The Highlighter
January 4, 2022

Board Chair

Municipality of North Cowichan Draft Official Community Plan Response: The Board submitted a response to the Municipality's Draft Official Community Plan, indicating its primary concern is the additional capacity required for elementary students due to increased enrolment, particularly in the Maple Bay, Berkey's Corner and Bell Mckinnon areas, as well as an anticipated need in Crofton and Chemainus within the next decade. The Municipality was also advised that the District is undertaking an update of its long-range facility plan and working towards creating a bylaw that will require the collection of school site acquisition charges.

Cowichan Secondary School Replacement Groundbreaking/Public Meeting: On December 14, 2021, The Right Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education, Councilor Stephanie Atleo from Cowichan Tribes, and Board Chair Candace Spilsbury spoke and participated in the official ground breaking at the site of the new school. Later that afternoon Trustees and senior management joined the Architects and Builders at a public meeting to reveal the designs for the new school.

Minister Whiteside's Visit: On December 14 Minister Whiteside and Board Chair Candace Spilsbury visited Mill Bay Nature School where the Minister was able to learn more about this unique educational model and meet with children, staff and parents. Next on her Agenda was a trip to Nourish Cowichan for a review of its program, before heading to the site of the new Cowichan Secondary. The presentation to the Minister of a drum was a highlight of the groundbreaking ceremony.

Board Retreat Follow-Up: Trustees will review the target areas for improvement that were identified at the recent Board Retreat and devise a plan for Trustee professional development during the Board Planning Session on January 11, 2022.

Education

Staffing Updates: A process to create a Vice Principal pool has recently been completed, and two members of the pool have already been placed in temporary positions. Madelin Rocheleau, who holds a teaching position at Ecole Mount Prevost, has accepted a temporary Vice-Principal assignment at Discovery Elementary. Kelly Girvan has been appointed as temporary Vice-Principal at Alexander Elementary, where she has taught for a number of years. An announcement on the additional candidates added to the pool will be released in the near future. An Associate Superintendent position will be posted January 7, 2022 due to a pending retirement later in the year. Stacey Berry has been awarded the position of Student Information System Manager, and will start in her new role on January 18.

Kindergarten Registration: All children five years of age as of December 31, 2022 may register for kindergarten for fall 2022. Registration for the District's French Immersion and Nature School Programs will take place January 24 - 28, 2022 (the registration dates also apply for siblings of students registered in these programs). Late applicants will be waitlisted. If registration for District

programs exceeds capacity, a lottery process will be used to determine placement. Registrations for catchment schools will take place from January 31 through February 4, 2022, for children living within the school's catchment area and for siblings of older children who will be continuing at the school with an out-of-catchment approval. Families wishing to register their child at a different school may do so using an out-of-catchment request form available at their school.

Early Learning Action Plan: The Board adopted the Early Learning Action Plan, which was prepared at the direction of the Board in response to the Early Learning Review. For each of the ten recommendations listed in the Early Learning Review, the District's Action Plan provides a District goal and rationale, lists required actions and resources, identifies who is responsible, and sets out a timeline for completion.

Superintendent's Update:

- Acknowledgements: Thank you to the District's Payroll, Operations, Finance, and 12-month employees who continued to work over the winter break, as well as the Principals and Vice-Principals who began work last week to prepare for the phased-in approach to start up.
- On December 29 Dr. Bonnie Henry announced a staggered return from the winter break to allow schools to enact enhanced COVID health and safety protocols. From January 4-7 schools will be providing learning opportunities for children of essential service workers and those students who need additional supports. The District will welcome all students back on January 10. All schools had staff and site-based Health and Safety Committee meetings to determine how they will promote the enhanced health and safety protocols and to develop plans for continuity of learning in the event there is a functional closure.
- Ignite Sans Bite virtual learning sessions will take place on February 10 and April 21.
- The Superintendent had school visits at Quamichan and Maple Bay and enjoyed the opportunity to see teachers, support staff and administrators in action supporting our kids as they learn. Thank you to all our staff members for the work they do and supports they provide for our learners.

Business

Funding Announcement: The Secretary-Treasurer provided a review of the funding announcement which included an additional $3,266,966 for the District. Highlights include:

- Higher than anticipated enrolment (374 standard students, 11 alternate students, and 27.687 Distributed Learning students) generated an additional $3.158 million in funding;
- Due to the increased enrolment, the District had to return a $417,969 enrolment decline supplement;
- There were adjustments in funding due to anticipated vs. actual numbers of students with special needs, English language learners, and Indigenous learners, which resulted in an increase of $396,531. Of this, $161,195 is targeted funding to support Indigenous Education.

2021/2022 Year-End Financial Projection: The November 30, 2021Year-End revenue projections came in $277,105 over budget, mainly due to a variance in the International Student Program. Salaries are coming in close to projection. Casual replacement (illness/vacation) is under budget due to the lack of available replacements. Utility costs have been higher than anticipated due to the cold weather, along with the additional energy required to circulate air through the upgraded filters (COVID). The year-end projection as at November 30, 2021 is for a surplus of $714,218.

2021/2022 Amended Budget Updates: The Secretary-Treasurer reviewed the changes made to the budget since it was adopted in May 2021. Highlights include:

- An increase in enrolment resulted in an additional $3.1million in grants;
- International Student Program revenue is anticipated to increase from $1.5M to $1.8M;
- An increase of $65,000 in rental income due to the lease of Charles Hoey;
- Interest rates have dropped which expected to decrease investment revenue by $28,000;
- An increase in the cost of natural gas contributed to an additional $94,000 which was added to the Utilities budget;
- Increases in per-student funding and International Student Program revenue reduced the amount of Operating Surplus needed to balance the 2021-2022 budget from $2.341M to $1.088M, and will leave $1.253M in unrestricted surplus. There may be demands on the surplus due to anticipated absenteeism, higher utility costs, and additional mask purchases.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Board Planning Session	January 11, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
DSAC Meeting (Trustee Hutchins)	January 13, 10:00 a.m.	Via Zoom
Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee Meeting	January 13, 4:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
Advisory Committee Meeting	January 18, 4:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
DPAC Meeting (Trustee Thorne)	January 20, 7:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
BEBC Meeting	January 25, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
BCPSEA AGM (Trustee Spilsbury)	January 27-28	Via Zoom
Closed and Open Board of Education Meetings	February 1, 3:30/4:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
Provincial Council	February 11-12	Via Zoom