



BOARD BUSINESS

September 2024

Student Voice Council representatives meet for first time

BOARD MEETING IN REVIEW

K'omok's First Nation Elder Donna Mitchell begins first board meeting with a powerful reminder of our history

The Board of Education was honoured to have Donna Mitchell of the K'omoks First Nation provide welcoming remarks at the first meeting of the 2024-2025 school year. Donna provided a first hand account of the serious negative impacts the residential school system has had on her and her family. We are very grateful for her poignant welcome to the new school year.

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.

Aspen Park Elementary expansion update

Former Director of Operations Ian Heselgrave provided an overview of the 11-classroom expansion that is coming to Aspen Park Elementary. Aspen Park Elementary school will get an 11-classroom prefabricated addition, which will add 270 new seats to the school. The new section of the school will include modern learning environments, with multiple classrooms connected by corridors. By utilizing prefabricated components, this project will be completed much quicker than typical for school construction projects. It's expected the new classrooms will be ready for Fall 2025.

**WATCH
SEPTEMBER
24
BOARD
MEETING**



Comox Valley Schools

Modest growth this fall for district overall enrolments

Associate Superintendent Jay Dixon updated the Board on enrolments in the district following the September count of students. Overall, the district is experiencing modest growth for this school year with approximately 150 more students in schools than last September. There are currently 11,000 students enrolled in Comox Valley Schools.



Isfeld students participate in “The Village” workshop for Truth and Reconciliation Week

Board Election Update

Comox Valley Schools announces election of Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Association Representatives

Comox Valley Schools is pleased to announce that Trustee Michelle Waite and Trustee Sarah Jane Howe have been acclaimed as the new Chairperson and Vice Chairperson respectively of the Board of Education. Both were nominated and acclaimed in their roles.

In addition, the following trustees have been nominated and acclaimed to key representative roles for provincial associations:

- Trustee Shannon Aldinger has been acclaimed as the Board representative for the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA), with Trustee Chrisi May Sacht acclaimed as the alternate.
- Trustee Chelsea McCannel Keene was acclaimed and will serve as the Board representative for the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), with Trustee Janice Caton being acclaimed to serve as the alternate.

“Our Board is committed to continuing our work supporting students, staff, and families in our community and to ensuring the ongoing success of our students,” said Board Chairperson Michelle Waite. “I am also looking forward to working with our rights holders and partners on the new strategic plan, which will help guide the future of education in the Comox Valley.”

Board Members

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





Truth and Reconciliation Week activities held throughout Comox Valley Schools

This week, from September 23 to September 30, we mark Truth and Reconciliation Week, a vital time for our students and staff to engage deeply with the history of residential schools and honor the resilience of survivors and their communities. Join us in our commitment to education, understanding, and healing as we participate in events designed to foster a greater understanding of Indigenous histories and cultures.

For the past two years, Comox Valley Schools have held Truth and Reconciliation Week to commemorate the history of residential schools and honor survivors, their families, and communities. The week, which aligns with Orange Shirt Day and other important events, features educational activities across SD71 to deepen students' understanding of the legacy of residential schools.

On the first day of Truth and Reconciliation Week at Mark Isfeld Secondary School, students enrolled in English First Peoples 11 had the unique opportunity to participate in a deeply impactful event called "The Village" workshop. This workshop was designed to foster a greater understanding of Indigenous cultures, worldviews, and histories, aligning with the broader objectives of Truth and Reconciliation Week—bringing awareness to the history and ongoing legacy of residential schools and fostering reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

"The Village" workshop aimed to create a safe space for students to engage in meaningful dialogue and experiential learning. The workshop emphasized the importance of building and understanding community, both historically in Indigenous contexts and in contemporary society.

The structure of "The Village" workshop was immersive and hands-on, drawing participants into a simulation of an Indigenous village where everyone had a role to play. This setup allowed students to experience how traditional Indigenous communities functioned, emphasizing the values of interconnectedness, responsibility, and reciprocity. Students took on different roles that reflected various aspects of community life, from governance to food sharing, demonstrating how each person's role was essential to the health and well-being of the community. One of the key learning outcomes for the students was a deeper understanding of the concept of "village responsibility"—the idea that the well-being of an individual is tied to the well-being of the community. As the workshop unfolded, students engaged in activities that underscored the values of mutual support and collective responsibility, values central to many Indigenous cultures. This experience enabled them to reflect on how these values can be applied in today's society, both within their own communities and in broader national efforts towards reconciliation.

Schools are holding events, lessons and activities throughout the week in the lead up to Truth and Reconciliation Day.



DISTRICT NEWS

September 2024



Comox Valley Schools
A Community of Learners



Terry Fox Runs underway in the Comox Valley

This fall, Comox Valley Schools are proud to once again participate in the annual Terry Fox Runs, continuing the tradition of honoring Terry's legacy of hope and resilience. Students and staff across our district will be lacing up to raise funds and awareness for cancer research, embodying the spirit of community and perseverance that Terry Fox inspired. Through these runs, we are not only supporting a worthy cause but also teaching our students the power of determination and making a positive impact.

Aspen Park Elementary recently held their annual Terry Fox Run, and it was a day filled with energy and community spirit! Students, staff, and families came together to honor Terry Fox's legacy while enjoying a variety of fun activities. After completing the run, participants were treated to refreshing popsicles to cool down and celebrate their achievement. Adding to the excitement, the event featured a chalk art contest where students showcased their creativity, transforming the school grounds with vibrant designs inspired by the day. And, of course, the festivities wouldn't be complete without a lively dance party, bringing everyone together in celebration of Terry's message of hope and determination. It was a memorable day that truly captured the heart and unity of the Aspen Park Elementary community.

Thank you to the many parent volunteers who make these runs possible and to everyone making donations to this great cause.



Consent Awareness Week shines light on this important issue

Consent Awareness Week is an opportunity to emphasize the importance of consent as the cornerstone of all relationships, not just intimate ones. Throughout the week, our students, staff, and community members engage in activities that highlighted the power of giving and receiving consent, understanding boundaries, and practicing respectful communication.

Understanding and respecting personal boundaries are crucial life skills. Consent Awareness Week aims to teach our students that consent is about communication, respect, and mutual agreement which forms the foundation for all healthy interactions. By incorporating these lessons into our curriculum and culture, we are taking proactive steps toward nurturing an atmosphere of respect and safety that extends beyond our classrooms.

Schools held age appropriate workshops and discussions covering topics ranging from the basics of understanding and communicating boundaries to how consent practices can be implemented in everyday life, both in and out of school. These sessions aim to empower students to speak up and make informed decisions about their personal space and boundaries.

This was the third annual Consent Awareness Week in the district and we thank everyone who took part.



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