

The Highlighter

June 4, 2019

Recognition and Delegations

Skills Canada National Competition Medal Winner – The Board congratulated Cowichan Secondary School student Ben Miller, who recently returned from the Skills Canada National Competition in Halifax, Nova Scotia with a silver medal in Collision Repair. Ben was eligible to participate in the National Competition after his gold medal win in the Provincial Competition. Ben recently completed his youth training welding C ticket and is a youth apprentice at Kroffat Auto for Automotive Service. Of note, Ben has been coached by Isherwood Auto Body two days a week since Dec to prepare him for the Skills Canada competitions.

Provincial French Public Speaking Competition - The Board of Education recognized five students who competed in this year's pan-provincial French public speaking competition, Concours d'art oratoire held on May 4th at SFU in Surrey. Emma Anzart from École Cobble Hill won 2nd place in the Grade 7 French Immersion Category for her speech "L'imagination". Other Provincial finalists from SD79 are: Koralie Magnan from École Mount Prevost who competed in the Grade 6 Francophone Category; Nirva Megevand from École Cobble Hill who competed in the Grade 7 Francophone Category; Chantelle Westgate from École Quamichan who competed in the Grade 8 Immersion Category; and Maeve Carlin from Cowichan Secondary who competed in the Grade 10 Immersion Category.

Recognition of Trustee Joe Thorne – Board Chair Spilsbury congratulated Trustee Thorne who was appointed to the British Columbia School Trustees Association's Indigenous Education Committee for a three-year term as Elder/Knowledge Keeper.

Board of Education

Student Travel – The Board granted approval in principle to the Frances Kelsey Secondary School's trip to London, England during Spring Break 2020.

Field Trips to the United States – In May 2017 field trips to the United States were suspended due to uncertainties about border crossings at that time. As there is no longer the same uncertainty with border crossings the Board has rescinded the temporary suspension of field trips to the United States.

National Indigenous Peoples Day – The Board recognizes National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, 2019.



Board of Education (continued)

One Cowichan's Climate Change Request – The Board of Education received an email from One Cowichan requesting that the Board send a letter to local governments urging them to take steps to combat climate change, and inviting them to participate in the Cowichan Climate Summit in early Fall. As a local government body itself, the Board declined to send the letter, but will request instead that the letter be sent to the Board of Education, as it has a role to play in climate change. The Board also welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Cowichan Climate Summit.

Flag Poles – The Pride Flag has been raised on the Board Office's new flag pole, and has generated interest and started conversations. The Board asked staff to look at adding one or more flag poles in order to be able to recognize the local Nations whose children attend District schools.

Rezoning Application for Cannabis Retailer at 2763 Beverly Street – The Board will be informing the Municipality of North Cowichan that it does not support the rezoning application for a cannabis retailer at 2763 Beverly Street as it is within 300 metres of the proposed site for the new Cowichan Secondary School.

Board Policy Regarding Cannabis Rezoning Requests – The Board approved a motion to incorporate the recommendation of VIHA's Medical Health Officers into Policy, which is to maintain a minimum buffer zone of 300 metres, with a preferred buffer of 600 metres, between cannabis retailers and schools.

Education

School Calendar 2019/2020 - One adjustment to the final 2019/2020 School Calendar was made through consultation with the Cowichan District Teachers Association, regarding a professional development day.

Violence in the Workplace and Mental Health – Associate Superintendent explained the current violent/threat incident process, and recapped the program of staff/professional learning focused on understanding behavior and mental health literacy for all staff.

Board Authorized Authority (BAA) Courses – The Board approved ELL 1: Developing, ELL 2: Expanding, and ELL 3: Consolidating courses for implementation in September 2019.

Superintendent's Update:

Superintendent shared highlights of the past month, which included:

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) BC Education Conference in Vancouver
- Pride Month
- Strategic Planning
- International Student Program's year-end celebration



Education (continued)

Poetry Slam - the annual District Poetry Slam took place at Chemainus Secondary. Students performed original works for the panel of community judges. Students were snapping, clapping, drumming, and otherwise supporting each other as they came to the stage to be judged. In the end, a tie for third place! As awards were passed around, the group came together to celebrate and recognized the strength of the shared experience, the support of their peers, and their art.

District Scholarships - During the week of May 13-17 students participated in the District Scholarship Presentations held at each of the District's secondary schools and CVOLC. Topics of the presentations ranged from physical activity, community service, fine arts, technology & trades, and applied design, science & technology. This year there are 87 awards valued at \$1,250 each for a total of \$108,750. Winners will be announced at the schools' award presentations.

