




Sooke School District
3143 Jacklin Road, Victoria, BC V9B 5R1
(250) 474-9800
www.sd62.bc.ca

Public Notice – Board of Education Public Meeting

A public meeting of the Board of Education for School District 62 (Sooke) will be held on **June 23, 2026 at 7:00 pm.**

Please note that all Public Board and Committee meetings are held **in person** at the District School Board Office, located at 3143 Jacklin Road, Victoria.

To encourage more public participation, the meeting will be **livestreamed** via Microsoft town hall. To join the meeting please click here: [Follow Link](#)

- Anyone who has the link can attend the meeting online. Ensure you have the Microsoft Teams app downloaded on your device.
- Members of the public will have the opportunity to ask questions related to agenda items discussed at the meeting:
 - Select the **Q&A**  function at the top of your Teams window.
 - Type in the **Ask a question** text box at the top of the Q&A panel. When asking a question, please identify yourself. **Anonymous questions will not be responded to.**
 - You will be notified that your question was received and will be published after a moderator approves it.
 - Members of the media can direct their questions to the Communications Manager at School District 62 for a response following the meeting.

If you have questions regarding the meeting or how to access it, please email info@sd62.bc.ca. See link for upcoming and previous Board and Committee meetings [Public Meetings | Sooke School District \(sd62.bc.ca\)](#) materials.

BOARD OF EDUCATION PUBLIC MEETING

By Microsoft Townhall

June 23, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST NATIONS TERRITORIES**
With gratitude and respect, we acknowledge that we live, learn, and work on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation, SCÍΛNEW (Beecher Bay) Nation, and the Nuuchah-nulth: Paaʔčiidʔath (Pacheedaht) Nation. We also recognize that some of our schools are located on the traditional territories of the MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nation, and the Ləkʷəŋən peoples of Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. (Words gifted by the Nations SD62 works with)
2. **AGENDA (page 2)**
 - 2.1 Call for amendments and additional items

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) adopt the public meeting agenda of June 23, 2026, as presented (or as amended).
 - 2.2 Report on In Camera Meeting – Amanda Dowhy
This notice is to inform the public that prior to this meeting an “in-camera” meeting of the Board was held where issues of legal, land and personnel were discussed.
3. **MINUTES (page 7)**
 - 3.1 Call for corrections to minutes of the Public Board meeting of May 26, 2026.
4. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
 - 4.1 Board Chair Update – Amanda Dowhy
5. **EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS**
 - 5.1 Equity in Action Year End Report – Jon Carr/Connie Swan (page 14)
6. **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL**
 - 6.1 Indigenous Education Council Update – No Report

7. CORRESPONDENCE & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence – Amanda Dowhy (page 63)

1. Office of the Ombudsperson Quarterly Report January 1 to March 31, 2026
2. Letter from Pacheedaht First Nation Dated May 20, 2026 RE LEA Concern
3. Email from Chelsea R. Dated May 15, 2026 RE ECEs
4. Email from Emily R. Dated May 15, 2026 RE ECEs
5. Email from Claire B. Dated May 16 2026 RE ECEs
6. Email from Danielle H. Dated May 16, 2026 RE ECEs
7. Email from Esther S. Dated May 18, 2026 RE ECEs
8. Email from Isabelle D. Dated May 18, 2026 RE ECEs
9. Email from Janelle I. Dated May 18, 2026 RE ECEs
10. Email from Alexandra S. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
11. Email from Carolyn L. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
12. Email from Debbie F. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
13. Email from Danielle V. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
14. Email from Kristi L. Dated May 19 2026 RE ECEs
15. Email from Kerry C. Dated May 19 2026 RE ECEs
16. Email from Laura R. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
17. Email from Lisa M. Dated May May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
18. Email from Maegan C. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
19. Email from Melissa H. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
20. Email from Michelle C. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
21. Email from Nina B. Dated May 19, 202 RE ECEs
22. Email from Rachael S. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
23. Email from Sarah R. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
24. Email from Saza R. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
25. Email from Sophia S. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
26. Email from Tawnya D. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
27. Email from Tiffany D. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
28. Email from Erin V. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
29. Email from Cynthia H. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
30. Email from Jasmine M. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
31. Email from Rafaela R. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
32. Email from Quynne P. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
33. Email from Victor C. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
34. Email from Ola K. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
35. Email from Laurel K. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
36. Email from Jennifer K. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
37. Email from Kristi S. Dated May 19, 2026 RE ECEs
38. Email from Maria F. Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs
39. Email from Jennifer E. Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs
40. Email from Kay R. Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs

41. Email from Francisca T. Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs
42. Email from Samantha A. Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs
43. Email from Sue I (Emily M.). Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs
44. Email from Uelun T. Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs
45. Email from Esther S. Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs
46. Email from Suzanne M. Dated May 20, 2026 RE ECEs
47. Email from Enid E. Dated May 21, 2026 RE ECEs
48. Email from Renata R. Dated May 21, 2026 RE ECEs
49. Email from Michelle C. Dated May 21, 2026 RE ECEs
50. Email from Kendra U. & Tim S. Dated May 21, 2026 RE ECEs
51. Email from Beth B. Dated May 21, 2026 RE ECEs
52. Email from Amanda T. Dated May 23, 2026 RE ECEs
53. Email from Candace D. Dated May 25, 2026 RE ECEs
54. Email from Lana D. Dated May 25, 2026 RE ECEs
55. Email from Jeffrey Z. Dated May 26, 2026 RE ECEs
56. Email from Christy W. Dated May 26, 2026 RE ECEs
57. Email from Kendall C. Dated May 29, 2026 RE ECEs

- 7.2 Standing Delegations (CUPE, SPEAC, SPVPA, STA) – 5 minutes each
- 7.3 Other Delegations – 5 minutes each

8. FINANCE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- 8.1 Resources Committee Meeting June 9, 2026 – Christine Lervold (page 168)

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) support implementation of the low barrier means assessment for transportation fee waiver eligibility as presented at the June 9, 2026 Resources Committee meeting.

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the report from the Resources Committee Meeting of June 9, 2026.

- 8.2 2026/27 Annual Budget Bylaw - Christine Lervold (page 176)

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) give third reading to the 2026/27 Annual Budget Bylaw specifying a total of \$245,935,907.

9. EDUCATION PROGRAM

- 9.1 Education-Policy Committee – Meeting of June 2, 2026 – Trudy Spiller (page 210)

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the report from the Education-Policy Committee Meeting of June 2, 2026.

10. STUDENTS

- 10.1 Superintendent's Report – Paul Block (page 213)

11. FOUNDATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

- 11.1 Trustee Liaison Reports – Board of Education

- 11.2 Governance Committee Meeting of May 21, 2026 – Amanda Dowhy (page 221)

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District No. 62 (Sooke) Adopt the draft new policy A-2, “Role of the Board” as recommended by the Governance Committee at its May 21, 2026 meeting.

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District No. 62 (Sooke) adopt the draft new policy A-11, “Role of the Superintendent” as recommended by the Governance Committee at its May 21, 2026 meeting.

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District No. 62 (Sooke) adopt the draft new policy A-10, “Delegation of Authority”, as recommended by the Governance Committee at its May 21, 2026 meeting.

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) rescind, the following governance documents: Policy A-100, “Statement of Philosophy”; Policy A-110, “Board-Staff Communications”; Policy A-310 “Board of Education – Composition & Purpose”, as recommended by the Governance Committee at its May 21, 2026 meeting.

- 11.3 August 2026 Board Meeting – Brian Jonker (page 232)

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) aligned to the requirements outlined in the School Act 67(3), hereby confirm the date of the next regular meeting of the Board of Education to be held on Tuesday, September 29, 2026.

12. ADMINISTRATION

- 12.1 Board of Education Work Plan: July to September - Amanda Dowhy (page 234)

13. PERSONNEL

14. UPCOMING EVENTS

- National Indigenous Peoples Day – June 21
- Last day of school – June 25
- Year-end Administrative Day – June 26
- School Trustee Candidate Information Session – July 2
- School Board Office closure – July 13 to August 21
- School Trustee Candidate Information Session – August 31
- Labour Day – September 7
- First Day of School September 8
- Next Public Board Meeting - September 29 (if no August 25th meeting)

15. RISE AND REPORT

16. QUESTION PERIOD

Members of the public have the opportunity to ask questions related to agenda items discussed at tonight's meeting using the QA function in MS Teams. Individuals must identify themselves and ask questions directed to the Chair. Members of the media can direct their questions to the Manager, Communications for response following the meeting.

17. ADJOURNMENT



MINUTES BOARD OF EDUCATION PUBLIC MEETING

May 26, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

TRUSTEES: Amanda Dowhy, Board Chair
Trudy Spiller (online via MS Teams)

Christine Lervold, Vice Chair

STAFF: Paul Block, Superintendent
Brian Jonker, Secretary Treasurer
Monica Braniff, Deputy Superintendent
D’Arcy Deacon, Associate Superintendent
Lisa Leclerc, Associate Superintendent
Fred Hibbs, Executive Director, Human Resources
Steve Tonnesen, Manager, Information Technology - Operations

REGRETS: Cendra Beaton
Russ Chipps

SECRETARY: Jenny Seal

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST NATIONS TERRITORIES**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board Chair who acknowledged the territories of the First Nations.

2. **AGENDA**

2.1 Call for amendments and additional items

The Chair reviewed decorum as per Robert’s Rules of Order and called for amendments to the agenda. Trustees attending online were asked to type in the chat if they wish to participate in discussion. The Chair reviewed the Q&A function in preparation for question period.

115. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller

That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) adopt the public meeting agenda of May 26, 2026, as presented.

CARRIED

2.2 Report on In Camera Meeting – Amanda Dowhy

This notice is to inform the public that prior to this meeting an “in-camera” meeting of the Board was held where issues of legal, land and personnel were discussed.

3. MINUTES

3.1 Call for amendments to minutes

The minutes from the Public Board meeting of April 28, 2026 and the Education Committee of the Whole meeting of May 19, 2026 were adopted by unanimous consent.

4. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 Board Chair Update – Amanda Dowhy

The Chair recognized the passing of Councillor Lillian Szpak and extended condolences to her family.

Graduation season began with the Indigenous student graduation celebrating the accomplishments of over 130 graduates.

The Sooke Principals’/Vice Principals’ Association, the Sooke Teachers’ Association and the Sooke Parents Education Advisory Council all held their AGMs, and the Board Chair congratulated outgoing and incoming executives.

The opening of the Little River crossing in Sooke took place on May 15th. Sooke Elder Jackie was in attendance along with grade 4 and 5 students who led the initial crossing.

5. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

There were no educational presentations.

6. INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL

6.1 Indigenous Education Council Update – Michelle Thut

The last meeting of the IEC was held May 5, 2026. Michelle Thut was selected as Chair and Jessica Kisby as co-chair. The IEC budget and targeted funding was discussed and approved by IEC council. The grade 8 and 12 gathering of Indigenous students at Camp Thunderbird was well attended, bringing together over 130 students from 6 school districts.

