

# School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF  
FEB. 25, 2025

February 27, 2025  
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](http://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/ZXDKq7HFdT0?si=9XEm7J5X5yB6f\\_to](https://youtu.be/ZXDKq7HFdT0?si=9XEm7J5X5yB6f_to)

## Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson Kat Eddy opened the meeting with a message of hope and optimism, highlighting a significant new partnership between the BC Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Education and Child Care. She emphasized that this collaboration is expected to streamline and enhance how the government manages public sector infrastructure projects—an essential step in ensuring that schools and community spaces remain vibrant and well-equipped to serve the needs of children.

In Campbell River, this partnership holds particular promise for the local school district, specifically Cedar Elementary School and the Cedar Annex. Located in the heart of Campbell River, the Cedar property is home to not only Cedar Elementary and its recently opened before-and-after-school daycare sites but also the essential community services provided by the Laichwiltach Family Life Society. However, the Cedar Annex building sustained significant fire damage in July 2024, rendering the space unusable for Laichwiltach Family Life Society's programming.

Chairperson Eddy underscored the importance of rebuilding and restoring these spaces—not only for education but for the broader well-being of the community. She expressed optimism that the collaboration between the Ministries of Infrastructure and Education and Child Care will help accelerate the rebuilding process, allowing the district to restore and expand these essential spaces to meet the growing needs of students and local organizations.

While discussing the invaluable services provided by Laichwiltach Family Life Society, Chairperson Eddy also took a moment to celebrate the launch of the groundbreaking Laichwiltach Health Center. This new facility represents a major step forward in addressing healthcare service gaps, particularly for Indigenous citizens in the region. A testament

to the power of collaboration between governments, Indigenous communities, and healthcare providers, the center will offer critical services that improve access to healthcare, promote wellness, and address longstanding health disparities.

Reflecting on current events unfolding in the United States, Chairperson Eddy expressed concern about the impact of propaganda and misinformation on society. She emphasized the importance of standing united in promoting inclusivity and ensuring that education remains a cornerstone in fostering safe and supportive environments for all students. In particular, she shared a message of solidarity with the LGBTQ2S+ community, reinforcing that their voices are heard, their rights are important, and that the district remains committed to creating a world where all students can thrive without fear of discrimination.

In closing, Chairperson Eddy extended her heartfelt gratitude to everyone in the education community for their unwavering dedication to high-quality, equitable education. She acknowledged the collective efforts that contribute to a brighter future for students, ensuring that every child has the tools and resources they need to succeed.

With a focus on collaboration, inclusion, and community well-being, the board remains committed to advocating for the needs of students, families, and educators throughout the district.

Watch this segment: [0:00:06](#)

## Superintendent Remarks

With just under three weeks until spring break, Superintendent Geoff Manning took a moment to highlight several exciting events happening across the district. On Friday, Skills Canada BC North Island Regional Trades



and Technology Competition will be taking place at North Island College (NIC). The competition, which runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., will showcase the impressive skills of students from across the region. Superintendent Manning encouraged everyone to visit NIC to see these young people in action.

Timberline's Head Over Heels musical will also kick off this Friday, February 28, with additional performances on March 1 and March 6 to 8. While both Timberline and Carihi traditionally put on musicals each year, Carihi will not have a production this time. However, Superintendent Manning expressed his appreciation for the incredible work students and staff put into making these performances such a success.

Next week also brings the District Musical Showcase, happening on March 4 at Timberline Secondary. This annual event is always a highlight, providing a stage for students to share their musical talents with the community.

Looking ahead, Superintendent Manning provided an update on the return of Carihi students from "Oryihi High." The nickname was affectionately given to the former Oyster River school, which has temporarily housed about 150 Carihi students since the school fire. These students and staff adapted quickly to the new learning environment and Superintendent Manning expressed his gratitude to teachers, support staff, maintenance crews, and students for their flexibility and resilience.

With renovations nearing completion at Carihi, Oyster River students will be returning to Carihi B-wing classrooms after spring break. Superintendent Manning, along with Associate Superintendent Phil Cizmic and Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick, recently visited the site to see the progress firsthand. He praised the tremendous work being done to ensure the spaces are ready for staff and students to return.

Watch this segment: [0:04:47](#)

## Continuing the Push for a Rebuild of Cedar Elementary

The board remains committed to advocating for a much needed rebuild of Cedar Elementary and continues to actively engage with both the Ministry of Education and Child

Care and the Ministry of Infrastructure, ensuring that Premier Eby's campaign promise from the fall remains a priority.

Following a meeting with the Laichwiltach Board of Directors, the Board of Education sent a letter to the Minister of Infrastructure requesting support for replacing the portion of the Cedar Annex that was damaged by fire. At the same time, the board is keeping the focus on the broader need for a full rebuild of Cedar Elementary.

There has been some movement on these discussions, and updates will be provided to district staff and the public as more details emerge. The board's goal remains clear—to secure a modern, safe, and supportive learning environment for students and staff at Cedar Elementary.

Watch: [0:09:16](#)

## Board Chairs Meet with North Island MLA

On February 21, the Campbell River Board of Education hosted board chairs and superintendents from Vancouver Island North and Vancouver Island West for a meeting with newly elected North Island MLA Anna Kindy. The gathering at the Campbell River school board office provided an opportunity to discuss key educational issues and formally introduce MLA Kindy to North Island school districts' leadership.

During the discussion, MLA Kindy acknowledged that education is not her career background. However, she expressed a willingness to review any issues brought forward and to advocate on behalf of school districts.

