



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

MINISTER OF EDUCATION VISITS THE COWICHAN VALLEY

COWICHAN VALLEY, BC – Today, the school district welcomed the Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, to the Cowichan Valley, where he participated in a brief school tour, a Remembrance Day ceremony, and a meeting focused on the district's ongoing advocacy for a new Cowichan Secondary School.

The Minister was joined by Cowichan Valley MLA Sonia Furstenau, Board Chair Candace Spilsbury, Superintendent Rod Allen, and other senior staff for a tour of Cowichan Secondary School's James Street campus, where they were shown some of the areas of the school that are in need of seismic upgrading.

Minister Fleming and MLA Furstenau also had an opportunity to see how teachers in the school are pushing ahead to teach innovatively in support of our learners, despite having a school facility that is not designed for 21st century learning—a testament to the creative and dedicated educators that work in SD 79.

The tour was in preparation for a meeting with the many community partners who are working alongside the school district in pursuit of the new secondary school, including Cowichan Tribes, City of Duncan, Municipality of North Cowichan, Vancouver Island University, and trustees from the Board of Education. The focus of the meeting was to discuss the Cowichan Place concept that all partners created—a plan that is already on its way to being realized, with the new school being the final piece.

“The Board of Education is very pleased that Minister Fleming and MLA Furstenau took the time to come see first-hand why we need this new school, and to see the strong partnerships and community support for a new school,” said Candace Spilsbury, Chair of the Board of Education for SD 79. “We believe they both have a strong sense of what makes the Cowichan Valley unique, and we're hopeful that good news for our students and our community will be coming soon.”

As part of the tour, the Minister and MLA visited the Cowichan Trades Centre at the former Koksilah Elementary school, where he was again shown some of the incredible opportunities our students have despite having aging facilities to learn in.

“Our school district is a leader in education innovation in B.C. and we want to ensure our students have the best learning environments and new learning opportunities that lead to their lifelong success,” said Rod Allen, Superintendent of SD 79. “We know that a new Cowichan Secondary School as part of Cowichan Place will allow us to do just that; and with continuing enrolment growth, and the support of our community partners, now is the time for this project to move forward.”

In recognition of Remembrance Day, Minister Fleming and MLA Furstenau also stopped by Khowhemun Elementary school where they attended the schools Remembrance Day ceremony.

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