7. CORRESPONDENCE & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence – Amanda Dowhy

- a. BC Ombudsperson Quarterly Report October 1 – December 31, 2025
- b. Email from Sebastien B. Dated April 30, 2026 RE Proposal for Counsellor Supervision

The above noted correspondence was received by the Board.

7.2 Standing Delegations (STA, CUPE, PVP, SPEAC) – 5 minutes each

SPVPA – Tammy DeLeenheer and Mandi Becking

A slideshow was presented celebrating the many ways staff, students, families and communities come together to support one another.

CUPE 459 – Amber Leonard, STA – Rita Zeni, SPEAC Tom Davis

The CUPE 459 President read UNDRIP Article 13. SPEAC President and STA President joined the CUPE President to present a joint message to the Board about the importance of early childhood learning support provided by ECEs and urged the Board to advocate for more funding from the Province.

7.3 Other Delegations – 5 minutes each

There were no other delegations.

8. FINANCE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

8.1 Education Committee of the Whole Meeting of May 19, 2026 – Christine Lervold

The Committee Chair provided a summary of the ECOW meeting. Administrative cuts were included in the proposed budget to address the 2.2M deficit. Due diligence was practiced, and sustainability was a focus. \$1.3 M in corporate services savings has offset some of the deficit.

The ECE program was initiated in 2011 and began as partnerships through the Nature K program and over a time of enrolment growth, it evolved. In 2018, 8 ECEs were onboarded. There are currently 11 ECEs serving the District. ECEs may choose to move into an EA position.

116. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller

That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) give first and second readings of the 2026/27 Annual Budget Bylaw, specifying a total of \$245,935,907.
CARRIED

117. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller

That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the report from the Education Committee of the Whole (ECOW) meeting of May 19, 2026.
CARRIED

8.2 Resources Committee Meeting of May , 2025 – Christine Lervold

The Committee Chair provided an overview of the Resources Committee meeting.

118. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the Quarter 3 Financial Forecast Report as presented at the Resources Committee meeting of May 12, 2026.
CARRIED
119. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) approve 2027/28 Five Year Capital Plan submission as presented to the Resources Committee on May 12, 2026.
CARRIED
120. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the report from the Resources Committee Meeting of May 12, 2026.
CARRIED

9. EDUCATION PROGRAM

- 9.1 Education-Policy Committee Meeting of May 5, 2026 – Christine Lervold
The Acting Committee Chair reviewed the items discussed at the Education-Policy meeting.
121. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) accept and endorse the 2026/27 School Codes of Conduct.
CARRIED
122. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the report from the Education-Policy Committee Meeting of May 5, 2026.
CARRIED
- A correction to the May 5th Education-Policy report flagged that Tom Miller should say Tom Davis.
- 9.2 Adoption of Draft Revised Policy C-329 – Paul Block
123. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller
Given that the required period for Notice of Motion has been served, that the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) ADOPT Draft revised Policy and Regulations C-329, “Field Trips”.
CARRIED

10. STUDENTS

10.1 Superintendent's Report – Paul Block

The highlights from the Superintendent's report were shared. There is \$8000 in funding available to assist students with expenses related to participation in sports tournaments. Donations are accepted at any school or by contacting the District's Finance Department.

11. FOUNDATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

11.1 Trustee Liaison Reports – Board of Education

On June 2nd the Victoria Youth Family Court is having an open house.

11.2 Trustee Elections and By-Elections Bylaw – Brian Jonker

Boards are legally required to pass an election bylaw leading up to the trustee election on October 17, 2026.

124. MOVED Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller

That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) allow all three readings of the School Trustee Elections and By-Elections Bylaw No. 1-26 at its meeting of May 26, 2026.

CARRIED (UNANIMOUSLY)

125. MOVED Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller

That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) give first, second and third readings of the School Trustee Elections and By-Elections Bylaw No. 1-26.

CARRIED

11.3 Governance Committee Meeting of April 13, 2026 – Amanda Dowhy

Connection issues resulted in lack of quorum when this motion was read at the April 28, 2026 meeting necessitating a repeat of this motion.

126. MOVED Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller

That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) adopt the revised policy A-500, "Policy Development" as presented at the Governance Committee meeting of April 13, 2026.

CARRIED

12. ADMINISTRATION

12.1 Board of Education Work Plan – Amanda Dowhy

The Chair provided a summary of the work plan.

13. PERSONNEL

There were no personnel items discussed.

14. UPCOMING EVENTS

- District Long Service & Retirement Recognition – May 27
- SPEAC Summit – May 27
- Anti-Racism Awareness Week – May 26 to June 1
- National AccessAbility Week – May 31 – June 6
- Education-Policy Committee Meeting – June 2
- Victoria Family Youth Justice Committee Open House – June 2
- Resources Committee Meeting – June 9
- Audit Committee Meeting – June 16
- National Indigenous Peoples Day Gathering – June 19 (at Royal Roads University)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day – June 21
- Next Public Board Meeting – June 23
- Last Day of School – June 25

15. RISE AND REPORT

The Chair noted the district is working towards a MoU with Pacheedaht First Nation to advance the seismic replacement of Port Renfrew Elementary.

16. QUESTION PERIOD

Members of the public had the opportunity to ask questions related to agenda items discussed at tonight's meeting. There were four questions:

1. How have you ensured that making cuts to ECEs won't endanger the wellbeing of neuro-divergent students and the mental health and well-being of teachers? Is there any research or statistics?

Staff referenced the [Early Learning and Childcare Report.pdf](#).

2. The STA report 19 classrooms being served by ECEs, but Associate Superintendent Lisa Leclerc reported 16. Why are these numbers different?

Associate Superintendent Lisa Leclerc confirmed there are 16 ECE partnerships, based on expressions of interest received.

3. Can this district be the lasting change for other districts to follow? Where else can this money be found?

School District 62 has been the leader across the Province for the last 8 years, in the hopes that permanent funding would come from the Ministry. No other districts have been able to operationalize an ECE program without funding. \$1.3 M in administrative cuts are being recommended.



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4. Has there been any consideration given to carry the deficit forward to allow more time for re-evaluation?

Yes, that option has been one of the options considered however, the district is not legally allowed to pass a budget with a deficit.

17. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Certified Correct:

Chairperson of the Board

Secretary Treasurer





Information Note Public Board Meeting

June 23, 2026

Agenda Item 5.1 – NA’TSA’MAHT Equity in Action Report 2025/26

ISSUE / TOPIC:

The [Equity in Action Project](#) represents the Ministry of Education and school districts’ enduring commitment to dismantling systemic barriers that impact Indigenous student success. Grounded in principles of equity of opportunity and a co-constructive approach, this initiative encourages a comprehensive review of educational practices and policies that may hinder the progress of Indigenous learners within British Columbia’s public education system.

BACKGROUND / FACTS:

The project was launched in response to the [Audit of the Education of Aboriginal Students in the B.C. Public School System](#), which revealed a pervasive “racism of low expectations” toward Indigenous students. In response, the *Equity in Action* framework is built around four foundational pillars that support Indigenous student success:

1. **Learning Profile** – Personalized and evidence-informed, emphasizing timely supports, responsive interventions, and a culture of reflective practice (e.g., *Pathway to Graduation – Grandparents’ Perspective Circle*).
2. **Learning Environment** – Promotes high, motivating expectations for all learners; nurtures identity, belonging, and confidence; rooted in an understanding of implicit bias and privilege.
3. **Pedagogical Core** – Embeds culturally relevant teaching practices, grounded in Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, and intentionally connects learning to family and community.
4. **Policy & Governance** – Ensures systems are community-accountable, coherently aligned, and driven by sustained, meaningful action.

ANALYSIS:

Now in its eighth year, the *Equity in Action* journey in the Sooke School District continues to grow and evolve. Staff across schools and departments have reflected on the educational experiences of Indigenous learners, developing and implementing strategic, actionable goals to create the conditions for student success.

During the 2025/26 school year, school teams revisited and refined their goals and actions related to the Learning Environment, Pedagogical Core, and Learning Profile. In doing so, they explored how a distinctions-based approach and participation in *Pathway to Graduation Circles* can further support and celebrate individual learners. Department reports were presented by Career Education, Curriculum, Human Resources, Inclusive Education Services, and Indigenous Education. Each of these departments also emphasized Equity in Action goals across one or more of the four pillars. At the District Office, efforts have focused on continuing to honor the implementation of [Bill 40](#) through the successful establishment of the Indigenous Education Council, strengthening relationships with local rightsholders, and advancing initiatives aligned with the Policy & Governance pillar.

NEXT STEPS:

The *Equity in Action 2025/26 Report* compiles celebrations, insights and goals from schools and departments across the district. It highlights key initiatives, shares promising practices, and provides thoughtful considerations to guide the next phase of this important work in the 2026/27 school year.

We extend our sincere gratitude to members of the Elder Advisory Consultation Circle, whose guidance has been instrumental in shaping school and district initiatives. Their voices ensure authenticity and alignment with the perspectives of local First Nation Rightsholders. Click [Equity in Action 2025-26 Year End Report](#) to access the report.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Indigenous Education Department:

- Jon Carr, District Principal – NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Education Department
- Connie Swan, District Vice-Principal – NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Education Department

EQUITY IN ACTION



25-26



INDIGENOUS LEARNING DAY
September 22, 2025

Morning: 8:30am - 12pm
9am Film:
Voices from the Local Elders

Keynote Address:
Jody Wilson-Raybould & Carolyn Roberts

Afternoon: 1pm - 3pm
Site-Based Learning



1st Inaugural Indigenous Learning Day, Sept. 22nd 2025



EQUITY IN ACTION 25-26





Elders & Artist Advisory Group

From Top Left: Dahlila Charlie, Shirley Alphonse; **Middle:** Phylliss Charles, Janet Sutherland; **Top Right:** Henry Chipps, Rick Peter; **Bottom Left:** Jo-Ina Young, Jackie DaYaeger-Plane; Earl Claxton Jr.

With gratitude and respect, we acknowledge that we live, learn, and work on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation, SĆIĀNEW (Beecher Bay) Nation, and the Nuu-chah-nulth: Paaʔčiidʔath (Pacheedaht) Nation. We also recognize that some of our schools are located on the traditional territories of the MÁLEXEĻ (Malahat) Nation, and the Ləkʷəŋən peoples of Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.



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EQUITY IN ACTION 25-26

INTRODUCTION

The ***Equity in Action Project*** represents the Ministry of Education and school districts' enduring commitment to dismantling systemic barriers that impact Indigenous student success. Grounded in principles of equity of opportunity and a co-constructive approach, this initiative encourages a comprehensive review of educational practices and policies that may hinder the progress of Indigenous learners within British Columbia's public education system.

