community School
- Hornby Island Community School
- Black Creek Food Bank
- Indigenous Education Council
- Fees
- Salaries Fees
- Equipment Replacement
- Denman Food Bank Hornby Food Bank
- Food
- Courtney Elementary Community School

Currently, SD71 has approximately \$430 000.00 to support students for the remainder of the school year and to carry forward. The district is looking at using these funds to offset the cost of school supplies for next year.



DISTRICT NEWS

April



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Books4Brains send kids home with over 3500 books!

Books 4 Brains continued its reading initiative started last year by distributing books to every student in kindergarten and Grade 1 in SD 71. Students were given the chance to rotate through various stations where they each chose three books. Each student went home with home with tote bags, containing three books they can keep. Books 4 Brains is a Comox Valley Business located in the Comox Centre Mall owned by SD 71 parent Melissa Agnew. This year, Books4Brains handed out 3510 books to 1170 students! We greatly appreciate their generosity as they promote literacy through this fantastic reading initiative. If you are in the Comox Centre Mall, please stop by and thank them for their generosity!



Mosaic donates logs for future carvings

You many notice a giant pile of logs out front of GP Vanier next time you are there. Mosaic Forest Management has generously donated several cedar logs to be used by the district for future carvings and wood projects. District Principal of Indigenous Education Bruce Carlos will be working with Karver Everson who will be turning these logs into totems and other works that will be located at schools throughout the district. Some of these logs were harvested over 50 years ago from the Jump Lake area near Nanaimo. Comox Valley Schools is very grateful for this generous gift.

Totems now awaiting their new home

Cumberland Community School was fortunate to host Junior Henderson and Karver Everson as they worked on two beautiful totems that will be located at the future Dawn to Dawn (D2D) and CV Transition Society K'wax Dzi Dsas Cumberland Affordable Housing Project. The artists shared some carving traditions, along with the story behind the poles with students and staff. The totems are now in storage for the time being. Many thanks to Karver and Junior for sharing their stunning work and knowledge with the community.



APRIL 2023

DISTRICT NEWS

April 2023

Grad Attire Program sees biggest uptake to date



Highland to host Concord Floral performance

Exciting news! Highland's play Concord Floral was chosen as the outstanding production at the North Island Zone Festival in November- and they will be heading to the provincial drama festival at Douglas College in May to represent the island!

There will be a special preview of this one act play at Highland Secondary on: Tuesday, May 2 @ 7 pm. Entry to the performance will be by donation (\$5? \$10?) at the door.

The show runs about 60 minutes and contains mature subject matter, coarse and confronting language, a smoke machine, and strobe lighting.

This performance is a supernatural thriller of suburban teenagers fleeing a mysterious plague. The play is Canadian, award winning, well crafted, and a superbly suspenseful piece. It's both for and about the teen experience and voice.

It is real and surreal...it's captivating. And Magical!

Seating is first come, first serve. Please arrive a little early to get your seat.

French speaking contest finalists off to SFU

Concours d'art oratoire held at École Robb is the longstanding public-speaking contest that is open to youth who are learning French in a school. It's a great way to celebrate their many hours of hard work learning and speaking French.

Students wrote speeches in French and presented them in front of an audience and judges at the SD71 district finals.

The top two finalists were selected from each category. First place winners will go on to represent our district at the provincial CAO finals at Simon Fraser University on May 6th.

Participants were exceptional this year and demonstrated poise and confidence in their French public speaking abilities. Félicitations!



Big uptake for Grad Attire Program this year

The Grad Attire program, providing suits, dresses and formal wear, free of charge, to Grads has now run on 6 Saturdays running from early December through April 15th. The program has provided a service to nearly 100 students this year from across the district. This number has doubled from last year. Thanks to the many volunteers (staff and students) from Vanier and a few from Isfeld, and around the community. Special thanks to Carson Grant and the folks at Comox Valley Dodge for hosting the program and their ongoing support and cooperation. The program does not plan on opening for any more dates this year, but a student in need can always contact Kelley Giorgianni or Lee McKillican here at Vanier. Donations in the form of gently worn grad attire or money (for alterations) can be donated here at the Vanier main Office.

DISTRICT SPORTS

April 2023



Vanier wrestler wins double gold at nationals

Comox Valley student Unya Hollmayer, a sixteen-year-old in grade eleven at G.P. Vanier Secondary and Captain of the Comox Valley Wrestling Club, has brought home double gold at the Canadian Wrestling Championships.

The gold medal victories capped a truly remarkable undefeated season for Hollmayer. Hollmayer will be leading the Comox Valley Wrestling Team again next year for the wrestling season. She's a great example for other young local wrestlers, including her 11-year old sister Inga who is following Unya's footsteps by winning all her matches so far in four tournaments.

Congratulations to Unya Hollmayer, her teammates and coaches for an outstanding season of wrestling.

School Cycling Program back for Spring

SD71's School Cycling Program Spring sessions started up again after a winter break.

This is a District Supported program for ALL grade 4/5 students at ALL schools on a two-year rotation. There is a Spring Session and Fall Session. If students do not get the program in grade 4 they will have it in grade 5. The program is run and organized by the Comox Valley School Cycling Coalition in partnership with SD71 Environmental and Outdoor Learning.

Students receive two days of cycling education, the first day is bike handling skills on the school grounds, and the second day is a road safety and off-site road ride.

A huge thank you to the Comox Valley Cycling Coalition for the wholehearted support and volunteer efforts to make this program possible, and to our wider community for supporting safe active transportation and sharing the roads and paths with us.



SD 71 Mountain Bike Team prepares for racing season

The Comox Valley Schools' Mountain Bike team is busy hitting the trails in Cumberland as the team prepares for the BC Provincial Championships in Rossland this May. The Championship has divisions ranging from Grade 8, Grades 9/10 and Grades 11/12 – with cross-country and enduro categories offered for each age group.

Many SD 71 riders have won their division over the years. The team holds weekly rides and is open to all skills and abilities. There are students from Isfeld, Vanier and Highland and many skilled riders are on the squad this year. We wish them luck with their training and at the Provincials.