

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
APR. 13, 2021

April 14, 2021
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.

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Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson John Kerr opened the meeting by welcoming students, parents, and staff back from spring break and the Easter long weekend.

Since the board's last public meeting at the end of March, COVID case numbers in BC have increased dramatically, including on Vancouver Island. With increasing cases across the province, a mask mandate has been implemented in all grades 4-12 classes with the recommendation that K-3 students also wear masks. Chairperson Kerr continued by stating that events in our community are often reflected in our schools and that as the virus is in the community this is a prudent precaution to minimize the threat.

He went on to acknowledge that the past year has been difficult for everyone, including students and staff and recognized the efforts of education workers to provide a safe environment for students to continue to learn in these unsettled times.

He also highlighted that the SD72 Board of Education was one of the first to advocate for priority vaccination for education workers in the province and that it is unfortunate that the vaccine earmarked for education staff has had unwanted side effects causing that roll out to be stalled. Hope remains that these can be resolved, and that education staff can receive vaccinations soon.

After continuing to express concerns over the poor condition of Cedar Elementary and having a replacement building top the district's capital projects list submitted to the Ministry of Education for the six years, Chairperson Kerr said that the ministry has not indicated that there will be a replacement in the near future. He stated that he believed the board should more forcefully advocate for the replacement of the almost 60-year-old building with a more modern facility that would reflect the demographics and needs of the learners and community.

He continued by sharing that members of the board will attend the virtual BC School Trustees' Association annual general meeting through the weekend and that during the three-day meeting trustees around the province would elect a new board of directors and debate and vote on over 40 resolutions to improve public education in BC.

Chairperson Kerr closed his remarks by highlighting that we are now entering the final two and a half months of the school year and sharing his hope that with improved weather and the ability to learn outside the next two and half months will be safe and successful for everyone.

You can watch a recording of the meeting on the district's YouTube channel at:

<https://youtu.be/fa7YY51y0wA>

Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Morrow started his remarks by sharing that April 22 is Earth Day and that several classrooms and schools will mark the day with activities related to keeping a healthy earth. It is also the time of year where we start to work on transition plans for incoming kindergarten students. While we typically open schools for a welcome to kindergarten activity because of COVID these events will be different for the second year in a row. Elementary schools will share details of those plans within their school community and with incoming kindergarten parents.

He continued his remarks by sharing that Tara Gordon's grade 6/7 Phoenix class fundraiser to support accessible water in South Sudan has been receiving donations from the community with the most recent being from the Campbell River Fire Department.

Speaking about COVID, Superintendent Morrow stated that with the increasing cases in the province we need to continue to be vigilant on maintaining protocols as schools will reflect what is happening within the community. With the



expanded mask mandate, the district has appreciated how students have adhered to the new protocols.

This week marks Education Week and the Ministry of Education, as part of the declaration, acknowledged that despite stresses and anxiety around the pandemic teachers, support staff, administrators and trustees across the province have shown incredible dedication and compassion. For more than a year, educational staff, parents, students, and partners have rallied to create a sense of normalcy for BC students. We appreciate how our SD72 community has continued to provide valuable learning opportunities, support our students, and worked to keep our schools as safe as possible and want to say thank you – we are grateful for our staff, parents, students and community support during this challenging time.

New Mentorship Program Partners Teachers to Learn from One Another

The board heard a presentation on the teacher mentorship program from Erin Pickering, district mentorship and Pro-D teacher coordinator.

The mentorship program was created to support teachers in best practices, using the leadership of teachers that are already working in the district and having them connect with teachers that are either new to our district, new to the profession or new to a particular role. The program is teacher-led, voluntary and based on a reciprocal learning relationship where both the mentor and mentee are learners and leaders.

The program started in January with a round table discussion and survey of approximately 20 to 30 educators from around the district. This feedback led to the development of a pair or triad model to allow for one-on-one relationships, an application process and decisions on release time and resource funds.

To date, the mentorship program has been primarily focused on providing online learning opportunities and establishing learning partnerships. There are currently 11 pairs of teachers working together mostly at the elementary and middle school levels. According to Pickering, the department structure at secondary school tends to naturally support mentorship amongst secondary school staff.

There are four mentees on standby waiting for pairing and several requests for mathematics support. Heading towards the end of the school year and the fall, program growth, recruitment of additional mentors particularly in math, best practices, and investigating how to support informal mentorships will be a focus.

Program costs are supported through professional development funds and the district received \$115,000 through the newly launched BC Teachers' Federation Mentorship Fund.

Changes to Policies on Role of the Board and Role of Committees and Representatives

After circulating proposed changes through a notice of motion the board has voted to adopt amended board governance policies on the role of the board (policy 1) and role of committees and representatives (policy 16).

The policies were changed to more clearly identify that the Board of Education is only comprised of the seven elected trustees and to clarify instances where the board or superintendent will select a representative to serve on an external committee.

A notice of motion was given for feedback to be sent to the policy review committee at the March 16 public board meeting and no comments or concerns regarding the amendments were received.

All board governance policies are on the district website at: <https://www.sd72.bc.ca/Board/policiesbylaws>

Board Makes Draw on Emergency Contingency Reserve to Cover COVID Costs

The board has had to draw \$535,000 from the district's emergency contingency reserve to cover COVID related costs in excess of the district's operating budget.

Through the COVID pandemic, district revenues have reduced by \$500,000 and costs have increased by \$170,000, increasing the district's expected deficit from \$830,000 to \$1.5 million. The district will receive \$135,000 in additional



funding from the federal Safe Return to Class fund leaving \$535,000 that needed to be covered.

The emergency contingency was established by the board in 2011 to serve as a safety net for unexpected, infrequent financial challenges to the school district. The contingency is limited to two percent of the prior year's revenues and any use of the contingency is to be replaced through the year end accumulated surplus if there is one.

Board Agrees to Allow Some Surplus Funds to Support 2021-2022 Budget

As the district begins developing the 2021-2022 budget, the Board of Education passed a motion supporting a draw of up to \$680,000 from unrestricted surplus.

This is a continued practice where the board has supported the use of up to one-third of the surplus, if needed, to help deliver a balanced budget while limiting budget cuts.

The district's surplus is currently \$2 million after an emergency contingency draw of \$535,000 for COVID costs.

Board to Advocate for Learning Needs in Rural and Remote Schools

The board's communications committee will be preparing a letter of advocacy to the Ministry of Education related to learning needs and opportunities in rural and remote schools. Trustees will review a draft of that letter in an upcoming meeting.