The project was launched in response to the ***Audit of the Education of Aboriginal Students in the B.C. Public School System***, which revealed a pervasive "racism of low expectations" toward Indigenous students. In response, the Equity in Action framework is built around ***four foundational pillars*** that support Indigenous student success:

- 1. Learning Profile** – Personalized and evidence-informed, emphasizing timely supports, responsive interventions, and a culture of reflective practice (e.g., *Pathway to Graduation – Grandparents' Perspective Circle*).
- 2. Learning Environment** – Promotes high, motivating expectations for all learners; nurtures identity, belonging, and confidence; rooted in an understanding of implicit bias and privilege.
- 3. Pedagogical Core** – Embeds culturally relevant teaching practices, grounded in Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, and intentionally connects learning to family and community.
- 4. Policy & Governance** – Ensures systems are community-accountable, coherently aligned, and driven by sustained, meaningful action.

Now in its eighth year, the Equity in Action journey in the Sooke School District continues to grow and evolve. Staff across schools and departments have reflected on the educational experiences of Indigenous learners and developed strategic, actionable goals to support student success.

We extend our sincere gratitude to members of the Elder Consultation Circle, whose guidance continues to shape school and district initiatives. Their voices help ensure this work remains authentic and aligned with the perspectives of local First Nation rightsholders.

During the 2025–26 school year, school teams revisited and refined goals connected to the Learning Environment, Pedagogical Core, and Learning Profile. Through this process, teams explored how a distinctions-based approach and participation in Pathway to Graduation Circles can better support, recognize, and celebrate individual learners.

At the District level, efforts focused on supporting the implementation of the Indigenous Education Council Policy, strengthening relationships with local Indigenous Rightsholders, and advancing work connected to the Policy and Governance pillar.

The Equity in Action 2025–26 Report brings together celebrations, reflections, and goals from schools and departments across the district. It highlights key initiatives, shares promising practices, and identifies areas for continued growth as the district moves this important work forward.



DEPARTMENT REPORTS



25-26



Elder Marlene Clifton leading the Leadership Team in a Drumming Circle at a Leadership Meeting

COMMITTMENT

Our Commitment – Equity in Careers Education means that we work to ensure that regardless of background, identity, ability or circumstances all students have equal access to post-secondary, trades training, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.



Camosun College Indigenous Learner's Day

EQUITY TEAM:

DANIELLE HUCULAK
 BRIAN HOTOVY
 KRISTY CALDWELL
 GRAHAM TRELOAR
 EMILY MORELAND
 MIKE HUCK

GOALS

- Ensure equitable access through counselling, programming, work experience, and post-secondary pathways
- Reduce participation gaps
- Remove systemic barriers
- Deliver inclusive, culturally responsive programs and pathways
- Increase representation and belonging by connecting students with diverse mentors, employers, and role models
- Improve outcomes for underrepresented youth
- Ensure accessibility and accommodations across all career events and placements
- Strengthen family and community engagement in career education



Bridges to Service Event:
 Western Canada Spill Response team

ACTIONS AND EVENTS

Camosun Health X & ELC Day
 Camosun Hands on Health Day
 Camosun Indigenous Learners' Day
 EPBC Parent's as Career Coaches
 Skills Canada Regionals and Provincials
 Soroptimist Society Dream It Be It
 Island Health Career Exploratory Day
 Bridges to Service: Career Pathways for Indigenous Youth (RCMP, Coast Guard, CAF, WCMRC)
 Marine Tech Event
 Take Our Kids to Work Day
 Campus Tours
 Dual Credit Teachers' Community of Practice
 Career Curriculum Teachers' Community of Practice
 Seaspan Tour
 Middle School Entrepreneur Fairs

Canadian Coast Guard Day
 Camosun Women in Trades and Technology
 C!Can World of Choices Event
 School based Volunteer Fairs
 School based Career Fairs
 Elementary & Middle School Entrepreneurship Fairs
 Skills Canada InSpire! Program
 Plumbers Union Local 324 Hands-On Learning Days
 Camosun Trades E-Van
 Westshore Secondary mini trades sampler
 Capstone Presentation Events
 Junior Achievement TechWorks
 Financial Literacy Workshop for Middle School Teachers
 myBlueprint Virtual Learning Sessions (Middle and Secondary)



Westshore Secondary Trades Sampler

CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

RED DRESS DISTRICT RESOURCE BIN



EQUITY TEAM:

DENISE WEHNER
SHELBY POLLITT
REISHA RYAN
STEPHANIE CAVE
JOY NUGENT
FRANCESCA LEE
DEANNA BRAJCICH
ANA GALAC
SHELLEY YATES
SHANNON GOMBOC

K-12 Immersion Métis Cultural Kits and Professional Development

Curated Kits

- Story books
- Lesson plans
- Music spoons
- Métis sashes
- Michif books with audio
- Métis art puzzles
- Hudson Bay Company blanket



Indigenous Resource Amplification Spine Labels

*Purchased 500
spine labels
for each school.*





Dawn and Lourie at the Indigenous Career Fair

OUR GOALS:

- 1.1 Consult with IEC representatives on procedures to recruit and hire staff that develop and deliver programs and services for Indigenous students, or whose roles involve significant interaction with Indigenous students. This may include reviewing proposed job descriptions, advising on posting or sharing current job opportunities to reach potential candidates, and IEC participation in hiring processes.
- 1.2 With First Nations partners providing leadership and direction, work together to address the history of the Indian residential school system through the development of professional development opportunities for staff, in a sensitive and appropriate manner.
- 1.3 In cooperation with First Nations partners, promote awareness and respect among new and existing employees of the district for First Nations' unique language, culture and history.

OUR ACTIONS:

- Participated in the Accessible Employment Expo 2025 hosted by WorkBC Victoria in September
- Participated in the Langford Job Fair hosted by WorkBC at the John Horgan Campus in September
- Attended the Esquimalt Nation Open House in October
- Attended other career fairs including the Victoria Career & Education Expo in October
- Participated as a Guest Speaker at the WorkBC Job Club to support job seekers in October
- Hosted a recruitment table at the NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Education Community Dinner at Ruth King Elementary in November
- Represented part of the School Board office team in the NA'TSA'MAHT Lahal Tournament in February
- Offered the following Indigenous learnings for the CUPE Professional Development Day in May:
 - Cedar Weaving by Maria Sampson who is a Coast Salish Weaver
 - Bond and Bead with Joslyn Charlie from the Nuu-Chah-Hulth and Kwakwaka'waka nations

OUR COMMITMENT:

School District No. 62 (Sooke) is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in a workplace that is free of discrimination and harassment. Our educational environments are welcoming and safe. Our staff and students value and appreciate our differences.



Elder Shirley Blessing a Communication Board

WATER BLESSING AT LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION CENTRE

The Language & Communication Centre celebrated the opening of its new space with a meaningful Water Blessing ceremony, guided by Elder Shirley Alphonse & Brother Rick Peter. The gathering brought staff together in a spirit of reflection, connection, & gratitude while honouring the cultural traditions of local First Nations communities. Through song, welcome, & the blessing of both people and space with a cedar bough and sacred water, the ceremony fostered a strong sense of well-being, belonging, and cultural respect. The event highlighted the importance of creating a space that reflects and honours *Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being*.

An informal open house followed, welcoming district staff to visit the new location, celebrate the team's work, and connect with colleagues. The occasion also provided an opportunity to reflect on the district's ongoing commitment to creating inclusive, respectful, and culturally responsive environments where everyone feels valued and supported.

EXPANDED SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SERVICES

This year, SLP services at Port Renfrew School expanded to include multi-day visits by the school SLP & the SLP from the BC Provincial School Outreach Program. Two students were provided with AAC devices. In addition, Pacheedaht Nation secured Jordan's Principle funding to support eight students with services from a traveling private SLP. This included coordinated school visits working with the classroom teacher to incorporate SLP strategies into classroom activities. Next year, we will continue to strive to strengthen relationships in community so that we can work more collaboratively with families to better support students.

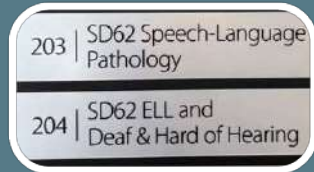


LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION CENTRE MEMO

The Memo intentionally highlights the WSÁNEĆ Coast Salish Moons, a practice which helps ground our work in local seasonal cycles while deepening our connection to the land & community. Next year, the information will be expanded to the IES Weekly memo & include Seasonal Celebrations & Annual Events.

ELL TEACHER SURVEY: FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING IN PRACTICE

ELL teachers participated in an anonymous survey to reflect on how the FPPOL are enacted in their work with multilingual learners. Grounded in relationships, identity & lived experience, the survey supported thoughtful reflection on practice and a shared commitment to reconciliation. Insights will guide ongoing dialogue and strengthen efforts to embed Indigenous worldviews consistently into our pedagogy. Next year, the survey will be expanded to more IES Department staff. ELL Meetings will also focus on one First Peoples Principle of Learning per meeting.



814 Goldstream Avenue
 NEW Office Location for:
 SD62 SLP/AAC
 SD62 ELL & MCSW
 SD62 Deaf & Hard of Hearing



NIE Student Family Advocate, Daniëlle Huber & School SLP Sydney Torok with Private SLP in Pacheedaht Nation

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026-27

Deepen Our Collective Understanding of the Learning Profile Pillar

- Review Inclusive Education Services' District Lellum with IES staff to develop a shared understanding
- Utilize elements of Pathway to Graduation Model to support student transitions from Elem to Mid & Mid to Sec
- Strengthen supports for local First Nation students by intentionally consulting with First Nation communities and continuing the implementation of IES programs & supports that enhance student achievement & well-being

Strengthen Our Practice in the Learning Environment & Pedagogical Core Pillars

- Consider culturally responsive accessibility and inclusion practices
- Initiate & implement projects through the Elder's Advisory Consultation Framework

- GOALS**
- Relationships
 - Local Context
 - Student Centered
 - Student Success



NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Education (NIE) is dedicated to enriching the educational, social, cultural, and academic experiences of students who self-identify as having Indigenous ancestry. Guided by the wisdom and direction of the Indigenous Education Council, Elders, Role Models, local Nations, families, and community partners, our programs and services support student success while helping to weave Indigenous perspectives, histories, languages, and ways of knowing throughout K-12 learning.

This year, NA'TSA'MAHT continued to strengthen identity, belonging, academic success, cultural connection, and student transitions across the district. Our team worked alongside schools to challenge bias and systemic racism, support meaningful learning opportunities, and create welcoming environments where Indigenous students are seen, supported, and held to high expectations.



