

# School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF  
JUNE 16 2026

June 17, 2026  
INFORMATION RELEASE

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You can watch a recording of this meeting on the district's YouTube channel at: <https://youtu.be/71CpYl8pnFc>

## Chairperson Remarks

In his opening remarks, Chairperson Craig Gillis said June is a time to reflect on a memorable school year and began by thanking students, saying they are the reason for the board's work. He also thanked parents and families, staff, and the district's management and operations teams for the support they provide to students every day. Chair Gillis said he is proud to serve on a conscientious, committed and caring board, supported by a community with strong heart and spirit.

He pointed to the recent progress on the Carihi Secondary rebuild as an example of what can happen when families, students, governments and district staff advocate together. Chair Gillis said the collective efforts of the parent advisory council, student voice, local and provincial support, and the district's management and operations teams helped secure the funding needed to repair the gym and rebuild A-Wing. He added that the district will now work deliberately to move the next steps forward as quickly as possible.

Reflecting on the year, He also shared a recent moment that made him think about the future of Campbell River students. He referred to the national attention surrounding former Robron student Rod Brind'Amour and Campbell River-born and raised broadcaster Kyle Bukauskas and said it left him wondering which current students may one day gain national attention as they pursue their own goals. He said graduation ceremonies offer a glimpse of students' hopes for the future and a chance to recognize the support they received along the way. On behalf of the board, Chair Gillis extended best wishes to this year's graduates as they move into the next stage of their lives and encouraged the

community to read the graduation supplement published in the local Mirror.

Chair Gillis also acknowledged international students who will soon return to their home countries, saying their families placed great trust in Campbell River when they chose the community for their children's school experience. He thanked the district's international student program, host families, schools and teachers for helping make that experience possible.

To close, he wished retiring employees happiness and good health in retirement and encouraged anyone interested in public education leadership to learn more about becoming a school trustee through the BCSTA website.

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## Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Geoff Manning highlighted several key updates as the school year draws to a close, including progress on major capital projects, student achievements, and upcoming year-end milestones.

Superintendent Manning confirmed that \$24.7 million in provincial funding has been approved to support the repair of the Carihi Secondary gym and rebuild of A-Wing. He acknowledged the strong advocacy of parents, staff and the board in helping secure the funding and noted that district staff are eager to begin construction, with repair work on the gym to get underway as soon as possible.

He continued by also highlighting the recent national achievements of students at Skills Canada. Timberline



Secondary students Dana Kim and Julian Ciumac and Carihi Secondary earned a bronze medal in video production, while Carihi students Jett Taylor and Indy Cook placed fourth in 3D animation. He also shared that a former Timberline grad and NIC student won gold in heavy-duty mechanics, reflecting the high level of talent and the strength of skilled trades and technology programs across the district.

Superintendent Manning noted how quickly the school year has passed and spoke to the many year-end celebrations taking place across schools. Recent events included the Carihi and Timberline proms, a Métis sashing ceremony, and the Indigenous graduation ceremony. Upcoming events include the Robron graduation, followed by Timberline and Carihi graduations next week, marking the close of the school year. These events recognize student accomplishments and provide opportunities for families and the community to celebrate learning.

As the district approaches the next election, Superintendent Manning thanked trustees for their ongoing leadership and commitment. He recognized trustees' contributions to the district's strategic direction and expressed appreciation for their work in supporting students and staff.

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## Energy Management Progress Shows Strong Savings and Emissions Reductions

School District 72 is seeing early success in its efforts to reduce energy use and lower costs across its schools, with results already exceeding short-term targets.

Director of Operations Jason Decksheimer and Erica Letchford of Rede Energy Solutions presented an update to the board on the district's energy management program, which focuses on improving efficiency in buildings while reducing environmental impacts.

The update showed a steady decline in energy use since 2022, with the district achieving about a 17 per cent

reduction to date. That performance is ahead of the initial target set for this stage of the work.

Lower energy use is also translating into measurable savings. By the end of 2025, the district is estimated to have avoided about \$236,000 in utility costs.

Much of this progress has come from operational improvements, including adjustments to building automation systems, lighting upgrades and participation in a provincial optimization program that supports more efficient building performance.

The district is also working toward longer-term carbon reduction goals required by the province. Emissions have decreased compared to earlier levels, though further progress will depend on securing funding for larger capital projects needed to make deeper reductions.

Trustees discussed how this work could connect to student learning, including opportunities to build awareness of energy use and environmental responsibility in schools.

