

February 2, 2023
INFORMATION RELEASE

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<https://youtu.be/zOYJZndDseY>

Superintendent Remarks

Associate Superintendent Philip Cizmic delivered the superintendent's comments, sharing that Superintendent Morrow was sick, and reminding staff, students and parents of the importance of staying home when you're not feeling well.

He continued by highlighting that on January 19 the district hosted educational and community teams from the Nanaimo-Ladysmith, Qualicum, Pacific Rim, Comox Valley, Vancouver Island West, Vancouver Island North and Powell River school districts for a regional equity scan. The session was led by Joe Heslip from the Ministry of Education and Child Care and provided an opportunity to share and learn from other districts as part of our commitment to reconciliation and equity. He thanked the Indigenous Education department and District Indigenous Education Principal Debra Martel for a great session.

Associate Superintendent Cizmic continued by sharing that kindergarten registration began this week and that parents have also been invited to apply for before- and after-school childcare at the six elementary schools approved for new childcare facilities (Cedar, Georgia Park, Ocean Grove, Pinecrest, Ripple Rock and Sandowne elementary schools). He also shared that the drawing and engineering for the new childcare buildings has been finished and the district is nearing tendering.

Looking ahead to next year, the district calendar committee has begun to develop school year calendars for the next three years, and the district is beginning to look at enrolment projections. Associate Superintendent Cizmic asked families who may be planning to move to please let their child's school office know.

In closing, he also shared that elementary and middle school report cards will be going out in February, elementary schools are nearing the 100th day of school, and secondary schools will be transitioning to new terms.

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Carihi Grade 9 Cohort Model Addressing Literacy, Numeracy and Wellbeing Priorities

Teachers Leah Samson, Scott McKenzie, Matthew Moore, Allison Peake, Stephanie Nicoll, Alana Jorgensen, and Jessica McConnell provided the board with an overview of the Carihi Secondary grade 9 cohort model, which was formally implemented last year when Carihi made the switch to a quarter model.

On a quarter model, students have two classes for 10 weeks and under the grade 9 cohort model, all grade 9 students get one academic course (Math, Socials, English or Science) for one of those blocks each quarter, shared between two teachers (one teacher teaches English/Socials and the other Math/Science). Grade 9 students work with these two teachers all year.

In each quarter, the timing of the academic course will switch. For example, in the first quarter the academic course may be in the morning block and in the next quarter it is in the afternoon block.

According to the teachers, there are three goals that form the foundation of the grade 9 cohort model – connection, community and collaboration. It also allows for an additional focus on wellbeing with presentations on such topics as mental health literacy, substance use and safe social media use.



Class sizes are intentionally kept to 25 students, and if there are problems that arise between students in the class there is an option to move a student to another classroom at the end of the 10 weeks.

Students form stronger relationships with the adults who work with them, and the cohort model allows for better individualized supports. According to the teachers, the grade 9 students entering high school after the pandemic have had a greater fragility and the consistency of working with fewer adults every day has led to a greater sense of community and trust.

Teachers have also seen a significant drop in literacy and numeracy levels since the pandemic and say that the cohort model provides students the time to address those needs as they can show their learning throughout the entire year.

According to French Immersion teacher Jessica McConnell, there has also been a marked improvement in students' language skills as they are getting intensive French language instruction through their core subjects throughout the year.

The presenters also shared that data has indicated grade 9 students are more successful in the cohort model, and it has been particularly helpful for Indigenous students, with failure rates at an all-time low within the grade.

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Students Add their Voice Through Strategic Plan Consultations

Consultations to collect feedback from parents, staff, students and community and help inform the Board of Education's next strategic plan have begun.

The first stage of the consultation process was an online survey that gathered responses from 896 people at the beginning of December (566 parents, 235 staff members, 77 community members and 18 students). All the comments have been given to trustees, who are now reviewing and considering this feedback.

To gather more input from students, Superintendent Jeremy Morrow and Communications Manager Jennifer Patrick have held classroom sessions this month with middle and secondary students on behalf of the board.

At the time of the board's public meeting, Patrick shared that classroom consultations had been held with grade 6/7 and grade 8 classes at École Phoenix Middle School and grade 9, 10 and 12 classes at Carihi Secondary and Timberline Secondary. Student input was also sought through the superintendent's student leadership committee.

Additional student sessions will be held with grade 6/7 and grade 8 classes at Southgate Middle School and an Indigenous Connections class at Carihi Secondary.

Following the student sessions, consultations will then be held with principals and vice-principals and local First Nations.

The strategic plan is set every four years by the Board of Education to provide direction for district staff and set priorities that guide decision making.

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Quarterly Finance Report

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick presented the board with a quarterly financial report that also marks the halfway reporting for the school year.

He shared that district revenues are up because of increased interest rates, but that expenses are currently exceeding revenues by approximately \$1.7 million.

While expenses are tracking higher year-to-date, Secretary-Treasurer Patrick reassured the board that this is to be expected as many larger supply and contract expenses hit over the summer months, in preparation for the upcoming school year, and then tend to level off as the school year progresses.

He also shared that the district hasn't yet received the grant to offset the salary increases from the recent BC Teachers' Federation and CUPE support staff contract settlements. This grant from the Ministry of Education and Child Care is expected to be received before the end of the year and Secretary-Treasurer Patrick said that the gap between expenses and revenues is expected to close as we get closer to the end of the year.

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School Year Calendars for the Next Three Years Under Development

School year calendars for the next three school years are currently under development and consultation is taking place with the calendar consultation committee. The calendar consultation committee is comprised of a trustee representative, Campbell River Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, Campbell River District Teachers' Association, CUPE Local 723, the district parent advisory council, senior management, Core Pro-D, and the Indigenous Education Advisory Council.

The draft calendars will be presented at the February 28 public board meeting and an opportunity will be provided for public feedback before the final calendars are submitted to the Ministry of Education and Child Care by March 31.

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