

The Highlighter

March 1, 2022

Board Chair

District Retirement Event: The District Retirement Event will be held on June 13, 2022. It has not yet been determined whether the event will take place in person or via Zoom.

British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Annual General Meeting: The BCSTA AGM will be held April 21-24, 2022 in Vancouver. The Cowichan Valley School Board will be hosting the Indigenous Education Day for the province. Trustee Thorne has been working with Gordon Li, Director of Education Services for the BCSTA, on the design for the event.

New Cowichan Secondary Collaborative Session II: Last fall Cowichan Tribes provided valuable feedback on the new school's design features at a collaborative session with HCMA (the project's architects), Urban One (the builders), Cowichan Tribes and Vancouver Island. Cowichan Tribes' Sul'hween (Elders), Education Committee, Chief and Council will be invited to a second collaborative session on March 9 with Urban One, HCMA, VIU and District staff to gather additional feedback.

Rotary Reads: Meetings have been held with Rotary of Duncan to discuss implementing Rotary Reads in the District. The program, which is being operated successfully in other Districts, would see volunteers reading to primary students in our schools. Planning is underway to have the program start in September and run all school year.

Standing Committee – All Nations Education Council: Trustees Thorne and Spilsbury are meeting with each of the local First Nations and Metis Nation to discuss what they believe would be helpful for Indigenous students, and in particular the initiation of a standing committee for all Nations. While some meetings have yet to take place, the response has been overwhelmingly positive at the meetings that have been held. It is hoped that the next Board Agenda will include the formation of a standing committee for all Nations.

Education

Principal/Vice-Principal Transfer (Process) Update: The Superintendent will be connecting with Principals and Vice-Principals over the next few weeks regarding their interest in being reassigned to another school. Reassignments of Principals and Vice-Principals will be finalized and shared with the Board and schools in late April.

BAA Course – Expanded Core Curriculum Braille 10: This course, which was developed as an elective to help students who are blind or visually impaired to develop competencies in Braille reading and writing, was approved by the Board for implementation in September 2022.

Performing Arts Academy: After a successful year of operation, Adage Dance Academy is ready to expand to a Performing Arts Academy, which would provide opportunities for students to develop skills and passion in the areas of dance, musical theatre, singing, and guitar. The Board of Education



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approved the establishment of the Performing Arts Academy at CVOLC and set fees at \$325 per month, or \$3,250 per year.

Superintendent's Update:

Acknowledgements:

- The District Learning Team worked hard to put on another Ignite Sans Bite session in February which featured a variety of learning opportunities for staff;
- The Tech Department are unsung heroes working diligently to support staff and students, which was highlighted in the recent presentation to the Board by the District Principal of Instruction and Innovation;
- The Superintendent shared a letter she received which thanked staff for working hard to take care of students and ensuring they are learning and kept safe, while working as a team along with other essential workers.

BC Student Learning Survey: The survey, formerly known as the "Satisfaction Survey," is a great opportunity for us to collect feedback, and is available online until April 29 for all Grade 4, 7, 10 and 12 students, their parents, and school-based staff.

Skills Regional Update: While the mid-Island skills competition has been cancelled, the District's Careers Team has been working hard to organize elementary school gravity car competitions as well as a local skills competition.

Catalyst Update: School-based chess tournaments are taking place prior to spring break. Drama students at Frances Kelsey Secondary will be judging video submissions for the District's drama challenge. Opportunities to participate in monthly STEM (primary) and Outdoor Education challenges are shared with schools to support teachers to embed learning enhancement in their classrooms.

District Elder Video Message: A video message by our District Sul'hween (Elder) Dolly Sylvester encouraging our xe'xe' smun'eem (sacred children) to return to school was shared. Dolly's message can be viewed at: <https://sd79.bc.ca/a-message-to-our-xexe-smuneem/>

Mill Bay Nature School Dance Exhibition: Photos were shared from a recent student-led and coordinated dance exhibition which took place after a student, who wanted to have an opportunity to hold a dance exhibition, invited the other students to join in. The powerful expression of child-centered learning may now be an annual event.

Cowichan Secondary School Replacement: Pictures of the site preparation work going on at the new Cowichan Secondary were shared with Trustees.

Ecole Cobble Hill's "Le Carnaval": From February 14 - 18 Ecole Cobble Hill celebrated French Canadian culture through games and festivities such as a French film festival, traditional French folk music, dancing, a parade, and crowning the Carnaval Royalty for the week.



Pink Shirt Day: Photos from activities held across the District on Pink Shirt Day February 23 were shared with Trustees.

Business

Update on COVID Safety Expenditures: The Secretary-Treasurer presented a summary of the Board's expenditures related to COVID during the first half of the school year.

- **Masks:** 146,000 disposable masks for students and staff have been purchased at a cost of \$11,780. In addition, the Board spent \$31,000 to purchase 17 N95 masks for each staff member (over 26,000 masks).
- **Ventilation:** Six portables have been updated with heat recovery ventilators at a cost of approximately \$240,000, which was funded by a combination of provincial and federal funding as well as the annual facilities grant. In addition, 34 standalone HEPA filter units are being ordered for learning spaces that do not have mechanical ventilation, at a cost of approximately \$60,000, part of which will come from federal funding. The District is continuing to replace air filters with MERV 13 filters.
- **Rapid Tests:** The Ministry of Education provided the District with approximately 2400 rapid tests (2 per regular employee). In order to include the District's 300 casual employees in the distribution, the Board used its federal funding to order an additional 600 kits at a cost of \$9,000.
- **Electrostatic Sprayers:** During the preparation of the 2021-2022 Annual Budget the Board allocated \$200,000 to continue enhanced cleaning, including two electrostatic sprayer positions, cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer. Additional provincial funding enabled expansion to four electrostatic sprayer positions to allow every school to be sprayed every day.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
VISTA Branch Meeting	March 5, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Board Planning Session	March 8, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
DSAC Meeting (Trustee Spilsbury)	March 10, 10:00 a.m.	Via Zoom
Board Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee	March 10, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
District Closure/Spring Break	March 14 – 25	Via Zoom
BEBC Meeting	March 29, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Climate Change Committee Meeting	April 1, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Via Zoom



MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Liaison Meetings with Local First Nations and Cowichan Valley Metis Nation	April 1, 1:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Closed and Open Board of Education Meetings	April 5, 3:30/4:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
Partner Group Liaison Meetings	April 8, 1:00 – 5:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
Board Planning Session	April 12, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Special BEBC Meeting	April 14, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Advisory Committee Meeting	April 19, 4:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
Public Budget Consultation Meeting	April 19, 5:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
BCSTA Annual General Meeting	April 21 – 24	Vancouver
BEBC Meeting	April 26, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Special BEBC Meeting	April 28, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom

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