

School District 72 Board News

MEETING OF
SEPT 6, 2022

September 8, 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/f7xs_6WYTLE

Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson John Kerr opened the first meeting of the school year by welcoming everyone back to school. He expressed his appreciation for the work done by custodians, maintenance, grounds, and other staff over the summer to get schools ready for the new year.

He continued by highlighting some recent moves at the school board office and spoke briefly about the increased accessibility of having the superintendent, associate superintendents, secretary-treasurer, and those that directly support these positions, now on the ground floor of the building.

Chairperson Kerr then acknowledged the Ministry of Education's recent announcement of an additional \$60 million in funding to help assist with the costs of school supplies, meal programs, field trips and other items. He shared that School District 72's share of approximately \$600,000 would be used in consultation with First Nations and parent advisory councils.

While welcoming this one-time cash infusion, Chairperson Kerr said that it still doesn't address what he feels is chronic underfunding of the public education system or extraordinary inflationary cost pressures. He said that he believes the province must factor inflation when distributing money for school district operations, otherwise the lack of funding for inflation amounts to a stealth budget cut each year.

He then closed his remarks by highlighting that elections for school trustees and other municipal positions will be held on Saturday, October 15 and shared that three current trustees will not be running again. He encouraged those that are interested in supporting the mandate of improving learning for all students to consider running for a seat on the board.

The nomination period is open now, until Friday, September 9.

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Superintendent Remarks

Superintendent Morrow shared his excitement for the year ahead and that, while final enrolment numbers won't be determined until the end of the month, the district will be welcoming approximately 5,500 students into our schools, including a record number of international students. He said that the district is still looking for homestay families and information can be found on the international program website at www.studyincampbellriver.ca.

He continued by also acknowledging the tremendous amount of work done each summer to improve, update and clean schools, and thanked custodial, operations, maintenance, IT, payroll, and school board office staff who work throughout the summer to ensure that we are ready to welcome students back in September.

Superintendent Morrow also expressed his appreciation for the parent volunteers who helped prepare the site and help with the installation of Georgia Park Elementary's new playground. The school received \$165,000 in funding from the Ministry of Education and the playground was supplemented through extra fundraising from the Georgia Park parent advisory council. He congratulated the school community on a beautiful new playground that will be enjoyed by the school and community.

In addition to preparing our buildings and classrooms, educators had a day of professional development last week. Superintendent Morrow shared that staff learned about youth mental health, early literacy, literacy, how to further their understanding about Indigenous ways of knowing, social emotional learning, outdoor education, and digital literacy.



In closing, he expressed his gratitude for the trust that parents place in partnering with us in the education of their children. He said that each child comes to us with unique gifts and attributes and that part of our role as educators is to uncover these qualities and commit to making sure that each child feels supported, valued, encouraged, and appreciated.

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Summer School Continues Tradition of Providing Unique Learning Opportunities

Summer School Principal Kelly Gage and Vice-Principal Shannon Hagen provided the board with an update on this year's successful and expanded Summer School offerings.

Summer School had a total enrolment of 756 students from elementary, middle, and secondary and ran in five district schools. For the first time ever, the program was able to provide some educational assistant support for students with designations. There were 101 students with designations and 168 Indigenous students that took part in Summer School 2022.

The highest level of interest was still at the elementary level with 612 students taking part in 21 programs. Courses included art and poetry, outdoor education, acting and drama, Mandarin, and reading camps, to name a few. Students were also able to go on several outings within the community with visits to the Splash Park, Pier, various beaches, and more.

Twelve programs were provided to 80 middle school students ranging in topics from art exploration to physical literacy, and middle school prep to math and judo.

At the secondary level, 47 students benefited from academic upgrade courses at both École Phoenix Middle School and Robron Centre. The Nexus alternate program was also offered for the fourth consecutive year at Robron Centre.

The Rec and Read Program was also run once again, in partnership with the City of Campbell River. Rec and Reading is a month-long program to support vulnerable students and families focused on literacy skills, connections, games, and community exploration.

