

# The Highlighter

## January 9, 2024

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### Board of Education

**Recognition:** Associate Superintendent Sheryl Koers and Cowichan Secondary School Principal Darcy Hoff were recognized by the Board for their work over the past three years on the new Quw'utsun Secondary School. They began by looking at other school designs both in BC and other jurisdictions, working with architect HDR to create the Statement of Requirements that included a prominent Indigenous theme, and spending their summers evaluating architects and design proposals as well as working towards the 100 percent final design. They considered every detail, including the colours chosen, materials used, signage and wayfinding, furniture design, floor and ceiling types, varieties of plants and greenspace areas, outdoor area design (playfield and basketball court), and even where the white boards and electrical plugs will be located. They provided recommendations for improvements in the design elements such as moving partitions, glazing and audio upgrades, attended bi-weekly meetings to monitor the project progress, worked with students and school staff to ensure their voices were heard, and collaborated with Indigenous Education and partners Island Health and Cowichan Tribes. Sheryl organized the donation by Mosaic of four logs for the pillars in the Gathering Place. Sheryl and Darcy worked tirelessly to ensure that the school is reflective of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning principles: Visible learning; collaborative in nature; opportunities for individual, small group, and large group learning; and an ability to interact with nature. The Board presented them both with tokens of their appreciation.

### Education

#### Personnel Updates:

- Jeff Robinson started as our new Director of Operations mid-December. Jeff has extensive experience in the public sector and brings a wealth of experience in operations, providing direct and operational support to the Ministry of Education and Child Care, most recently in his role as the Senior Manager, Facilities and Workplace Services. Jeff has worked on several capital projects and his experience will benefit the District.
- The Superintendent noted that this is Associate Superintendent Sheryl Koers' last Board Meeting prior to her retirement. Sheryl has been with District for over 36 years, starting as an elementary teacher in 1987, taking on her first leadership role in 1998 as a Vice-Principal, moving to her first Principal role in 2000. She joined the District leadership team in 2012 when she was appointed Acting Director of Elementary Education. Sheryl will be honoured at a retirement gala on January 11, 2024.
- Ashley Bell has been appointed Vice-Principal of Chemainus Secondary School.
- There have been internal and external expressions of interest to the Principal and Vice-Principal pool postings, with interviews being held this week.

**Kindergarten Registration:** Kindergarten registration for children who will be 5 years on or before December 31, 2024 will take place January 15-19 at Mill Bay Nature School, Ecole Cobble Hill and Ecole Mount Prevost, and at catchment schools from January 22-26, during regular office hours. A lottery, if needed, will be held to determine seats at the Nature and French Immersion Schools. Further information on registration and out-of-catchment registration requests can be found in [Administrative Procedure 301](#).



**COWICHAN VALLEY**  
School District

## **Superintendent's Update:**

**Acknowledgements/Appreciation:** The Superintendent acknowledged the staff members who worked while others were off during the winter break, including Payroll, Finance, Human Resources, Purchasing/Receiving, Technology Services, Operations and Transportation, as well as clerical, custodial, grounds, and trades members working to prepare schools and classrooms for the return of students and teachers in January.

**Quw'utsun Secondary School:** Early December a ceremony was held with an Elder who blessed the School's four logs, which were donated by Mosaic. On December 7 Trustees had a tour of the school. On the same day the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer received a delegation of 40 agents from Spain and Italy, who were guests of the International Student Program, and showed them the exterior of the school.

**3-Year School Calendar Update:** The Board is now in the last year of the previously-approved three year calendar. A proposed three-year calendar for the 2024-2027 school years will be made publicly available at the January 30<sup>th</sup> BEBC meeting. The process for public consultation and to receive feedback will be outlined at that time.

**Semester Change:** Semester 1 will end on January 29.

**Black Excellence Day:** Black Excellence Day on January 15 is an opportunity to celebrate the many contributions of Black people in our community and throughout the province and to learn more about Black role models in history and those who are actively making a difference today. January 15 is in honour of the great civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who was born on January 15, 1929.

## **Secretary-Treasurer**

**BC Tripartite Education Agreement:** The District's Joint First Nations Student Transportation Plan has been approved. The Plan will provide an additional bus route for Cowichan Tribes, an additional bus route and bus monitor for Malahat Nation, and morning water taxi service for Penelakut Tribe (students take the ferry home after school).

**Funding Announcement:** The announcement confirmed our funding expectations based on September's 1701 enrolment. Funding is \$1.7M more than in the original budget due to increases in enrolment, and the number of Special Needs and ELL students. Funding is expected to rise again following the February and May enrolment counts.

**Budget Timelines:** The budget cycle for the 2024/25 budget, which outlines key dates for engaging with the Board, was reviewed. The process timeline will be similar to last year. The [timeline](#) is available on the District website.

**Amended Annual Budget Update:** The Secretary-Treasurer provided information on changes to the 2023/2024 budget since it was passed in the spring. Surplus usage is above plan, which is expected as some expenses from last year were rolled over into this budget. Wages are \$1.45M over budget due to wage increases for all staff. Increases for Principals/Vice-Principals/Exempt staff weren't budgeted as we were waiting to receive the funding. Also impacting the budget were the addition of twelve EA positions and an increase of \$945K in benefit costs. The CPP earnings cap for employees rose from \$63K to \$74K. WorkSafe rates are escalating again, raising costs. Without bringing in any

surplus from this current year, we will have used about \$430K more surplus than at year end. Projections are to have over 3% remaining in surplus after surplus from this year is added.

### Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Board Planning	January 16, 4:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
DPAC Meeting (Trustee Croft)	January 18, 7:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Advisory Committee Meeting	January 23, 4:30 p.m.	Inspire Room
BEBC Meeting	January 30, 4:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Closed/Open Board Meetings	February 6, 3:30/4:30 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Partner Liaison Meeting	February 9	Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport
Budget Survey Open Online	February 9 - 23	SD79.bc.ca
Budget Meetings with Partner Groups	February 12 - 16	TBA
Board Planning	February 13, 4:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Advisory Committee Meeting	February 20, 4:30 p.m.	Inspire Room
Public Budget Consultation	February 20, 5:30 p.m.	Inspire Room
Provincial Council (Trustee Croft)	February 24	Virtual
BEBC Meeting	February 27, 4:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Long Service Tea	March 7, 3:45 p.m.	Oceanfront Suites
BCPSEA AGM	April 18-21	Westin Bayshore, Vancouver

#### Board of Education Trustees

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