

# The Highlighter

## October 4, 2022

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### Board Chair

**BCSTA Certificates/Pins Presentation:** The BC School Trustees' Association (BCSTA) recognizes Trustees for their service at the end of their terms. Certificates and term pins were presented to each Trustee on behalf of the BCSTA.

- Johanne Kemmler, 1 term
- Elizabeth Croft, 2 terms
- Randy Doman, 2 terms
- Rob Hutchins, 2 terms
- Joe Thorne, 2 terms
- Barb de Groot, 4 terms
- Candace Spilsbury, 4 terms

**SOGI Joint Statement:** Jennifer Whiteside, the Minister of Education and Child Care, joined with all other education partners to release a statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). They stand in solidarity to ensure every school is a place where all students deserve to be welcomed, included and respected in a safe learning environment, while being fully and completely themselves. The statement says there is no room for any type of discrimination in our schools and reiterates that BC's K-12 curriculum includes a focus on valuing diversity and respecting differences, as well as human rights and responses to discrimination. The Board's Community of Care Pledge, which was signed by all Trustees, states the District's values which align with the Ministry's statement.

**World Teachers' Day – October 5, 2022:** World Teachers' Day will be acknowledged across the District to recognize the professionalism and commitment of teachers and support staff.

**National Principals' Month - October:** At the September Open Board meeting the Board directed the Superintendent and Board Chair to create a plan to recognize and thank Principals and Vice-Principals for their outstanding leadership in schools for students, staff, parents and the community.

**Cowichan Valley Indigenous Day of Learning – September 26, 2022:** The Board in partnership with DPAC hosted the Indigenous Day of Learning: From Grief to Medicine, which was a local version of a similar event hosted by the Board at the BCSTA conference in April. Approximately 200 attendees at S'amuna' House were privileged to learn about Coast Salish history, culture and language thanks to speakers John George, Wayne Charlie, Albie Joe Charlie and Trustee Joe Thorne. Huy ch q'u to Siem Tun (Trustee Thorne) for organizing, Cowichan Tribes who supported us, and District staff for their support.

**Local Education Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding Celebration and Inaugural Meeting of the All Nations Indigenous Education Council - September 28, 2022:** The historic celebration and inaugural meeting were attended by representatives of seven Nations. This is the first time in the District's history that Local Education Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding have been in place with all (eight) Nations: Cowichan Tribes, Lyackson First Nation, Halalt First Nation, Malahat Nation, Metis Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Stz'uminus First Nation, and Ts'uubaa-asatx Nation. Attendees



**COWICHAN VALLEY**  
School District

recognized the importance of continuing to meet to support all students, and in particular the Indigenous students in the Cowichan Valley.

**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - September 30, 2022:** Thank you to the many people from the District who attended the event to support our local Indigenous community, and acknowledge the tragic loss of so many children. According to the news, an estimated 6,000 people attended the local walk.

**Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Meeting with Minister Whiteside - September 13, 2022:** On September 13, 2022 the Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer and Board Chair met with the Minister of Education and Child Care and several members of staff. The meeting was arranged by the City of Duncan, and was attended by its Mayor and Councilors, the Mayor of North Cowichan, and MLA Sonia Furstenau. The strength of collaboration of Cowichan Valley leadership was recognized by the Minister. The District's message was the importance of funding for seismic upgrading at Alexander and Quamichan. If funding was available when the new secondary school is opened, the existing Cowichan Secondary could be used as a swing school during the upgrades.

**Premier's Awards for Excellence in Education:** Last month Larry Mattin, Director of Instruction, was announced as a finalist in the District Leadership category. The Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer and Board Chair will join Larry at the awards ceremony on October 14, 2022 at Government House in Victoria.

**Saying Goodbye:** Board Chair Candace Spilsbury thanked staff for their hard work, and expressed how much she enjoyed working with them all. She also thanked Trustees, whom she called her "dream team," for being collaborative and supportive. Trustee de Groot thanked Trustees and staff for the amazing learning experience during her four terms.

## Education

### Personnel Updates:

- Superintendent Robyn Gray introduced the following new staff members to Trustees:
  - Debbie Hunter, Transportation Manager, recently moved from Edmonton where she worked as the Transportation Director for Edmonton Catholic Schools. Debbie brings a breadth of knowledge from over 17 years' experience.
  - Mary Jo Wilson is transitioning into the role of Health and Safety Manager. She has worked in the health and safety field for over fifteen years and comes with extensive knowledge from her work as the Regional Safety Advisor for the BC Construction Safety Alliance and experience as a Safety Auditor.
- Trustees were updated on the following updates to Principal/Vice-Principal assignments:
  - Ann Kissinger, Vice-Principal at The Grove, has been assigned Temporary Principal at Chemainus Elementary. Her Vice-Principal role at the Grove will be overseen by Jennie Hittinger, who will provide dual Vice-Principal support to The Grove as well as Cowichan Secondary.
  - Mark Williams, a teacher at Khowhemun Elementary, has been assigned to a Temporary Vice-Principal role at the school.

**Enrolment:** The Superintendent advised Trustees that as of September 30, 2022 the District's enrolment is 8,441. This is an increase of 110 students over the previous year, mainly at the elementary level.

