

The Highlighter

May 4, 2021

Board Chair

News Updates:

- Trustee de Groot was congratulated on her retirement from her position as Chair of Literacy Now Cowichan, where she spent many years leading literacy in the Cowichan Valley. A grant has been created to honour her community service and educational legacy.
- On May 5, 2021, the Cowichan Leader Group will mark the National Day of Awareness by hanging red dresses in downtown Duncan. Trustees Spilsbury and Thorne will hang a red dress to help bring attention to the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- COVID-19 vaccines will be available for staff within the next two weeks. Thank you to the Government, the Provincial Health Office and Island Health for recognizing the importance of K-12 staff and the importance of K-12 education.

Government to Government Meeting - The Municipality of North Cowichan's Race Relations Committee organized a Government to Government Meeting to increase relationships within the local governments, and to increase their knowledge of Indigenous peoples. The Board was represented at the meeting by Trustees Croft, Kemmler, Thorne and Spilsbury. Also in attendance were representatives of Cowichan Tribes, the Mayor and Councilors of North Cowichan, the City of Duncan, and the Towns of Lake Cowichan and Ladysmith, as well as the Chair and Directors of the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee - The first meeting of the Board's Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee will take place on May 6, 2021. The meetings will be facilitated by well-known public speaker Kevin Lamoureux, who has been an Educational Lead for the National Center for Truth and Reconciliation, a Scholar in Residence for several school divisions, and a faculty member at the University of Winnipeg. The Committee includes eight secondary students from across the District. Meetings for the Committee are scheduled through May 2022.

Board Retreat/Performance Review - Gordon Li, BCSTA's Director - Education Services, will facilitate a performance review for Trustees through individual questionnaires which will help direct the focus for the upcoming Board Retreat. The BCSTA has put out three learning packages for Boards: The Rights and Responsibilities of Boards; Government Processes for Boards; and Advocacy for Boards.

Climate Change Committee - The Board declared a climate emergency in 2020, following a presentation by For Our Kids. Students have continued to share that climate change is one of their biggest concerns. There are many great climate initiatives taking place within the District, but no overall climate change plan. The Board passed a motion to create a Standing Climate Change Committee, commencing October 2021.



COWICHAN VALLEY
School District

Pride Month – The Board directed that the Pride flag be flown at the School Board Office from May 31 to the end of June to symbolize its support of diversity and inclusion, and specifically for those members of the community who identify as LGBTQ2+.

Education

Introduction of Margaret Olsen - The Superintendent introduced Margaret Olsen, who assumed the role of District Principal of Human Resources on April 15. Margaret brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from previous positions in the educational sector. Welcome Margaret!

Principal/Vice-Principal Assignments – The Principal/Vice-Principal Assignments 2021-2022, which have been shared with all schools, were reviewed.

Principal/Vice Principal	Assigned/Reassigned to	Effective
Charlie Coleman	District Principal, Indigenous Education	August 1, 2021
Mary Peter	District Vice-Principal, Indigenous Student Achievement	July 1, 2021
Kevin van der Linden	Principal, Open Learning	August 1, 2021
Ann Kissinger	Vice-Principal, Open Learning	August 1, 2021
Jennie Hittinger	Vice-Principal, Cowichan Secondary	August 1, 2021
Scott Jackson	Vice-Principal, Chemainus Secondary	August 1, 2021
Venessa MacDowell	Vice-Principal, Frances Kelsey Secondary	August 1, 2021
Kyla Bridge	Vice-Principal, Bench Elementary	August 1, 2021
Delyth Morgan	Vice-Principal, George Bonner Elementary	August 1, 2021
Camila Bhandari-Arscott	Vice-Principal, DL Virtual Classroom	August 1, 2021
Ashley Bell	Vice-Principal, Lake Cowichan School	August 1, 2021

District Coordinators – The Superintendent congratulated the Coordinators who will be continuing their positions in 2021-2022, and commended them for their excellent work leading learning across the School District.

- Hannah Morales, District Coordinator of Indigenous Student Success
- Rich Ready, District Coordinator of Instruction and Innovation (Elementary)
- Corina Fitznar, District Coordinator of Instruction and Innovation (Secondary)
- Lindy Thompson, District Coordinator of Inclusion Support
- Brenda Lee, Early Learning Coordinator
- Ryan Gough, District Coordinator of Careers

Cowichan Secondary School Replacement Update – There are three proponents looking to be the builders of the new Cowichan Secondary School. The third set of three-day collaborative sessions is underway, and will finish tomorrow. The winning proponent may be selected as early as late August, and it is hoped that work may begin on the site by fall.

Educational Initiatives – The Board redirected some of its federal COVID funding to create outdoor classrooms. These outdoor classrooms will be located at Alexander Elementary, Chemainus Elementary, Ecole Cobble Hill, Cowichan Valley Open Learning, Frances Kelsey Secondary, Khowhemun Elementary, Mill Bay Nature School, Palsson Elementary, and Quamichan School.

The District is looking to partner with some of our Nations to provide transition programs to help learners that have been away from school during the pandemic to reengage with their schools.



Preliminary conversations have taken place with Khowhemun, Alexexander, Quamichan, Cowichan and Chemainus Secondary.

Marketing Plan: District Programs - Mike Russell, Director of Communications, provided an overview of the marketing plan underway for the District's unique programs:

- Inquisitive Design Technology Program;
- Mill Bay Nature Clans Program;
- Distance Learning Virtual Classroom;
- The Grove:
 - Swallowtail Program;
 - At-Home Program;
 - Blended Distributed Learning

Information, including videos on each of the programs, is being shared through the District's social media outlets. Work to improve the District's appearance in Google search results for educational options was completed. Hits on the District's website via Facebook links increased from 127 hits during the two-week period prior to the start of the marketing program, to over 1,100 for the subsequent two weeks. Web flow (following links once on the District's site) has also increased substantially.

