



# BOARD BUSINESS

June 2023 - Jesse Morin and Randy Frank with the drum log they donated to Ecole Robb Road Elementary

## Board of Education passes balanced budget

Comox Valley Schools' Board of Education unanimously voted to pass the Annual Budget and Bylaw 2023-2024. The district strives to maintain the right balance of resources so that all our students' education is maximized. The district projects \$119,928,101 in revenues and expects \$120,262,577 in expenses. A small shortfall of \$334,476 will be offset by budget surplus funds from this school year.

<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$119,928,101</b>
<b>Less:</b>	
Expenses	\$117,391,577
Tangible Capital Assets Transfer	\$271,000
Local Capital Transfer	\$2,600,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$120,262,577</b>
<b>Net Revenue Less Expenses</b>	<b>-\$334,476</b>
Budget Surplus Use	\$334,476
<b>Balanced Budget</b>	<b>\$0</b>

*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

Budget 2023-2024

5-year Capital Plan

Update from Board Chair  
Michelle Waite

Update from Acting  
Superintendent Geoff Manning

District News

## 5-year Capital Plan includes possible expansions

As Comox Valley Schools continues to grow, new school expansions have been added to the Annual 5-Year Capital Plan submission. The Board voted unanimously to support the plan that outlines future capital priorities for the district. Some of the top priorities include:

- Courtenay Elementary - seismic upgrade
- Valley View Elementary - expansion
- Aspen Park Elementary - expansion
- Isfeld Secondary - expansion
- Ecole Puntledge Park Elementary - replacement
- Queneesh Elementary - mechanical and electrical upgrades
- NIDES - windows and cladding
- Denman Island - mechanical upgrades
- Various schools - funding for food preparation appliances

The expansion and seismic upgrade of Cumberland Community School no longer in this submission because it is now at the business case development stage and the district is hoping to have more news on this soon.

**WATCH  
JUNE 27  
BOARD  
MEETING**

# BOARD BUSINESS



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## Board Meeting Highlights - June 2023



### Board Chairperson Update

#### **Board of Education Chairperson, Michelle Waite**

As we close the chapter on this school year, I extend my sincerest gratitude to each of you for your perseverance, dedication, and unwavering commitment to our students and community.

This year, we've achieved significant milestones that underscore our dedication to fostering inclusive and enriching learning environments. From implementing our first-ever Consent Week, opening a new child care centre at Lake Trail, to securing upgrades for the Cumberland Community School and expanding our food programs, we've collectively worked towards providing a safe, supportive and stimulating experience for all our students.

This would not have been possible without our committed teachers, clerical staff, custodians, education assistants, Indigenous support workers, Ni'noxsola, principals and vice-principals, senior administrators, PAC members, volunteers, and of course, our remarkable students. Thank you for shaping our schools into a beacon of care, inclusivity, and excellence.

Enjoy a restful, rejuvenating summer and I look forward to the exciting new opportunities that the next school year will bring.

### Acting Superintendent Update

#### **Acting Superintendent, Geoff Manning**

As this academic year draws to a close, I'm filled with gratitude. Our return to normal school operations allowed us to witness the tremendous resilience and dedication of our students and staff, who faced real-world challenges head-on and brought positive change to their schools and community. There were several in-school events, concerts and performances that parents hadn't attended in three years. The exceptional guidance of our staff has helped students reach their potential, and for this, I extend my sincerest thanks. To those retiring or moving on, your commitment to education is deeply appreciated.

To the Graduates of 2023, congratulations on your achievements! May your futures be filled with health, happiness, resilience, and continued passion. Parents and caregivers, your unconditional love and support have been instrumental in this journey. As we look forward to a summer of relaxation, I'd like to express my deepest thanks once again for your support. Our district thrives on a culture of inclusion and collaboration, continually finding innovative ways to improve.

Please, enjoy your summer and be safe. See you in September.



JUNE 2023





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## DISTRICT NEWS

JUNE 2023

# PRIDE MONTH

### Comox Valley Schools celebrate Pride Month

Comox Valley Schools have been partaking on a month-long journey in celebration of Pride Month. Pride Month in SD 71 involves a variety of activities and in-school initiatives aimed at promoting diversity, inclusion, and acceptance of everyone who volunteers, works, and attends Comox Valley Schools. Regardless of month, all Comox Valley Schools must be spaces that are safe, respectful, and welcoming for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, or background.

Highland Secondary kicked off the month with a vibrant display of rainbow gear and flag colours worn by students and staff. A welcoming gesture of cookies and stickers was extended to the school community in the front foyer. A lunchtime Pride flag raising ceremony saw students pledging against homophobia and transphobia, their signatures bearing testament to their commitment on a banner in the school's front foyer. The school's QSA curated a special video for advisory classes, demonstrating the history of Pride Month. To further support the cause, the QSA developed Pride 2023 totes and t-shirts, available as a fundraiser for the group.

