

Superintendent's Report to the Board

May 2023



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A Message from the Superintendent

Ama Sah / Ya'uc / Good Day,

As I prepare this month's report, the northwest is experiencing unseasonable high temperatures, and it really is beginning to feel like summer! Despite the excitement and anticipation of the upcoming vacation, learner attendance during this last month of the school year continues to be very important as teachers strive to ensure year-end outcomes are being met by all.

Recently I had the pleasure of attending the Zone01 Robotics Competition for elementary and secondary grade levels, hosted by Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School under the direction of teacher Kim Wilkinson. More than 100 learners from Northwest schools participated in the challenges, with the host squad qualifying for the national championships in Montreal next month. This event was a wonderful example of the impact local partnerships between schools and business/industry can have when children and community are prioritized. Thank you again to all those who organized, coached, volunteered, witnessed and financially supported this action-packed event for our learners. Your collective support is truly appreciated.



As I participate in conversations around the district, I continue to see evidence that we remain focused on the success of our learners. In this first year of implementation of the Board's Strategic Plan, a great deal of groundwork has been laid in relation to the three goal areas, including the development of a data dashboard, efforts to recruit fully qualified teachers to our wonderful communities, and the development of a draft K-3 Literacy Plan focused on teacher capacity, instructional and classroom resources, and foundational skill building for our youngest learners. And through our Budget Working Committee and public budget survey, as well as our employee engagement survey, we are now identifying priority actions for 2023-24. I am confident that as we monitor our primary indicators of progress over the next several years, our district will see the positive impacts of our intentional actions.

The work is ours collectively. T'oyaxsut 'nüüsm (thank you everyone) for your commitment to our learners and schools!

Regards,

Aaron Callaghan
Superintendent,
Coast Mountains School District



Upcoming Dates

- May 26 – Professional Development Day (No Classes)
- June 1 – Budget Working Committee
- June 7 – Business & Education Committee Meetings
- June 9 – Coast Mountains School District Website Launch
- June 14 – Board Meeting (Stewart)
- June 21 – National Indigenous Peoples Day

Coast Mountains School District acknowledges with respect the lands on which we live, work, play & learn as the traditional & unceded territories of the Gitksan, Haisla, Nisga'a & Ts'msyen Peoples.

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Budget Planning Survey & Working Committee

Thanks are extended to everyone who participated in the district's virtual Budget & Planning Survey during the month of May. Over 200 participants weighed-in on budget priorities aligning with the Strategic Plan – Engage, Ignite, Empower – for 2023-24. Targeted actions receiving the nod as priorities included:

- K-3 Literacy Strategy
- Recruitment & Retention of Qualified Teachers
- Improving Outdoor Learning Spaces and Land-Based Learning
- Student & Staff Wellness
- Enacting Reconciliation & Anti-Racism Education

The district's Budget Working Committee also met in May to collaborate on priorities. Led by Secretary Treasurer Ginger Fuller, the committee provides a forum for open communication and understanding of the budget, with a broad opportunity for input into budget decisions aligning with the district's goals.

Re-Ignition of Equity in Action

On Thursday May 4, Coast Mountains School District staff, Trustees and community partners came together to participate in a re-ignition of Equity in Action hosted by Joe Heslip of the Ministry of Education & Child Care. Equity in Action is a provincial framework that focuses on improving outcomes for learners with diverse abilities, those of Indigenous ancestry, and those children and youth in care. During the session, participants considered the four main pillars of the framework – pedagogy, learning environment, policy and learning profile - and reviewed questions developed for district reflection. Story work was intentionally weaved into the delivery of the day's workshop, and those attending left with a renewed commitment to engage in the important work of equity in the service of our district's learners and their families.



School Administrative Update

Congratulations to those who are taking on new roles in school-based administration in the fall:

- Keith Axelson – Incoming Principal at Parkside Secondary School
- Jane Arbuckle – Incoming Principal at Caledonia Secondary School
- Jan Thorburn – Incoming Vice Principal at Hazelton Secondary School
- Mark Newbery – Incoming Principal at New Hazelton Elementary
- Sandy Kenmuir – Assuming Principal role at Thornhill Primary School
- Surinder Dhaliwal – Assuming Principal role at Thornhill Elementary School
- Louise Ormerod – Interim Principal at Hazelton Secondary School
- Joe Dominguez – Assuming responsibility for the district's International Student Program
- Jaclyn Wells – Incoming Vice Principal at Caledonia Secondary School
- Spencer Edwards – Incoming Vice Principal at Mount Elizabeth Middle Secondary School

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Accessible BC Act

The Government of British Columbia continues to work towards becoming a more inclusive province. In June 2021, the Accessible B.C. Act became law and it provides a framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. Within the K-12 Education sector, school districts must meet three requirements by September 1, 2023:

1. Establish an Accessibility Committee;
2. Develop an Accessibility Plan; and
3. Establish a process for receiving public feedback.



Coast Mountains School District is working in collaboration with other northern districts to ensure these important requirements are met. Members from the disability community or those who support members of the disability community will be an important voice to advise this work. Anyone interested in learning more or possibly participating in the process, please contact Carole Gagnon (Carole.Gagnon@cmsd.bc.ca). For more information on Accessible BC please visit: <https://bit.ly/accessibleBC>

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On May 8, Kitimat joined other cities including Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver in hosting a Zone01 Robotics Competition for elementary and secondary learners.



Several staff members from Hazelton Secondary School witnessed a totem pole raising in Sik-E-Dakh on April 21.