

The Highlighter

October 5, 2021

Board Chair

World Teachers' Day: Trustee Spilsbury thanked teachers and staff and wished them all the best for World Teachers' Day. She and the other Trustees enjoyed the opportunity to visit schools and see students and staff, and to connect with the schools.

New Cowichan Secondary School Blessing/Preparation of the Land: Trustee Spilsbury thanked Cowichan Tribes for their support in hosting the day and leading the amazing ceremony, which was attended by Trustees, senior management, delegates of local, provincial and federal governments, and Cowichan Secondary School administration, staff and student representatives.

September 30th National Day of Truth and Reconciliation: Many people from the District and the community joined together to participate in the powerful walk and listen to the impactful speeches.

Board Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee: The Committee's second meeting was held on September 23, led by facilitator Kevin Lamoureux, Education lead for the National Centre for *Truth and Reconciliation*. Following the meeting, a local reporter who sits on the Committee asked if she could write about her experience there (see: <https://thediscourse.ca/cowichan-valley/on-reconciliation-and-education>). The last paragraph is a wonderful testament to our educators. The Board adds their thanks to District's staff members for the work that they do.

Board Ad Hoc COVID Transition Committee Update: The COVID Transition Committee welcomed new member, Medical Health Officer Dr. Shannon Waters, who brings experience and knowledge on COVID to meetings and provides great advice. The Committee has continued to meet and collaborate to keep kids and staff safe.

Vancouver Island School Trustees Association (VISTA): Trustee Thorne opened and closed the conference on October 2, which featured two speakers: BCSTA Director Dr. John Chenowith, a Trustee from Merritt, who spoke on Truth and Reconciliation; and Medical Health Officers Dr. Sandra Allison and Dr. Shannon Waters who updated Trustees on COVID protocols.

Education

Personnel Updates: Blair Higgs will join the District as Facilities Manager on November 8. Blair is currently the Assistant Manager of Building Maintenance at the Greater Victoria School District. Many thanks to Ian Murray for his work as Facilities Manager, and for delaying his retirement in order to support Blair's transition into the role.

District Student Enrollment: Preliminary data suggests we are 418 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) over projection, and 227 FTE over last year's enrollment.



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COVID Communication: Mike Russell, Director of Communications, has been working closely with Principals and Vice-Principals as cases and clusters are identified. Following the Ministry's announcement updating the mask mandate to include students from Kindergarten to Grade 3, the District quickly distributed masks from storage to all elementary schools. Members of senior management are meeting weekly with the Medical Health Officer to stay updated. Island Health and the Provincial Health Office are making adjustments to their protocols to improve communication.

Orange Shirt Day/Week: Charlie Coleman, District Principal of Indigenous Education, provided an update on events held across the District during Orange Shirt Week. Monday was Non-Instructional Day with an Indigenous Ways of Knowing focus that featured a keynote presentation from Kevin Lamoureux in the morning, and 26 different learning sessions in the afternoon. With Thursday being the new National Day of Truth and Reconciliation statutory holiday, schools packed their Orange Shirt Week events into three days. A slideshow of photos showcasing events across the District was shared with Trustees.

Ministry of Education, Indigenous Education: Equity in Action: The Ministry of Education's Indigenous Education branch has created an equity scanning tool to support districts to identify promising practices as well as barriers that are impacting Indigenous students' success. The District and representatives of some of its partners will be meeting with the Ministry on November 8 to construct a community profile and develop an equity in action plan.

Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA): FSA's will be written by students in Grades 4 and 7 from October 11 to November 12. The FSA is an important assessment tool that informs the District on how our students are doing around foundational skills in literacy and numeracy.

Superintendent's Update:

Acknowledgements:

- World Teachers' Day: It was a great honour and pleasure to deliver goodies with a Trustee today to acknowledge all teachers on World Teachers' Day. We appreciate the teachers and support personnel who support our families and students. It hasn't been an easy time and they are doing a stupendous job.
- Non-Instructional Day: The organizers and presenters were acknowledged and thanked for their work to provide 26 workshops with an Indigenous focus for all staff across the District.
- Cowichan Secondary School (CSS) Replacement - Blessing of the Land: Thank you to Grade 10 CSS students Jordanna White and Mirrah Thorne who spoke at the ceremony and shared their excitement and enthusiasm for the new school. The CSS students who attended the ceremony to support Jordanna and Mirrah were also acknowledged.
- COVID Exposure Events: The support and leadership our schools and District staff have provided to students and the community during these challenging times was acknowledged.

