

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
FEB.23, 2021

February 24, 2021
INFORMATION RELEASE

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Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson John Kerr opened the meeting by acknowledging that over the last two weeks COVID-19 exposure notices were issued for both Campbell River high schools and that cases on the North Island had doubled since the beginning of the week. He continued by saying that while he understands that everyone is experiencing COVID fatigue the safety of our school communities and the community-at-large is dependent upon everyone doing their part to stop the spread.

He encouraged everyone to continue to follow the directions of the provincial health officer and stated that the most important step in keeping COVID out of our schools is to stay home and self-isolate if you have symptoms.

Moving on from COVID, Chairperson Kerr highlighted that there have been some changes in personnel at the school board office and he officially welcomed new Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Renée MacNeil and Director of Human Resources Carrie McVeigh, as well as congratulated Brenna Ewing, the current principal of Southgate Middle School, on her recent appointment as Director of Learning Support Services, effective in July.

In closing, he shared that he had the opportunity to attend the district Pro-D day on February 12 and found it gratifying to see the number of staff who participated in the virtual event and their level of engagement. He stressed that events such as these help the district make continuous improvement in our practice and achievement, directly supporting the goals of the district's strategic plan.

You can watch a recording of the meeting on the district's YouTube channel at:
<https://youtu.be/hsnWIBz7WAw>

Superintendent Remarks

Elaborating on Chairperson Kerr's comments on the COVID exposures at Carihi and Timberline Secondary Schools, Superintendent Morrow shared that out of caution Island Health has asked for two classes to self-isolate for 14 days after the last potential exposure date at each school. Both classes are being provided with opportunities to continue their learning remotely through the isolation period.

He also acknowledged that when exposure notices are issued for schools that it is concerning and reiterated that what is happening in schools is reflective of what is happening in the community. He, too, encouraged the community to continue to take health and safety precautions.

Highlighting some district events, Superintendent Morrow shared that February 24 is Pink Shirt Day, an opportunity to take a visible stand against bullying but that all schools and district worksites need to be safe, inclusive, and supportive environments for all students and staff every day of the year.

Battle of the Books will continue virtually this year and students will compete in the annual reading trivia challenge by competing at their schools with winners moving forward to zone and, ultimately, a district battle. The district battle will be held March 16. Administration of the grades 4 and 7 Foundation Skills Assessment has also begun with a completion date no later than March 12.

Superintendent Morrow closed his remarks by sharing that over 700 employees participated in the district Pro-D session on February 12, which included hearing from some current and graduated students about their personal school experiences and the qualities of the educators that made a difference in their lives.



Ministry of Health responds to board's advocacy efforts on COVID vaccine prioritization

A letter from the Ministry of Health, in response to the Board of Education's request that school employees to be prioritized alongside other essential workers for the COVID vaccine, says that vaccine efforts have had to be focused on vaccinating as many high-risk people as possible in the first quarter of 2021 due to low supply.

The letter continues by stating that this "... is not a comment on the value of the essential services provided by school district staff but is focused on protecting those who are most vulnerable to severe illness first." It outlines that as vaccines arrive in increasing quantities there will be targeted deployment for people in additional priority groups but that the timelines will depend on the approval of other vaccines and the availability. Scheduling may also be modified as COVID transmission is monitored.

Over concerns about how many people teachers, support staff and other school employees come into close contact with daily, the Board of Education wrote two letters to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health in December requesting that the provincial government place a high priority in providing the COVID vaccine to school employees after healthcare professionals, as essential workers. The board had also submitted a resolution on prioritizing vaccinations for education staff as essential workers to the BC School Trustees' Association (BCSTA) Provincial Council.

Board supports grant application for solar energy system at Quadra Elementary

The board voted to give permission to the Quadra Island Climate Action Network Society (ICAN) to apply to BC Hydro for grant funding and support a potential project that would enable the society to install a grid-tied photovoltaic solar energy system on Quadra Elementary School.

Quadra Island trustee, Susan Wilson, brought the project proposal forward to the board on behalf of ICAN and with support of the Quadra Elementary Principal Fred Schaub and teacher Sheldon Etheridge.

ICAN's project proposal outlines that the project would feature a five to seven panel rooftop array that would produce between 2.5 and 3 kW output tied to the school's current electrical grid with an in-school display module and the potential for expansion.

In addition to providing renewable energy, the project could provide the opportunity for students to learn about energy and environmental concepts through experience and engagement with solar system technology.

If the necessary funding is secured installation could begin in May 2021 with the system complete before the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

Board adopts amended budget

The board voted to approve the amended budget of \$77,644,901 for 2020-2021.

The total budget revenue is \$73,414,051 while the budgeted costs are \$76,725,901 resulting in an overall deficit of \$3,311,850. The deficit includes planned spending of \$1.7 million from reserves and a planned operating deficit of \$1.6 million.

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 2020.

The preliminary budget included a planned deficit of \$830,000 and a planned reserve draw of \$1.7 million, however COVID-19 has resulted in an approximate \$500,000 drop in revenue and increased costs of \$300,000. The district also experienced increased costs of \$2.5 million related to cleaning, staffing and health and safety costs which were offset by federal and provincial grant funding.

Update on BC K-12 COVID health and safety measures

On February 4, the BC Centre for Disease Control and Ministry of Education announced new K-12 health and safety measures and another revision was issued on February 23. The district has been reviewing these changes against our practices to ensure compliance, but they seem to have little impact in School District 72 because of our 1/8 model at



secondary schools which limits the number of transitions for students. Key aspects of the changes include the introduction of a new health app for students and parents to help with daily health checks, the requirement for adults to now wear masks within their cohorts, middle and secondary students having to wear masks within their classrooms unless at their regular seats, and a re-emphasis on hand hygiene, physical distancing, and the need to stay home when feeling unwell.

District partnering with organizations to improve physical literacy

Working with Sport for Life, Pacific Sport and the Campbell River Physical Literacy initiative, and with thanks to funding from the Ministry of Health, the district is striving to increase physical literacy in elementary and middle schools. The intention is not to be sport specific but rather to encourage physical activity throughout life.

The funding will support the hiring of a 0.6 FTE (full-time equivalent) educator from April to June of this year and with a plan to continue next September. This support teacher will work alongside classroom teachers to help them apply best practices in physical literacy before school, recess, gym, after school and during class time to give “brain breaks”.

Through this partnership schools will also receive stencils for hallways and outside blacktops and have access to the Play Builder website with lesson plans for K-7.

Enrolment forecasted to increase next year

Preliminary 2021-2022 district-wide student enrollment projections are expected to increase by 20 full-time equivalent (FTE) students next year, based on the Bragar demographics and information from schools. This projection is subject to change based on the annual September 30 enrollment count.

District starts budget development process for 2021-2022

Partner group consultations to develop the 2021-2022 operating budget will begin in April. Details will be provided

by the secretary-treasurer's office. Given public health restrictions on gatherings, meetings will be held online.

Dates to note for the public are:

Wednesday, April 14 at 7 p.m.

Budget information will be reviewed by the board and the parent advisory groups.

Tuesday, May 4 at 12 p.m.

Deadline for public submissions/presentations regarding the 2021-2022 operating budget to be heard at the May 11 public board meeting. Should you wish to make a presentation, contact Natalie Crawshaw in the secretary-treasurer's office at (250) 830.2302.

Tuesday, May 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Public submissions/presentations submitted by 12 p.m. on May 4 will be heard at this meeting.

Tuesday, May 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Potential adoption of the 2021-2022 budget at the public board meeting.

