

# School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF  
NOV. 16, 2021

November 17, 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](http://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/wy3nxCfUkVw>

## Kerr and Eddy Re-Elected as Board Chair and Vice-Chair

John Kerr is back as chairperson of the School District 72 Board of Education and Kat Eddy also retains her position as vice-chairperson for the last year of this board's term. Both were elected by acclamation from their fellow trustees at the November 16 public board meeting.

"Thank you for your faith in me to carry on in this position for another year. It has certainly been a learning experience over the last year, but I think that this board has been an absolutely terrific board that, in pretty well every case, moves in the same direction. And the core purpose of this board, that has been emphasized so many times, is the health, wellbeing and learning of our students. This board has done everything it possibly can to support our staff and support our students and I would like to see that continue for the upcoming year; I have no doubt that it will," said John Kerr following his re-election.

"I would like thank the team that sits around this table, our senior leadership team, our senior management team, our CUPE (support staff) and district teachers for supporting me in my personal learning on the journey of becoming a good governor for the children of our school district. It is a very positive and supportive environment in which to learn, and I hope that translates into the education of our children from K-12," said Vice-Chair Kat Eddy.

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## Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson John Kerr started his remarks by speaking to the process the board followed in reaching its recent unanimous decision not to implement a vaccine mandate for

district staff. He shared that the board reached its decision after consulting with North Island Medical Health Officer Dr. Charmaine Enns, who provided vaccination rates for the communities the board serves and transmission rates in district schools, as well as addressed trustees' individual questions on the necessity of a mandate.

The high rates of vaccination in the North Island, BCTF's indication of a 94% vaccination rate of teachers province-wide, adherence to public health measures in schools, and the fact that there have been no known incidents of transmission in schools were the basis for the board's decision not to currently implement a vaccine mandate.

He shared that while members of the board have received letters filled with pseudo-legal terms that threaten legal action and personal liability from those opposed to vaccination, the letters were not a factor in his personal decision and that the scientific information provided by Dr. Enns was the sole determiner on his part. He also stated that COVID vaccination for children was never part of the provincial direction to boards in considering a vaccine mandate and the board has had no conversations on the matter.

While there is no vaccine mandate for staff, Chair Kerr still encouraged all staff members who have not yet been vaccinated to get vaccinated as the most effective way to protect themselves, their families, and the students we serve.

Switching topics, Chairperson Kerr shared that members of the Cedar replacement committee, along with Superintendent Jeremy Morrow and Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick have gotten a meeting with Education Minister Jennifer Whiteside on November 25. He thanked all who have sent letters of support to MLA Babchuk and Minister Whiteside and encouraged anyone, who hasn't already, to lend their voice to the calls for a new Cedar Elementary by



downloading and sending a letter from [www.sd72.bc.ca/newcedar](http://www.sd72.bc.ca/newcedar).

He closed his remarks by acknowledging that these are trying times for everyone and particularly thanked district staff for their efforts in maintaining a sense of normalcy for students.

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## Superintendent Remarks

In opening his remarks, Superintendent Morrow shared that the Battle of the Books, the district's annual reading trivia competition to encourage more students to read for pleasure, started on November 1.

Speaking to other events around the district, he acknowledged the upcoming student-led conferences and encouraged parents to participate and receive updates on their children's progress, as well as offered his congratulations to the Carihi senior boys' soccer team on their Island championship win and wished them luck in the upcoming provincial championship.

He shared that he had also had the privilege of watching the senior girls' volleyball teams from Carihi and Timberline compete in the North Island tournament and how great it was to have parents and spectators once again in the gym watching our student athletes compete. Superintendent Morrow expressed gratitude to all the coaches and staff who give their time and care in affording students these opportunities and shared some anecdotes from recent school visits to highlight the ways staff are transforming even the ordinary into special experiences for our students.

Lastly, Superintendent Morrow shared that since the November 1 district-wide Pro-D day he has heard from several staff that the sessions deepened their personal commitment to truth and reconciliation. The Pro-D day was for all staff to further their understanding and learning around Indigenous peoples' perspectives and worldviews.

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## Surge Narrows Students Work with Community to Create Nature Trail and Guide

Surge Narrows students of multiple ages joined forces with the adults of their community to combine their learning with a community project to create a nature trail and accompanying trail guide.

Surge Narrows is the district's most remote school. Located on Read Island, the school has 17 students from kindergarten to grade 9 who all learn together in one classroom and under the direction of one teacher, Susanne Hrybko. Susanne shared details of the project and a video prepared by students with the Board of Education.

Three years ago, a family on the island was selling a portion of land and the community mobilized when they heard that a logging company was interested in purchasing the property. Community members decided to fundraise to try to purchase the land with the long-term vision of turning it into a shared community space.

Students have worked alongside the adults in the community on this shared project. First in designing, producing, and selling screen printed tea towels as a fundraiser through to designing and helping to build the finished trail.

Over the course of three years, students measured distances and tree circumference, researched First Nations languages of the area, made trail markers, flagged and researched the most interesting parts of the trail, as well as wrote, edited, designed and produced an accompanying trail guide, and much more. By being hands-on with this community project, students applied aspects of the Ministry of Education's applied design skills and technologies curriculum and core competencies.

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## District Asked to Create Early Years Coordinator Position to Expand Connection to Early Learning Community

The Campbell River Area Family Network has asked the Board of Education to consider creating an early years coordinator position to work with the early years community as the Ministry of Education has schools working to create integrated childcare by 2024.

The Campbell River area has higher averages of vulnerability than provincial data and increasing overall vulnerability rates across all neighbourhoods as indicated on the recent Early Development Index (EDI). The hope is that by having a dedicated early years coordinator there could be increased collaboration between the school district and the early learning programs and family outreach, as well as for a community working group in planning for childcare.

The network would also like the school district to increase StrongStart's engagement with the early years community and for there to be more shared professional development opportunities between the school district and the early learning community.

Other school districts in the province, including the Comox Valley School District and Vancouver Island West School District, have created similar positions.

Research shows that the early years of a child's life play a critical role in brain development and a child's educational achievement and lifelong success.

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## Board to Review Surplus Policy to Align with Ministry Requirements

The board's audit committee will be reviewing the district's current surplus policy to ensure that it aligns with recent changes to the Ministry of Education's requirements for accumulated surplus.

Secretary-Treasurer Patrick informed the board that current district practice aligns with many of the ministry requirements but some district practices, such as using the budget

feedback and strategic plan to identify restrictions and the board's review and approval of these restrictions, had not yet been formally reflected in board policy.

The audit committee will review the current district policy and the new requirements and bring a draft revision back to the board in an upcoming meeting.

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## Quarterly Financial Report Shows Deficit Due to Start-Up Costs

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick presented the board with a quarterly financial report as of September 30, 2021. Revenues were up due receipt of one-time Ministry grants, but expenses were overspent by approximately \$760,000 due to summer work and the ordering of supplies for school start-up. The district reported a deficit of \$2 million for the quarter, but this is expected to be reduced during the year as these are seasonal costs related to school start-up.

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## Cedar Replacement Committee to Meet with Education Minister

Members of the board's Cedar replacement committee, along with Superintendent Jeremy Morrow and Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick, will have a 20-minute Zoom meeting on November 25 with Education Minister Jennifer Whiteside to discuss Cedar Elementary.

In providing this update, Chairperson Kerr said that this will be the board's chance to make the case for Cedar Elementary and again called for anyone, who hasn't already, to support the request for a new Cedar Elementary by downloading and sending a letter from [www.sd72.bc.ca/newcedar](http://www.sd72.bc.ca/newcedar).

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