



# BOARD BUSINESS

RCMP Camp 2025 Graduates

May 2025

## BOARD MEETING IN REVIEW

### Board Responds to CUPE request for Child Care support

The Board of Education passed a motion at the May meeting directing the Superintendent to prepare a report for the Board to explore implications and alignment of partnering in a proposed child care pilot, and report back to the Board with recommendations. This motion was a follow-up to a presentation to the Board by CUPE at the April Board Meeting about partnering in public child care in the district.

*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.*



### Special Track Meet Delegation shines light on success of event

The Second Annual Special Track Meet, held earlier in May, was a powerful example of what happens when inclusion, physical literacy, and community come together. More than 125 students from across the Comox Valley took part in the event, nearly 50 more than last year, making it the largest and most engaging meet yet.

The idea for the event came from teacher Matt Zadvorny, who was inspired by the Surrey School District's Special Track Meet. After witnessing its success, he partnered with Amanda Lange, PE/Leadership teacher, and Jina Taylor, District Lead Teacher for Physical Literacy, to bring the vision to life locally.

Held at the GP Vanier track field, the day was packed with energy and encouragement. Students rotated through eight different activity stations, including:

- Wheelchair racing with PacificSport
- Obstacle courses and long jump
- Soccer and beachball volleyball
- Adaptive bocce with OneAbility Games
- Water bottle decorating and health education at the "ReThink Your Drink" station
- A creative javelin-style duck launch using leaf blowers
- And a mini-marathon and bubble party to close out the day

Each student received a participation ribbon and was grouped into school teams named after animals to promote a sense of identity and fun.

Behind the scenes, months of planning ensured the event was inclusive and accessible to all learners. School teams arrived with visual schedules and social stories to help students feel prepared and confident. Volunteers—including parents, retired educators, high school students, and emergency service members—helped run the stations, guide teams, and cheer participants on. With its growing success, the district looks forward to making this joyful and inclusive event an ongoing annual tradition.

WATCH  
MAY 27  
BOARD  
MEETING



Comox Valley Schools

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## Board Chairperson Update - Michelle Waite - ččēhαθč

National AccessAbility Week is being celebrated this week. While it is a time of recognition and celebration, it also serves as a reminder of the work ahead to ensure accessible learning spaces for all students and staff.

Earlier this month, we held a budget-focused Open Committee of the Whole meeting, where we engaged with our partner groups on the first draft of our 2025–26 operating budget. We look forward to receiving feedback from the budget survey and to the continued evolution of the draft as we move toward approval by the Board. As always, our focus remains on developing a budget that places students at the centre of our decision-making. While we are not beginning this cycle with a projected deficit, we must continue working to ensure our systems evolve in alignment with our Strategic Plan. Recently, the Board met virtually with the Minister of Education and Child Care, Lisa Beare. Woven into the broader conversation about funding, we discussed several key areas: professional learning funding; the development of a provincial gender-based violence action plan and opportunities for partnership with our district; a review of priority ferry boarding policies and their impact on equitable access to education and student well-being; and funding for child care services that support children with unique needs.

The month of May marks the beginning of our commencement season, with our International Student graduation held last week, and Highland Secondary's ceremony coming up this weekend (fingers crossed for no rain). By the time we meet again in June, ceremonies will have taken place at NIDES, Nala'atsi, Mark R. Isfeld Secondary, and Glacier View. Commencement represents the culmination of many achievements and stepping stones that occur every day and in many different ways for each of our students in Comox Valley Schools.

In June, we acknowledge 2025 Pride Month, celebrated under the theme Unbreakable Pride and Unshakeable Power. We look forward to honouring our commitment to diversity and to the 2SLGBTQAI+ community through education and celebration.

Thank you for your continued interest in and commitment to the Comox Valley Schools community.

