

The Highlighter

November 7, 2023

Board of Education:

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair: The Board of Education held its annual election for the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair. Board Chair Cathy Schmidt and Vice-Chair Elizabeth Croft were both re-elected by acclamation.

Board Recognition:

Cowichan Secondary School Indigenous Technology Class – Outdoor Learning Space: The Cowichan Secondary School Indigenous Technology Class, including staff members Tobias Lemay, Skye Ramage and the late Rita George-Green along with students in Grades 10-12, were recognized for creating an outdoor learning space at the School Board Office. The class partnered with District employees to create the learning space which includes wooden benches and a Speaker's chair. Two hundred and fifteen orange hands were also made and placed on the fence to acknowledge the Kamloops 215. Wood was added to the fence to create outlines of local mountains, and some of the 215 hands were placed in the shape of a sun setting over the mountainside. This learning area is a bookable space that can be accessed by classes from Alexander, Quamichan, and Cowichan Secondary, as well as staff from the School Board Office.

Education

Personnel Updates: Amanda Stone, who has been a member of the District's Transportation Department for nine years, started her new role as Assistant Transportation Manager on November 2. In addition to being a bus driver, Amanda is a certified Driver Trainer and has trained drivers both within the District and across the province.

The position of Director of Operations has been filled, with the incumbent starting in the role December 11. The name of the successful applicant will be announced in the near future.

Principal/Vice-Principal Updates: The Superintendent announced the following recent changes in assignments:

- Brenda Lee has transferred from Vice-Principal at Discovery Elementary to Chemainus Elementary as of October 6;
- Emily Nickason, a teacher at Discovery Elementary, has been appointed Temporary Vice-Principal at the school effective October 6;
- Jennifer Merrett has been appointed Temporary Principal at Tansor Elementary effective November 6;
- Colleen Mullin, who recently returned from secondment as Principal of Stz'uminus Elementary School and was recently assigned Vice-Principal at Chemainus Secondary, has been assigned the role of Temporary Principal at The Grove effective November 6;



COWICHAN VALLEY
School District

- Lindy Thompson, who had recently moved from Vice-Principal at Chemainus Secondary to the Temporary Vice-Principal at Cowichan Secondary, has returned as temporary Vice-Principal at Chemainus Secondary;
- Kim Darbyshire, District Vice-Principal of Inclusive Learning, has been appointed Temporary Vice-Principal at Cowichan Secondary effective November 6 until the return of Jennifer Merrett.

District Student Enrolment: District student enrolment (headcount, not full time equivalent) is 8,520 students, with 1,789 Indigenous students, and 1,226 designated students (644 receive funding as they are designated either Level 1, 2 or 3, and 582 are non-funded). In addition, the District currently has 183 International students.

Communicating Student Learning Reporting Templates: The Board passed motions approving the Cowichan Valley School District Classroom Assessment and Reporting Guidelines, K-12, and delegating approval of revised or alternate templates for written updates to the Superintendent.

Enhanced District Communication Tool: The Board passed a motion to approve the annual licensing of SchoolMessenger and SafeArrival programs for the District. The platform allows quick, efficient communication to be pushed out to parents and families via email, text and phone calls without having to listen to the radio, or explore the website and social media, which can be challenging during power outages. The platform also allows schools to push out communication if their child doesn't arrive at school.

Superintendent's Update:

Acknowledgements/Appreciation: The Superintendent acknowledged and thanked the CUPE Pro D Committee for putting on an excellent learning opportunity for CUPE staff on October 20 that featured keynote speaker Dr. Jeremy Goldberg.

Administrative Procedures Updates: The Superintendent advised of the following recent updates:

- **Removed AP 240 – Student Counselling Services:** This AP was removed as job descriptions and postings address this more clearly and completely;
- **Revised AP 261 - Educational Trips – Out-of-Province/Country Travel:** This AP was updated to reflect current practice;
- **New AP 302 - Admission of International Students without Fee:** This AP was reviewed and updated to reflect current practice;
- **Removed AP 304 - Refugee Students:** Registration information for Refugee students is captured in AP 302;
- **Revised AP 562 – Transportation of Students – Field Trips:** This AP was reviewed and updated.

Quw'utsun Secondary School: Photos were shared of the October 13 construction milestone when the last steel girder was installed and the final concrete pour was prepared. The girder was signed by dignitaries and on-site construction crew before being lifted into place and installed as the final structural piece of the school.

Ecole Mt Prevost - Saving our Fruit, Saving our Future: The Superintendent shared photos of the School's Grade 6/7 class who found a unique way to learn about food security and food waste in our community while being an active part of the solution. The class joined the FruitSave program and volunteers from the Cowichan Green Community to source out fruit trees that needed to be picked. Fruit was picked from both an apple and a pear tree, with the fruit being divided equally between the homeowner, Cowichan Green Community (for distribution within the community) and the

school. The learning continued at the school where students made pear jam, pear cake and an apple crumble. Students are eager to continue this work next year.