The district plans to continue expanding energy-saving measures while pursuing funding opportunities to support future improvements.

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## Accessibility Work Advances Across SD72 Schools

School District 72 is continuing to make progress in improving accessibility across its schools and sites, with a focus on reducing barriers for students, staff and visitors.

Superintendent Geoff Manning outlined the work of the district's Accessibility Committee in its annual report, highlighting efforts over the past school year to improve physical access, strengthen inclusive practices and build awareness across the system.

The committee's work is guided by the district's Accessibility Plan and focuses on practical improvements that support day-to-day participation. This includes input from members with lived experience and those who



directly support individuals with disabilities, helping ensure that decisions reflect real needs in schools.

Improving access to facilities remains a central part of this work. Accessibility audits completed last year continue to guide upgrades such as automatic door openers, ramps, handrails, high-visibility markings and accessible parking. A total of 41 accessibility-related work orders have been completed so far this school year.

The district is also planning ahead, with priority projects identified for 2026. A key focus is improving access to washrooms and changing spaces, particularly in older schools where gaps still exist. While progress is ongoing, access remains inconsistent across some sites, and some schools continue to rely on temporary solutions or have limited specialized equipment.

Accessibility improvements are extending beyond buildings to outdoor spaces. The committee has supported more inclusive playground design, including accessible surfacing and equipment that allows more students to take part. At Pinecrest Elementary, upgrades supported through Tire Stewardship BC will improve surfacing to better accommodate students who use mobility equipment.

Students are also benefiting from increased access to specialized equipment. New resources, including an accessible stroller and portable lift, are helping expand participation in field trips, outdoor learning and transportation, with support for implementation and training provided through inclusive education.

Alongside these physical improvements, the committee continues to look at ways to strengthen inclusion and belonging. This includes exploring inclusive sport models and potential opportunities for broader student participation across the district.

Building awareness and shared understanding remains an important next step. The committee has identified a need for clearer communication, more consistent language and expanded professional learning focused on accessibility, anti-ableism and disability justice.

Committee members also provided input into the new Board Policy 5: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility. The revised policy is intended to reflect current practice and guide board decisions, district planning and school-level work.

The report also notes that formal feedback on accessibility has been limited, with low awareness identified as a key barrier, particularly for students. Increasing awareness of feedback processes and creating more accessible ways to gather input will be a focus moving forward.

The Accessibility Committee will continue this work in the coming school year, including working with operations to develop inclusive playground standards, improving communication and beginning planning for the next three-year Accessibility Plan.

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## Summer School Registration Underway with Strong Early Demand

Summer school programs in School District 72 are seeing strong early interest, with hundreds of students already registered for this year's learning opportunities.

Associate Superintendent Philip Cizmic told the board that 675 students have signed up so far, including approximately 625 elementary students and 50 middle and secondary students.

Registration reopened for a second intake period from June 17 to June 23, giving families one more final opportunity to enroll their children before programs begin.

The district continues to see steady participation in its long-running summer school program, which has been offered since 1981. It remains one of the only programs of its kind on the North Island and continues to serve students and families each year.

Summer school is offered at no cost to families, supported through provincial funding. The program has been free to



attend since 2007, helping reduce barriers and expand access to learning outside the regular school year.

The district expects registration numbers to increase following the final intake period, with programs continuing to support student learning, skill development and engagement over the summer months.

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## Board Tables Motion on Possible Grade Reconfiguration

Trustees have tabled a motion that would have explored potential changes to grade configurations across School District 72.

The motion, brought forward by Trustee Dave Harper, proposed that staff examine the educational and financial implications of moving from the current K-5, 6-8, 9-12 model to a K-7 and 8-12 structure.

Trustees expressed interest in the topic and agreed it could warrant further consideration. However, there was also recognition that the timing may not be appropriate to begin a significant review, particularly with upcoming elections. Trustees noted that such work would require staff time and resources and should be carefully considered.

The board voted to table the motion to a future date. No direction has been given to staff, and no review or changes to grade configurations are underway at this time.

The item was first introduced as a notice of motion at the May 26 public board meeting, allowing trustees and the public time to be aware of the proposed discussion before it came forward for consideration.

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## Carihi Funding Approved for Gym Repair and A-Wing Rebuild

School District 72 is moving ahead with work at Carihi

Secondary following confirmation of provincial funding for both gym repairs and the A-Wing rebuild.

The projects will proceed in parallel, with planning and preparation underway for both components.