Miracle Beach Elementary took an academic approach to Pride Month, setting up a display in the library, complete with a Pride curated book collection. Staff and a group of students worked to promote inclusive language within classes, offering an informational sheet to help guide discussions.

At Queneesh Elementary, the Rainbow Alliance Club created a large inclusive art piece for the computer lab wall. Royston Elementary held their Rainbow Spirit Day — connected to the Pride theme of June. Principal Colegrave organized getting the Everyone is Welcome sign up in the main entrance up earlier this Spring.

GP Vanier Secondary also had an action-packed Pride Week from June 5-9, featuring themed and spirit days, announcements, informational items, and posters. Activities included a silent auction for a Pride Basket, SOGI information discussions, and a "Personal Journey towards Empathy" email package for staff. The "Aspire to Action" trip to Victoria on June 21-22 is also a notable upcoming event — the program focusses on causes such as 2SLGBTQ+ rights and anti-racism. A table in GP Vanier cafeteria, manned by students from Aspire, provided Pride items and information for students, further spreading awareness and fostering a sense of community.

Each Comox Valley Schools' unique approach to celebrating Pride Month reflects the shared commitment to inclusivity, acceptance, and celebration of diversity across our school community. These initiatives are just a few of the many different events and activities happening for Pride Month throughout the district.

All individuals involved with Comox Valley Schools are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect — regardless of race, religion, family status, physical or mental abilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age. There is no room for discrimination in SD 71 schools.





# DISTRICT NEWS

June 2023



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## Schools celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day with a Week of Activities

Comox Valley Schools marked National Indigenous Peoples Day with a week-long celebration of Indigenous culture, history, and contributions across its schools. The district's celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day is a testament to the ongoing commitment to honouring and learning from the Indigenous communities that have shaped and continue to enrich our country.

The week began at Ecole Robb Road Elementary. The school is very fortunate to be receiving a whale log drum, carved by K'ómoks First Nation carver Randy Frank and gifted by parent/archeologist Jesse Morin. An opening ceremony for the new whale log drum was held in the school gym and the entire school attended. Some of the esteemed guests at the ceremony included, Randy Frank, Hereditary Chief Frank, Hereditary Chief Mitchell, family members, Auntie Mona (Ramona Johnson, Ni'noxsola at Robb Road), Jesse Morin and ISW Pauline Engisch. By the end of the assembly, almost the entire school was dancing to the sounds of the new drum.



**Drum log opening ceremony - Ecole Robb Road**

Ecole Puntledge Park Elementary celebrated the day by honouring Indigenous Support Worker Dean Quiring for his 25 years of service in Indigenous education. Comox Valley Schools is beyond grateful for Dean's service in our district as he's made an incredible difference in the lives of many of our students. The event featured traditional powwow dancing, singing, drumming, and student speeches and was graced by Ray Thunderchild, a Cree from Saskatchewan, who served as the MC, singer, and drummer for the event. Once again, most of the school joined in for some dancing by the end of the assembly. (continues)



JUNE 2023



(continued) Cumberland Community School witnessed the raising of new totem poles at the Peace Park in Cumberland with many people from the community in attendance. This winter, the totems were located at Cumberland Community School for a period, and this allowed students to learn from Karver Everson and Junior Henderson as they worked on the beautiful totems. Comox Valley Schools is grateful for the teachings they shared with students and staff about some of the traditions behind creating these beautiful totems.



Valley View Elementary School showcased over 400 pieces of art under the theme "Our Sense of Place" and the display remained in place for the week in the school gymnasium. Royston Elementary held a full day event with a welcoming assembly in the morning, and then kids circulated through a variety of Indigenous themed stations before enjoying a communal lunch outside.



Huband Park Elementary School organized a student-led Indigenous games day. The school also arranged a story walk of Wab Kinew's book with multiple classes and served bannock. Students started each school day with a land acknowledgement. Queneesh Elementary organized a week-long celebration with activities ranging from art, oral storytelling, Indigenous sports, dance, and food. Brooklyn Elementary and Airport Elementary organized Indigenous games, while Miracle Beach Elementary held a school-wide event with various stations set up for students. Aspen Park Elementary celebrated the week with various activities, including creating window displays of local sea creatures and learning their Kwak'waka names.