CULTURE & LANGUAGE

NA'TSA'MAHT continued to support cultural learning, language revitalization, identity, belonging, and connection to land through a wide range of school and district initiatives. Highlights included:

- The 3rd annual multi-district SD62 Lahal Tournament and continued participation in South Island Lahal tournaments
- New Thunderbird cultural land-based programming for at-risk students supported by Student Advocacy Teachers
- Hulitan Partnership: Grandma Clifton drum rotations at Urban zone Schools
- Role Model and Elder in Residence programming across schools K-12
- Coast Salish Weave Art Collection rotations
- Carolyn Roberts' book launch and staff learning connected to *Tess's Red Dress*
- Winter Solstice Gathering at the new Royal Roads John Horgan Campus Indigenous Space
- September start-up learning and year-end gathering in community at the new T'Sou-ke Nation Health Building
- A second year attending the Qualicum First Nations Early Learning Conference
- Monthly resource bulletins and ENGAGE resource support for schools
- Co-creation of District Authentic Resources in partnership with the Elders & Curriculum Dept.
- Third year facilitating the Elder's Advisory Circle supporting school and district cultural initiatives





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

• Highlights included:

- Urban Indigenous Dinner and Film evening featuring Lahal
- Métis Community Dinner at Ruth King Elementary
- T'Sou-ke Nation Community Dinner at John Muir Elementary
- SĆIΛNEW Nation Christmas Dinner hosted at SĆIΛNEW STĒLIT̓KĒL Elementary School
- Pacheedaht Family Pizza Night and launch of the new Port Renfrew School middle school program
- Three Elder Consultation Circles, continuing this important practice for a third year
- Continued relationship-building with local Nations, Métis families, urban Indigenous families, Elders, Role Models, students, and staff



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026-27

We are excited about the year to come.

Our Focus will be:

- The 2nd District-wide Indigenous Learning Day
- 4th Year Elders Advisory Circle
- Continuing the Thunderbird Culture Group Series with Student Advocates
- South Island District initiatives i.e.) Lahal Tournament; Land-based Day



SCHOOL REPORTS



25-26



Cedar Harvesting with T'Sou-ke Elder Janet (Journey Middle School)

SCHOOL REPORTS



25-26





HIGHLIGHTS

- Targeted academic support for Indigenous learners
- Cultural sharing through events such as the Salmon Bake
- Embedding cultural foods and learning within Feeding Futures
- School-wide learning on MMIW2S+ through a story walk
- Collaborative cross-curricular exploration of Truth and Reconciliation through a student-created video
- Promoting student equity through anti-racism and allyship development

EQUITY TEAM:

SARAH BAAS
TARA COLBORNE
MADISON DAHL
CHRISTINE HOSKINS
KIM MARIER
SHANNON POON
KIM SCOTT

WORKING TOWARDS OUR GOALS

This year, we continued to deepen understanding of territorial acknowledgements by supporting the creation of meaningful, locally grounded, and personalized territory acknowledgements. We worked to strengthen graduation pathways through targeted academic and homework support, while also sharing culture through food. Through a school-wide approach, we continued to seek opportunities for collaborative learning and shared experiences, including drumming.

EQUITY GOALS/FOCUS:

- Deepen equity through student voice to inform school practices.
- Strengthen graduation pathways for Indigenous students through targeted academic support.
- Create opportunities to share culture and deepen learning aligned with the First Peoples Principles of Learning.



Drumming and shared songs led by Grandma Clifton



LOOKING AHEAD

- Increase Indigenous student voice in school culture and decision-making.
- Expand visual representation of Indigenous cultures throughout the school.
- Strengthen staff practice in territorial acknowledgements and First Peoples Principles of Learning.
- Develop and embed a school-wide cultural plan across all departments.
- Support new staff in Indigenous learning, including engagement with Elder in Residence and Role Model programs.

May 5th Red Dress Day Art and Story Walk

ADULT GRADUATION PROGRAM

The Fast Forward to Graduation Program provides adult (18+) students the opportunity to earn their BC Adult Graduation Dogwood Diploma in 5 months or 1 semester. SD62 Continuing Education is proud of our Indigenous graduates of 2026.

EQUITY TEAM:

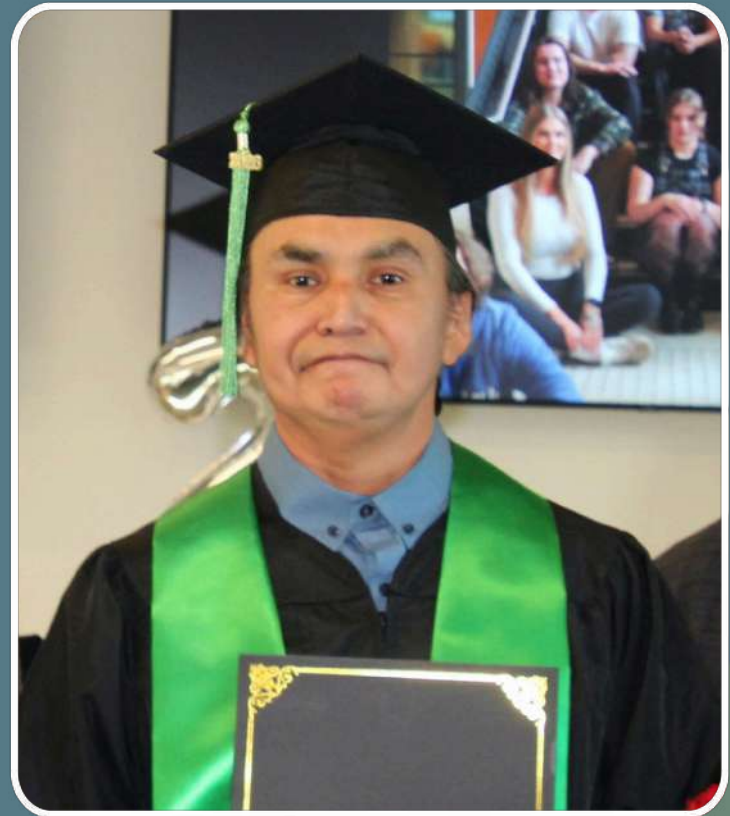
MORGAN SARGENT

SUSAN COATES

HEATHER LAIT

EQUITY IN ACTION GOALS

- Bringing cultural teachings into the classroom
- Create a sense of belonging for all students
- Invite Indigenous Role Models into the classroom and to school events
- Participate in District NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Education (NIE) NIE events



Cultural teaching were brought in by the NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Education staff & Role Models. Students participated in a lahal tournament and attended the Indigenous Grad Recognition Ceremony.



Equity Team 2025-2026 Events

<p>Orange Shirt Day</p> <p>Sept. 29th</p> 	<p>Indigenous Word Wall</p> <p>Year long</p>  <p>Rotating words with prize entries for students practicing Indigenous phrases</p>	<p>Na'tsa'maht Wellness Week</p> <p>Feb 17-20</p> <p>Guest Speaker Kaleb Dahlgren</p> <p>Flourish Workshops</p> <p>WSANEC Ultimate Spirit Sessions</p> <p>Lahal Tournament</p> <p>Food at the outdoor firepit</p>	<p>Grade 9 Inclusion and Anti-Racism Workshops</p> <p>Throughout Feb</p>  <p>Tanya will contact Gr 9 teachers with scheduled timeslots.</p>	<p>MMIWG Ceremony</p> <p>May 5</p>  <p>Reach out to Rhiannon if you'd like your class to be involved</p>
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New members always welcome! Our next team meeting will be in the afternoon of the "I" Day

EQUITY TEAM:

ALISON BARTON
 PATRICK GALE
 ALEXANDER GARSON
 RHIANNON JONES
 O'SHEA
 TANYA PHILLIPS
 KRISTI SCHAEFER
 TIFFANY STEADMAN

EQUITY GOALS & FOCUS AREAS

- Strengthen the school's connection to local Indigenous communities to build trust and collaboration.
- Connect all students to Indigenous ways of knowing and the natural world through Role Models, teaching garden, and place.
- Increase Indigenous student graduation rates by addressing academic, cultural, social emotional, and systemic barriers through targeted support
- Support Language: SENĆOŦEN and Ditidaht Word Wall for opportunities to hear and practice language.



WHAT'S NEW AT EMCS

ON SEPTEMBER 22ND DURING SO62'S FIRST INDIGENOUS DAY OF LEARNING, T'SOU'KE ARTIST AND COMMUNITY MEMBER SHELLEY DAVIES' NEW MURAL WAS UNVEILED AT EDWARD MILNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL. AS AN EMCS ALUMNI HERSELF, SHELLEY PUT MANY HOURS INTO THIS BEAUTIFUL PROJECT THAT NOW LIVES PERMANENTLY IN OUR MAIN STAIRWELL. THE HERON "SNEKE" WAS GIFTED TO EDWARD MILNE BY OUR ELDER JACKIE ON BEHALF OF THE T'SOU'KE NATION. THE HERON IS THE GUARDIAN AND WATCHMAN OF THE SALISH SEA, THE HERON IS KNOWN TO GUIDE FISHERMAN BACK TO SHORE DURING BAD WEATHER. THE HERON IS A SYMBOL OF PATIENCE AND GRACE.



EMCS RAISES THEIR HANDS IN GRATITUDE TO ELDER JACKIE, SHELLEY DAVIES AND THE T'SOU'KE NATION FOR SHARING THIS GIFT WITH US.



Indigenous Valedictorians



SENĆOŦEN word stop at the Orange Shirt Day walk

LOOKING AHEAD

- Build on existing initiatives to deepen impact and **whole school** engagement.
- Continue to use data and observations from the learning community to guide next steps:
 - Addressing Racism.
 - Rebranding EMCS to include the gift of SNEKE from T'Sou-ke Nation.





A YEAR OF GROUNDING AND DIRECTION-SETTING

This year has been a formative “direction-setting” year for our school’s equity work. With new administrators and staff, we focused on building shared understanding, strengthening relationships, and establishing a clear path forward.

Looking ahead, we are building on this foundation by engaging the wider school community in meaningful events and inviting staff and students to participate in committees that will help plan, organize, and support this work collaboratively.

EQUITY TEAM:

BENULA BUNJUN
JOHN FROESS
NEVADA KALUDJER
CHRISTOPHER MOORE
LINDSAY LOCKHART
ROB MCALLISTER
CHELSEA RICHARDSON
REISHA RYAN
WILLIAM STEE
JADIA WONG

GOALS AND FOCUS AREAS

- Strengthening relationships and shared understanding
- Deepening cultural awareness and understanding the current landscape of our school community
- Building structures for sustained equity work

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hosting the district’s Indigenous Learning Day at our school (September 22)
- Orange Shirt Day activities
- Connections: Brother Rick Peter (respected pillar of our community), Bruce Comaniuk (Native Plant Garden and mural work), ongoing involvement of Elders and Role Models
- Lahal!
- Red Dress Day/National Day of Awareness for MMIWG2S+ People
- Staff reflection survey
- Setting direction for next year + forming committees



LOOKING AHEAD

- Addressing racism (especially in jokes/humour)
- Examining school spaces to promoting inclusion
- Making Indigenous language visible throughout the school
- Increasing whole-school engagement
- Deepening student connection





Veterans Memorial Park October 2025

STRENGTH, PROTECTION & RESPECT

We prioritized connecting to the principle that learning is recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

- **Strength:** knowing and facing our history as a Nation and the role of Indigenous Nations that helps define us
- **Protection:** reflecting on the implications of our perception as Peace Keepers juxtaposed against our history of colonization
- **Respect:** committing to reflecting on our history as we make decisions about who we are, and our future actions

FOCUS GOALS:

CENTRE OUR SCHOOL IDENTITY AROUND THE CULTURALLY GROUNDED LOGO WHICH ENCAPSULATES THE POWERFUL SPIRIT RESILIENCE AND GRACE THE SCHOOL NAME HIGHLIGHTS.

