

The Highlighter

May 5, 2020

Board Chair

Thank You to Staff – On behalf of the Board of Education, Trustee Spilsbury thanked all staff for keeping each other, students and families safe, and for supporting students and families in so many ways. Last week 400 food hampers were delivered to students and families. Over 100 students attended our educational support program for children of essential services workers in our schools. All schools were continuously cleaned to be safe and healthy, and students have received contact and educational programs. Trustees have heard from parents who are thankful to staff, and who are amazed and grateful for staff and the District's support for students, families and communities.

Board of Education

Cowichan Secondary School Replacement Neighbourhood Learning Space – The Board determined that the Neighbourhood Learning Centre Space in the new Secondary School will be allocated to Indigenous Language and Culture, Health and Wellness, and Innovations and Technology.

Pride Flag – The Board requested that the pride flag be flown at the School Board Office from May 30, 2020 to the end of June 2020 to symbolize its support of diversity and inclusion."

Graduation - Trustees directed staff to explore opportunities that celebrate the achievement of our Grade 12's through commencement activities that may look different from traditional commencement and report back to the Board at the next Board Meeting.

Education

Maintain a Healthy and Safe Environment for all Students, Families and Employees – A number of health and safety protocols have been established. Principals and Vice-Principals are providing local health and safety protocols specific to school sites. The



Health and Safety Manager and Health and Wellness Coordinator have provided Zoom opportunities to share protocols. District staff have established a working group to support staff around emotional/mental health supports.

Provide the Services Needed to Support Children of our Essential Workers – As a learning community, elementary schools have provided supports for Tier 1 and Tier 2 Essential Services Workers. Thirteen of 16 elementary schools are supporting over 100 students. The ESW children are being supported by Educational Assistants in partnership with 1-2 teachers, who are providing the educational services component.

Support Vulnerable Students Who May Need Special Assistance – Alongside the framework for the continuity of learning, a framework for supporting priority learners has been created. Examples of support include:

- Providing up to 400 food hampers a week to our families;
- School-based teams have been connecting and providing support for all schools;
- Communicating with and supporting teachers to provide inclusive learning;
- Providing Educational Assistants with opportunities to upgrade their technical skills to help them support learners;
- Facilitating ongoing communication between schools, students and families.
- Transitioning work to prepare for next year's incoming Kindergarten students, and students from Grades 6 and 7 who are headed into secondary schools;
- Establishing partnerships with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Vancouver Island Health Authority, and Cowichan Valley Youth Services;
- District elementary counsellors: have compiled a list of agencies that are open and able to provide mental health supports for students and families; have provided a range of at-home activities for social/emotional learning; and are looking at how to support students who may have some behaviour concerns;
- Behaviour support consultants are supporting our diverse learners at home;
- District counsellors have facilitated online learning opportunities for Educational Assistants on mental health literacy and trauma informed practice.

Provide Continuity of Educational Opportunities for All Students – Teachers have been connecting with students two to three times per week, with two to five hours of learning opportunities per week for each student. Teachers are focusing on the instructional loop in terms of providing an opportunity, providing an interaction, and providing feedback, with focus on the core and curricular competencies that are embedded in our redesigned curriculum. There have been three weeks of learning opportunities for students across the district, through a range of methods, including: paper based (picked up or delivered to homes); activities sent home; Zoom or Office 365 team sessions. Online learning tools have been explored and used. Many teachers have stepped out of their comfort zone and learned programs to host sessions for learners. Educational Assistants are joining the Zoom sessions and are



hosting their own additional supports. Some teachers have reported students who had previously been too shy to participate in class are now engaging. Families are connecting and engaging with teachers. Some teachers envision making the connections part of their regular practice as they move forward.

Superintendent’s Update:

- The Superintendent acknowledged Administrative Professionals’ Day which was held on April 22, and expressed thanks for the support of all of the District’s Administrative Assistants.
- The Superintendent held Zoom sessions with all Educational Assistants on April 23 and 24 to acknowledge the importance of their work and express appreciation for their work, in particular their support of children of Essential Service Workers.
- In order to operationalize the Strategic Plan, four half-day sessions will be held, with one session on each of the Plan’s four priorities. Teachers and support staff will be invited to work on strategies related to priorities on the Strategic Plan.
- A number of Senior Team members who had planned to travel to the Deeper Learning Dozen meetings are participating in weekly sessions being held by Zoom.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Board Planning Meeting	May 12, 4:00 p.m.	Via ZOOM
Advisory Committee Meeting	May 19, 4:30 p.m.	Via ZOOM
Board Education and Business Committee Meeting	May 26, 4:00 p.m.	Via ZOOM
District Scholarships – details to be announced at a later date	TBA	
District Retirement Celebration	June 24, 5:00 p.m.	Via Zoom