**Orange Shirt Week: Every Child Matters:** Many events were held throughout the week, including an Indigenous-focused Non-Instructional Day on Monday. District Principal of Indigenous Education

Charlie Coleman shared a slide show of events held across the District for Orange Shirt Week. The Superintendent thanked Charlie and Indigenous Education team for the work they do.

**Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA):** The Foundation Skills Assessment will take place in the District between October 10 and November 8 this year. The FSA is an annual province-wide assessment of the academic skills of all B.C. students in grades 4 and 7, and provides parents, teachers, schools, school districts and the Ministry of Education with important evidence on how well students are progressing in the foundation skills of Literacy and Numeracy. Parents of students in Grades 4 and 7 received a letter from the Superintendent as well as a letter from the Board regarding the importance of students participating in the FSA.

### **Superintendent's Update:**

#### Acknowledgements/Appreciation

- **Non-Instructional Day September 26:** The Indigenous-focused Non-Instructional Day and day of learning was incredibly well organized. The morning was opened in a good way by District Elder Dolly Sylvester, and featured a performance by the Tzinquaw dancers and "Learning with a Light Heart" by keynote speaker Monique Gray Smith. The afternoon had a variety of excellent workshops including a bus tour. We raise our hands in thanks to staff and the guest speakers for the incredible day.

**2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey (McCreary):** The District will be participating in the survey, which takes place every five years. The results are used locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to understand and support healthy youth development including changes in youth health.

**Fall District-Wide Assessments:** The data collected in October will be used at the class, school and District level to inform instruction and how resources are spent. This is the first year of implementation for the K-9 district-wide assessments which were created by teachers in our District for our learners. The Childhood Experience Questionnaire (CHEQ) for parents of kindergarten students will provide information from families to the kindergarten teachers to help them understand and support their learners.

**Alexander Kindergarten Welcome Ceremony:** On September 21 a Kindergarten Welcome Ceremony, organized by Indigenous Education staff and Counsellor Richard Matthews, was held in the outdoor classroom at the School Board Office. The kindergarten students from Alexander Elementary were welcomed in a traditional way by District Elder and Knowledge Holder, Dolly Sylvester, and received gifts as they departed.

**Rotary Reads Program:** The District has been working with Rotary partners for the past year and a half on the Rotary Reads Program. On September 22 eight Rotary Reads members met with the District Principal of Inclusive Learning and the Coordinator of Early Learning to kick off this annual program.

**Garden House Foundation Charity 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Book Sale:** The annual sale will take place at George Bonner Elementary on October 29 and 30. Proceeds from the sale provide grants to Cowichan Family Life, Cowichan Women Against Violence and Duncan & District SPCA. Everyone is invited to attend.

**Terry Fox Run:** Many District schools participated in the run and raised money for cancer research. The total raised across the District was not yet available.

**Great BC ShakeOut Earthquake Drill:** Many District schools, as well as staff at the School Board Office, will participate in the earthquake drill at 10:20 a.m. on October 20th.

Tour de Rock: The Tour de Rock will be travelling through Chemainus, Lake Cowichan, Duncan, Shawnigan, and Mill Bay between October 3 and October 5.

Foster Family Month: October was first proclaimed Foster Family Month in British Columbia in 1990. Whether they have been foster parents for many years or are brand new, all are critically important to the health and safety of our province's most vulnerable children. We recognize and honour these incredible foster caregivers in our community and their dedication to improve the lives of those children who need them.

Dyslexia Awareness Month: October 2022 is the fifth annual Dyslexia Awareness Month which is recognized by schools in a variety of ways. Wearing red is a way to celebrate the "Mark it Read" awareness campaign.

## Business

**Student and Family Affordability Fund**: On August 29, 2022 the Ministry of Education and Child Care announced a 60 million dollar Student and Family Affordability Fund for BC Public Schools. A consultation process with First Nations partners and Indigenous Groups, DPAC, school PACs, students, teachers, Principals and Vice-Principals, the Advisory Committee, Indigenous Education Department, and Nourish Cowichan has been completed. A tiered distribution to schools was approved by the Board.

### Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Board Planning	Oct. 11, 4:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room (Board Room)
DSAC (Trustee Croft)	Oct. 13, 10:00 a.m.	TBD
DPAC Meeting	Oct. 20, 7:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Inaugural/Open Board Meeting	Nov. 8, 4:30 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
Advisory Committee	Nov. 15, 4:30 p.m.	Inspire Room
Tentative: Trustee Orientation/Retreat	Nov. 18, 3:00-7:00 p.m. Nov. 19, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Or Nov. 25, 3:00-7:00 p.m. Nov. 26, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	TBD
BEBC Meeting	Nov. 22, 4:00 p.m.	Yuxwule' Eagle Room
BCSTA's Academy and New Trustee Orientation	Dec. 1-3	Westin Bayshore, Vancouver

#### Board of Education Trustees

Candace Spilsbury, Chair  
Johanne Kemmler, Vice-Chair  
Elizabeth Croft  
Barb de Groot  
Randy Doman  
Rob Hutchins  
Joe Thorne