This meeting served as an important step in building a working relationship with MLA Kindy, ensuring that the educational needs of North Island communities remain on the provincial agenda.

Watch this segment: [0:10:26](#)

## “How Are We Doing” Report Highlights Progress and Challenges in SD72

Superintendent Geoff Manning presented findings from the Ministry of Education and Child Care's annual “How Are We Doing” report, which examines the educational outcomes of



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Indigenous students in the 2023-2024 school year. Manning provided a data-driven overview of student demographics, academic performance, and graduation rates, while also highlighting areas of success and concern.

In the 2023-2024 school year, Indigenous students made up 24% of the total student population in SD72, with 1,356 self-identifying as Indigenous. The vast majority live off-reserve, while 225 reside on-reserve. This distinction is important as funding structures differ based on residence.

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), which measures literacy and numeracy in grades 4 and 7, revealed mixed results. In grade 4, 53% of Indigenous students were “on track,” closely mirroring the 55% of non-Indigenous students. However, the “emerging” category—indicating students needing additional support—was 10% higher for Indigenous students.

While the literacy FSA provides a snapshot, SD72 also tracks literacy development using the DIBELS assessment. Encouragingly, the data from the past three years indicates a positive trend, with fewer students at risk and more reaching proficiency.

A significant gap was evident, with only 34% of Indigenous students “on track” in grade 4 numeracy, compared to 55% of non-Indigenous peers. A similar trend was seen in grade 7, with 30.4% of Indigenous students meeting expectations versus 46% of non-Indigenous students.

Recognizing this province-wide issue, SD72 has prioritized numeracy improvement, including hiring a director of instruction and forming a numeracy committee to support educators in strengthening math instruction.

For individual secondary school courses where students achieved a C+ or better, Indigenous students had better outcomes than non-Indigenous students in BC First Peoples 12 and Contemporary Indigenous Studies and similar outcomes for English First Peoples 10 and Workplace Math.

One of the more concerning findings was a sharp drop in the five-year graduation rate for Indigenous students—from 71% to 50%. However, a closer look at the data revealed that many students are choosing to extend their high school education beyond five years, rather than dropping out. When

looking at six- to eight-year completion rates, the percentage rises to 81%.

Manning also noted external factors, such as an unusually high migration rate (students leaving the district without re-enrolling elsewhere) and possible impacts of the COVID-19 disruption to education, may be reflected in this drop.

The report also incorporated data from the Student Learning Survey, which revealed that 56% of Indigenous grade 4 students feel they belong at school, nearly identical to the 58% of non-Indigenous students and 69% of Indigenous grade 7 students feel welcome at school, slightly higher than non-Indigenous students (67%). Interestingly, at grade 10, a higher percentage of Indigenous students (36%) reported liking school compared to non-Indigenous students (29%).

When asked if they feel adults at school care about them, 72% of Indigenous students said, “all or most of the time,” compared to 69% of non-Indigenous students. Manning acknowledged that while the survey results show areas where Indigenous students feel supported, there is still work to be done to close achievement gaps and improve graduation rates.

SD72 continues to focus on improving Indigenous student outcomes through targeted literacy and numeracy support, professional development for educators, and culturally responsive programming. While some gaps remain, the district is seeing positive trends in literacy and a growing number of Indigenous students excelling in key subject areas.

Manning concluded by encouraging trustees to review the full [“How Are We Doing” report](#) and reaffirming the district’s commitment to Indigenous student success: “We’re seeing progress, and we remain committed to ensuring every student in our district is supported on their learning journey.”

Watch: [0:11:55](#)

## District Sees a Decrease in Funding Grant Comparison

A lower-than-expected final student count has resulted in a \$620,000 decrease in the district’s operating grant for this school year compared to initial projections.



Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick explained that while the district had forecasted an enrollment of 5,527 students when building its preliminary budget, the actual number came in at 5,466—a shortfall of 60 students. This, along with an overestimation in special education enrollment, led to a funding reduction of \$707,000, though the final adjustment came in slightly better at \$620,000.

To offset the funding gap, the district identified and removed budget items that were not proceeding, ensuring that reductions did not impact existing staffing levels. The district also noted trends in student demographics, with English as a Second Language (ESL) enrollment increasing while the number of students with Indigenous ancestry is declining—patterns that are expected to continue.

Watch this segment: [0:38:19](#)

## Board Adopts Amended Budget for 2024-2025

The board voted to approve the amended budget of \$95,265,816 for 2024-2025.

The total budget revenue is \$92,479,340 while the budgeted costs are \$94,495,463. The district has a consolidated deficit of \$380,733 and an operating surplus of \$895,836 without reserves. Combined with reserves, the district has an operating deficit of \$1,635,390.

The total district budget for salaries and benefits is \$69,575,692. Administrative staff salaries increased with the overlap of the retiring associate superintendent and the start of the new director of instruction which was done for succession planning. As well the district has seen a benefit increase of 20% for extended health care and dental rates.

The amended budget includes updated expenses, actual revenue based on the number of students attending district schools, and salary costs from the preliminary budget passed in May 2024.

The final budget will be available on the district website.

Watch: [0:42:32](#)

## Enrolment Forecasted to Decrease Slightly Next Year

The district is forecasting a decrease of approximately 12 full-time equivalent (FTE) students next school year after analyzing community trends and information from the schools, according to Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick.

Long-term forecasts, looking ahead to 2026-2027 and 2027-2028, are showing continuing declining enrolment due to lower birth rates. However, this could be offset should the community experience more in-migration.

The enrolment forecast is used to build the district's preliminary operating budget.

Watch this segment: [1:05:38](#)