Draft Student Reporting Order: A team from the District is reviewing the District's assessment and reporting guidelines to determine whether they align with the Reporting Order, and are providing feedback to the Ministry on the new Order. The Ministry will be analyzing feedback to determine any necessary revisions, and are looking to implement the new Order next September.



District-Wide Assessments: A number of assessments are taking place in September and October, including: K-3 Early Success Screen, Grade 2-8 District Wide Write, Grades 4-9 District Wide Read, Grades 2-3 Primary Reading benchmarks. These assessments assist teachers to support learning in their classrooms.

Non-Instruction Day: This day featured many great learning opportunities, including a keynote presentation by Kevin Lamoureux who provided ideas on how we can support our learners and focus on reconciliation. It was a wonderful day of learning for all participants across the District.

Terry Fox Run: Many District schools held a Terry Fox Run recently and raised money for cancer research. Some examples include:

- George Bonner - On September 22 Grades K-3 students ran laps of the field; Grades 4-5 students completed a 2km road run/walk; and Grades 6-7 students ran down to Mill Bay Nature Park and dipped their toes in the ocean, "Just like Terry" before running back to the school. Students collected nickels on Monday, dimes on Tuesday, quarters on Wednesday, loonies on Thursday and toonies on Friday for a total of over \$1,000.
- Alexander - Students collected different coins (as done by George Bonner students) for a total of over \$800. On September 17 students ran (in the pouring rain!) for Terry, with divisions running on their own for 15-minute intervals during the morning.
- Bench - The students were divided into four groups which all ran on September 24 in the sunshine, and raised \$1,275.
- Cowichan Secondary - their run raised 2,142.51. They had a school-wide lesson during their Thrive time, with a run/walk the following week.
- Alex Aitken - A school-based run on September 21 raised \$285 for the Terry Fox Foundation.
- Ecole Cobble Hill - Their September 24 Terry Fox Run raised \$670.
- Palsson and Lake Cowichan Schools also held Terry Fox Runs.

Great BC Shakeout: Thirteen of the District's schools will be participating in the earthquake drill, which will be held on October 21 at 10:21 a.m.

Tour de Rock: Students at George Bonner lined the parking lot to show support for the riders who visited the school and spoke to students about their reasons for participating in the Tour. At Tansor Elementary a push up competition took place between a kindergarten student and one of the riders. The kindergarten student did 50 push ups, while the rider was only able to complete 16. The Tour also made a stop at Ecole Cobble Hill.

Fire Prevention Week October 3 - 9: On October 6 each of Palsson Elementary's classes will walk (100 meters) to the Fire Department where they will tour the firetrucks and have a fire safety talk with Officer Steve Vatcher and volunteers.

Foster Family Month: October has been declared Foster Family Month in BC, and is a time to recognize and honour the incredible caregivers for their dedication to improving the lives of those children who need them.

Dyslexia Awareness Month: Wearing red is a way to promote awareness of Dyslexia Awareness Month, which is recognized across Canada during October.



Business

Financial Plan: COVID Restart Funding: The expenditure plan for the \$204,329 received from the Province was approved by the Board. The plan includes \$25,000 for a combination of disposable and reusable masks, \$110,000 to provide two custodial positions to provide additional electrostatic spraying positions on an itinerant basis, with the remaining \$69,329 designated to improve air quality through increased MERV 13 air filter replacements and upgrades to the HVAC systems in seven portables.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings and Events

MEETING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Special BEBC	Oct. 12, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Board Planning	Oct. 12, 5:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
DSAC Meeting (Trustee Doman)	Oct. 14, 10:00 a.m.	Via Zoom
BCSTA Board Chairs Meeting	Oct. 14	Vancouver
Partner Liaison Meeting	Oct. 15	Vancouver
Advisory Committee	Oct. 19, 4:30 p.m.	Via Zoom
DPAC Meeting (Trustee Kemmler)	Oct. 22, 7:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
BCSTA Provincial Council (Trustee de Groot)	Oct. 23	Via Zoom
BEBC	Oct. 26, 4:00 p.m.	Via Zoom
Board Retreat	Nov. 6, 9:00 a.m. – noon	Arbutus Golf Club
Equity in Action	Nov. 8	Arbutus Golf Club
BCSTA's 2021 Trustee Academy	Dec. 2-4	Vancouver

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