

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
DEC. 19 2023

December 20, 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.

Find us on Facebook under [Campbell River School District – SD72](#) or on Twitter under [@CRSD72](#)

You can watch a recording of the meeting on the district's YouTube channel at:
<https://youtu.be/1W-2RieUMfE>

Chairperson Remarks

In her opening remarks, Chairperson Kat Eddy acknowledged all the winter concerts and events happening around the district at this time of year and thanked all staff, students, and our learning community for a wonderful end to 2023. On behalf of the board, she extended best wishes for the holiday season and shared how they look forward to welcoming everyone back on January 9 for regularly scheduled classes.

Watch this segment: 0:00:04

Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Geoff Manning thanked the board and all district staff for the warm welcome he received over the last four months and shared some of his personal highlights like attending We Wai Kai professional development sessions, the district's cross-country run, Carihi's student wellness fair, and moving Remembrance Day ceremonies and Indigenous Veterans' Day events, to name a few. As volleyball season comes to an end and winter concerts and events happen all over the district, he thanked the staff and dedicated volunteers.

He closed by wishing everyone a restful, relaxing holiday and hoping they all come back reenergized for the remainder of a great school year of learning.

Watch this segment: 0:01:18

Understanding ChatGPT and Generative AI in Our Schools

A topic attracting significant attention, including in the context of schools and education, is the introduction of ChatGPT and generative AI. Superintendent Geoff Manning gave a

presentation to the board on what this technology is, how it functions, and its implications for our schools and district.

ChatGPT is a natural language processing tool driven by artificial intelligence (AI) that allows you to have human-like conversations and more with a chatbot. Launched on November 30, 2022, it rapidly gained traction, generating approximately 100 million responses within a few days. Its capability to assist in tasks such as writing emails, essays, and even coding, presents both opportunities and challenges in an educational context.

A primary concern for educators is the potential misuse of such technology by students, possibly leading to a lack of critical and creative thinking. Our district conducted a survey among teachers in our middle and secondary schools to gauge their interaction with, and perception of, ChatGPT. The results were telling:

Awareness and Usage: A whopping 98.6% of the 71 responding teachers were aware of ChatGPT, with 66% having used it.

Educational Merit: 59% saw educational merit in these tools, while 31% were unsure.

Banning AI: Interestingly, 54% opposed banning ChatGPT in schools, with 35% uncertain.

Teachers expressed concerns about cheating, the impact on learning outcomes, overreliance on technology, and the diminishing human interaction. However, Superintendent Manning shared that these tools are not inherently detrimental. Like textbooks or calculators, he said they are tools that can be harnessed for educational benefit.



He pointed out that generative AI is here to stay and will only advance. The challenge for education is to integrate these advancements ethically. Students must understand the importance of using AI responsibly and recognize the line between assistance and misconduct.

Input from a recent superintendent student leadership meeting highlighted that students are already engaging with AI, reinforcing the need for a proactive approach in educating both students and teachers about responsible use.

Watch: 0:04:50

New Policy on Naming and Renaming Schools

The Board of Education has adopted a new policy to govern how they will name and rename schools and district facilities. The new policy was proposed because the board had not previously had a clear process on naming schools, or when and how they would consider renaming a facility.

Under the new policy, schools and facilities will be named/renamed after geographical and historical characteristics after consultation with student, parent, school, and district staff, as well as local community representatives. Schools and facilities will not be named after living or deceased people.

An ad-hoc committee would be sanctioned to propose at least two names to be chosen by the board. The committee would seek approval and considerations from local First Nations, local representatives of off-reserve Indigenous people, students, staff and families and the local municipalities and regions in the catchment area of the school and/or facilities.

If any names in the local Indigenous language is chosen, as acknowledgement to traditional territories, the First Nation must first give its consent and must gift the name to the school district.

The board will consider renaming a facility only if it receives proof of overwhelming support from the community, an existing location undergoes a major change of use, a local municipality or regional district renames a geographical reference associated with the school, or if the name no longer aligns with board policy.

A notice of motion was given to allow for feedback at the board's November 28 public meeting. No comments or concerns on the policy were sent to the board's governance policy committee.

The new policies can be viewed on the district website under Board of Education/Governance Policies & Bylaws.

Watch this segment: 0:20:33

Board Considers New Policy on Public Interest Disclosure

Vice-Chairperson Craig Gillis presented the board with a notice of motion for a new board governance policy on public interest disclosure (otherwise known as whistleblower/safe reporting).

Legislation was introduced December 1 that requires all public bodies to have whistleblower policies and procedures in place. The intent of the legislation is to encourage employees to report unlawful or unethical conduct with assurance that they will be protected from reprisal protect employees without fear of reprisal.

The draft policy and an accompanying operational procedure have been prepared based on guidance from the BC Public School Employers' Association.

Notice of motion was given for feedback on the board governance policy to be sent to the policy review committee through the superintendent's office before January 10, 2024. The board will be considering the motion at their January 16 public board meeting.

The draft policy, along with information on how to submit feedback, are posted on the district website under News & Announcements.

Watch: 0:24:20

District to Begin Work on New Long-Range Facility Plan

The district will begin developing its next 10-year facility plan and has selected the firm studioHub to conduct the facility review, assist with consultations, and prepare the final report with recommendations to the Board of Education.



A 10-year facility plan is required by the Ministry of Education and Child Care to consider school enrolment capacity, surplus space, catchment boundaries, expansions, closures, new schools and to identify strategic investments in facility upgrades.

While the current 10-year facility plan isn't due to expire until 2025, according to Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick there are some development proposals proceeding in the community that may have direct impact on the school district and would be beneficial to consider as part of the facility plan. Districts are required to have a 10-year plan, but they can be updated more frequently.

Superintendent Geoff Manning, Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick, and Director of Operations Jason Decksheimer reviewed proposals from three firms and selected studioHub to conduct the review on behalf of the board as they had the most comprehensive, full-service proposal.

studioHub is one of the lead architects in the move to lower cost, prefabricated, permanent additions to schools around the province, meaning they can also provide the district's facility plan with some added insight. They also have experience in providing school districts with portable plans while they may be waiting for government approvals on additions or new construction.

The facility plan development process can take three to six months to complete and is anticipated to begin in January/February and end in June 2024 in time to inform the district's next five-year capital plan submission. The project budget of approximately \$50,000 will come out of internal local capital.

Watch: 0:28:27

Board Approves New Exempt Position for Associate Superintendents' Office

The Board of Education has approved a budget addition of approximately \$30,000 out of operating surplus to move the associate superintendents' administrative assistant position from CUPE clerical to an exempt position.

Superintendent Geoff Manning spoke to the board about the change, indicating that it was appropriate given the role is

required to often deal with confidential matters, stay over hours, work through school holidays, and is required as a 12-month position. As the position has recently been vacated, it was also identified as being a timely change before hiring efforts begin. Superintendent Manning also shared with the board that CUPE had been consulted and was aware of the proposed change.

The board noted that this was an extraordinary ask that should normally go through the district's budget process, but supported the change given that hiring must take place.

Watch: 0:36:51

