

Carihi Secondary Fire Recovery Project Timeline of Work & Current Status

Since the November 2024 fire, the school district has taken continuous action to stabilize the site, restore learning, and advance rebuild planning. Progress on permanent reconstruction now depends on provincial approval.

November – December 2024

Immediate Response & Return to Learning

November 21, 2024

Fire damages A-wing, including the gym, mezzanine, multi-purpose room, teaching kitchen, stage, and lower classrooms. B-wing also sustained smoke and water damage. Thirteen teaching spaces were affected.

November 23-27, 2024

District restores core systems (HVAC, electrical, fire alarm, water) and begins structural and safety assessments.

Late November 2024

Required air quality testing, hazmat assessment, and structural reviews completed before remediation could begin.

December 2, 2024

Carihi students return to class in other parts of the school and with temporary satellite locations at the closed Oyster River Elementary School, extra space at École des Deux Mondes Elementary, and gym glasses at Robron Centre. District priority was to get students back to in-person learning as quickly as possible. About 250 students temporarily displaced and bused to alternate sites. School goes to a simplified Day 1 and Day 2 rotation and double block schedule to try to minimize lost instructional time because of travel.

December 11, 2024

Campbell River Fire Department releases their investigation findings. Cause of the fire determined to be accidental spontaneous combustion and not the result of arson or other suspicious activity. The fire originated in the area between the laundry room and the exit next to a shelving unit where three or four milk crates were stacked with clothing for students. Residual cooking oil or grease remained embedded in the fabric after laundering and retained enough temperature from the heat from the dryer to initiate oxidation of the oil residues when the fabrics were piled together. The fire alarms functioned correctly; however, no sprinklers were present in A-wing. This was in compliance with all safety regulations at the time A-wing was built and continued to meet legal requirements.

December 2024

Asbestos contamination confirmed, A-wing determined unsafe, and B-wing remediation begins.

January – March 2025

Early Repairs/Demolition & Start of Provincial Approval Process

January - February 2025

Temporary roof installed on gym to prevent further damage. Structural stabilization work begins,

including shear wall construction. Architect and consultants engaged to plan repairs and rebuild options.

March 2025

A-wing demolition begins and is completed. Demolition permits submitted and approved. Four portable classrooms ordered from Chaparral Industries.

March 12, 2025

The Ministry of Infrastructure advised that they would release initial project funding for the claim but that the school district would need to submit a formal project definition report (PDR) for full funding approval from the Treasury Board.

April – June 2025

Reoccupation, Major Technical Work & Ongoing Provincial Requirements

April 1, 2025

Students and teachers return to B-wing and lower classrooms below the gym.

April 2025

Temporary power, electrical systems, and site infrastructure restored.

April 24, 2025

First draft of the project definition report (PDR) completed and submitted.

Late April - May 2025

Extensive geotechnical investigations completed. Supports structural engineering decision for rebuild of gym wall and A-wing relocation.

June 25, 2025

Ministry of Infrastructure requests additional technical details and cost estimates for PDR.

July - September 2025

Design Progress & Shifting Provincial Requirements

July 2025

Multiple revised PDR submissions completed in July to satisfy Ministry of Infrastructure requests.

August 6, 2025

Chaparral Industries informs the district that construction of the four new portables had not started despite earlier timelines and communication. Delivery moved from September 1, 2025 to late November 2025.

August 12, 2025

Senior leadership team, Carihi administration walk through east side of gym, stage and lower classrooms for the first time since the fire.

August 15, 2025

Ministry of Infrastructure requests additional comments for pre-fabrication construction in the PDR.

August 20, 2025

Camp kitchen trailer delivered.

August 25, 2025

Ministry of Infrastructure capital planning officers come to visit the site to discuss PDR requirements and options.

September 6, 2025

2 portables moved from other district schools to Carihi Secondary and ramp/stair construction begins, as does electrical and mechanical work.

September 10, 2025

Ministry of Infrastructure directs district to create a new project in capital planning system for the Carihi replacement/renovation work.

September 22, 2025

Ministry of Infrastructure requires architect to review Carihi gym replacement options in PDR.

October - December 2025

Temporary Facilities Completed & Continued Changes to Project Requirements

October 28, 2025

Occupancy permit for SD72 owned portables received from the City of Campbell River.

November 7, 2025

Ministry of Infrastructure requires major PDR revisions, including expanded options and additional analysis.

November 15-16, 2025

The four new portables are delivered to Carihi Secondary from Chaparral Industries.

November - December 2025

Gym structure stabilized and made weather-tight.

December 2025

Ministry of Infrastructure requires further information and revisions to PDR including detailed costing, risk analysis and procurement analysis.

December 19, 2025

District sends the Ministry of Infrastructure capital planning officers what the district is led to believe is the "final" PDR recommending A-wing rebuild and gym repair as the district's preferred option. Further rebuild planning work must pause pending approval and direction from the Province.

January - May 2026

Continued Provincial Review/Revisions & Community Pressure Mounts

January - March 9, 2026

District staff work through multiple additional revisions to the PDR at the Ministry of Infrastructure's



request, including: equipment inventories (of thousands of items), detailed costing and escalation calculations, and space allocation adjustments.

March 9, 2026

Ministry of Infrastructure informs the district that the PDR was complete.

March 13, 2026

District receives requests for additional revisions to the PDR from the Ministry of Infrastructure.

April 17, 2026

Superintendent Geoff Manning sends a letter to Minister of Infrastructure Bowinn Ma about the inefficiencies in the PDR process and the negative impact that the delay for funding approval of the restoration to Carihi Secondary is having on students.

April 20, 2026

Ministry of Infrastructure capital planning officers confirm they need no further revisions to the PDR.

April 29, 2026

Carihi PAC launches advocacy website www.rebuildcarihigym.com and online petition.

May 5, 2026

Carihi PAC attend the SD72 public board meeting shares that the online petition had already garnered over 730 signatures.

May 6, 2026

Carihi PAC vice-president Sophia Sauter gives an interview with CBC Radio Victoria.

May 7, 2026

The Board of Education finalize and send a letter to Minister of Infrastructure Bowinn Ma expressing their frustration with the delay in funding approval for the restoration of Carihi Secondary. The letter was also copied to Minister of Education and Child Care Lisa Beare, North Island MLA Anna Kindy, Infrastructure Critic MLA Misty Van Popta, Campbell River Mayor Kermit Dahl and Council, and the Carihi Parent Advisory Council. It was also posted publicly on the school district website and social media and sent to local media outlets.

May 15, 2026

Carihi band students on an annual trip to Victoria request and secure a meeting with the Minister of Infrastructure's office to deliver the signed petition. Students are also interviewed by Chek News (see coverage here: [Carihi students take appeal for school repairs to Victoria nearly 18 months after fire](#)).

Current Status (Spring 2026)

The project definition report (PDR) is complete. District is awaiting provincial funding approval through the Treasury Board. Construction start date and timeline cannot be finalized until approval is received.