

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
SEPT. 26, 2023

September 27, 2023
INFORMATION RELEASE

Please note these are not official minutes of the Campbell River Board of Education.

Minutes are available from the school district website at www.sd72.bc.ca.

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You can watch a recording of the meeting on the district's YouTube channel at:
<https://youtu.be/czXWC8SljYw>

Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson Kat Eddy opened the meeting by sharing that a main item on the evening's agenda was a report on the district's financial audit for the year ending June 30, 2023. She stated that oversight of the district's budget and finances is one of the core responsibilities that the Board of Education is tasked with and she thanked the finance department, led by Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick, for efficient financial operations.

She continued her remarks by sharing that on Saturday, September 16 trustees were invited to join CUPE Local 723 in celebrating the union's 65 years of service to the students and families in School District 72. On behalf of the board, Eddy thanked all past, present, and future CUPE staff for their valuable work and the key role that they play in the education system.

On October 13 and 14 trustees will be travelling to the Vancouver Island School Trustees' Association (VISTA) meeting which will focus on leadership for continuous student improvement. Trustees will report on this meeting at the October 17 public board meeting.

She also highlighted upcoming events for National Truth and Reconciliation Day on September 30, including the Laichwiltach Family Life Society's Every Child Matters walk starting at 11 a.m. on Saturday, September 30 from Spirit Square. She encouraged everyone to attend and recognized the work that Laichwiltach Family Life Society has done to support Indigenous women, children, and families in the community for over 30 years.

In closing, Chairperson Eddy shared that she was recently invited to Cedar Elementary to discuss and support a family workshop series that the school is planning to offer for

kindergarten parents that will share resources on how they can support their child's literacy development.

Watch this segment: 0:00:03

Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Geoff Manning shared that schools have had a fantastic start-up and that he has visited almost every school, except for Cortes and Surge Narrows which he hopes to visit before the end of October. He also shared that he has visited all the childcare sites and will be starting more comprehensive school visits to meet with principals and vice-principals.

Superintendent Manning stated that reconciliation activities will be taking place this week in all schools leading up to the September 30 National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and reminded staff and parents that there will be no school on Monday, October 2 in observance of the statutory holiday.

Watch: 0:04:51

Greenways Land Trust Supports Environmental Learning and Stewardship

The Board of Education received a report on school programming that was provided in partnership with Greenways Land Trust last school year.

Greenways Land Trust provided 76 in-class sessions, environmental stewardship and nature outings and worked with classes to plant 657 native plant species and remove 480 kilograms of invasive species and garbage from local ecosystems last year alone.

They have also helped to support school gardens through an online volunteer database which matches volunteers with



school gardens to help tend and maintain these gardens over the summer months.

Greenways Land Trust members also provided several educational interpretive walks on birding, restoration work at Baikie Island Nature Reserve and other important locations within the community, and how to spot and remove invasive species.

The board thanked Greenways for the invaluable support for environmental stewardship education within School District 72 schools and asked that this report be shared with the superintendent's student leadership committee as environmental stewardship is a top concern raised by students.

Watch this segment: 0:08:25

Board Reviewed Financial Statements for Year Ending June 30, 2023

Cory Vanderhorst from accounting firm MNP gave an audited financial statement presentation stating that SD72 has an \$8.5 million surplus that includes operations and capital. Total revenues have increased by \$5.2 million but expenses have also increased by almost \$3.5 million for a combined deficit of \$628,242.

The district received a clean audit report, meaning that there were no procedural changes required in the district's finance department.

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick highlighted that the district increased its overall operating surplus by \$55,000 and the discretionary operating surplus by \$475,000. He pointed out that this year-end performance was a significant accomplishment given that the district had to reduce \$2 million to balance the budget and was facing escalating sick replacement and inflationary costs.

As part of his financial analysis, Patrick also shared that the Student and Family Affordability Fund which had been funded at \$603,000 was underspent and \$268,481 will carry forward. This will allow some of the supports that families benefited from last year to continue in addition to the new Feeding Futures funds, which is targeted for food security.

He also mentioned that the \$8.1 million that the district received for the construction of the childcare centres is now being spent as work is underway this fiscal year.

