

BOARD BUSINESS

September 2023

Ecole Puntledge Park students paint Orange hearts in preparation for Truth and Reconciliation Week

BOARD MEETING IN REVIEW

K'omoks First Nation's Ramona Johnson presents gift to Board

Comox Valley Schools' Board of Education and staff are very grateful for the gift of a beautiful friendship eagle rug from SD 71's Ni'noxola that will reside in the board room. A gorgeous eagle rug was presented by K'omoks First Nation's Ramona Johnson on behalf of the Ni'noxola (Wise Ones) here in our district. Many thanks to Ramona for sharing the story behind the rug and for the heartfelt welcome to the territory.

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.



Ramona Johnson Welcome/Gift

Strategic Plan Renewal

2022-2023 Year End Finances

Early Years Learning Update

Dr. Jeremy Morrow announces Strategic Plan renewal

Comox Valley Schools will begin looking inward during the Strategic Plan renewal process over the weeks and months ahead. We'll be asking our partners, students and staff for their input into what is working and where we need to improve. We look forward to your participation and feedback during this important process that will guide our district in the years ahead.

SD 71 finishes 2022-2023 year with \$5.95 million surplus

Acting Secretary Treasurer Russel Horswill outlined the year end financial positions for SD 71. Thanks to increasing enrolments, the district ended 2022-2023 with a surplus of \$5.95 million. It is important to note that these surplus funds are mostly already allocated for specific projects or initiatives in the district.

Early years programs thriving in SD 71

District Principal of Early Learning and Childcare Lisa Pedersen-Skene provided an overview of early learning options in SD 71. There are currently 15 sites with child care and 12 with before and afterschool care. There are also several more sites planned at Arden, Glacier View and possibly Vanier.

**WATCH
SEPT 26
BOARD
MEETING**

BOARD BUSINESS



Comox Valley Schools

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September 2023

Board Chairperson Update

Board of Education Chairperson, Michelle Waite



Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! If this is your first month with Comox Valley Schools, welcome to our community. To our many returning students, families, and employees, welcome back! We extend a warm welcome to our new Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jeremy Morrow. Describing his start as "hitting the ground running" for this school year is an understatement. Jeremy's dedication to the critical work focussing on student achievement, safety, and a sense of belonging is evident to everyone who has had the opportunity to listen to and interact with him. We also welcome back our Acting Secretary Treasurer, Dr. Russell Horswill. Russell brings a strong financial and business portfolio to our district, along with a deep understanding of SD 71 from his previous tenure with us. His genuine care of the importance of people-centered work – with a focus on students – is highly valued.

We are fortunate to have Jeremy and Russell join our district as we embark on a great deal of urgent work together. Once again, SD 71 is experiencing increased enrollments. This growth brings opportunities, and we are grateful to district staff for ensuring schools had space to accommodate everyone when they arrived earlier this month. We'd also like to express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to a successful start to our school year.

September is a busy month, and here are a few noteworthy updates for 2023:

We recently concluded the second Consent Awareness Week, held from September 18 to 22. A special thank you goes to our District Parent Advisory Committee for organizing two online sessions for parents/caregivers to gain age-specific insights into teaching children about consent. Our district is a staunch ally in supporting, educating, and upholding the values of inclusivity, diversity, and the advancement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) rights. In response to recent actions that contradict these values, a joint letter was issued, reaffirming our commitment to the above principles, and pledging support for our 2SLBTQAI+ school community and families. I am wholeheartedly dedicated to allyship, support, and actions ensuring safe learning environments that promote social, academic, and emotional growth while fostering a sense of belonging. This week of September 25 to 29, marks Truth and Reconciliation week in the Comox Valley School District. By collectively focusing on reconciliation during the week, we generate the power and energy needed to advance at a pace unattainable through individual efforts. Each of us must make a personal commitment, and I invite you to join me and our Board of Education in taking action – and deepening our understanding of reconciliation – not just this week, but every week moving forward.

SEPTEMBER 2023

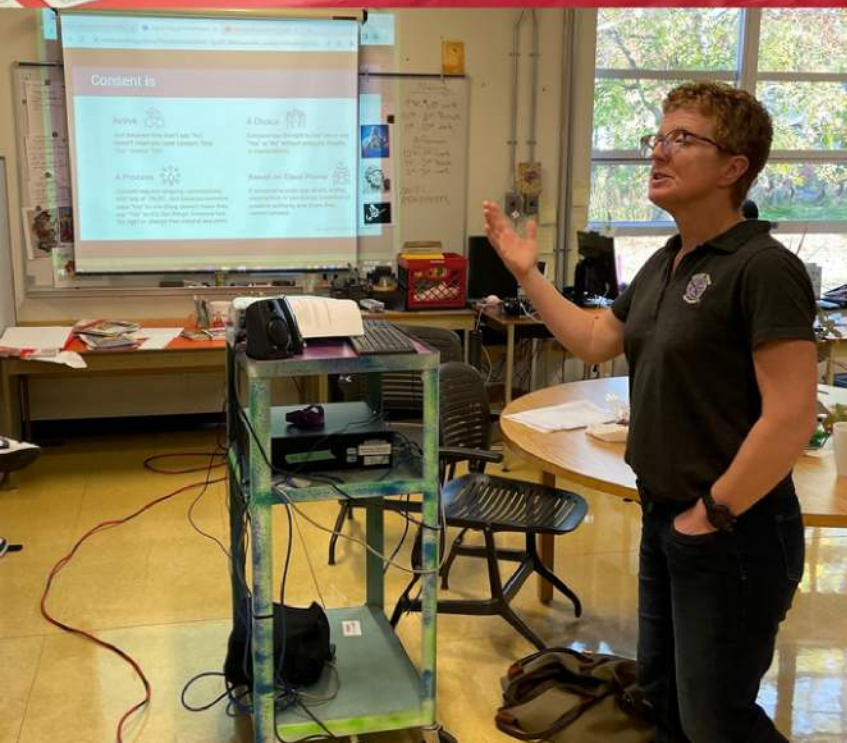
Consent Week

Schools hold Consent Week activities and lessons

During Consent Week in SD 71, schools held thoughtful, affirming, intersectional and age-appropriate conversations about consent as a cornerstone of all relationships, not just intimate ones.



