

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
OCT. 26, 2021

October 28, 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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You can watch a recording of the meeting on the district's YouTube channel at:

<https://youtu.be/IFINq2UWpXg>

Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson John Kerr opened the meeting by addressing the Premier's announcement that boards of education, as employers, would be responsible for deciding whether to implement a vaccine mandate for school district staff. The BC School Trustees' Association (BCSTA) and the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), in cooperation with several other groups, have created K-12 sector guidelines which list four steps that are to be followed by boards before they decide on whether to create a proof of vaccination policy for staff. The guidelines require boards to gather information, align with legal advice and public health guidance and orders, consult with employee and First Nations groups, and engage with the community. He stressed that the board has a great deal of work to do before a final decision can be made and asked for staff and community patience as they work through the process.

He continued by stressing that, while a recent meeting of board chairs with the Ministry of Education gave the impression that the ministry expects boards to require vaccinations for employees as a condition of employment, the School District 72 Board of Education will make its final decision based on what trustees believe are the needs of our community.

Switching topics, Chairperson Kerr said that advocacy efforts towards the replacement of Cedar Elementary School continues with recent presentations to the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee and at the City of Campbell River and School District 72 liaison meeting. He also shared that CUPE Local 723 recently sent a letter of support to the education minister and MLA Michele Babchuk and requested CUPE membership also send letters of support. He encouraged anyone concerned about equity and student achievement in our district to lend their voice to the calls for a

new Cedar Elementary by visiting www.sd72.bc.ca/newcedar to download and sending a letter of support to MLA Babchuk and Minister Whiteside.

Chairperson Kerr closed his remarks by acknowledging that the work of the board is becoming more demanding and complicated and commending senior management and school staff for continuing to overcome many challenges and trying circumstances. He also acknowledged trustees for their ongoing dedication to considering and representing the best interests of the community.

Watch this segment: 0:06

Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Morrow started his remarks by sharing that a Campbell River School District alumni Marion Shields-Brown, who attended École des Deux Mondes, École Phoenix Middle School and graduated from Carihi Secondary in 2017, was chosen to speak at Simon Fraser University's fall 2021 convocation ceremony. Marion was celebrated for graduating with a degree from the Resource Environmental Management faculty, participating on the SFU NCAA track team and making the Dean's list for six consecutive terms. On behalf of everyone in the district, Superintendent Morrow congratulated Marion and her family on her outstanding academic success.

Continuing with celebratory highlights, Superintendent Morrow also shared that the district has received the Medium Commercial Efficiency in Action Award from FortisBC for work in upgrading to high efficiency boilers at École Willow Point and École Phoenix Middle School, as well as installing a condensing makeup air unit at the Southgate Middle School workshop. Combined these projects will result in an annual greenhouse gas reduction of approximately 106



tonnes of carbon dioxide and \$38,400 in operational savings. School District 72 is only the third school district to receive this acknowledgement from FortisBC. He congratulated Operations Manager Steve Woods, HVAC Leadhand Wesley Sharpe and Electrical Leadhand Christopher Lorenzetto and the rest of the HVAC and electrical teams.

He continued his remarks by sharing some recent and upcoming events, starting with the positive experience he had meeting with, listening to, and learning from student leaders in our district on the Oct 22 Pro-D day.

Oct 25 to 29 is school library week and Superintendent Morrow recognized the central role that teacher librarians play in the education and development of our students. Our school libraries have become learning hubs with lots of energy and collaborative projects taking place and these spaces offer opportunities for students to explore new worlds and become their best selves through access to multimedia content, educational programs and other resources curated by our teacher librarians.

Lastly, he closed his remarks by highlighting that November 1 is a district-wide Pro-D day to continue to fulfill the board's policy of ensuring that time is dedicated each year to Indigenous learning for all staff. Every member of staff community is expected to participate in and reflect on our collective ownership and work in creating positive, respectful, equitable environments within school communities. He expressed gratitude for Erin Pickering, Debra Martel, and Gillian Kirke's leadership in organizing this event.

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Campbell River Retired Teachers' Association Seeks Support Towards Printing a Book on the History of School in the Area

The board heard a presentation from the Campbell River Retired Teachers' Association (CRRTA) president Bonnie Roset and member Barbara Carrie monetary support from the board towards the printing of a book on the first 100 years of School District 72, from 1893 to 1993.

The project was begun by the CRRTA after learning that there was no formal archive of the history of the school

district. Photos and stories have been provided by former teachers, former students, local citizens, board records and public archives. CRRTA members are still working on editing and preparing the book for printing.

The BC Retired Teachers' Association has provided \$2,500 in funding towards the project, and they are seeking a loan of approximately \$6,000 from the school district to be able to produce 150 copies that will sell for \$40 each. A timeline of when the book will be available for purchase is still to be determined.

After cost recovery, any additional funds raised from the sale of the books may be contributed towards the CRRA bursary fund, which was established on behalf of SD72 students.

The board received the information and will consider the matter further at a future meeting.

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Close to 650 Students Benefited from Summer School Offerings

Associate Superintendent Morgan Kyle gave the board an update on Summer School 2021 on behalf of Summer School Principal Sean McLaughlin and Vice-Principal Kelly Gage.

