

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
MAY 31, 2022

June 2, 2022
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/JsT-wP8YZA>

Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson Kerr started the meeting by highlighting that the district's seven applications for school-based childcare centres were approved by the Ministry of Education and Child Care. These centres, when open, will provide an additional 210 licensed before- and after-school childcare spaces to the region.

The new childcare facilities will be freestanding at each school location. Six will be in Campbell River and one will be on Quadra Island in partnership with the Quadra Children's Society. Services will be provided by school district educational assistants and fees have yet to be determined.

Chairperson Kerr acknowledged the work of Associate Superintendent Philip Cizmic in leading this initiative, as well as those in the Campbell River and Quadra Island childcare communities who supported the district's application.

He continued with comments on the district's 2022-2023 budget development process, highlighting that over the past several years the board has been able to avoid significant reductions by using its operating surplus from previous years, but that there is no longer enough surplus to continue this practice.

The district has a \$2.1 million deficit heading into the 2022-2023 school year and had a \$3.2 million deficit for the 2021-2022 school year. Chairperson Kerr spoke to the pressures the district has faced due to extra costs from COVID-19, inflation, and costs that have been passed onto boards without additional funding.

While speaking about unfunded costs that have been passed along to boards, Chairperson Kerr cited that inflation has exceeded over six percent this past year and that this is not accounted for in funding; teacher on call costs caused by

COVID-19 mitigation efforts that exceeded the budget by almost \$1 million; and the province's requirement for boards to provide 5 sick days for casual employees at an additional cost of almost \$200,000 per year.

He said that as the board considers approval of the 2022-2023 operating budget, the board has made every effort to keep cuts away from the classroom and that the budget was developed in consideration of input received throughout an extensive consultation process.

In closing, Chairperson Kerr said that the board's budget decision would be based on the realities of a system that is facing constant cost pressures in a wide variety of areas that either remain under- or un-funded by the province.

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Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Morrow opened his comments by stating how nice it was to see the return of some traditional year-end activities and celebrations and how different this year-end looks from a year ago.

He shared a few of the occasions that have brought people together this May, highlighting Cedar Elementary's salmon feast, the unveiling of Ripple Rock Elementary's new library mural created by artist Jessica Chickite, Phoenix Middle School's Active School Travel event as part of Bike to Work week, Carihi media students attendance at the Capilano Film Festival, Phoenix mountain bikers' success at the Island Series Cross Country Races, and Phoenix Middle School's dodgeball fundraiser for Tour de Rock.

Superintendent Morrow also offered his congratulations to the Carihi senior girls soccer team for their excellent season



and wished them well as they travel to Vancouver to compete in the provincial championships.

He shared that Summer School already has more students registered than last year and that the district is expanding offerings where we can to accommodate waitlists.

As we near the end of the year and graduation celebrations, he acknowledged how hard staff and parents work to create memorable events for students and asked students to have fun but celebrate safely and responsibly.

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Proposed Budget Reductions to Have Minimal Impact on Literacy Plan

Associate Superintendent Morgan Kyle spoke to the board to provide some clarification on the proposed literacy-related budget reductions and the district's ongoing efforts to enhance literacy instruction. She wished to reassure the public that literacy will continue to be addressed in a significant way in alignment with the board's strategic plan.

In 2020-2021, the board invested \$400,000 to provide teachers with more literacy instruction tools to help enhance the work they do with students, particularly those with diverse needs. Part of this \$400,000 investment was to hire three literacy coordinators to work with teachers to share research and support evidence-based best practices, as well as early intervention.

In the last two years, the district has also introduced DIBELS as a screener for all students in K-5 and both middle schools, PRESS intervention and programming training, literacy leads, a Flyleaf resource to help with phonetic decoding in every elementary school, a literacy framework companion, and learning hub website with resources for students, parents and teachers. The district has also continued to collect and monitor literacy data and have regular meetings with school principals focused on literacy rates and how to improve student literacy.

Associate Superintendent stressed that much of this work will continue next year, with the only changes being a reduction from three literacy coordinators to one coordinator, and literacy leads at three schools who do not have a full-time teacher-librarian. She shared that literacy coordinators were always intended as a temporary measure to help

increase teacher capacity and support the introduction of these new tools.

There is only a proposed net budget reduction of \$100,000, with the district still keeping one elementary literacy coordinator and the remaining \$197,000 focused on literacy supports at elementary schools.

