

# BOARD BUSINESS

May 2024



**Coding Arcade a great success at Lake Trail**

## BOARD MEETING IN REVIEW

### Superintendent Morrow provides Strategic Planning update

The four sessions of work by the Strategic Plan Writing Team are now complete, and Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Morrow outlined the progress made over four intensive days up Mt. Washington. Throughout the four writing sessions, the team made significant progress, synthesizing vast amounts of information and data. These sessions were marked by impressive collaboration and teamwork, with substantial contributions from all participants. Dr. Morrow recounted a powerful moment from the recent Writing Team workday when, after covering some impactful topics while processing survey feedback and other information showing gaps in our system, Ni'noxsola JoAnn Restoule sang a healing song to the entire group while they formed a collective circle.

*The Board of Education acknowledges that we are on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation. We would like to thank them for the privilege of living on their land and the gift of working with their children.*



The final writing session wrapped up with a focus on finalizing the draft Strategic Plan, which is expected to be shared by the end of the school year. The dedication and hard work of everyone involved have been crucial in moving closer to a comprehensive Strategic Plan for Comox Valley Schools. Special thanks to Lisa Bernoties McCullough for her exceptional facilitation of the sessions and to all members of the writing team for their time and energy.

### Gender Based Violence Committee Update

Trustee Shannon Aldinger provided an update to the Board about the Gender-Based Violence Committee. Partner groups have been consulted and invitations sent out to prospective committee members. Next steps will be scheduling an introductory meeting before the end of June, with the expectation of continuing the work in the next school year.



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BOARD  
MEETING**

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## Board Chairperson Update

Board of Education Chairperson, Michelle Waite - ᑕᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ



As we move into the last month of the school year, it is a time for activities that bring together and showcase the hard work of students and the commitment of our education teams and District. From band concerts, track meets, and recognition events to the milestone events of graduation, each provides opportunities, insight, and inspiration about what our students have achieved and what the possibilities are. Our Strategic Plan work continues, and the team brought together to review, analyze, and synthesize all the data has concluded its major work. We look forward to learning more about this in the month ahead. The commitment from everyone involved indicates both the importance of the work and the passion for children and learning in our collective community.

We continue to work through the 2024/25 budget process to present and adopt a balanced budget by June 30 (as per the School Act). Thank you to everyone who participated in and supported the budget consultation process, including our hard-working Finance team. As our District plans for the 2024/25 school year, we anticipate an increase of over 160 students to welcome into our schools. With the opportunities that come with growth, space and cost pressures regarding modulars become a challenge. We continue to request capital funding from the Ministry of Education and Childcare to address the needs of our District.

## Board Members

Michelle Waite, Chair (Lazo North)  
Susan L Leslie, Vice Chair (Town of Comox)  
Janice Caton, Trustee (City of Courtenay)  
Shannon Aldinger, Trustee (City of Courtenay)  
Sarah Jane Howe, Trustee (Village of Cumberland)  
Chelsea McCannel-Keene, Trustee (Baynes Sound, Hornby & Denman Islands)  
Cristi May Sacht – Trustee, Trustee (Puntledge, Black Creek)





May 2024

## Red Dress Day in Comox Valley Schools

Comox Valley Schools stands in solidarity to honor and remember the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirited People (MMIWG2+). Throughout our district schools were, sharing knowledge, and paying tribute to those who are no longer with us in advance of Red Dress Day. At Highland Secondary School, eleven red dresses, adorned with information, quotes, poetry, and images, served as powerful symbols of remembrance and awareness in the main foyer of the school. Many thanks to Ramona Johnson, known as Tsa Tsi li Dzam'ga and K'alam'al aga, for her generous donation of dresses and shadow figures for the display. At Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, the main entrance and lobby was adorned with a prominent MMIWG2+ display, serving as a visual reminder of our commitment to honour and remember. During a special honouring and gratitude ceremony, students and staff came together to pay tribute to the lives lost and to express solidarity with Indigenous communities. We thank Ni'noxsola JoAnn Restoule, as well as Kath Larson, and Luke Robinson for their invaluable guidance and support in creating this meaningful display.



## Grade 4s take part in Big House Experience

Recently, Comox Valley Schools Indigenous Education hosted the annual Kumugwe Big House Experience in partnership with Kumugwe Cultural Society. Grade 4 classes in SD 71 had the amazing opportunity to witness Big House teachings hosted by Andy Everson and the Kumugwe Dancers. Many members of the Indigenous Education Council and Comox Valley Schools' Trustees were also in attendance. It was a treat to see some SD 71 Indigenous Education Staff take part in the teachings. Andy Everson provided explanations of the traditions, songs, and dances that the audience witnessed. Many thanks to the Kumugwe Cultural Society for providing this incredible educational experience for everyone in attendance.