Hector McIntosh Speaking Competition – The finals of the 39th Annual Hector McIntosh Public Speaking Competition were held on May 13th. The results of students from SD79 schools were as follows:

Category 2 (Grade 7 & 8): 3rd – Bench Elementary

Category 3 (Grade 9 & 10): 2nd – Frances Kelsey Secondary
 3rd – Frances Kelsey Secondary

DSAC Students at Rotary Club of Duncan's Spelling Bee for Literacy – On May 8th four DSAC students joined Superintendent Robyn Gray, Secretary-Treasurer Jason Sandquist, and Trustee Johanne Kemmler at the Duncan Rotary Spelling Bee for Literacy. The students again chose the team name "The Wannabees" and added a student focus to the event.

SD79 Mini-O Elementary Track Meet – The 5th Annual SD79 Mini-O Track Meet was held on Friday, May 17th at the Cowichan Sportsplex. Along with sunshine, the day brought smiles, face painting, freezies, and trading cards making this year's events a huge success yet again. After the official opening, including a march-in from the North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP, the events began. A big thank you to the students of the International Student Program, and to everyone involved for making the day a success.

Metis Cultural Week - Grade 4/5 students from Chemainus Elementary, Crofton Elementary, École Mt. Prevost, Maple Bay Elementary, and George Bonner Elementary were able to experience a little bit of historic Métis life at Métis Cultural Week 2019 at Glenora Trails Head Park. Students were exploring food and language through the making of bannock, transportation with a real Red River Cart and Voyager Canoe, trading and trapping, dancing the jig to fiddle music, leisure activities with games and crafts, and learning about the buffalo hunt with some Pemmican. These experiences build on work done before the week in exploration of Métis life and history. Each year the schools rotate and each school in the district will experience Métis Week over the course of a few years. A special thanks to our local Cowichan Valley Metis Nation for their teachings.



Education (continued)

Cardboard Boat Building – Students from across our district made a splash with the annual Cardboard Boat Building event which pitted these burgeoning engineers and their cardboard masterpieces against water, time, and the absorbent qualities of cardboard. The boats were constructed in just a few hours earlier in the day, and then launched into the calm waters at the Cowichan Aquatic Centre. After racing their not-so-speedy boats across the 25m pool, the next test of the students' engineering prowess was the timed float and the test of weight carrying capacity. Student after student piled in, sometimes two, often four, and remarkably eight in one boat. Finally, after valiantly serving their purpose, the boats were dredged from the depths and carted outside to dry off.

Clam Gardens trip – Last month students participated in the Clam Gardens Science and Culture Camp at Russell Island in the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. Now in its 6th year, the camp, which was brought together by Parks Canada and School District 79, has seen scores of our students visit and do work on historic clam gardens that were created by Indigenous peoples as a way to better support the resource management of clams and other aquatic food sources in their traditional territories. Students had the opportunity to do this important work, as well as learn about amazing research going on at the gardens and around the parks in Canada. Elders, with stories passed down from generations, gave students the foundation of historic knowledge through an indigenous perspective before modern archeological techniques were shown. On this last trip, stories, crafts, and songs were shared. Beach research and oceanic life identification were popular, as was the underwater unmanned amphibious vehicle (UAV), the remote-controlled video sub. A nature walk, exploring the different plants and their traditional uses was also on offer. Archeologists, both above and below water, came to speak to students about the importance of preserving and understanding these gardens, and students were able to ask divers questions in real time as they explored below. Those that didn't want to get near the water could watch a live video feed from the UAV. An amazing traditional lunch capped off a wonderful day filled with music, song, food, friends, and a wonderful exploration of our region's history. Huy ch q'u to all involved in giving this gift of learning to our students.

Youth Action Day Leadership Conference – Youth Action Day 2019 “For Youth, By Youth” was hosted at Quamichan School on May 15th. Through the Compassionate Leaders Project of the Cowichan Intercultural Society, the student planning team worked hard to organize this event for student delegates from secondary schools in the Cowichan Region. There was an emcee, keynote speakers, a musical guest, free lunch, and participating students were able to pick two workshops to attend. Thank you to Cowichan Intercultural Society Compassionate Leaders Project, the student planning team and community partners for providing this opportunity to our Grades 8-12 students again this year.

Palsson Elementary: Explorative Nature Play - Palsson Elementary students have been busy building and rebuilding structures with their classes and in multi-age groups at outside play time with sticks from the friendship forest. The school staff love how creative students are with their building and imaginative game play. They stress the importance of safety and inclusivity in their explorative nature play and we are pleased with how this is going.



