

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
MAY 13 2025

May 16, 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.
Find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) under @CRSD72.*

You can watch a recording of this meeting on the district's YouTube channel at:
<https://youtu.be/flRZ4qY8eoc>

Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson Kat Eddy opened the meeting by acknowledging the serious fiscal challenges facing not only the Campbell River School District but many districts across British Columbia. She reminded the public that trustees are legally required under the School Act to pass a balanced budget each year—an obligation that demands difficult decisions rooted in both financial responsibility and a steadfast commitment to student success.

Chairperson Eddy noted that the district is currently in a deficit position and, unlike some regions of the province, is not experiencing student growth to offset rising costs. She emphasized that this is not a short-term issue but a long-term reality requiring focused leadership and collective resolve. Despite the financial pressures, she reaffirmed the board's guiding commitment to equity, strategic priorities, and keeping students at the heart of every decision.

She expressed deep appreciation for the district's advocacy partners—the Campbell River District Teachers' Association, CUPE, and the Campbell River Principals' and Vice Principals' Association—whose lived experience and constructive engagement help ground financial decisions in the realities of classrooms. She also thanked the district's business department for their professionalism and for extending consultation timelines in response to partner feedback, helping to shape a more inclusive and responsive budgeting process.

Looking beyond the local context, Chairperson Eddy called attention to systemic challenges across the province. She highlighted that British Columbia is currently the second-lowest funded public K–12 education system in Canada

and noted the increasing urgency of this situation, particularly for smaller districts. She underscored that stable, sufficient, and sustainable public education funding is essential, not optional, and warned that current funding levels risk eroding quality services for students and families.

She commended the growing advocacy from district parent advisory councils (DPACs), many of which have launched public campaigns urging government to re-examine the funding model. Their efforts, along with ongoing advocacy by the BC School Trustees Association, reflect a widespread call for increased investment in staffing, infrastructure, and supports for diverse learners.

Chairperson Eddy concluded by reaffirming the board's commitment to transparency, collaboration, and student-centered governance. She acknowledged that the decisions ahead will not be easy but promised they will be made with integrity, humility, and deep respect for the voices of staff, partners, families—and above all—students.

Watch this segment: [0:01:13](#)

Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Geoff Manning began his remarks by highlighting two programs that represent both ends of the student journey in the district—from those just entering kindergarten to those preparing to graduate.

He first spoke about the recent interactive Careers in Natural Resources Expo hosted at Timberline Secondary on May 9. This event was a collaborative effort between the Campbell River and Comox Valley school districts and



School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
MAY 13 2025

North Island College. Students and parents interested in natural resources careers had the opportunity to explore hands-on exhibits and training opportunities. Programs featured included NIC's forestry, drone and continuing education offerings, as well as displays from BC Hydro, welding and electrical trades, marine and dive safety, geotechnical engineering, and heavy equipment simulators. Students from both Carihi and Timberline, as well as visitors from the Comox Valley, attended the event.

Superintendent Manning then turned to the district's youngest learners, noting that Welcome to Kindergarten events are currently underway across elementary schools and will continue into June. With 330 students already registered and a projected enrollment of 375, the district is optimistic about meeting its target for the upcoming school year. Manning shared his personal appreciation for these events, reflecting on their importance in creating a warm, positive first experience for children and families entering the school system.

In closing, he acknowledged the unique timing of this period—welcoming new students while preparing to celebrate the graduating class of 2025 in just a few short weeks.

Watch this segment: [0:06:19](#)

SD72 Music Programs Continue to Inspire

The past few years have brought no shortage of challenges for our schools—pandemic disruptions, economic pressures, and budget constraints. Yet amid it all, music education in Campbell River has continued to thrive, thanks to the resilience of our students, the dedication of our educators, and the strong support of our community.

Speaking on behalf of the Campbell River Music Educators Association, music teachers Kirsten Liske (École Willow Point) and Emily Hickford (Sandowne Elementary) shared their heartfelt thanks to the board and community for their ongoing support of music programs across the district.

Among the most significant challenges faced this year was the fire at Carihi Secondary in November. The fire left music students without a dedicated space, instruments, or

sheet music—but not without spirit. Just days later, the Carihi choir, under the direction of Beth Kingston, took to the Tidemark Theatre stage for a live John Denver tribute performance. Not long after, they returned to perform a full winter concert to a live audience.

Throughout the year, music classes and rehearsals have continued in temporary spaces around the district, with students and staff adapting quickly and continuing without missing a beat.

In March, the District Music Showcase returned to the stage, hosted in partnership with Timberline Secondary. This annual celebration brought together music students from across the district to perform and share in the joy of live music.

Most recently, Carihi's musical theatre department presented a full three-night production at the Tidemark Theatre. Led by Beth Kingston and Christine Knight, the production is another shining example of the strength and creativity of our students and staff.

Our music programs help students build skills that last a lifetime, with several graduates accepted into top university music programs—and some returning home to teach the next generation. In fact, several music educators in SD72 are proud alumni themselves.

To end their presentation, Kirsten and Emily shared a short video montage of our students sharing what music means to them.

Watch this segment: [0:10:45](#)

CRDTA Shares Concerns on 2025-2026 Budget Proposals

Campbell River District Teachers' Association (CRDTA) President Debra Coombes presented the association's concerns regarding the proposed 2025–2026 school district budget. The presentation highlighted concerns about the potential impacts of proposed reductions on students, staff, and the broader school community.