A parent information night will be held to provide families with an opportunity to speak with the heads of the departments for the various programs.

District Scholarships - The District has been allocated 93 scholarships this year, which is up from 83 in 2020. The scholarships, valued at \$1,250, will be divided among secondary schools based on their number of graduates. Judging will begin next week.

Dance Academy at CVOLC – The Board approved a Dance Academy for September 2021, which grew out of an unofficial partnership with Adage Studio which was formed during the past year. The Academy will be an opportunity for students in Grades 8-12 to spend their school days doing a combination of academics/PE (taught by the District's teachers) and dance (taught by Adage's professional instructors). Fees for the Academy will be \$315/month, or \$3,150/year.

Board Authority Authorized (BAA) Courses – The Board approved eleven courses for implementation in September 2021. Athletic Leadership 10-12 and Principles of Sport 10-12 are related to Cowichan Secondary's new Rugby Academy. Also approved were Lake Ambassador 11, Library Studies 11, Assistive Technology 11, and Post-Secondary Prep 12.

Superintendent's Update:

Rainbow Crosswalks - At the April Board Meeting Inclusive Education was acknowledged for its role in the rainbow crosswalk initiative. The Superintendent apologized for not being aware of all the history related to this initiative, and shared that the crosswalks were initiated, and in some cases completed by students with support from staff, the Lake Cowichan Teachers Association, the Cowichan Valley Teachers' Union and support from the BC Teachers' Federation.

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia will be observed on May 17 to support people of all sexual and gender diversities.



Student Learning Assessments - The K-3 Early Success Screen, Grades 1-8 District Wide Write, and DART for Grades 4 and 9 will take place this spring.

April 19 Non-Instructional Day - Shelley Moore provided an engaging keynote presentation on Moving Towards Equity and Inclusion.

Young Authors' Conference - Approximately 100 students from Grades 5-12 representing 23 schools including DL Virtual Classroom attended the annual conference. This year students were able to attend a Zoom session with one of eight published authors. Student submissions have been bound and are available for Trustees.

Ready Set Learn and Ready Set Go - Ready Set Learn is a community-based program facilitated by Strong Start educators, which will be held at parks throughout the Valley. Ready Set Go are school-based sessions hosted by elementary schools and Kindergarten teachers to welcome incoming Kindergarten students. The planning team has designed a story walk for this year's events. More information on these events will be coming out soon.

Duncan's Hul'q'umi'num Street Sign Project - The Downtown Duncan Business Improvement Association (DDBIA), City of Duncan and Cowichan Tribes partnered to name several downtown streets with Hul'q'umi'num names. Alexander Elementary teacher, Kelly Girvan, partnered with Cultural Language Teacher Claudia Sylvester to select seven Hul'q'umi'num-speaking students to voice the seven street names. This community resource is available on our Indigenous Education website, and through the DDBIA and downtown businesses.

Busing Welcome Sign - Transportation Manager Selena Hayes, District Elder and Knowledge Keeper Dolly Sylvester, and District Principal of Indigenous Education Charlie Coleman have been working to develop a Hul'q'umi'num welcome sign for the new bus servicing Malahat Nation students. It is hoped the program will be expanded to include other buses and routes to bring elements of the District's Strategic Plan to life.

Frances Kelsey Secondary School - Students and staff can enjoy new outdoor seating in front of the school on benches constructed by Mr. Pimenta's Grades 10, 11 and 12 shop classes, which were funded by a grant won by Mr. Hart.

Ignite Sans Bite - May 13 will be the final virtual learning session in the 2020-2021 series. Further information will be out shortly.

Indigenous Education Provincial Gathering - A number of staff members represented the District at virtual event held April 7 and 8.

BC Superintendents' Association - A District team participated in the virtual Spring Forum on April 22, which had attendees imagining schools as places of healing through Truth and Reconciliation. The event was hosted by Kevin Lamoureux, who is the facilitator for the Board's new Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee.

Indigenous Outcomes Team - The team will be in the District on May 12 to meet with District staff.



Business

2021-2022 Annual Budget – The Board approved the 2021-2022 Annual Budget in the amount of \$105,707,554. The balanced budget was shaped by the 2021-2022 Budget Guiding Principles, as well as the Strategic Plan’s four priorities. The Board attended fourteen separate meetings during the budget development process. Opportunities for input were provided through a public survey, a public meeting, and meetings with partner groups. Secretary-Treasurer Jason Sandquist thanked Karen Blow, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, and the Finance Department for all their contributions to the budget process.

2021-2022 Annual Facilities Grant Plan - Highlights of the work to be completed include: window replacement at Alexander Elementary, inclusive washroom at Bench Elementary; exterior painting of Khowhemun Elementary; moving of two portables at Palsson to make space to accommodate a third; completion of the final phase of recommissioning at Mill Bay Nature School, boiler replacements at the School Board Office and Quamichan School, Thetis Island water treatment system, and exterior painting of the School Board Office.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee	May 6, 4:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
Early Learning and Child Care Committee	May 7, 1:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Board Planning	May 11, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
DSAC (Trustee Doman)	May 13, 10:00 a.m.	Via Zoom
Advisory Committee	May 18, 4:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
DPAC (Trustee Croft)	May 20, 7:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
BEBC	May 25, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
District Retirement Event	June 14, Time TBA	Via Zoom

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