



BOARD BUSINESS

June 2024

16 classroom expansion coming to Cumberland Community School

BOARD MEETING IN REVIEW

Board approves \$157.78 million dollar Budget for 2024-2025 school year

The Board of Education adopted the Annual Budget Bylaw for fiscal year 2024/2025 with the total budget bylaw amount of \$157.78 million dollars. The preliminary 2024-25 Annual Operating Budget was presented to the Committee of the Whole on May 14, 2024 by Assistant Secretary Treasurer Jennifer Nelson. Public Feedback was provided to the Board on May 28th, 2024, with a further option to balance the budget. Staff presented the draft operating budget on June 11th, 2024, at the Committee of the Whole meeting. The Board voted unanimously to pass this 2024/2025 Budget. Boards must prepare an annual budget and have it adopted by bylaw on or before June 30th, each year.

Personal Digital Devices Guidelines released for schools

Associate Superintendent Jay Dixon and Director of Information and Technology Josh Porter provided an overview of the new guidelines for schools regarding the use of Personal Digital Devices (PDD) in SD 71. This past winter, the Province announced three actions aimed at enhancing the safety and well-being of students concerning digital technology. These measures include guidelines on the use of PDDs in schools, which will be implemented in the upcoming 2024-25 school year. SD 71's Administrative Procedure 145 Use of Personal Devices and Administrative Procedure 350 District Code of Conduct have both been updated -- and schools will be updating their Codes of Conduct to reflect these updates. Information about the guidelines is available on the SD 71 District website and a letter was sent home to parents outlining what this means for students and schools.

SD 71 successful with emissions reductions efforts

Director of Operations Molly Proudfoot outlined the successful efforts SD 71 has implemented to reduce emissions over the last decade. The reductions were noted in the Climate Change Accountability Report -- a requirement for all provincial public sector organizations, annually. Continuous optimization efforts focused on auditing and reviewing building systems, and implementing strategic scheduling and controls programming has enabled the district to successfully reduce emissions. The district's 2023 emissions are down 30% from 2010 (the year we started tracking and reporting). Meaning SD 71 is on track to achieving the 2030 reduction target of 40%, set by the province. To achieve long term emissions targets SD 71 will continue focusing significant efforts and investments on reducing our stationary emissions, which comprise around 85% of our emissions.

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.

WATCH
JUNE 23
BOARD
MEETING



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JUNE 2024



Board Chairperson Update

Board of Education Chairperson, Michelle Waite - č̣ę̣ę̣haθę̣

June, there is so much to acknowledge and try to capture. The following are some highlights and snapshots of some of the many elements from this month at Comox Valley Schools.

Embedded in June are the weavings of National Indigenous History Month. Recognizing the rich history, heritage, resilience, and diversity of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. June 21 was National Indigenous Peoples Day, and we hope you found an opportunity to participate, learn, and celebrate in your own way or at one of the events in our community.

June is Pride Month and has been an opportunity to reinforce, through education and celebration, our commitment to diversity, and our 2SLGBTQAI+ community. It's been wonderful seeing our school community embracing and promoting inclusion and acceptance.

June is traditionally a month in our schools where we acknowledge and celebrate the culmination of a year of exploration, learning, and growth. It is also "grad season," with events honoring our students moving from one level to another. We began June at the Highland Secondary School graduation, with—thankfully—no rain and eagles joining in alongside K'omoks First Nation Elder Ramona Johnson to start the ceremony in a good way for the graduates. Both NIDES and Mark Isfeld Secondary School École Secondaire graduations filled our hearts, with energy in the rooms reflecting the collective accomplishments of the graduates. The graduation of our Nala'atsi students was not only evidence of the dedication of students but also the many layers of commitment and care to create pathways for the graduates. The graduation of Glacier View Secondary students once again highlighted the many pathways open for our students' educational journeys, as well as their tenacity, and unique gifts. Our final and largest graduation takes place soon, in the last week of June, for GP Vanier Secondary School graduates. This is the largest graduating class in our community, and we are looking forward to another opportunity to recognize and celebrate our graduates.

It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes every employee in our district to educate, support and, at the end of this journey, to execute graduation events that honour this collective work. Thank you to each and every one of you, and congratulations to each graduate in the Class of 2024!

This June has also been filled with announcements and the official opening of two ministry-funded childcare centers, located at Arden Elementary School and Glacier View Secondary. Mid-June brought the funding announcement for Aspen Park Elementary School, with \$16.5 million in provincial funding for an 11-prefabricated-classroom addition, which will add 270 new seats to this school in a timely manner. It is important to recognize and acknowledge the positive impacts of this expansion that is being supported and funded by the Ministry of Education and Childcare and the BC Government. In our growing community of the Comox Valley, the financial impact of the ministry funding an 11-classroom expansion cannot be understated. The alternative is funding allocated from our annual operating grant. Over the past year, we have been moving forward with the creation of our Strategic Plan and have been pleased to provide updates on our progress. We are excited to be moving closer to the parameters and pathways that will ground and guide all of our collective work in the upcoming years.