Secretary-Treasurer Patrick warned the board that they may need to consider increasing budget allocations for employee benefits as they are increasing more than expected given the resumption of benefit use post-COVID and inflation.

The audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2023 were approved by trustees and extended the auditor's contract with MNP following a recommendation from the district's audit committee.

The audited financial statements will be available on the district website at www.sd72.bc.ca under 'What's Happening', 'Reports & Publications'.

Watch: 0:10:00

Maintenance & Operations: Preparing Schools for the New Year

Director of Operations Jason Decksheimer provided the board with an overview of the summer projects undertaken by the maintenance and operations staff to ensure schools were ready to welcome students back for another year of learning.

The largest undertaking of the summer was the groundbreaking on construction for the district's new childcare centers.

Three major HVAC projects which included classroom unit ventilators and new control systems were completed at Sayward, Southgate and Quadra and two sections of roof were replaced at Southgate Middle School.

Crews repaired, replaced, and rehabilitated gym floors at Phoenix Middle School and École des Deux Mondes. École des Deux Mondes also got substantial exterior and several classrooms repainted. Paint crews and carpentry also did a refresh of the teacherage at Surge Narrows School on Read Island.

There were also cladding replacements at several schools, including Ripple Rock Elementary, and a flooring replacement in five classrooms at Timberline Secondary.

Our custodial team worked diligently to clean schools from floor to ceiling and the ground crew focused on field maintenance and clean up following the excavation work for the childcare centres.



The board thanked maintenance and operations staff for all that they do behind the scenes to ensure that our schools are safe, clean, welcoming spaces conducive to learning.

Watch: 0:39:09

Ministry Approves Funding for Minor Capital Plan Projects

The Ministry of Education has approved \$195,000 in projects from the district's five-year capital plan request under the school food infrastructure program, carbon neutral capital program, and bus acquisition program.

The following items have been announced to receive capital funding by the Ministry of Education: a food delivery vehicle and kitchen upgrade for Carihi Secondary School; electric vehicle charging stations for the maintenance yard, school board office, Sayward and Cortes schools; and a new electric school bus.

The Board of Education held all three required readings and unanimously passed the required capital plan bylaw to allow the district to receive the funds and proceed with these projects.

The board also passed a motion to support the district's minor capital application for 2024-2025 which includes: a bus replacement; HVAC upgrades at Sandowne, Cortes and Timberline; playground replacements at Cortes and Ecole Willow Point; roofing repairs at Sayward and the installation of fall safety systems at all schools; replacement of a high voltage transformer at Phoenix Middle School; and HVAC upgrades and roof repairs at Robron Centre.

Watch: 0:50:05

Board Approves Budget Addition for New District Principal for Learning Support Services

The Board of Education approved a budget addition of \$150,000 to allow for the hiring of a new district principal for learning support services following a request from Superintendent Manning and the senior management team.

Superintendent Manning stated that the number of students with designations has risen significantly since the district's spring projections and combined with the number of staff within this department there are increased administrative needs. A newly created district principal will help the director of learning support services with coordinating supports for

students and will help oversee other student and family supports, like the Feeding Futures food security program.

The position was proposed after looking at learning support service department structures in comparable sized districts to SD72. Learning support services is the district's largest department with a budget of approximately \$11 million and a significant number of associated professional staff and over 150 educational assistants.

While the estimated cost for the position is \$200,000, the additional draw on the district's budget this year will only be \$150,000 after being offset by \$30,000 in funding for the childcare principal position and small portion of the funding increase the district will see because of the increase in designated students.

Watch: 1:02:03

Trustees Ask Staff for Investigation into ChatGPT and its Implication for Classrooms

After a conversation sparked by a CBC article, "How Metro Vancouver teachers are dealing with ChatGPT in the classroom", trustees passed a motion asking senior staff to explore the capabilities of ChatGPT and report on its potential use and misuse in SD72 classrooms.

Superintendent Manning said that this is a topic top of mind for many teachers and school leaders in our district, as well as across the province and nationally. He shared with the board that several schools have already been having in depth staff discussions about ChatGPT and how to explore its use in a proactive, positive way.

Watch: 1:16:34