Of those that responded to a family survey at the end of Summer School, 97% said that they would take Summer School again and overwhelmingly the feedback included requests for more course offerings and the ability to register in multiple sessions.

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Trustees Discuss Upcoming Election and Share Insights

Trustees discussed the role of school trustees and the mandate and nature of school boards, in consideration of the upcoming election on October 15.

It was pointed out that the mandate of school trustees is to support improving student learning and achievement and that everything that a board of education does is to that end. The board sets the general direction for the school district and hires the superintendent but does not interfere or have say over what happens in the day-to-day operations of the schools.

As a corporate governance board, trustees can have deep discussions and disagreements but once a decision is made by the majority of members on the board, individual trustees need to support the decision and stay within the board's governance policies.

Trustees suggested that those interested in running for school trustee familiarize themselves with the [School Act](#) and the [board's governance policies](#).

Trustees elected through the October 15 general voting day will fill a four-year term on the Board of Education.

The nomination period for individuals interested in running for school trustee in the upcoming municipal election will close on September 9. Nomination information and submission documents are available from the district website.

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District Receives \$607,000 to Expand Meal Programs and Help Families with School Costs

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick confirmed that the district will receive \$607,000 under the Student and Family Affordability Fund announced by the Ministry of Education



and Child Care to expand meal programs, make sure students have the school supplies they need, and cover any additional fees.

There is a requirement that districts consult with Indigenous groups, school communities, and parent advisory councils, about how best to use this money. The district's director of learning support services will be leading these consultations.

Secretary-Treasurer Patrick told the board that this one-time funding and the district will have to report back to the Ministry on how the money was used.

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Childcare Pilot Planned for January 2023

Associate Superintendent Philip Cizmic provided the board with an update on the district's progress on adding before- and after-school childcare at seven district schools.

In July, the district issued a request for proposals for a lead architect and MacDonald Hagarty Architects in Courtenay won that bid. Each site has now been engineered and the district should receive a draft floor plan within a week or two. Once the draft floor plan is received, the next step will be putting out a bid for the type of buildings.

A pilot project for after-school care at two schools is still under development and is hoped to get underway in January 2023. The Ministry has supplied some additional one-time funds to survey the community about childcare needs and to support the implementation of before- and after-school care.

The district has strategically selected sites where there are no existing childcare centres to try not to negatively affect community childcare providers.

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Board Accepts Schedule of Reserves

Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Patrick presented the board with the schedule of reserves as the financial statement audit and reporting for the 2021-2022 fiscal year is nearing completion. With a variance of actual results to the district's budgeted deficit, unrestricted and restricted operating reserves have decreased to \$2,185,757 from \$4,572,656.

With this significant drop in operating reserves and increasing inflationary cost pressures, the board was not able to make additions and instead has conservatively agreed to use surplus funds to help balance the budget; maintain a buffer for potential unexpected enrollment withdrawals; pad the emergency contingency for unexpected operational needs; and maintain unspent school supply accounts.

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Board Approves Minor 2023-2024 Capital Plan Submission

The district is requesting the Ministry of Education consider the replacement of two buses within its transportation fleet, heating and ventilation upgrades, playground replacements at Pinecrest, Cortes and École Willow Point, and sectional roof replacements at Southgate and Sayward.

These project requests totaling \$5.2 million dollars were approved by the board to be sent to the Ministry of Education for funding consideration in the 2023-2024 school year.

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Busy Summer for Maintenance and Operations Staff

Associate Superintendent Philip Cizmic provided the board with an overview of the maintenance and operations summer projects, which included fixing the Cortes School well and Surge Narrows electrical, installing a new portable at Ocean Grove, some renovations inside Ocean Grove Elementary, building a retaining wall at Southgate Middle School, as well as ongoing maintenance, painting, boiler upgrades, roofing, and HVAC system upgrades.

Maintenance staff also had to contend with an increase in graffiti and property vandalism. Once again, maintenance, operations and custodial staff were recognized for their diligent work in getting schools ready to welcome students and staff back in September.

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