

BOARD BUSINESS

November 2023



Mark R. Isfeld Secondary 2023 Remembrance Day Ceremony

BOARD MEETING IN REVIEW

Board Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson re-elected

Comox Valley Schools' board has re-elected Michelle Waite as chairperson and Susan Leslie as vice chairperson for the upcoming year, following the Nov. 28, 2023, public board meeting. Additionally, Trustee Sarah Jane Howe will serve as the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) provincial councilor, with Trustee Shannon Aldinger as the alternate. Trustees Chelsea McCannel Keene and Cristi May Sacht have been appointed as the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) board representative and alternate, respectively.

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 Elections

Child Care Update

Child Care demand exceeds supply in the Comox Valley

Lisa Pedersen-Skene, District Principal Early Learning and Child Care provided an overview of Child Care facilities and services located in SD 71. While the district added new spaces such as the Cumberland and Lake Trail Child Care facilities, demand far outpaces supply in the region. Two more facilities are set to open by the end of this school year at Glacier View and Arden schools. These facilities will be a big boost for families in those areas who require child care services with each site licensed for 44 before and after school care, 16 group child care (30 months- 5 years) and 21 infants/toddlers. Comox Valley Schools is hosting an Early Years Dinner Series on November 29, January 24, April 10 with over 75 participants from local organization sand school staff confirmed to participate. We are looking forward to connecting with community for fulsome discussions about Child Care in the Comox Valley.

**WATCH
NOV 28
BOARD
MEETING**

NOVEMBER 2023

DISTRICT NEWS



Comox Valley Schools

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November 2023

New accessible swing set now open at Hornby

Hornby Island Community School celebrated the unveiling of a new accessible swing set in front of a big crowd of happy students and parents. The project was spearheaded by the school PAC in October 2022, and a robust fundraising campaign amassed over \$36,000, that helped bring the vision to fruition. The swing set, distinguished as the only public swing set on Hornby Island, incorporates an accessible swing and suitable ground cover, enabling children of all abilities to play side-by-side.



Woodstove musicians visit Cumberland

Cumberland students and staff were super lucky to get a visit from Woodstove Music Festival! Students were given tickets they used to attend shows that were set up in rooms throughout the school. They were able to ask each band about songwriting and creating music, while taking in performances by Bu VanBlume, Baby Face Brass and former alumni Jozy!

Thanks to all the PAC volunteers and parent Megan Cursons for being the inspiration behind this amazing day for students (and lucky staff).

And many thanks to Woodstove Festival for this awesome day of music at Cumberland Community School!



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Highland student leads inspiring bike safety campaign

A year after a life-altering cycling accident, 16-year-old Benoit Vaillant has transformed his harrowing experience into a compelling bike safety awareness campaign. Marking the first anniversary of his accident on November 9, Vaillant hosted a free public presentation at Highland Secondary School as part of the District Parent Advisory Council Speaker Series. His message is clear: visibility is crucial for cyclist safety. To address the issue of costly safety equipment, Vaillant initiated a GoFundMe campaign for bike lights, garnering support from the Head Injury Prevention Society and the Comox Valley Bike Coalition. The initiative has been praised for its focus on community safety and accessibility. The Comox Valley Head Injury Prevention Society lauded Vaillant's efforts, recognizing the importance of making safety lights and helmets more accessible as the darker months approach. Benoit Vaillant's resilience and dedication to road safety have not only raised awareness but also inspired both cyclists and drivers to prioritize safety measures. His campaign serves as a reminder of the importance of visibility and the collective responsibility for road safety.



Big turnout for Salmon Day at Ecole Puntledge

Salmon Week at Arden Elementary School was a vibrant and educational experience, highlighting the importance of salmon in Indigenous cultures and ecosystems. Organized by Sandi Phye, Indigenous Support Worker, and Shawna Lyle, the Indigenous Liaison Teacher for Arden, the week was packed with hands-on learning activities.

The week began with Cory Frank from the K'omoks Guardians demonstrating the art of filleting salmon to the students, imparting both skill and respect for this vital resource. Following this, Tanner Billie, also from the K'omoks First Nation, led an engaging salmon dissection session, offering students a closer look at the anatomy and life of these fish. A special mention goes to the local Puntledge Fish Hatchery for their generous donation of salmon, which were central to the week's activities. This gesture not only supported education but also reinforced the community's connection to local ecosystems.

Midweek, Sandi Phye's sessions on brining salmon for smoking were particularly enlightening. Students learned the traditional methods and the cultural significance of preserving salmon. The culmination of this learning was evident on Thursday when salmon were smoked right in the school courtyard, filling the air with the aroma of this age-old practice. Salmon Week at Arden Elementary was not just a series of activities; it was a celebration and acknowledgment of Indigenous knowledge and practices. It fostered a deeper respect for nature and indigenous cultures among students, making it a truly memorable week. Thanks to everyone involved for creating such an impactful and educational experience.



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Courtenay students learn wheelchair basics

SD 71's Physical Literacy Support Teacher Jina Taylor brought a trailer full of wheelchairs for wheelchair basketball and some other games to Courtenay Elementary.

Students learned some basics about using a wheelchair in a safe, fun, and encouraging environment.

It was a great chance for Talia to show off some of her skills to her classmates! Many thanks to Pacific Sport for providing the resources for this awesome experience. Pacific Sports runs programming called Wheelkids - a unique program that achieves a rare feat—true inclusion in physical activity. All participants regardless of ability and fitness level—will be challenged through the drills and games put on by their coaches.



Grade 4 educators prepare for the Kumugwe Big House Experience



Laltłan Dala'ogwa, Keisha Everson, representing the Kumugwe Cultural Society, welcomed Grade 4 teachers, Principals, and Indigenous Education Staff on November 21st to the Kumugwe Big House to prepare for their annual visit to the Big House in Spring 2024.

The Kumugwe Cultural Society have hosted students, traditionally Grade 4's, in the Big House for 20 plus years, to share the history of the Kumugwe Big house and the significance of the potlatch. Participating in the Big House Experience has been an active and engaging event as students are expected to know why they are coming, be active listeners and remember what they have learned to share that with others – all part of oral tradition that has and continues to exist on this territory since time immemorial.

This is the first year that Keisha Everson or someone from the Kumugwe Cultural Society has talked directly to teachers before the traditional spring event and it was an exciting, cozy, and transformational experience in the Big House, warmed by Clyde Dawson, a firekeeper who shared his gifts with keeping our bodies, minds, and heart warm and ready for this learning. Thank you to for the presence of Karver Everson, brother to Keisha, and Iris and Orion, Keisha's two lovely children who all remind us of the importance of family and community in our work as educators.

The work to keep ways of being and knowing alive is not done in isolation. We also heard lovely, strong, and supportive words from community members, Ni'noxola, Evelyn Voyageur and Indigenous Education Council Member, Trish McPhail who both encouraged us to be part of systemic and transformational change.

Grade 4 students and teachers will come to visit the Big House ready and more prepared than ever.

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