Consent Week in Comox Valley Schools saw a series of educative initiatives and activities across various schools to reinforce the importance of understanding and practicing consent. Each school, while following a unique approach, converged on the central theme of understanding and respecting consent. Huband Park emphasized on teacher education about consent, supported by school counsellor Erin Postle and district counsellor Jill Kotapski. They integrated consent education into their daily interactions and code of conduct with students. Glacier View's unique approach involved the entire school. Students were encouraged to sign a pledge committing to practicing consent in daily life. Participants had a chance to win prizes. Mark R. Isfeld Secondary had various activities lined up including a PowerPoint presentation, an information booth by Comox Valley Victim Services, and a '#Webelieveyou Booth'. A school-wide Consent Art Project was conducted, and there was also an exciting Kahoot game with prizes for the top-performing TA. GP Vanier focussed on creating awareness through multimedia. The Leadership team developed posters and initiated a trivia contest. The school also organized Q&A sessions with counsellors and an informational booth by Community-Based Victims Services. Miracle Beach provided its staff with a variety of resources to facilitate teaching consent in their classrooms. Support was available for those who required assistance in presenting the information. Highland used Advisory Groups to discuss and share resources around Consent Week. The school collaborated with Victim Services, represented by Brooke Finlayson, to set up informational displays. Buttons, stickers, and other promotional items were distributed to students. Ecole Puntelidge took a creative route by educating students on consent through video morning announcements. These are just some of the interesting events and initiatives SD 71 schools held for Consent Week 2023.





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September 25 - October 2
Truth and Reconciliation Week



Truth and Reconciliation Week

As part of our ongoing journey of reconciliation, there are many activities and learnings throughout the year in classrooms across the District. Orange Shirt Day and Truth and Reconciliation Week are opportunities at the end of September that help ground the conversations for the year ahead. Schools across SD 71 will be observing a week dedicated to Truth and Reconciliation from September 25 to 29. This week serves as a solemn reminder for students and staff about the lasting impact of residential schools, offering homage to survivors, their families, and communities. In December 2021, Comox Valley Schools' Board reaffirmed their commitment by recognizing the final week of September as the Truth and Reconciliation Week in SD 71. This week signifies the lead-up to Orange Shirt Day and paves the way for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Red Dress Campaign, as well as the Walk for Wenjack Secret Path week in October. In acknowledgment and gratitude, the Board of Education recognizes its privileged position on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation and extends its deepest appreciation for the opportunity to reside on this land and to be a part of the educational journey of their youth. We believe reconciliation starts with education.



SD 71's Principal of Indigenous Education Bruce Carlos will be in Williams Lake for Truth and Reconciliation Day to attend celebrations in Williams Lake. This year marks 10 years of Orange Shirt Day and the message "Every Child Matters" as part of a broader effort to acknowledge the past, promote healing, and build a more equitable and inclusive society for our children where the rights and well-being of Indigenous children and communities are respected and valued. In spring 2013, Carlos met Phyllis Webstad and she shared her story while looking over a photo album of photos from her childhood. Her story, as you know, is powerful and carries a strong message that "Every Child Matters." At the end of this visit, Carlos committed to helping her spread her story back in our school district. Over the past 10 years we've seen the message of Orange Shirt Day first grow across Canada and now is acknowledged worldwide. In SD 71 schools we're now seeing this important day acknowledged during our "Truth and Reconciliation Week" held over the last week of September each year and now with a statutory non-work day for "Truth and Reconciliation Day" on September 30th every year.

DISTRICT NEWS

September 2023



Tsolum school alumni honour former teacher Beryl Regier

Tsolum school alumni (now Navigate/NIDES) recently held a heartwarming reunion event that brought together former students, teachers, and staff from across the years. Amidst the celebration, the event also featured a touching tribute to a beloved former teacher, Beryl Regier. Alumni from various generations gathered at the school, sharing stories, laughter, and nostalgia. The event served as a testament to the enduring spirit and sense of community that Tsolum School has fostered throughout its rich history. One of the highlights of the day was the heartfelt tribute to Beryl Regier, a former teacher who had a profound impact on countless students and the Comox Valley arts community during over the years. Mrs. Regier took a moment to reflect on her time at Tsolum School and also donated a crafted plaque for the school.



Holodomor bus teaches students about the Ukrainian genocide

Senior students at Isfeld, Vanier and Highland took part in lessons held in a mobile classroom while learning about the Holodomor -- a famine-genocide carried out in 1932-33 which resulted in the deaths of millions of people in Soviet Ukraine. The Holodomor Mobile Classroom is a 42 foot expandable recreational vehicle converted into a state-of-the-art, digital, multimedia interactive classroom on wheels. The project teaches about the courage to speak up about truth, tolerance, civility, and democratic values.



Aspen holds Terry Fox run fundraiser to start year

Recently, Aspen Park Elementary School students and staff came together for the annual Terry Fox Run! Students ran with enthusiasm, determination, and a strong sense of community. It was a fantastic sight to see them all united for a great cause. Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and supported this event.