School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
MAY 13 2025

Coombes emphasized that while the CRDTA recognizes the difficult financial landscape facing many BC school districts, including Campbell River, they feel the current budget proposals will have a lasting impact on core instructional supports.

She shared the CRDTA's concerns regarding the proposal to have teacher librarians cover instructional prep time and how this will result in reductions to specialist teaching positions, reduce access to libraries, impact teacher librarians' flexibility and educational role, as well as potentially jeopardize book fairs and the district-wide "Battle of the Books".

Coombes also shared concerns about the proposed reduction within the district's teacher coordinators and how this will affect both teacher development and direct student support, as many teacher coordinators also co-teach, model lessons, and mentor educators in schools on strategic priority areas such as literacy, numeracy, Indigenous education, and social-emotional learning.

While acknowledging that the district is legally required to present a balanced budget, Coombes urged trustees to strengthen their advocacy for improved provincial funding. She emphasized that rising costs, inflation, and unfunded ministry mandates continue to put pressure on district budgets.

She concluded by asking the board to reconsider some of the budget proposals and to work with partner groups to build a stronger collective voice in support of public education.

Throughout the spring, the CRDTA has participated in the district's budget consultation process, attending budget meetings and submitting a comprehensive written brief to the Board of Education and senior district leadership.

Watch this segment: [0:21:11](#)

Quarterly Finance Update: District Forecasts \$1.4M Year-End Deficit

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick presented the school

district's third-quarter financial update for the period ending March 31, 2025. The report provided an overview of actual revenues and expenditures to date and outlined how the current year is expected to close in relation to the approved budget.

The district had originally forecasted a year-end deficit of \$1.4 million, including an estimated \$850,000 structural operating shortfall. As of March 31, the district is currently tracking a \$2 million deficit, although this figure is expected to decrease to approximately \$1.4 million by year-end as revenue continues to come in and some spending slows.

Several budget lines are running higher than expected, including teacher salaries, benefit costs which continue to climb due to rising extended health premiums, and TTOC (teacher teaching on call) costs which are also above projection but expected to stabilize in the final quarter.

The report confirms that nearly all available reserves will need to be used to cover the 2024-2025 shortfall, leaving limited flexibility heading into the next budget cycle. This underscores the importance of the proposed 2025-2026 budget focusing on achieving a balanced position.

Watch this segment: [0:43:27](#)

District Outlines Proposed Reductions for 2025-2026 Budget

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick provided an overview of the budget development process for the 2025-2026 school year, highlighting the efforts taken to gather input, identify alternatives, and reduce the projected \$949,000 operating deficit while maintaining student services as much as possible.

In response to past feedback that stakeholders needed more time and input into the process, the senior leadership team began consultations in early February. Budget proposals were shaped through that engagement, and adjustments were made in response to concerns raised.

Secretary-Treasurer Patrick provided examples of how feedback influenced the final proposals including reducing



CAMPBELL RIVER
School District 72

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
MAY 13 2025

the proposed reduction to teacher coordinator positions from 1.0 to 0.5 FTE, eliminating a proposed reduction to a teaching position in inclusive education, and scaling back a proposed IT budget increase.

The following recommendations have been proposed to balance the budget:

- \$650,000 in savings to be achieved by shifting to teacher librarians providing prep coverage, resulting in the reassignment of five specialist prep teachers (in areas such as art and PE). This change aims to create a more consistent literacy-based prep model across schools, though it displaces some school-developed programming.
- \$100,000 recovery of unspent school-based funds that have been held in trust. This recovery would vary by school and not affect current programming.
- \$70,000 in a 0.5 FTE reduction to a district teacher coordinator.
- \$70,000 cost adjustment reflecting the refined criteria for intensive behaviour EAs.
- \$50,000 reduction to the district's strategic priorities budget. This is a reduction of approximately one-third of the budget, which will be reduced for district-wide initiatives while maintaining school-level support.
- \$35,000 in savings to be realized from the government's Carbon Tax reduction.
- \$9,000 in savings achieved through a minor adjustment reducing prep time coverage for principals and vice-principals.

Additionally, the district will be seeking new funding or funding recovery for 2 FTE positions through the Classroom Enhancement Fund, an operating contribution from the international student program, grant funding to support the district literacy teacher coordinator position, operations support for the Feeding Futures program and identified savings through unused professional

development funds for exempt staff. This will result in an additional \$485,000 in savings.

The district had also already reduced 1.4 FTE from school-based administration heading into this budget development cycle.

Over five years ago the board made a \$1.8 million investment in technology and many of those devices are now at end of life and need to be replaced. The budget proposals include a \$450,000 addition to support device replacement, as well as with consideration to increasing software licensing fees.

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the Indigenous Education Council are also requesting the director of Indigenous Education position be funded from operating dollars rather than targeted funding to align with the district's strategic priorities.

Through the budget consultation process, senior leadership considered a range of other alternatives, including selling unused properties or eliminating all elementary vice-principal positions. However, such options were either unfeasible (e.g., due to trust clauses on land sales) or failed to generate the scale of savings required.

The district is seeking further public feedback before bringing the final 2025-2026 budget to the Board of Education for possible adoption at the May 27 public board meeting.

The list of recommendations is posted on the district website at: [2025-2026 Budget Development Process \(sd72.bc.ca\)](https://2025-2026 Budget Development Process (sd72.bc.ca)). Feedback on the proposals can be submitted by email to [the secretary-treasurer's office](#) until 4 p.m. on May 22.

The board will consider the recommendations and budget feedback and possibly approve the budget at the May 27 public board meeting.

Watch this segment: [0:50:09](#)