## Big crowd enjoys the District Track Meet

A huge congratulations to everyone involved in the District Track Meet! The field and stadium were packed with enthusiastic spectators and talented participants, making for an exciting and memorable day under the beautiful skies of Comox Valley. Our athletes showcased their incredible skills and sportsmanship across various events, including high jump, long jump, ball toss, relays, and other running races. Each event was a testament to our students' hard work, dedication, and school spirit. A big thank you to the organizers, volunteers, coaches, and families for their support in making this event a great success. We are proud of all our students for their outstanding performances and teamwork.





# DISTRICT NEWS



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May 2024

## Mental Health Awareness Week in SD 71

This year's theme, "Compassion Connects," resonated deeply across the district, highlighting the importance of supportive environments for nurturing mental health among students and staff.

In the lead up, Glacier View Secondary focused on promoting healthy lifestyle choices through events organized by student leaders, including a community barbecue and gratitude circles, which fostered community bonding and personal reflection.



Mark Isfeld Secondary School began the week with a full-school assembly and rolled out various workshops. The school's "Unplug & Play Afternoon" was a highlight, encouraging students and staff to set aside digital devices to participate in group activities that promote mental wellness through social interaction and physical activities. Ecole Puntledge Park embraced the color green, symbolic of mental health awareness, integrating it into their daily operations. The school conducted mental health check-ins and discussions aimed at bolstering emotional well-being, blending fun with practical strategies for maintaining mental health.

Highland Secondary dedicated efforts to making mental health resources accessible, setting up an information booth and distributing educational materials, ensuring that students had continual support throughout the week.

Vanier Secondary marked the week with a series of engaging events, from educational lessons on mental health to "Hats on for Mental Health" day, aiming to reduce stigma and foster open discussions about mental wellness.

NIDES provided extensive resources to teachers and administrators to share with parents and families, emphasizing the importance of understanding mental health through an educational lens. A special online presentation by Kim Barthel highlighted the art and science of relationships and their impact on mental wellness.

At Miracle Beach, activities leading up to National Child and Youth Mental Health Awareness Day included "Walking Wednesday," where students engaged in nature walks during recess, fostering a connection with the environment as a way to enhance mental well-being.

Cumberland engaged students and staff with daily themes like Mindful Monday and Friendship Friday, which helped deepen understanding and support for mental health through a series of interactive activities.

Huband Park Elementary rolled out a comprehensive mental health display in the library, facilitated read-aloud sessions that focused on mental health topics, and adorned the school with posters and infographics. Morning meetings and classroom lessons, led by counselors, focused on mental health, kindness, and wellness, helping to embed these critical topics into daily conversations.

The activities and the enthusiastic participation across Comox Valley Schools underscore the district's commitment to not just addressing mental health challenges but also celebrating mental wellness.

The week has been a testament to the community's dedication to creating an inclusive atmosphere where mental and emotional health is openly discussed, recognized, and nurtured, ensuring that students and staff are equipped with the tools necessary to thrive in all aspects of life.





May 2024

## Airport Elementary celebrating 70 years

Congratulations to Airport Elementary School on a remarkable 70th Anniversary Celebration! On May 23rd, the Airport Elementary School community gathered to commemorate a significant milestone — 70 years of excellence in education and community building. The school grounds were filled with joyous reunions, heartfelt memories, and vibrant displays of the school's rich history.

The event was a resounding success, with former staff and students reconnecting and reminiscing about the wonderful times they shared. Historical pictures and displays provided a touching tribute to the decades of learning and growth that have taken place within the school's walls.

As we honour seven decades of reaching for the stars, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who attended and made this event truly memorable. Here's to many more years of success, learning, and community at Airport Elementary School!



## Cooking students learning from industry pros

The Professional Cook E-pretence Level 1 program provides students with exceptional learning experiences, combining hands-on activities with expert guidance from industry professionals.

Recently, our students had the privilege of learning from Maya Varela from L.I.V.E. Maya walked students through the process of breaking down chickens, emphasizing the importance of utilizing every part of the bird to ensure nothing goes to waste. This practical approach not only enhances their culinary skills but also instills sustainable cooking practices.

Additionally, we were honored to have Evan Grey, the head chef at Land and Sea, demonstrate how to break down half a pig. This valuable lesson was made possible thanks to the amazing people at Tannadice Farm, who supplied the pig and will soon be giving our students an educational tour of their farm.

Students also worked on their seafood unit with the assistance of Rob Spiers from Sea Wise Packaging. Rob's expertise and the generous donation of salmon from Sea Wise Packaging allowed the students to practice filleting, further honing their skills in seafood preparation.

We are grateful to all the industry professionals and partners who contribute to the learning and growth of our students.