Education (continued)

Crofton Elementary: School Play - Crofton Elementary School performed a rendition of 'Cinderella and the Substitute Fairy Godmother'. The one-day play was hosted at the Crofton Community Centre and saw a nearly packed house for the family-friendly event. Students had been working on this play since January and it was great to see the community turn out to support the students once again. Thank you to the teachers, staff, and students for all the extra work they put in to make this a resounding success.

Bench Elementary: Bee Project - Bench Elementary students have spent the last months deeply learning about bees and their interconnectedness to our foods, communities, history, and culture. Focusing on deep listening, respecting others' perspectives, and indigenous peoples' perspectives, the students have built new bee hives, managed bees and other insects, and studied and improved landscapes to benefit and protect bees. While a lot of the initial learning, including bee-books, in-class (enclosed) beehives, and construction of the student's bee hives, was done at Bench Elementary, the students were invited out to Mr. Ian Low's farm to tend bees and start hives of their own in their newly-designed and created boxes. This complex hive organism needs tending, and inspecting hives and looking for honey weren't the only things happening for the bees on Mr. Low's farm. The larger ecology project focused on place-based learning and changes in the built environment that would affect bees, their food, and their safety. To this end, gardens of 'bee-friendly' plants were planted. Students took time to dig up roots, rocks, and debris and carefully prepare the beds. The seeds were planted, watered, and nurtured in hopes of providing food and security for the hives.

Frances Kelsey Secondary: Indigenous Heritage Day & Thunderbird Pavilion – The school community at Frances Kelsey Secondary School marked Indigenous Heritage Day with a tremendous celebration, and the official opening of the Thunderbird Pavilion and Community Space. The community was treated to a number of activities including a traditional salmon cook by members of the Malahat Nation, displays of carvings, paintings and great discussions with an expert traditional artist, and knowledge of local plants and their uses shared. As well, weaving in both cedar and wool was highlighted. Members of the local Cowichan Valley Metis Nation also shared their history with displays of impressive sewing and bead work inside a tipi. Another hit with the students was the axe-throwing station happening next to the Métis canoe.

The day also marked the official opening of the Thunderbird Pavilion and Community Space. The Thunderbird Pavilion is the cornerstone of this newly-created community space. In the works for over a year, this space boasts a large garden, salmon cook pit, and the new pavilion. This space was envisioned by students, staff, and community as a placemaking initiative and a location where all members of the community could gather and celebrate. This community-based project was created through the hard work of FKSS's grade 8 – 12 shop students and their teacher, the generous donation of beautiful wood by the Malahat Nation, and construction and design expertise by Kinsol Timber Systems Ltd. Although the Thunderbird Pavilion has been in the works for over a year and a half, it was constructed in just one day on Tuesday, April 16. The project saw Kinsol Timbers Systems master builders sharing their expertise and guidance with FKSS students who, together, were able to construct the beautiful structure.



Education (continued)

Alexander Elementary: School Garden – With assistance from the Cowichan Agricultural Seed Hub (located at the Cowichan Incubator Seed Farm on Beverly Street), students from Alexander Elementary School planted squash, cucumbers and melons. Staff from the Cowichan Green Community has been working with student to make seedling mix, seeding in trays, seeding a variety of beans and transplanting broccoli and radishes.

CVOLC: First Peoples Discovery Garden at CVOL and the Grove -The “First People’s Discovery Garden” is starting to come to fruition at Cowichan Valley Open Learning (CVOL) and the Grove. They were fortunate to receive a grant from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation to assist with this endeavor. Both the Grove distributed learning program and the Cowichan Valley Open Learning programs are working together to create this beautiful space and place. With the help of Della Rice, and her cool partner, a student from the home-schooling community, they will be creating a space to not only discover and harvest local indigenous plants and vegetables, but also a space and place that can feed the community for several months each year. They plan to create a garden that is self-sufficient and very productive. In the future they look to continue to create partnerships within the community and to grow and expand this to meet the needs of the Cairnsmore community and school community.

Business

2019-2020 Annual Budget – Trustees approved the 2019-2020 Annual Budget in the amount of \$101,379,377.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Closed Board Meeting	June 4, 3:30 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room (Boardroom)
Open Board Meeting	June 4, 4:30 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room (Boardroom)
DSAC Meeting (Trustee Croft)	June 5, 10:00–11:30 a.m.	Chemainus Secondary School
Mill Bay Nature School Official Opening	June 7, 10:00 a.m.	Mill Bay Nature School
Board Retreat (Strategic Planning)	June 8, 9:00 – 2:30	TBA
Meeting with Town of Lake Cowichan Mayor and Council	June 17, 4:00 p.m.	39 South Shore Road, Lake Cowichan
Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Trustee Doman)	June 18, 1:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room (Boardroom)