Lake Cowichan School Grade 12 Partnership with Local RCMP: Every month Grade 12 students at LCS attend informative assemblies focused on preparing them for adulthood and encouraging them to make safe and smart decisions. These assemblies are part of a partnership with the local RCMP through its CAPRA program. Photos were shared of the fun and learning that takes place at these informal events.

Parent-Child Mother Goose: Fall Mother Goose sessions are underway. These playful experiences are for children from birth to five years and their adults and include activities based on rhymes, songs and story telling that enrich parent/child relationships. Registration for the sessions is through the District's Learning Links.

All Superintendents' Meeting with the Deputy Minister: On October 12 the Superintendent traveled to Vancouver to attend this meeting which included updates on the K-12 workforce, school outreach teams, the BC School Superintendents' Association (BCSSA) Summer Leadership Gathering, and improving student transitions from K-12 to post-secondary.

Vancouver Island School Trustees' Association: The Superintendent joined Trustees in Nanaimo for the VISTA fall meeting on October 13-14.

All Nations Indigenous Education Council: The Board hosted the Council meeting on October 18 which was attended by representatives of a number of local Nations. The next meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2024.

Great BC ShakeOut: Many schools in the District, along with staff at the School Board Office, participated in the earthquake drill which was held at 10:19 a.m. on October 19.

Provincial Assessments: Grade 10 literacy and numeracy assessments and Grade 12 literacy assessments took place October 30 through November 3. The next assessments will take place from January 15 - 26, 2024. Foundation Skills Assessments (FSAs) for students in grades 4 and 7 are underway and will be completed on November 10.

Proposed Amendments to the School Act: On October 26 Minister Singh held a call with Board Chairs and Superintendents to advise of proposed amendments to the *School Act* intended to support better education outcomes for First Nation and other Indigenous students attending provincial public schools and more effective relationships between boards of education and First Nations.

Changes to Grade 10 Social Studies Curriculum: Last week the Ministry announced that beginning in the 2024-26 school year Grade 10 Social Studies curriculum will be broadened to ensure that all students learn about the holocaust.

Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education: On October 26 the Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer and Director of Inclusive Learning attended the awards ceremony at Government House in Victoria. Tanya Leech, who is currently the secretary at Discovery Elementary, was nominated for her work in her previous role at Mill Bay Nature School.

BCSSA Fall Conference: The Superintendent and Associate Superintendents will be attending the fall conference in Vancouver on November 16-17. The conference's theme is Intersectionality: Leading for the Future.

Non-Instructional Day: The November 24th NID will have a focus on Identity, Belonging and Mental Health.

Master's Research Project: Frances Kelsey Secondary School teacher Matthew Franko has received approval to conduct research entitled "Action Research in a Student-Choice Environment" which will compare the traditional physical health (PHE) environment with one with increased student choice.

Adoption Awareness Month: BC recognizes November as Adoption Awareness Month which celebrates the families that give children and youth love and support as permanent members of their family.

Secretary-Treasurer

Cowichan Secondary School Closure and Disposal Public Consultation Process: A public consultation meeting will be held on November 14 at 6:00 p.m. at Cowichan Secondary. The meeting will include an overview of the school's history, catchment area and projections for growth, and will provide an opportunity for the public to give feedback on the closure, disposal and future use of the school. A mechanism to provide feedback will also be available on the District's website until December 31.

Policy 26 – Whistleblower Protection: The Board adopted Policy 26 – Whistleblower Protection which is available on the District's website at <https://sd79.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Policy-26-Whistleblower-Protection-1.pdf>.

Amendment to the 2023/2024 Annual Budget: The Board passed a motion approving the addition of 12 Educational Assistants to the 2023/2024 Annual Budget.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
DSAC (Trustee Lise)	November 9, 10:00 a.m.	Cowichan Secondary
Community Consultation – Cowichan Secondary Closure and Disposal Process	November 14, 6:00 p.m.	Cowichan Secondary School Cafeteria
DPAC	November 14, 7:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Advisory Committee	November 21, 4:30 p.m.	Inspire Room
BCSTA Trustee Academy	November 23 – 25	Westin Bayshore, Vancouver
BEBC	November 28, 4:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Closed/Open Board Meetings	December 5, 3:30/4:30 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Board Bus Tour	December 7, 12:00 p.m.	Meet at Quw'utsun Secondary
Climate Action Advisory Committee	December 8, 12:00-1:30 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Board Planning	December 12, 4:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
DSAC Meeting	December 14, 10:00 a.m.	Chemainus Secondary
Advisory Committee	December 19, 4:30 p.m.	Inspire Room
Board of Education/District Leadership Team Winter Holiday Breakfast	December 22, 8:00 a.m.	School Board Office Complex - Inspire Room

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