ROOTEDNESS & GROWTH

Continuing our focus to the principle that learning is embedded in memory, history and story, we participated in Métis 101 to learn more about experiences on the Prairies:

- **Rootedness:** connection to the environment offers both challenges and opportunities. These factors are regional and impact both culture and society. We learned about the importance and roles of specific animals in Métis culture.
- **Growth:** a growth mindset can be challenging but is essential if we wish to advance our community. While exploring the challenges that occurred in daily Métis life, we reflected on how ideas and solutions can help us individually but more importantly the greater good of a thriving and supportive community. We then tied that learning to our experiences as students and teammates.



Métis 101 April 2026



Plant Walks May 2026

UNITY & BALANCE

Finally, we touched on the principle that learning is holistic, reflective, experiential and relational:

- **Unity:** As student athletes we understand the concept of being unified as a team. The Plant Walk helped us learn about Indigenous plants around Langford Lake and unify/connect our experiences from our school garden, to our surroundings.
- **Balance:** By expanding our learning and experiences in these various ways, we sought to bring balance to our goal of becoming well-rounded, educated citizens.





Westshore Lahal Team

EQUITY GOALS & FOCUS AREAS

Equity in Action Goal: *To promote equitable practices by increasing Westshore's understanding of and engagement with Indigenous language and connection to land, sea, and sky.*

This goal is in continuation of our previous year with the following focus areas:

- Increasing opportunities for staff and students to engage in Indigenous ways of knowing, learning and language through drumming and song with Indigenous Elders
- Continue to increase opportunities for students to learn from land, sea and sky through role model visits and a variety of land-based learning
- Immersed staff and students into the Indigenous cultural experience of Lahal

EQUITY TEAM:

LIANE DIMOCK

JUSTINE KELLY

RACHEL TAILLEFER

DARRELL WRIGHT

GILLIAN LEROSE

STRATEGIES & STORIES

Westshore's yearly cultural plan guides our equity actions and practices through the four seasons. This collaborative document ensures each grade level/program in the school engages with meaningful land-based learning opportunities. Equity in action survey results show students are keen for more Indigenous perspectives and culture to be embedded in classrooms

This Year's Highlights:

- Take a Hike program formed a Westshore Lahal team and participated in 3 local tournaments this year. Students acted as leaders within the school community to share their learnings with younger grades.
- Every program/class at Westshore participated in drumming sessions with Gramma Clifton- Indigenous language, ways of knowing, learning and histories.
- Stronger focus on Indigenous student grad transitions and exposure to available post-secondary and career opportunities
- Increased land-learning opportunities including a new field trip with Fort Rodd Hill's camas meadow with role model Janine Bradley
- Equity in Action team began leading staff through discussions on how to incorporate Indigenous music into classroom teaching through lens of Carolyn Roberts: Re-Storying Education

"Our deep conversations never would have happened without drumming first"
-Gr. 12 student

"You can forget about a documentary or a book, it's not a real life experience, but I remember Goldstream and Grandma Clifton's stories so well"
- Student CG

"I loved learning more about my culture from my Mom's side"
- Student BA



NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Graduation Ceremony



Land-based learning at Goldstream Park

LOOKING AHEAD

2026-27 Goal: We will advance equity by strengthening Indigenous cultural learning, amplifying student voice, and building staff capacity to engage in land-based and classroom practices that foster belonging, identity, and meaningful participation for all learners.

Looking head to next year, staff and students have provided input into the direction our equity work will take next year. These include:

- Increase opportunities for staff to learn about and from the land, sea and sky in order to build confidence to engage these activities with students
- Continuing to use a cultural plan to guide our teaching and learning throughout the year with an emphasis on supporting our ILP programs and students with increased cultural learning opportunities
- Form a Westshore Student Equity in Action group with a goal of organizing a student retreat in the fall. The goals of this group is to capture more student voice and engage students in equity planning for the school year ahead
- Continue to increase student confidence and participation in Lahal by facilitating a school based lahala tournament during the SIS'IT moon.
- Continue to support grade 12 Indigenous students with supported transitions to post-secondary and career opportunities





Staff Drum Making Workshops

EQUITY GOAL AND FOCUS AREAS

Equity in Action Goal: Increasing Westshore's understanding of and engagement with Indigenous language and connection to land, sea, and sky.

This goal is a continuation our previous years' goals, with three focus areas:

- A greater emphasis on Indigenous language learning
- Opportunities for staff to engage with Indigenous ways of knowing and learning through the creation and use of drums
- Continue to increase opportunities for students to learn on and from land, sea and sky through role model visits and a variety of land-based learning field trips

TEAM MEMBERS

- LIANE DIMOCK
- JUSTINE KELLY
- JAMIE CLEGG
- DARRELL WRIGHT
- KIM STROM
- RACHEL TAILLEFER
- GILLIAN LEROSE

STRATEGIES AND STORIES

- Westshore's yearly cultural plan guides our equity actions and practices through the four seasons. This collaborative document ensures each grade level/program in the school engages with meaningful land-based learning opportunities.
- Equity in action survey data shows students are keen for more land-based learning opportunities

This Year's Highlights:

- Staff drum creation with Brother Rick, drum design with Dahlila, drumming sessions with Grandma Clifton and Glenn Grande
- SENĆOŦEN counting (1-10) at monthly staff meetings
- Land-based learning field trips: Goldstream, SNIDÇEĒ, Metchosin Farm, Moose Hide March
- Student-created Westshore Territory Acknowledgement

"The Moosehide walk was enlightening, I have never done anything like it and it made my mind more open" – Student- JR

"When I went to the Seed Farm I liked being outside and learned lots as well. It was a memorable experience so I remembered what I learned more than I would at school" – Student WV

"I love hearing speakers we wouldn't have at school" Student-GSC



Grade 12 Social Justice Students at the Moose Hide March

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead to next year, staff have provided input into the direction our equity work will take next year. These include:

- Continuing to use a cultural plan to guide our teaching and learning throughout the year
- Increasing opportunities for staff and students to engage in drumming together
- Continuing to increase our SENĆOŦEN learning through the teachings of the 13 moons at monthly staff meetings
- Facilitating more land-based learning opportunities for Westshore students
- Engage staff in deeper conversations about reconciliation and action by using the book Re-Storying Education by Carolyn Roberts



Goldstream Salmon Run with Elder Earl





Staff Drum Making Workshops

EQUITY GOAL AND FOCUS AREAS

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Goldstream Salmon Run with Elder Earl





CENTRE MOUNTAIN LELUM



Staff land based learning

OUR FOCUS

We focused on embedding our values—SIÁM, TENEW, Na'tsa'maht, and IY, ŠKÁLEÇEN—into our school culture by aligning them with our equity work, four pillars, and school goals. We also focused on developing student engagement around these core values, and landbased learning

EQUITY TEAM:

- KATHLEEN MEIKLEJOHN
- MICHAELA MISTAL
- CHEYMUS MCNULTY
- LEANNE BILOUS

OUR YEAR OF LEARNING

Our team worked to intentionally align our school priorities with our shared Indigenous values of SIÁM (respect), TENEW (the land), Na'tsa'maht (unity), and IY, ŠKÁLEÇEN (working together in a good way). This year, we strengthened school culture by establishing school families to deepen belonging, relationships, and shared expectations for engagement and learning across the school community. These families provided a structure for embedding our values into daily interactions, school expectations, and student responsibility. We also expanded land-based learning through the undertaking and creation of an Indigenous garden with the support of the STA and facilities. We also engaged in landbased learning through forest walks, and regular connections to seasonal changes. These experiences grounded learning in TENEW and supported students in building awareness of land, place, and reciprocity. Together, this work strengthened a values-based, relational, and land-connected school culture.



Staff PD - Land based learning

GOALS FOR 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

Continue to deepen our commitment to Indigenous education by embedding Indigenous ways of knowing more intentionally into classroom planning and instruction across all subject areas. We will strengthen land-based learning through consistent integration of the Indigenous garden, forest walks, and seasonal cycles into teaching and learning, deepening students' connection to TENEW and place. We will also further develop school families as a key structure for living our values, SIÁM (respect), TENEW (the land), Na'tsa'maht (unity), and IY, ŠKÁLEÇEN (working together in a good way), while strengthening student belonging, leadership, and restorative practices. Through this work, we will continue to actively embed our values across the school community and strengthen a respectful, relational school culture.





DUNSMUIR MIDDLE SCHOOL



Dunsmuir students working on art with Dahlila Charlie.

EQUITY GOALS & FOCUS AREAS

This year, Dunsmuir's equity goal focused on providing meaningful Indigenous teaching and learning experiences for the entire school and building capacity by supplying school wide resources and increasing staff confidence in using them. We continue to be guided by the data found in Dunsmuir's Lellum and offer enhanced supports for our students.

Despite multiple staff transitions, consistent members of our team provided opportunities to share and celebrate culture within the school and broader community, and hosting school wide events that highlighted a variety of Indigenous perspectives, voices, and traditions.

EQUITY TEAM:

CRAIG DIDMON

ANASTASIA WILSON BURKE

KIRSTEN WALKER

JULIA CLIFTON

ALEXIS MCKEAN

KIM STROM

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Truth and reconciliation work** – our Equity Team has supported all students in recognizing Orange Shirt Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Louis Riel Day, Red Dress Day and National Indigenous Peoples Day.
- **Arctic Winter Games** school-wide tournament highlighting Inuit events/competition. Students competed within their classrooms in 3 events, followed by a finals tournament.
- **Lahal** – The school continues to deepen our engagement with Lahal. This year's activities will include team and class competitions, staff-versus-student lunchtime games, and a school-wide tournament.
- **Culture work** – students have had the opportunity to work on incredible art projects with Dahlila Charlie, experience the Thunderbird drum with Glenn Grande, group drumming, and plant walks with Kevin Henry. Our year end event will include time with Kookum Jo-ina and lots of fry bread!



Drumming with Glenn Grande and his Thunderbird drum.



Learning about Metis culture with Emily Hanna



Cooperative group art with Dahlila Charlie



Year end Indigenous student gathering at Camp Thunderbird



Doing more together!

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead to the 2026/27 school year, the Dunsmuir Equity in Action team is committed to building upon the progress made this year by expanding participation in the events and opportunities of this year. We will be welcoming new staff and directly linking our literacy, numeracy and attendance goals to cultural stories and events to more solidly weave Indigenous ways of learning into the fabric of our school and Lellum.