Courtenay Elementary held a school assembly and a parent volunteers prepared a salmon BBQ for students and staff. Hornby and Denman Community Schools gathered together at Hornby School to celebrate the day with a focus on Indigenous Games and land-based learning. They also prepared a special lunch of smoked salmon with Fir Tip garnish. GP Vanier held a student-led, indigenous-focused, school-wide assembly. This student group was led by the Vanier Indigenous Education committee, a group comprised of 10+ Vanier staff members and several students. Mark R. Isfeld Secondary also held a school-wide event featuring a tribute to Isfeld Ni'noxsla (Wise One) JoAnn Restoule. Schools throughout the district honoured the day.



# DISTRICT NEWS

## June 2023



### 24 students complete Mountie Camp

The camp, led by RCMP officers, provided a unique opportunity for local youth to learn about law enforcement, build valuable life skills, and foster positive relationships with law enforcement professionals.

Participants engaged in a range of activities designed to promote teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills, while getting the opportunity to delve into various aspects of law enforcement, including crime scene investigations, police vehicle operations, physical fitness and readiness, drill and deportment, mental health, police dog services, major crimes, traffic investigations and more.

The camp culminated with a formal graduation ceremony held on May 19th when family members, community leaders, and distinguished guests joined the participants to celebrate their achievements and the personal growth they experienced throughout the program.

Many thanks to SD 71's Randy James and the Comox Valley RCMP Detachment for running this incredible experience for students!



### Isfeld grad wins A&E essay contest

Congratulations to Mark Isfeld Grade 12 student, Paige Negenman for winning the A&E Lives the Make a Difference Essay Contest! A&E announced that Paige won the Grade 9-12 division for her essay about the impact of Queen Elizabeth's reign on Canada.

Paige's essay on Queen Elizabeth II was chosen from hundreds of submissions received this year for the nationwide contest. As First Prize winner, Paige will receive \$1,000 and her teacher will receive \$500 for use in the classroom. Awesome work!



### Wheelie Wednesday returns with focus on visibility and safety

The return of Wheelie Wednesday to Arden Elementary was a success! The bike rack was bursting with scooters and bikes of all types on a beautiful day. The parking lot was closed to cars and students took turns doing laps in a safe environment.

The Arden Green Team partnered with grade 10 Highland student Benoit Vaillant who shared his message of bike safety and awareness following a serious accident last fall, which involved being hit by a car while cycling home from an extracurricular school activity one evening this past November. His goal is to spread awareness to prevent other youth out cycling and walking from getting injured by vehicles on the road. He is fundraising to get as many bike lights and reflectors out to fellow students in the Comox Valley as possible.

His message is particularly meaningful to Arden families who have been advocating for the safety of students walking and biking to school without adequate active travel infrastructure.

Thank you Ben and to the Arden Green Team for helping spread bicycle safety messages with students!



# DISTRICT NEWS

## June 2023



### Grade 7s take in Kumugwe Big House Experience

Comox Valley Schools Indigenous Education hosted the annual Kumugwe Big House Experience in partnership with Kumugwe Cultural Society.

Grade 7 classes in SD 71 had the amazing opportunity to witness Big House teachings hosted by Andy Everson and the Kumugwe Dancers. Many members of the Indigenous Education Council and Comox Valley Schools' Trustees were also in attendance.

Andy Everson provided explanations of the traditions, songs, and dances that the audience witnessed.

The event had taken a hiatus for the past three years, so it was great to return in-person to the Big House for this event.

Many thanks to the Kumugwe Cultural Society for providing this incredible educational experience for everyone in attendance.

### Isfeld grad wins A&E essay contest

Three incredible students from the Comox Valley had an amazing opportunity to connect and compete at the annual [#DHH Proud](#) event in Burnaby, bringing together Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students from all over British Columbia.

This year, Finley Adamson and Sophia Rogers from Cumberland Community School presented their exceptional speeches, showcasing their skills and sharing their unique experiences as hard of hearing individuals. Finley secured third place!

In 2022, Isfeld student Quinn Hoar emerged as the winner of the spotlight competition with her inspirational speech titled, "Why I'm Proud to be Hard of Hearing." This year, Quinn had the honor of opening the event, sharing her experiences, and offering valuable advice to the new contestants.

Congratulations to Quinn, Sophia, and Finley for your outstanding efforts! Your achievements and contributions have made us immensely proud.

Keep shining bright and inspiring others!



### School cycling program wraps season

Grade 7s from Brooklyn elementary took the district bikes and cycled from Brooklyn to Mack Laing Park. There they met up with Jesse Morrin, an archeologist working with the K'omoks First Nations. Jesse shared insights and shared knowledge with the group on the traditional significance of the area.

SD 71's School Cycling Program had a packed Spring with a full slate of schools – teaching hundreds of students the rules of the road and bicycling fundamentals.

Classes from around the district have been out on the trails and roads using the district bikes as a means to expand their learning of this place.

A huge thank you to all the support from volunteers, especially those with the Comox Valley Cycling Coalition!

JUNE 2023