

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
JUNE 17 2025

June 18, 2025
INFORMATION RELEASE

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Chairperson Remarks

As we close the 2024-2025 school year, Chairperson Kat Eddy expressed appreciation for the educators, administrators, support staff, partner groups, and fellow trustees whose dedication continues to meet the diverse needs of students and supports the children in our communities. She extended special thanks to retiring staff, recognizing their lasting contributions to student success and their profound impact on generations of learners and colleagues.

Reflecting on the year's collective efforts, Chair Eddy acknowledged ongoing challenges but emphasized the continued progress made through collaboration and shared commitment. She highlighted recent trustee advocacy at the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) annual general meeting and presentations to the Select Standing Committee on Finance as key examples of how trustees are working together to amplify the needs of all 60 school districts.

Chairperson Eddy shared BCSTA's commitment to sustaining this momentum over the summer through coordinated advocacy strategies that reflect the lived realities of public education in British Columbia.

In closing, she encouraged everyone to take time over the summer to rest, recharge, and celebrate the successes of the past year, with optimism for what lies ahead.

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Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Geoff Manning reflected on the end of the school year, acknowledging that while it marks a transition for all students and staff, it also signifies the close of a career for some. Earlier this month, the district celebrated the retirements of 30 CRDTA, CUPE and excluded staff. He expressed appreciation for the collective service and contributions these individuals have made to the district.

He also highlighted the many celebrations taking place across schools, including the recent Indigenous graduation ceremony and upcoming secondary school graduations. This year, 91 Indigenous students are graduating across the district. A Métis sashing ceremony was also held at Robron Centre, and many schools are taking part in events recognizing National Indigenous Peoples Day coming up on June 21.

Superintendent Manning noted that graduation ceremonies are scheduled for Robron on Friday, June 20, Timberline on Tuesday, June 24, and Carihi on Wednesday, June 25.

Reflecting on the year, Superintendent Manning acknowledged both the successes and the challenges that shaped this school year. He shared that he had spoken to graduates at the Indigenous grad ceremony about the idea that "the obstacle is the way" — an idea that was exemplified by the Carihi Secondary community as they navigated the aftermath of the fire earlier this year. Superintendent Manning commended Carihi staff for their resilience and continued dedication teaching throughout the disruption.



Ending his remarks, he thanked everyone for their continued efforts and commitment and offered encouragement for the final stretch of the school year.

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Board Approves 2025-2026 Annual Operating Budget

After a third and final reading, the Board of Education voted to approve the proposed preliminary annual operating budget of \$92,234,938 for the 2025-2026 school year.

At the May 27, 2025 public board meeting the board held the first two readings of the budget, which were passed, but they did not unanimously agree to hold all three required readings at that meeting. All BC boards of education are required to submit a balanced budget by the end of June each year.

The budget includes:

- \$650,000 in savings by shifting to teacher librarians providing prep coverage, resulting in the reassignment of five specialist prep teachers (in areas such as art and PE).
- \$100,000 recovery of unspent school-based funds that have been held in trust.
- \$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.
- \$35,000 in savings to be realized through 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.

- \$485,000 in savings through 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.
- A \$450,000 addition to support IT device replacement and other supports.

The budget is based on an estimated student enrolment of 5,757 full-time equivalent (FTE) students for September 2025 and forecasted total revenues of \$91 million and total costs of \$91.3 million, which results in a capital deficit of \$227,605.

The preliminary budget will be posted shortly to the district website at [Reports & Publications](#).

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Trustees Compensation Increased

Trustees voted to increase their compensation following the annual trustee remuneration formula. Based on current information on other Vancouver Island school districts and student funding, the formula recommended an annual increase of \$552 for the chairperson, \$633 for the vice-chairperson, and \$430 for trustees.

The new annual compensation amounts will be \$ 19,831 for the chairperson, \$18,341 for the vice-chairperson, and \$16,925 for trustees.

The trustee remuneration formula was set by a community representative committee in 2005, and the board reviews the compensation levels for district trustees each year.

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Ministry Approves Funding for New Accessible Bus

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has approved funding for a new school bus from the district's 2025-2026 capital plan request. The request was for a new diesel accessible school bus with four wheelchair spaces.

The board held all three required readings and unanimously passed the required amended capital plan bylaw to allow the district to receive the funds and proceed with ordering the bus.

Watch this segment: [0:19:35](#)

Childcare Program Expands with New Builds and Continued High Demand

School District 72's childcare program continues to grow, with strong community uptake, full staffing, and construction of new sites underway according to an update from Associate Superintendent Philip Cizmic.