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Board Approves 2022-2023 Annual Operating Budget

After three readings, the Board of Education voted to adopt the proposed preliminary annual operating budget of \$75,933,412 for the 2022-2023 school year.

The budget is based on an estimated student enrolment of 5,669 students in September 2022 and forecasts total revenues of \$74.6 million and total costs of \$75.4 million for an operating deficit of \$150,000 and a capital deficit of \$619,925.

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Public Board Meeting Schedule Set for Next Year

The Board of Education has set their public board meeting schedule for the 2022-2023 school year. Meetings will be held:

September 6, 2022
September 27, 2022
October 11, 2022 – Last Meeting for Outgoing Trustees
November 1, 2022 – Oath of Office for Newly Elected Board Members
November 15, 2022 – First Official Meeting of the Newly Elected Board
December 13, 2022
January 10, 2023
January 31, 2023
February 28, 2023
March 21, 2023
April 18, 2023
May 9, 2023
May 30, 2023
June 20, 2023



Public meetings of the Board of Education are held at the school board office at 425 Pinecrest Road, Campbell River and begin at 7:30 p.m. Trustees meet in person and the public have the option to attend in person or online through livestream.

The meeting agendas and attendance information will be posted on the district website prior to each scheduled meeting.

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Board Looks to Change Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy and Set New Policy on Financial Planning and Reporting

Vice-chair and board governance representative Kat Eddy presented the board with notices of motion for changes to board governance policy 26 (Accumulated Operating Surplus) and a potential new policy on financial planning and reporting.

The proposed revisions and new policy are based on updated provincial guidelines for K-12 financial planning and reporting and provincial policy on accumulated surpluses. Although the district was already in compliance, these changes are to further clarify the board's process and provide greater transparency.

Notices of motion were given for feedback to be sent to the policy review committee through the superintendent's office before June 10 as the board will be considering the motions at their June 21 public board meeting. The draft policies can be viewed on the district website.

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District Supports City's Application to Host 55+ BC Games

The Board of Education passed a motion to support City of Campbell River and Comox Valley Regional District's joint application to host the 55+ BC Games in either 2024, 2025 or 2026. As part of the motion, the board also committed to providing in-kind support of services and facilities should the bid be successful.

When the games were last held in Campbell River in 2010, the school district provided use of the Robron field.

Trustees spoke in support of the bid but asked the secretary-treasurer to be mindful of limitations while students are in session and potential cost implications to the school district.

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Quarterly Finance Report Shows Absence-Related Expenses are Starting to Settle

While the district's preliminary budget had to address a \$2.2 million deficit, financials at the end of the third quarter of this school year show that absence-related expenses are starting to settle out and fall back within budgeted amounts.

According to Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick this is good news, as any unspent funds carry forward to the district's operating surplus and could help provide the board with some additional breathing room should they face more unexpected cost pressures next school year.

For the quarter ending March 31, 2022, revenues were right on target and expenses were about three percent under budget

One area that the finance department had been closely monitoring was teacher on call (TTOC) costs as this had been \$1.2 million more than expected in the December 2021 quarterly report, as staff adhered to COVID mitigation protocols and stayed home when sick. Secretary-Treasurer Patrick shared that those expenses hit a peak in January and February and started to decrease in March.

It was noted that CUPE staff also experienced higher absence rates in January and February, but support staff wage costs were under spent at the end of March only because the district has struggled with recruitment challenges to have enough staff to backfill these positions.

While expenses at the end of March were underspent, it was also noted that there is often a seasonal spending increase as we near the end of the school year.

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District Capital Plan Submitted to Ministry

The school district is submitting the following projects as its top priorities for 2023-2024 capital plan requests to the Ministry of Education: a full replacement of Cedar Elementary (\$31.5 million); two-classroom expansions at Ocean Grove and Ripple Rock Elementary Schools (\$6.7 million); and seismic upgrades at Cedar, Ecole des Deux Mondes, Penfield, Robron and Oyster River (\$25.5 million).

The Board of Education still considers a new school building for Cedar Elementary to be a top priority to improve the learning conditions for students at that school, but until such a time as a new school is approved and constructed seismic remediation is necessary.

The former Oyster River school building is also included for seismic upgrade as part of ongoing maintenance as that building is being currently leased and in case that facility may be needed for future district use.

Each school district is required to annually identify and submit a list of its required capital projects to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The Ministry uses this list to consider and prioritize requests from around the province and allocate capital project funding.

The Board of Education is usually informed of any approved project requests by the Ministry the following spring.

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