We will continue to maximize our use of the land around us and as many cultural experiences as possible.



GOALS & FOCUS - LEARNING AND WORKING TOGETHER

Our goals this year were:

- To invite Elders and knowledge holders to our school to reflect the diversity of our learners
- Hold space and honour days of special significance like Orange Shirt Day, Moosehide Day and Red Dress Day
- Increase connection to the land and community by use of outdoor and land-based learning
- Work to embed Indigenous ways of learning into curriculum and throughout the school, including classrooms, student supports and extra-curricular activities through teacher led curriculum and lesson sharing

EQUITY TEAM:

LEANNE ZANON
 LARA BELL
 OLIVER WINSER
 TERRI HAYWARD
 KELLY DVORAK



OUR SCHOOL

This school is built on the traditional territory of the T'Sou-ke Nation. Journey is nestled alongside the forest, by DeMamiel creek, and Stickleback pond.



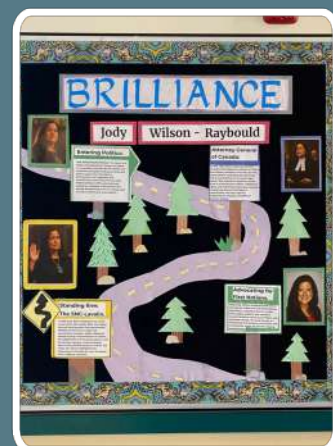
Students, and teachers have meaningful learning opportunities in these outdoor spaces to connect with our surrounding lands. These opportunities create a safe space for diverse learners to meet, share, and learn together.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Elder Janet Hansen from T'Sou-ke made regular weekly visits and worked with students, classes and with the Inclusive Education Department in creating enriching connections to students
- Created a visual language board that included SENĆOŦEN and diitiid?aa?tx languages that will continue into next year.
- Expanded our Honouring MMIWG&2S people through purposeful activities.
- Created a moon board as a visual reminder of the Saanich moons and its connection to our land
- Dahlila Charlie shared knowledge and vision with our students through creating an art display
- Several classes researched and designed additions to the Brilliance Board that celebrates Indigenous Excellence
- Students are repairing the Mural in the front facing the entrance that showcases Na'tsa'maht
- Debra Kessler and Rose Dupont shared Metis Woodland art

GOALS

- Continue to support educators to embed Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding into meaningful learning opportunities
- Continue to increase the visual representation of Indigenous art and culture through out the school.





Speakers at the Red Dress Day Walk

EQUITY GOALS & FOCUS AREA

- To foster a sense of belonging and connection for the Spencer Community (students, staff, caregivers)
- To support place-based and land-based learning
- To reflect, educate and advocate on equity, justice, anti-racism

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EQUITY SURVEY

- Students who have experienced and witnessed racism shows a 10% decrease from last year
- More students have what they need to learn
- Improvements in student voice, inclusion and relevance to learning
- Land Acknowledgement is visible and heard

EQUITY TEAM:

- NATHAN AMBROSE
- HAYDEN BARTELS
- SHARON BOND
- GINA CAPRETTA
- ASHLEY CONRAD
- JEN NIXON
- ANNA SERDYUKOVA
- KRISTINE TAYLOR
- LISA THERRIEN
- KIRSTEN WALKER

HIGHLIGHTS & STORIES: OUR EQUITY JOURNEY

- We continued to focus on cultural exhibitions, performances, and guest speakers promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Highlights: Grupo América, Bryan St. Louis, Christian Armstrong, Indigenous role models, and drumming with Grandma Clifton;
- Significant expansion of the Explore and Enrich (E2) Program, increasing opportunities for student voice and engagement, ownership of learning;
- Expanded learning and participation in days of significance, including, MMIWG2S+, Reconciliation Day, Red Dress Day Walk;
- Launch of the Lahal Club, with participation in four Lower Island tournaments;
- Introduction of the Equity Film Series, hosted three films and were supported through strong community partnerships and local business donations;
- Ongoing development of the front entrance visual display, reflecting and celebrating the school's diversity;
- Expanded land-based learning opportunities, including the Salish Sea Program, visits to Lohbrunner Farm, invasive species removal initiatives; and participation in the Outdoor Adventure Group (E2).



Students working the land at Lohbrunner Farm

LOOKING AHEAD

We will continue our collective learning on our equity journey by:

- **Addressing Racism and Supporting DEI work and learning:** ensuring more visibility to celebrate diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism initiatives, including training and discussions with staff and students; create a learning resource for staff and school for collective action, learning and understanding.
- **Strengthen Connections and Belonging:** expand on the Explore and Enrich (E2) Program; continue to grow Lahal, and expand on all clubs, including a multi-cultural club; support performances, cultural displays and learning that reflects the diversity of the community; increase consistent access to Indigenous and diverse voices and content across curricular areas.
- **Expand Authentic Student Voice:** Create opportunities for increased student voice and involvement in decision-making; create more opportunities for student-to-student mentoring; ensure students have what they need to learn and have ownership of their learning, through initiative such as E2.



Playing Lahal at the NIE Day of Learning



THIS YEAR'S GOALS AND FOCUS

This year, we adapted our school's family groups to better meet current needs and interests, focusing on building community and belonging across ages and abilities. We held monthly assemblies striving to emotionally include all students with Indigenous ways of knowing weaved throughout. We responded to staff feedback and student engagement, and incorporated STEM activities. We also shared our experience running an elementary Lahal tournament to support other schools. Our Lahal tournament was a full day filled with 8 stations in the morning that classes rotated through including playing lacrosse, creating button blankets, gardening, an Indigenous story walk through the forest, sampling tea, and playing Lahal. We were fortunate to have Grandma Clifton support the Lahal teachings. In the afternoon, students watched the grade 5's participate in the 3rd annual official Colwood Elementary Lahal tournament.

EQUITY

TEAM:

- TAMARA MAXIM
- JULIA CLIFTON
- EVA MARTIN
- SARAH RAMSBOTTOM
- BECKY CLARK
- SUE TONNESEN
- CATRINA SNOOK



HIGHLIGHTS

- Role Model visits
- Gramma Clifton supporting the Lahal tournament
- Monthly Equity Family Group assemblies and activities.
- Community building through participation on Music Monday.
- Staff book club - "Ensouling Our Schools"
- Painting Indigenous hand drums

STUDENT QUOTES

- "I like that you get to learn while having so much FUN!!!"
- Family Group
- "I like how we are outside the whole day" - Lahal Day
- "You can do fun distractions and sing along with your friends" - Lahal Day

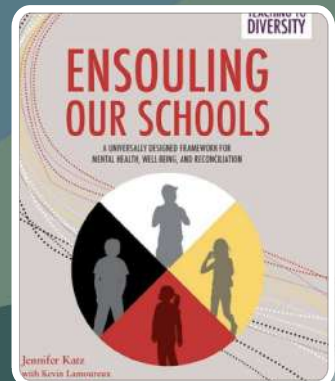
STRATEGIES

We have asked for feedback from the staff and the exiting grade 5 students as an example of intergenerational learning and feedback. Classrooms continue to take time to learn from the land in our outdoor classroom, Royal Roads forest, and school garden with growing support from Flourish! School Food.



LOOKING AHEAD

Our goal is to simplify family group activities and focus on community building, sense of belonging, and mentorships across age groups. We aim to expand the tournament by partnering with Hulitan Daycare and Westshore High School to foster intergenerational learning. We hope that the RCMP can also join next year and help make bannock.





THIS YEAR'S FOCUS AND HIGHLIGHTS

This year, we expanded our collection of Indigenous-authored books to support both classroom learning and our staff book club. Students learned from Indigenous Role Models and Elders through drumming, storytelling, dance, beading, and traditional games like Lahal. Ms. Nicole also worked weekly with classes on hands-on Indigenous activities such as making Talking Sticks, Button Blankets, beaded ornaments, and bear paws. Staff participated in workshops hosted by Qualicum First Nations, bringing back meaningful resources to enrich learning through play.

Our Grade 3/4 students reflected on Territorial Acknowledgements and created their own, incorporating their cultural identities while expressing gratitude and respect for the unceded traditional territories. Their acknowledgement opened our yearbook, morning announcements, and Spring Concert. The concert was especially meaningful as Grandma Clifton and older students performed for the community, ending with everyone joining in "The Women's Warrior Song" arms raised as warriors. Crystal View will also celebrate Indigenous culture at the year-end Fun Day through a variety of traditional games and activities.

EQUITY TEAM:

- CHRISTY CHIA
- TANYA CONSTABLE
- ALEXIS MILNE
- NICOLE HAGUE
- BRONWYN BRIGHT
- DONNA SAGODI



Grade 4 and 5 students at the Lahal tournament



Drumming with Gramma Clifton at the Spring Concert

Territorial Acknowledgement created by grade 3/4 class-published in the yearbook

WHERE WE LEARN & PLAY

We are from Crystal View Elementary. We are from all over the world.

Our school is near Mill Hill.

We would like to acknowledge with gratitude and respect that we are on the traditional, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Lekwungen (Songhees and Esquimalt) Nations.

We like spending time in nature by camping, swimming, running, fishing, and going on forest walks in Mill Hill. We promise to take care of the land by respecting nature, picking up garbage, composting, and recycling.

We will learn from Elders, continue learning about Indigenous peoples, and take part in important Indigenous days and events throughout the year. We will also show kindness, respect, and care for one another and the land we have the privilege to live, learn, and play on.

Hych'ka, Klaco Klaco, Maarsij, Hatmeva, Thank you.

LOOKING FORWARD

Next year, our main goal is to implement the Circle of Courage Core Competency Reflection template created by the Equity Team this year, which some classes are already using. We are also excited to have Ms. Constable incorporate Indigenous content into library and ADST lessons. In addition, we will finalize a new school logo designed by a local Indigenous artist to reflect community and nature within the existing cougar paw. We are also committed to ensuring every class receives Indigenous learning experiences and visits, using school funds where needed.



Lanterns created for Winter Solstice



Winter Solstice - decorations



Button blankets created by students



Created by grade 4/5's after watching "Where Have All the Buffalo Gone?"





EQUITY TEAM:

SHANNON CAUDWELL
GEMMA CLARKE
KIANNA TREWIN
LYNN BROWN
ROSIE COOK

THIS YEAR WE FOCUSED ON COLLABORATION, COMMUNITY, AND HONORING FNESC'S FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPALS OF LEARNING

In early September we gathered as a staff to drum and sing together. Teachers then met in grade groups and had collaboration time with Shannon, our NA TSA' MAHT Classroom Program Assistant.

"Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions"

"Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational"

"Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge"

"Learning involves patience and time"



We held our third National Day of Truth and Reconciliation Assembly, where students read, "Stolen Words" by Melanie Florence.



We were honoured to welcome guest artist, Dahlila Charlie, to help us create our Tree of Life.

