



Cowichan Valley School District

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### **Increasing Student Numbers Means Increased Funding for SD79**

The Cowichan Valley School District 79 welcomed more than 200 new students this fall, bringing the total number of students to 7605. Because education funding is partially based on the number of students and their specific needs, the District will see a funding increase of approximately \$2.6 million. More funding, combined with the removal of busing fees, and the implementation of exciting New Curriculum programs, means a great year for SD79 students and families.

Board Chair Candace Spilsbury said, “We had a very positive start. The District is adding new teachers, new Educational Assistants, new support staff and new programs. We can all breathe a sigh of relief that funding bottomed out last year, and will now increase as enrollment grows. “

The District has hired 16 new teachers, and expects to hire 20 new Educational Assistants.

The new curriculum rolling out across Cowichan, gives teachers more freedom in how they deliver programming, and provides students with more choices about how they learn.

“British Columbia is already rated among the top 3 education systems in the world,” said Superintendent Rod Allen. “We know that the education students receive now, must prepare them for a changing work environment. Alongside content, students discover strategies for learning that will serve them for a lifetime.”

Among the new programs being offered are the Land-Based Program and Community Program at Cowichan Secondary. Rather than move from class to class, students study multiple subjects at varying levels in the same class. Guest presenters and on-site studies are the norm. Students benefit from real-world perspectives and immersive experiences.

Stephen Finch, a student in the Community Program says, “The amount of different opportunities that arise is phenomenal.” Classmate Evann Fellows appreciates that she can personalize her learning, and “... get a lot more done.”

The Land Based program gets students out to forests, gardens, beaches and more. Teacher, Craig Lauridsen connects with community groups and experts to host the tours or contribute their expertise in class. Students receive a warm welcome wherever they go. There is a strong First Nations component of traditional knowledge, and learning through story.

At the CSS Quamichan Campus, there is a new class called the Explore! class. It is a multi-grade (8 and 9) class that takes a multi-disciplinary approach to learning. What this means is that students can work on a single project that satisfies more than one subject at a time. Students in the class have expressed that they do not feel the same level of stress that they would feel in a traditional setting, where they would attend a different class every block. They are also appreciating that they are able to approach learning through inquiry, and that they are able to explore their own interests and passions. A balance of group and individual project work is galvanizing the class, and students are feeling like they are doing very important work.

“As exciting as school start up is,” says Spilsbury, “we know it requires a great deal of energy from teachers, support staff and administrators. The Board deeply appreciates our staff’s commitment to putting students first.”

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