It has been an amazing school year, and heartfelt thanks to everyone who has volunteered, supported, and worked collectively for each and every student in Comox Valley School District. For those who are retiring or moving on to other opportunities, thank you for your contribution, and for those who are continuing, thank you, and we look forward to seeing you in September.

Gilakas'la

Board Members

Michelle Waite, Chair (Lazo North)
Susan L Leslie, Vice Chair (Town of Comox)
Janice Caton, Trustee (City of Courtenay)
Shannon Aldinger, Trustee (City of Courtenay)
Sarah Jane Howe, Trustee (Village of Cumberland)
Chelsea McCannel-Keene, Trustee (Baynes Sound, Hornby & Denman Islands)
Cristi May Sacht – Trustee, Trustee (Puntledge, Black Creek)



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SD 71 Honours National Indigenous Peoples Day

Comox Valley Schools honoured National Indigenous Peoples' Day with a series of engaging and educational activities district-wide.

At Lake Trail, the festivities began with a welcome event at the Grand Staircase. Students participated in various activities, including an Indigenous Scavenger Hunt, Beading Circle, Rock Painting, and traditional games such as Lahal, Lacrosse, and the One Foot High Kick. A special lunch featuring Fry Bread Hotdogs, strawberries, and blueberries was provided, and students had the opportunity to earn stamps on their Station Passport for a chance to win a special gift. The day also included a screening of "Kayak to Klemtu" and a Karaoke session in the Multi-Purpose Room.

Hornby Island Elementary School celebrated earlier in the week with a delicious meal prepared by parents, featuring smoked salmon chowder, cornbread, bannock, berry cobbler, and a strawberry drink. Elder Barb joined the school to discuss medicinal foods and shared her rockfish butter clam chowder and salmon spread on crackers. Students enjoyed singing "Amla'la sa Kumuxse" and participating in a Stomp unity song and Friendship Dance.

On Denman Island, students marked the day with a trip to Tribune Bay, where they engaged in Indigenous games on the beach.

At Arden Elementary, the day started with a school-wide discussion on the importance of the day. The afternoon featured Indigenous games led by Jina Taylor and school staff. The previous day, students enjoyed an Indigenous salad bar with smoked salmon, blueberries, and bannock, emphasizing the significance of food and celebration. Royston Elementary also participated in the celebrations with a full schedule of activities, including Feather Passport creations, storytelling, stations and games, and a communal outdoor lunch.

At Mark R. Isfeld Secondary, a school-wide assembly started with student Robert Hardy and his father, Elder Richard Hardy from the K'omoks First Nation, delivering the Welcome to the Territory and performing a song. Then, four students who created incredible Jingle Dance Dress Regalia for their Capstone projects in the months leading up to today wore their creations and danced for the school. They were joined in the Jingle Dance by JoAnn Restoule, Ni'noxsola at Isfeld, and Jeannie McDonald, Indigenous Support Worker at the school. Many thanks to the organizers of this event and everyone who took part.

Comox Valley Schools are committed to recognizing and celebrating Indigenous culture and heritage through these meaningful activities across the district.



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Warriors Society gathers to celebrate successes

The Warrior Society gathered at Camp Gilwell for a day of celebration and recognition. The Warriors are students in grades 4-9 who are Indigenous and attend Comox Valley Schools. The event marked the culmination of their learning journey, where they explored traditional knowledge and practices centered around the four elements: smudging, fire-making, respecting and living off the land, and the vital importance of water.

The celebration commenced with the day designed to honour the students' achievements. Daryle Mills, the group's leader called each Warrior up with their Indigenous Support Worker (ISW). Together, they highlighted the students' unique qualities and growth within the Warrior Society. It was powerful to see students recognizing and complimenting each other for the qualities and attributes each person brought to the Warrior experience over the school year.

The Wachiay Friendship Centre provided beautiful hoodies for all Warrior Society members, which students wore proudly. The Warrior Society program, supported by the Comox Valley Schools' Indigenous Education team, teaches students valuable skills and values. Through a blend of cultural education and practical activities, the program fosters a sense of identity and belonging among Indigenous students. It emphasizes the importance of traditional knowledge, respect for the environment, and community building. The program's hands-on approach includes activities like plant identification, traditional crafts, and survival skills, ensuring that students gain a comprehensive understanding of their cultural heritage while developing essential life skills.

The final Warrior Society meeting is scheduled for today (June 13), where students will use their compasses in various games and activities, further solidifying the skills they have acquired.



Two new child care centres now open!

Comox Valley Schools celebrated the grand opening of our new child care centres at Arden and Glacier View, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to supporting families and the community. We were honoured to have Minister of State for Child Care, Mitzi Dean, join us for this special event. These new centres will provide a nurturing and educational environment for our youngest learners, ensuring they have the best start in life. We are thrilled to see the positive impact this will have on our community!