## Board Members

Michelle Waite, Chairperson (Lazo North)

Sarah Jane Howe, Vice Chairperson (Village of Cumberland)

Susan L Leslie (Town of Comox)

Janice Caton (City of Courtenay)

## Shannon Aldinger (City of Courtenay)

Chelsea McCannel-Keene (Baynes Sound, Hornby & Denman Islands)

Cristi May Sacht (Puntledge, Black Creek)







## DISTRICT NEWS

May 2025



### Hornby Island Students Experience Culture, Language, and Friendship on Quebec Exchange

Grade 7/8 students from Hornby Island Community School recently returned from an unforgettable student exchange in Quebec City, where they were warmly hosted by students and families from Quebec High School (QHS). This exciting opportunity, made possible through the support of Heritage Canada and the YMCA, provided students with a vibrant week of experiential learning, cultural immersion, and lasting friendship.

The exchange began with a tour of QHS and a city bus excursion to explore the broader Quebec City area. Throughout the week, students participated in a wide range of enriching activities. They toured the Quebec Parliament to learn about provincial governance, laughed together at Bora Bora Water Park, and watched a movie filmed on QHS's historic campus.

A highlight of the trip was the "Great Race" through Old Quebec, where students raced through iconic sites such as Château Frontenac and Place Royale—solving historical riddles and tackling challenges along the way.

Students also had the opportunity to visit a traditional Cabane à Sucre (sugar shack), where they enjoyed authentic Quebecois food, music, and dancing. The group then travelled to a Wendat learning centre to explore Indigenous history and culture in the region, gratefully acknowledging the Wendat Nation for the time spent on their traditional territory. The trip concluded with a proud moment as several Hornby students delivered a presentation on conservation to the Honourable Minister Jean-Yves Duclos. A few students were even interviewed by CBC Radio-Canada!

This memorable exchange fostered connections across language and geography, sparking new friendships and shared understanding. Sincere thanks to Quebec High School for their incredible hospitality. Merci beaucoup!

### National Recognition for Aspiring Poet at Highland Secondary

Congratulations to Carola De la Mata, a talented Grade 9 student in Mr. Macvey's class at Highland Secondary, who recently earned national recognition in the Polar Expressions Publishing poetry contest. Carola placed second in Canada—a remarkable achievement in this prestigious literary competition. Her winning poem is featured in the 2024 poetry anthology *Born in Embers*, showcasing the voices of emerging young writers from across the country. In addition to having her work published, Carola and the school received cash prizes in recognition of her success. Well done, Carola!







## Future Coders Tackle Gender Bias in AI at Hackergal Hackathon

Young coders from across Comox Valley Schools recently came together to participate in the national Hackergal Hackathon—a day of creativity, collaboration, and coding, all with a focus on tackling gender bias in artificial intelligence (AI).

Held at the School Board Office, the event brought together students from multiple schools to explore how technology can be used to solve real-world problems. Working in small teams, students were challenged to design innovative tech-based solutions that address bias in AI systems and promote gender equity in the digital world.

Throughout the day, students developed their ideas using block-based coding platforms, guided by dedicated teachers and industry mentors who helped them explore both the technical and ethical dimensions of their projects. The event was part of a Canada-wide initiative to inspire girls and gender-diverse youth to see themselves in the world of coding and technology—fields where they have been historically underrepresented.

The atmosphere was filled with excitement and focus as students worked through problem-solving exercises, brainstormed ideas, and presented their final projects to a panel of supportive staff and peers. Many students said they left the event feeling inspired, proud, and eager to continue their coding journeys.



## National Recognition for Educator's Equity-Focused Work

Comox Valley Schools is proud to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Carolyn Ganga, a dedicated educator whose leadership and advocacy have been recognized on the national stage. Carolyn was part of a multi-year research group with the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF), working to engage and support new BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) educators across the province. The group's work focused on creating affinity spaces, facilitating workshops, and amplifying underrepresented voices through storytelling and professional collaboration. In recognition of this work, Carolyn and her team were honoured with two national awards from the Canadian Association of Labour Media:

- The Fighting Oppression Award – for a communications initiative that raises awareness and contributes meaningfully to anti-oppression efforts; and
- The Katie FitzRandolph Award – for best overall regular print publication in Canada.

Congratulations, Carolyn—your work is an inspiration to colleagues, students, and communities alike.