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick reported that the gym funding has been approved as a separate project, allowing work to move forward more quickly once contracts are finalized.

At the same time, planning continues for the A-Wing rebuild. The approved design reflects the district's preferred option, which includes additional space to better support student use, including a separate eating area that enhances the school's cafeteria program.

The A-Wing project will require additional design and planning work before construction begins. Once that work is complete, construction is expected to move forward alongside the gym project.

All work will follow provincial capital guidelines. The district will work closely with Ministry staff throughout the process to meet required standards at each stage of the project.

Detailed timelines will be shared as contracts are finalized and key milestones are confirmed.

The district will continue to provide updates and keep students, staff and the community informed as both projects move ahead.

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## Board Approves 2026-2027 Budget

The Board of Education has approved School District 72's 2026-2027 budget following several months of difficult planning, reductions and provincial advocacy.

Trustees gave final approval to the budget bylaw, adopting a balanced budget of approximately \$93.5 million for the coming school year.



The approved budget reflects earlier work to address a significant projected shortfall driven by rising costs and declining enrolment identified during the spring budget process. Those challenges led to \$2.1 million in reductions and funding adjustments aimed at minimizing impacts on classrooms while maintaining services for students.

In May, the district also faced additional uncertainty when it learned that it may face a funding shortfall of \$385,000 tied to the recent provincial labour settlement with the BCTF. While the teacher benefit cost settlement had been described as fully funded, the province was originally intending to allocate this on a per-student model which would have seen SD72 only receive about one percent or roughly \$11,000 towards its true cost for the school district.

Following advocacy from district leadership, the province adjusted its funding approach, ensuring that districts would be made whole to reflect their true financial impact. Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick reported that Campbell River played a key role in identifying the issue and helping to resolve it for districts across the province who also would have faced a shortfall.

With this issue resolved, trustees were able to move forward with final budget approval and did not have to consider making further budget reductions.

The budget continues to focus on protecting direct classroom supports wherever possible. Many of the reductions were achieved through attrition, retirements and operational efficiencies rather than layoffs. Adjustments included changes to school administration staffing, reductions in department budgets and extended replacement cycles for technology.

Trustees acknowledged the work that went into balancing the budget under complex conditions and emphasized the importance of continued advocacy for sustainable funding that reflects the realities facing public education.

The district will now implement the approved budget for the 2026-2027 school year.

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## Board Approves Updated Trustee Per Diem Rates

The board has approved updated trustee per diem rates following its annual review of trustee remuneration and expense allowances.

The new rates align with those set by the BC School Trustees Association, effective January 1, 2026. They are: breakfast: \$15; lunch: \$20; dinner: \$32; and full day: \$67.

Trustees also reviewed mileage reimbursement as part of the annual process. The board is aligning with the BC School Trustees Association mileage rate of 73 cents per kilometre.

The review is required under Board Governance Policy 24, which directs the board to set meal and expense rates for trustees carrying out board business. As part of the process, the district compares its rates with other Vancouver Island school districts and provincial benchmarks before making a decision.

This annual review helps ensure trustee expenses remain consistent with provincial practices and reflect reasonable costs when trustees are fulfilling their governance responsibilities on behalf of the district.

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## Trustee Compensation Increased

Trustees approved increases to trustee compensation following its annual remuneration review.

The adjustments are based on the district's established trustee remuneration formula, which uses information from other Vancouver Island school districts and student enrolment data to guide recommended changes.

For the 2026-2027 year, the formula recommended annual increases of: \$367 for the board chair; \$258 for the vice-chair; and \$351 for trustees.

With these changes, the new annual compensation levels are: chair: \$20,198; vice-chair: \$18,599; and trustees: \$17,276.

The trustee remuneration formula was originally developed by a community-based committee in 2005. The board reviews compensation levels each year to ensure they remain aligned with comparable districts and reflect current conditions.

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## Board Begins Preparations for October School Trustee Elections

The board addressed a couple of housekeeping items in preparation for general voting day and school trustee elections on Saturday, October 17 by appointing the district's electoral officers.

The board appointed Edith Watson as the chief election officer and Betty Wasyliw as the deputy election officer for the 2026 School District 72 trustee elections. The district partners with the Strathcona Regional District and the City of Campbell River for the local election services.

Trustees elected through the October 17 general voting day will fulfill a four-year term on the Board of Education.

The nomination period for individuals interested in running for school trustee in the upcoming municipal election will open on September 1 and will close on September 11. Nomination information and submission documents will be available from the district website in the coming weeks.

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