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\$16.5 Million Expansion at Aspen Park Elementary

Aspen Park Elementary is expanding! By fall 2025, the school will have 275 new student spaces with an 11-classroom prefabricated addition. This \$16.5 million investment is great news for Comox Valley Schools as it will help reduce the use of portables at the school and in the district. With modern, sustainable designs, these new classrooms will provide state-of-the-art learning environments for students and staff. MLA Ronna Rae Leonard made the announcement at an event at Aspen Park which included a beautiful student performance to start things off.



\$31 Million Expansion announced at Cumberland Community School

Comox Valley Schools is proud to announce a major expansion project at Cumberland Community School, supported by a \$31 million investment from the provincial government. This expansion is designed to accommodate the increasing student population and provide state-of-the-art educational facilities. The announcement was made by Minister of Education and Child Care, Rachna Singh, at an event MC'd by Minister Josie Osborne. The event announcing the good news was held at the school in the final week of the school year. The project will add 16 new classrooms and specialized learning spaces, including a new gymnasium and a modernized library. These enhancements will create a more dynamic and supportive learning environment for students, promoting both academic and extracurricular development. This expansion is a significant milestone for the community and for our district to meet the rapid enrolment growth we are seeing in Cumberland. With these new seismically safe classrooms, students will be learning in modern and well-equipped environments reflecting our commitment to providing the best possible education for students.



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Congratulations to Sarah Coull: BC's Librarian of the Year!

Sarah Coull, the dedicated Librarian at NIDES and Brooklyn Elementary School from School District 71, has been awarded the prestigious BC Teacher-Librarian of the Year – Diana Poole Memorial Award. This accolade is the highest honour bestowed by the British Columbia Teacher-Librarians' Association (BCTLA), celebrating those who make extraordinary contributions to teacher-librarianship at and beyond the school level in British Columbia.

Brooklyn Elementary honoured Sarah at a school-wide assembly, celebrating her remarkable contributions and well-deserved recognition. Sarah's dedication to professional growth and her role as a peer mentor underscore her status as a lifelong learner who consistently models curiosity, creative thinking, and strong relationship-building. She is part of an exceptional group of district Teacher-Librarians who exemplify excellence and a deep commitment to student success.

Sarah's recognition stems from her exemplary planning and implementation of school library programs that serve as a beacon of inspiration for others. Her commitment to literacy, inquiry, and lifelong learning is evident in every project she undertakes. Over the past five years, Sarah has made significant impacts across numerous elementary school sites within the Comox Valley, including Denman, Hornby, LRC, NIDES, Huband, Arden, Cumberland, and Brooklyn.

Among her many achievements, Sarah has designed a Virtual Library Learning Commons for NIDES OL learners, developed a thriving garden within the Arden school library, and collaborated on district-wide initiatives such as Girls in STEAM. Her leadership extends beyond her school sites as she serves as the Chair of the local SD71 BCTLA Chapter and has co-authored an insightful article on Joyful Collaboration in the Canadian School Libraries Journal.



Incredible 1st Special Education Track meet!

Congratulations to everyone involved in SD 71's first ever Special Education Track Meet!

It was a resounding success with over 70 students participating in running races, wheelchair racing, long jumping, soccer accuracy, Frisbee accuracy, and agility course work. A huge thank you to the 40 volunteers, staff, and former staff who helped make this day possible.

Bravo to everyone involved – and thanks to Royston Teacher Mathew Zadvorny for bringing this idea to our district from his time in Surrey.

This was the first-ever Special Education Track Meet in SD 71, and it won't be the last.

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3rd annual Indigenous Rugby Day the biggest one yet!

It was a beautiful June Day for the third annual Indigenous Rugby Day. The event, which celebrated Indigenous culture and sportsmanship, saw participation from 82 Indigenous students in Grades 6 and 7, alongside 7 student leaders and junior coaches from Highland Secondary School. Additionally, 5 coaches, including former Comox Valley Schools students and community coaches, contributed to the day's success. The event began with an opening circle and a warm welcome to the territory. Following the welcome, students engaged in various rugby skills sessions led by the coaches in breakout groups. After lunch, students participated in flag rugby games before the day concluded with a closing circle. Special thanks to event organizers Cheryl Graham and Mireille Appelbe for their steadfast commitment to this event. And many thanks to the Indigenous Education family, including 14 Indigenous Support Workers and other cherished staff, for their unwavering support and dedication in making this event possible for the third consecutive year. This is such a great day for students!



Sandwich Technical Schools hosts Women In Trades Day

Sandwich Technical School hosted the inspiring "Women Explore the Trades" event and it was truly awesome. This hands-on learning experience provided an invaluable opportunity for participants to work alongside professional women in a range of trades, gaining practical skills and exploring potential career paths. Participants engaged in diverse trade workshops including Automotive, Carpentry, Baking, Electrical, Heavy Duty Mechanics, Horticulture, Plumbing, and Hairstyling.

A big shoutout to L.I.V.E catering for the delicious lunch! And a huge thanks to all the companies and professionals who donated their time, supplies, and amazing takeaways for the students! The event was a tremendous success, leaving participants excited about potential careers in the trades and equipped with new skills and confidence. Stay tuned for next year's event!