Students, staff, and families have worked together to complete our Truth and Reconciliation loom that we started last year with Esquimalt and Tsartlip guest artist, Sherry Thomas. We look forward to hanging this important art work in our front foyer.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the year ahead we hope to weave SENĆOŦEN language into our daily learning. We will continue to amplify teacher collaboration. We look forward to decolonizing our foyer, and pursuing Equity Pro D as well.



"You go over, under, over, under"
(student teaching another student)

"This is a lot of work now that I put my hands on it"

"I am Metis!"



HANS HELGESEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

GOALS AND FOCUS

This year we continued our learning and partnership with SĆIÁNEW Nation to expand our understanding of language and culture. A main focus for this year was weaving First Peoples Principles of Learning in a natural and meaningful way into everyday practices.

We followed the WŚÁNEĆ Moon calendar and highlighted each moon at our monthly assemblies. Students are continuing to show growth and ownership in taking steps toward truth and reconciliation by volunteering to share the territorial acknowledgement at assemblies and daily announcements. To end every assembly, each class led the whole school by drumming the Hy'chka song.



EQUITY TEAM:

- NICOLE HAGUE
- CAMILLE MCRAE
- TRICIA COOPER
- CHELSEA IRURETAGOYENA
- JOANNE DUBE
- KAREN SJERVEN



Drumming at our monthly assemblies



Orange shirt day



Drums made by Grade 5s and RBSS students

HIGHLIGHTS

Special guests we learned from include:

- Brother Rick - Storytelling and Hul'qu'mi'num language
- Kookum Jo-Ina - Métis teachings and storytelling
- Glenn Grande - The "Thunderbird" drumming
- Ashlee Reitmeier - Dream catchers
- Delilah Charlie - Coast Salish art
- Fiona Chambers - Metchosin Farm

Special Activities to support learning

- Grade 4/5 working at Metchosin Farm
- Grade 3/4 releasing salmon at Goldstream Park
- Flourish workshops - seed saving, planting, harvesting
- in-class activities:
 - button blankets
 - bear paw mittens
 - talking sticks
 - beading and cedar weaving
 - Red Dress day dresses
 - lacrosse



WŚÁNEĆ Moons bulletin board



Watering our indigenous plant garden beds



Red dress day dresses



Bear paw mittens



GROWING TOGETHER (FOCUS)

At the start of the school year, our staff spent time learning the drumming songs that our students know and perform at assemblies. This helped staff feel more comfortable participating alongside students and also created a meaningful way to open staff meetings together as a group.

Students regularly read the territorial acknowledgement at assemblies and during morning announcements, showing growing confidence and ownership in their own journeys of truth and reconciliation.

We completed our first rotation of Coast Salish Animals of the Month and have begun revisiting the animals with the addition of Michif names. This helps honour and reflect the lived experiences of our Indigenous students, who are of Métis heritage.



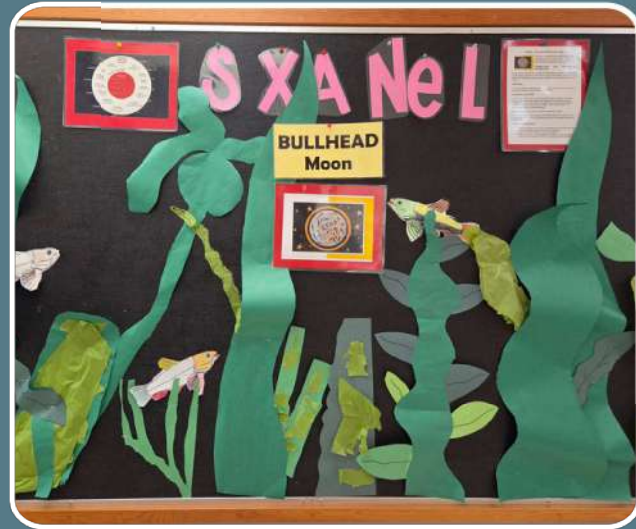
EQUITY TEAM:

- RUPERT GADD
- KRISTINE KOSOLOFSKI
- SELBY PELLOW
- ALICIA PETERSON
- LAURA SCHAEFFER
- SARAH STIRLING
- KATE YAKAMOVICH
- KENDRA LAIDLAW

CELEBRATING OUR JOURNEY (HIGHLIGHTS)

The staff and students at Happy Valley Elementary are grateful for the many opportunities to learn from and work with knowledge keepers and Role Models this year. With the support of the NIE department and our school PAC we continue to enrich student and staff experience with authentic voices and activities in the following ways:

- Kookum Jo-Ina Metis presentation and medicine pouch making
- Saanich Moon bulletin boards co-created with NCPA and class teachers
- Whole school presentation with Indigenous storyteller Kung Jaadee
- Cedar bead necklace making
- Salish Weave
- Raising Salmon and participating in a salmon release
- Drumming with Grandma Clifton
- Creating Lahal sets for all of our intermediate classrooms
- Garden workshops incorporating traditional knowledge



Monthly bulletin board - The Bullhead Moon



FUTURE PATHWAYS (GOALS)

- Further expand our work in language learning, both in SENĆOŦEN and Michif for students, staff, and families.
- Continue to develop our school culture and collective identity by selecting a new school mascot that reflects both the character traits of our school community and fosters a meaningful connection to a local animal
- Honour diverse ways of knowing, doing, and sharing understanding by exploring Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles as a staff



Surveys for "values of Happy Valley School"



K/Grade 1 Clay QELENSEN

OUR VISION

John Muir is committed to fostering a school culture where Indigenous knowledge, histories, and perspectives are respectfully and authentically embedded in all aspects of learning. We strive to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities. We continue to honour diversity which enriches our community and to ensure that every individual deserves success and to feel valued and to be heard. We feel honoured to work, live, and play on the traditional unceded territory of the T’Sou-ke Nation.

EQUITY TEAM:

- CORRINE MERX
- JESSICA HEPTING
- ELLA LEBLANC
- HAILEY RIDLEY
- MANDI BECKING
- TAMMY DELEENHEER

YEAR OF LEARNING

This year, our school has continued its commitment to Indigenous education by meaningfully integrating Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum. Students continued to engaged with authentic Indigenous stories, teachings and resources across many subject areas. We were honoured to welcome Indigenous Knowledge keepers and community members into our classrooms . Continued connections to the land and sea through hands-on exploration of the local beach and forest to learn about the importance of the plants and animals that inhabit these ecosystem and their significance in Indigenous knowledge systems. We were honoured to host a NA’TSA’MAHT Dinner in partnership with the NIE Department and our local Nation. The evening provided a meaningful opportunity to come together in community, celebrate learning, and share the important work happening within our school alongside our Elders and Ms. Hailey. Families had the opportunity to view student art and writing inspired by the NIENE moon, reflecting students’ learning and connections to the teachings of the Saanich seasonal calendar. As a school community, we reflected on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action through events such as Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. These learning opportunities fostered empathy, respect, and understanding in our students. While we acknowledge there is more work to be done; we are proud of the steps we’ve taken this year and remain committed to deepening our relationships with the local Indigenous communities and continuing this important journey of learning and reconciliation.

LOOKING AHEAD

- continue to strengthen relationships with the local Nation and deepen students’ understanding of local Coast Salish ways of knowing, being, and belonging
- continue to foster stronger connections to the land and sea through purposeful, place-based learning experiences
- increase the visibility and everyday use of SENĆOŦEN language and culture



Whole school mural representing NIENE moon





EQUITY GOALS/FOCUS

Team Members: Our team has two administrators, a teacher librarian, two NCPA members and teacher representatives from the elementary and middle schools. We are a K-8 French Immersion School.

Equity Goals:

- Working on Indigenizing the school logo with a local artist.
- Creating an outdoor learning space accessible for all of our students.
- Developing confidence in engaging in the work of decolonizing teaching practices.
- Learning to talk about the culture with authentic resources to avoid cultural appropriation
- Students and staff learning drumming and songs taught by knowledge keepers

EQUITY TEAM:

- TRACEY ANNE GEORGE
- KEELY ROBERTS
- ANGELINA HENDRY
- CANDACE DONNELLY
- MEGAN POMPER
- THERA DE GREEF
- KATRINA ABELL
- MELLISSA RYAN



Have a Heart Mural

Artist in Residence, Dahlila Charlie worked with elementary students to create this *Have a Heart* Mural. It is proudly displayed in our main hallway.

Grandma Clifton worked with middle and elementary students teaching them traditional drumming.

Highlights



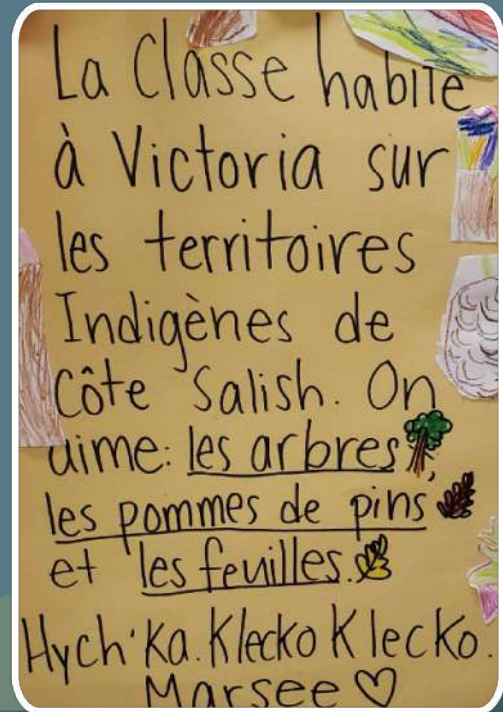
Drumming

LOOKING AHEAD

- Contine to work with an artist to create a new logo representative of our school on traditional territory
- Hold assemblies based on local Coast Salish traditions
- Review the resources we currently have and continue to build them and find ways to share and engage them with the teachers
- Continue to invite knowledge keepers to our school to teach our students and staff
- Further study the Indigenous Atlas of Canada



WITH PAC SUPPORT, AN INDIGENOUS OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACE WAS BUILT. ELDER SHIRLEY ALPHONSE HELPED US OPEN OUR LEARNING CIRCLE WITH A WATER BLESSING



Kindergarten Class creating their personalized territorial acknowledgement



Witness Blanket Project for Orange Shirt Day

INTRODUCTION & HIGHLIGHTS

At Lakewood, our champions of equity continue to work hard on integrating First Peoples' Principles of Learning into day-to-day curriculum. Our population is approximately 5% identified students from various nations and backgrounds. Our primary goal at Lakewood is to ensure these students feel welcome and supported in all aspects of their school experience, with a secondary goal of bringing understanding, empathy, and learning to non-Indigenous students in the spirits of Truth and Reconciliation.

Some highlights include:

Métis beading, playing Lahal, Bannock-making, and other cultural learning opportunities.

