



Cowichan Valley School District

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

STUDENT ENROLMENT CONTINUES TO CLIMB IN THE COWICHAN VALLEY

COWICHAN VALLEY, BC – The numbers are in and the Cowichan Valley School District (SD 79) has welcomed more than 200 new students this year, making this the third straight year of enrolment growth for the district.

This year, there are just over 7,800 full-time equivalent (FTE) students across the school district, up from the 7,594 funded by the Ministry of Education last year. This includes (as of September 30, 2017):

- 4,631 students in our elementary schools (increase of 112);
- 2,727 students in our secondary schools (increase of 29); and
- 308 students in our alternate program (decrease of 15).

There are also 136 learners enrolled in the district's dual credit, distributed learning, and adult program—programs that are also seeing growth. These counts do not include the estimated 230 students who will be part of the district's international student program this year.

“The Board of Education is incredibly pleased to see another year of enrolment growth; this is fantastic news for our schools and our communities,” said Candace Spilsbury, Chair of the Board of Education. “We anticipate growth to continue across our district, and we are engaged in some ongoing work with local and provincial governments to make sure that this growth is factored into community planning and funding opportunities for new schools.”

This year's enrolment figures include more than 100 FTE's of unanticipated enrolment growth, which—on top of the new class size and composition requirements—put some additional pressures on schools in the district. The most significant jump in enrolment this year was in the elementary grades, particularly across Grades 4-7.

“We have an incredible public education system in our district, and it's exciting to see that more and more kids are getting an opportunity to experience what we have to offer,” said Rod Allen, Superintendent. “We also welcomed a number of new teachers and staff to our district this year, thanks to enrolment increases and class size and composition requirements. Even though quick growth can bring along some challenges, it's an exciting opportunity for all of us.”

Some of the schools experiencing the largest growth this year include Chemainus Elementary (33 FTE), Frances Kelsey Secondary (26.75 FTE), George Bonner Elementary (25 FTE) and Bench Elementary (23 FTE).

Recognizing the Cowichan Valley is experiencing continued growth, the school district contracted a demographer who completed a report in October that outlined enrolment projections and areas of growth across the district. This report will be used by the Board of Education and district staff as an important planning tool, and will be key in ensuring that growth in our communities is factored into local area planning, and district facility planning.

The report can be viewed online: <http://sd79.bc.ca/report-on-district-demographics-and-changing-school-capacities/>.

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