648 students took advantage of the additional learning opportunities offered this last summer with wait lists for over half the programs. However, registration at the secondary school level was very low and so flexible learning options were provided to provide students with the opportunity to work on units of study that they struggled in during the school year, instead of repeating the entire course.

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Campbell River School District Still Considering Staff Vaccine Policy

Discussions about a possible vaccine policy for Campbell River School District staff are continuing and while labour issues cannot be discussed in public meetings the board did issue the following statement, as it recognizes that the issue

is of great interest to the community. Chairperson John Kerr read the statement on behalf of the board:

“The subject of a proof of vaccination mandate for school employees was placed on boards of education by Premier Horgan in October.

Since then, the Ministry of Education, the BC Public School Employers' Association, BC School Trustees' Association, CUPE, BC Teachers' Federation, education steering committee and several other groups has established guidelines for sector policies. These guidelines have been circulated to all relevant groups and now boards are required to do the work outlined in the guidelines to determine whether they will implement a proof of vaccination mandate in their school districts.

The School District 72 Board of Education intends to follow the process outlined in the guidelines before making any decisions on this matter.

Not only are there five steps to follow, but each must be done thoroughly and thoughtfully. Before making a final decision, the board is required to gather data and evidence in alignment with privacy rules, confirm alignment with legal advice, public health guidance and orders, consult with employee groups and First Nations, and engage the community. When those steps are complete the board must decide whether or not to create a policy and announce a decision.

Please be assured that the board's main concern is the health and safety of our students and employees.

Finally, the board takes this matter very seriously and if it makes the decision to create a proof of vaccination policy for employees it will direct the superintendent to implement an operational plan. Any decision that the board makes will thoroughly consider the moral, legal, and labour implications of its actions.

This will be a complex undertaking and we ask for forbearance and understanding as we go through this process.”

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Student Achievement Data Shows Some Improvement

As part of the district's ongoing commitment to greater transparency in sharing student achievement data, Superintendent Morrow presented student achievement results to the board through the Framework for Enhanced Student Learning. While there are some encouraging trajectories, according to Superintendent Morrow there is also a clear indicator of work that the school district needs to engage in, particularly regarding the ongoing disparity of outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Superintendent Morrow prefaced the results by stressing that any time we consider student data we should all be reminded that each number represents an individual student.

Campbell River School District's demographic data in comparison to the overall provincial school system indicates that the unemployment rate and number of lone parent families in Campbell River is higher than the provincial average and the percentage of adults with post-secondary credentials and the median family income is lower in Campbell River than the provincial average.

The most recent Early Development Index data shows the district's youngest students are experiencing higher vulnerability in most areas of consideration with the biggest area of concern being language and cognitive development, where the district is very close to the most vulnerable districts in the province.

According to literacy assessments on the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), district results for grade 4 reading are within the provincial average, having improved over the last four years and grade 4 writing results are well above the provincial average. Unfortunately, district results for grade 7 reading have fallen below the provincial average, while grade 7 writing remains on the higher end of the provincial average. Superintendent Morrow pointed out that while there has been an improvement in Indigenous student results in the district, there continues to be disparity in results for Indigenous students overall.

District results overall indicate that Campbell River School District students are within the 50th percentile for last year's Literacy 10 graduation assessment.

With regards to numeracy results, there has been an improvement across all measures in FSA numeracy results, but the district is still on the low end of the provincial average for grade 4 numeracy results and below the provincial average for grade 7 numeracy.

Overall graduation rates for the district are encouraging, however an area of significant concern is that there was a decline in Indigenous graduation rates last year.

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Board Approves Right of Way to Assist with Bringing High Speed Internet to Cortes Island

The board approved a statutory right of way bylaw granting City West Cable and Telephone Corp. the statutory right of way on district lands at Mary Point Road on Cortes Island. This will allow for the installation of underground fibre optic communication cable to provide high speed broadband internet services to residents and businesses on Cortes Island.

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Trustees Attend Numerous Conferences and Committee Meetings in October

Trustee committee representatives provided reports on the recent Vancouver Island School Trustees' Association conference, Ministry of Education partners liaison meeting, BC School Trustees' Provincial Council meeting, and SD72 and City of Campbell River liaison committee meeting.

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Student Voice Meeting Held on October Pro-D Day

Trustee Shannon Briggs and Superintendent Morrow met with eight student representatives from Southgate Middle School, École Phoenix Middle School, Carihi Secondary and Timberline Secondary on the October 22 professional

development day for the first in-person student voice meeting. Robron students had sent their regrets.

According to Trustee Briggs, the students shared positive and constructive feedback, as well as advice for the board. The discussion included student-led topics such as the greater need for both student and teacher IT support and training, vaping issues in schools, Tik Tok, the need for more outdoor covered seating areas, pandemic protocol enforcement and impacts, grade transitions, timetables, sexual health, and graduation.

The meetings are part of a continued board goal to hear more directly from students and to help inform their decision-making from a student perspective. The aim is to meet monthly either online through Teams or in-person.

Students have been selected in consultation with school administration because the students exhibit interest in forming policy and communicating with trustees around improvements and supports for public education.

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