The district has now completed construction for all seven of the original childcare sites. These centres are fully operational, and the province is in the final reconciliation stage, reviewing financial documentation. Notably, Associate Superintendent Cizmic said the project came in approximately \$400,000 under budget. The district has requested to use these funds toward its second phase of childcare expansion.

Phase two includes four additional sites, which have been approved by the Ministry of Education and Child Care and are currently in early design with architects. Construction on two of these new centres may begin as early as this summer. These new centres will focus on before- and after-school care and programming for children aged three to five—an area of growing demand in the community, particularly among healthcare workers.

Now in its second year of operation, the district's childcare program has exceeded expectations. Afternoon programs are particularly popular, with six sites operating at 90% capacity and multi-year waitlists in place at several locations.

Summer childcare is also being provided this year, with 61 children registered across three sites. As with last year, extended care hours are available to support healthcare professionals working 12-hour shifts.

Associate Superintendent Cizmic told the board that programming over the summer includes a strong focus on outdoor activities, with flexible plans to ensure children stay cool and safe during hot weather. He also shared that all the district's childcare centres are currently fully staffed and operating on a financially break-even basis.

The childcare program expansion reflects the district's continued commitment to supporting working families and meeting the evolving needs of the community.

Watch this segment: [0:27:59](#)

Busy Summer Ahead at Carihi as Fire Restoration Progresses

Carihi Secondary will be a hub of activity this summer as the district continues repairs, installs temporary learning spaces, and prepares for long-term restoration following the fire earlier this year.

Superintendent Geoff Manning informed the board that repairs to Carihi's gymnasium are high on the list of summer priorities. Crews will focus on repairs to the exterior wall and roof to ensure the gym is watertight by September. This will allow interior restoration to move ahead in the fall, with a hopeful reopening timeline of January.

Two classrooms beneath the gym—farther from the origin of the fire—are expected to be fully restored and ready for students by the start of the school year.

Four new portables will also be installed over the summer between F Wing and C Wing, in the former parking area. To address space needs because of enrollment growth, at least one additional portable (possibly two) will also be moved from within the district to a location behind E Wing, near the office, and should be operational by September.



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Superintendent Manning also shared that the culinary program will return to Carihi in the fall with the purchase of a commercial camp kitchen that will be installed in the lower west parking lot, between the gym and the daycare. The program had temporarily relocated to North Island College, and the district was very appreciative for that partnership.

In addition to these projects, summer work will include early-stage site preparation at the original fire location. Superintendent Manning said the community should expect to see heavy equipment, civil servicing, geotechnical work, and cranes on site as part of this long-term repair work.

While timelines are always subject to delays due to weather, contractors, or permitting, the operations team is moving forward with determination to ensure Carihi is well prepared for September—and to hopefully bring the gym back into full use for January.

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District Capital Priorities Submitted to the Ministry Unchanged for Fourth Year

The school district is once again submitting the following projects as its top priorities for the 2026-2027 capital plan requests to the Ministry of Education and Child Care: a full replacement of Cedar Elementary (\$39.7 million); two classroom expansions at Ocean Grove and Ripple Rock Elementary Schools (\$8.4 million); and seismic upgrades at Cedar, École des Deux Mondes, Penfield, Robron, and Oyster River (\$25.5 million). These projects were identified and sent for the 2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026 school years as well.

The only new addition is a request to support the demolition of the remainder of the Cedar Annex building which was partially destroyed by fire in July 2024. The Ministry of Education and Child Care may provide funding for demolition of closed schools but will not provide funding for repairs. Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick informed the board that this application does not yet mean that the building will be demolished. Even if approved by

the Ministry, approval and arrangements would take upwards to two years and other arrangements could be made between the Board of Education and Laichwiltach Family Life Society (the current tenants) for Cedar Annex in the meantime.

A new school for Cedar Elementary has been a top priority for the Board of Education for the last seven years to improve the learning conditions at that school. However, until such a time as a new school is approved and built, seismic upgrading is necessary for the existing building. In October 2024, the BC NDP and Premier David Eby promised a new Cedar Elementary and the rebuilding of the Laichwiltach Family Life Society facility if re-elected.

The former Oyster River School building is also included for seismic upgrade as part of ongoing maintenance since the building has been leased and in case it ever needs to be used again by the district like it was this past school year after the Carihi Secondary fire.

School districts must identify and send a list of required capital projects two years out to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The Board of Education is usually informed of any approved project requests in the following spring.

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