EQUITY TEAM:

KERRY ARNOT
CHERISE BOUVIER
OLIVIER EMERY
MEG GRIEVE
KAYDENCE KAUFFMAN
CAM MEIKLEJOHN

EQUITY GOALS & FOCUS

Our equity team has identified several areas of growth for this year. We have been working on:

1. Continuing to **welcome Elders and Knowledge Keepers** into the school
2. Focusing on **Métis knowledge** and resources in particular to support our representative population
3. **Building an in-house collection** of authentic resources in library for Equity
4. Continuing **expanding land-based learning** opportunities
5. **Integrating Indigenous learnings into routines** (i.e. regular territorial acknowledgements on announcements, drumming/singing at assemblies, using "Hych'ka" instead of thank you with staff and students)

Indigenous role models who visited this year:

- Kookum Jo-Ina - Métis culture and history, Fur Trade.
- Ashlee Reitmeier - History of beadwork and beading activities.
- Brother Rick - Drumming
- Janine Bradley - Nature walks, identifying Native plants, storytelling, Hul'qumi'num language learning.
- Dahlila Charlie - Coast Salish design elements and art.
- Marlee Paterson - Michif (Métis-language) learning.
- Grandma Clifton - Drumming and learning the Women's Warrior Song.
- Julie Cohen - Métis fiddling and jigging.
- Glenn Grande - Thunderbird the medicine drum and the Seven Grandfather Teachings.



Thunder Drumming with Glenn Grande



Inuit Soapstone carving



Hands on with Métis artifacts.

LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT YEAR

For next year we are hoping to build on previous successes/projects to continue the good work already being done in the building:

- Continue territorial acknowledgements, singing/drumming, language integration throughout the days and weeks
- Build empathy and understanding within our non-Indigenous community of families through meaningful dialogue as to the legacy, ongoing impacts, and goals of Truth and Reconciliation
- Further integrating land-based learning opportunities
- Begin the process of equity meetings earlier in 2026/27



ÉCOLE MILLSTREAM



Julie Cohen (Métis fiddler) visit

FOCUS & GOALS:

CONNECTING TO THE SEA, LAND, & SKY

- 1) Understanding how the land, sea and sky are interconnected and woven throughout the First Peoples' Principles of Learning.
- 2) Knowledge building and sharing learning to empower our students and the school community.

EQUITY

TEAM:

MARY ADAIR
LAURA COLTON
NATHAN GATES
DYLAN JOY
MICHELLE KING
SHARON SCHWARTZ

SUPPORTING LEARNERS:

- 1) **Truth & Reconciliation Walk** – Continued with our annual walk to the corner of Millstream & Treanor to show our support for “All Kids Matter”.
- 2) **WSÁNEĆ Moons** – Monthly bulletin boards and lessons in the classroom. Expanding a bit more on the events related to the moons (ie. SXÁNEL – BULLHEAD MOON...a time for harvesting seaweed), along with other things visible in the sky (ie. Orion's Belt).
- 3) **Winter Solstice** – A shared lesson and slides was given to all teacher to allow for in-class learning and discussions.
- 4) Invited **Role Models** to support Indigenous learning (ie. Bruce Comaniuk – chalk drawing for Indigenous Games Day, Drumming – Grandma Clifton, & Julie Cohen – Métis Jigger and Fiddler).
- 5) **Indigenous Language Day** – We invited Kung Jaadee to our school to kick off Literacy Week. She shared her traditional Haida stories, personal experiences, and contemporary Haida life.
- 6) **Land Acknowledgements & Hych'ka Siem** – used daily and monthly to recognize, honour, and respect where we live, learn and play. Students took on leadership roles on the announcements and assemblies in sharing the territorial acknowledgement. As well, some intermediate students wrote their own thoughtful land acknowledgements to share with the school.



SIS,ET – Elder Moon



Kung Jaadee – Haida Storyteller



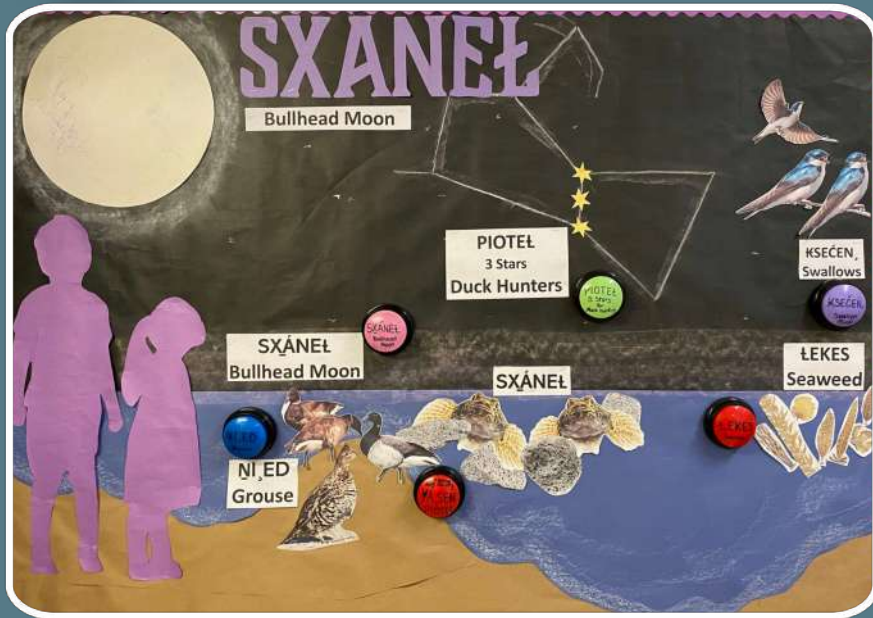
Drumming with Grandma Clifton



Truth and Reconciliation Walk



ÉCOLE MILLSTREAM



SXÁNEL – Bullhead Moon bulletin board with SENĆOŦEN word buttons

SUPPORTING LEARNERS CONTINUED:

- 7) **Indigenous Games Day** – We continued with some of last years games/activities (eg. Bruce Comaniuk for chalk drawing), along with introducing some new activities. Shared knowledge of the importance games played in their every day lives for hunting, fitness, and building community.
- 8) **Indigenous Book List** for story reading in the classroom and ways to connect the curriculum to the “Land, Sea, & Sky”.



Jaadee Kung – Haida Storyteller

MOVING FORWARD:

- 1) **Professional Development** – We are in the planning stages of a November workshop with the Qualicum First Nations Culture Program to organize a pro-d day for our staff and to possibly open it up to other staff in the district.
- 2) **Indigenous Language** – Highlight language in the classroom more throughout all the grades. Incorporate Indigenous Language into our Literacy Week and showcase some Indigenous Authors (local and across Canada).
- 3) **Indigenous Learning Fair** – Have more classes join to showcase our learning.



Truth and Reconciliation Walk



Drumming with Grandma Clifton



Coast Salish Art Shapes





PEXSISEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

EQUITY GOALS AND FOCUS

The PEXSISEN Equity Team and school community continued to engage meaningfully with local Indigenous knowledge, guided by the teachings of our school name, PEXSISEN ("open hands"). This work remained grounded in hands-on, relationship-based learning, including visits from role models, an artist residency, expanded drum-making opportunities, school-wide assemblies, and other student-centred activities.

Building on last year's goals, we strengthened inclusive practices by increasing Indigenous language learning opportunities, creating adapted materials, expanding the annual Honouring Assembly, and recognizing Red Dress Day for the first time. Throughout the year, we focused on deepening students' connection to the PEXSISEN community and the meaning of our school name. This included expanding the Grade 5 drum-making tradition to include painting drums, continuing participation in Lahal tournaments (with a need to further develop intramural opportunities), and supporting student leadership through territorial acknowledgements. We also increased access to Indigenous language learning, including all students learning and singing the Hych'ka Siem song.



2025-2026 Honouring Assembly

EQUITY TEAM:

- MATTHEW BARKER
- JENNIFER BUREAU
- CAITLIN ELVEDAHL
- HEATHER FINLAY
- JOSH JOHNSON
- RACHEL LERHE
- KATIE LONGPHEE
- RHIA WARDELL
- KEELY ROBERTS

SUPPORTING LEARNERS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- Strengthened relationships and cultural learning through visiting role models and artist-in-residence Dahlila Charlie who helped expand our drum-making tradition of last year by helping students paint each drum.
- Facilitated school-wide events, by expanding the PEXSISEN Honouring Assembly, with guests, presentations and community involvement, National Indigenous Peoples Day and introduced Red Dress Day.
- Increased student voice and engagement through student-led territorial acknowledgements and contributions to assemblies, art displays, and the school legacy video.
- Deepened SENĆOŦEN language learning and seasonal teachings through stories like the PEXSISEN ŁKÁLJ story, signage with QR codes linking to First Voices, and additional resources.
- Expanded participation in cultural practices such as Lahal to support student understanding and connection.
- Improved accessibility and inclusivity by expanding the Equity Team and adapting Indigenous learning opportunities for students of diverse abilities.
- Equity survey data shows a foundation of respect for Indigenous learning and a commitment to inclusive practices across the school community.



LOOKING AHEAD

Overall, this year reflected steady progress toward our goals, with meaningful opportunities for student learning and connection. Looking ahead to the 2026-2027 school year, we will build on this work by:

- Increasing participation in Lahal through intramural games and by hosting the 2026-2027 tournament.
- Continuing to integrate Indigenous representation across all areas of learning and school culture.
- Expanding access to Indigenous learning opportunities for students of all abilities.
- Fostering First Peoples Principles of Learning through the next annual PEXSISEN Honouring Assembly

Celebrating Spring and New Beginnings





GOALS

To build school-based resource collections for use with students throughout the year.

Continue to build on place-based learning opportunities, connected to Indigenous ways of knowing and the curriculum.



EQUITY

TEAM:

- NICOLE UNDERWOOD
- VICKI IVES
- CAITLIN ADSETT
- KEVIN PARSONS
- SANDI ARTS
- BEA ANDREWS
- SEAN BROWN
- CHARLOTTE KARLEEN
- SANDI BOWERS

Our school community is on T'Sou-ke Nation territory surrounded by nature. We are committed to Truth and Reconciliation; in conversations, activities, relationships, and learning.

IN OUR SCHOOL WE:

- Give individualized territory acknowledgements to connect with place
- Invite role models to teach all of us
- Incorporate SENĆOŦEN and Southern Michif languages through our Na'tsa'maht Classroom Program Assistant
- Play and share Lahal in classes and with community
- Use our surrounding forests to connect to place
- Acknowledge and honour cultural dates and annual events
- Have a school mascot, the Black Bears, and logo designed by former student Isabelle St. Pierre from T'Sou-ke Nation
- Host a full-day Indigenous Day in June

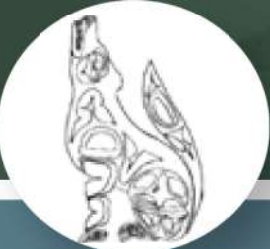


OUR PATH FORWARD

- Include Calls to Action in assemblies and school culture
- Continue to focus on First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Include our families and whole school community in Truth and Reconciliation
- Incorporate SENĆOŦEN into daily activities, announcements, greetings, displays, and counting
- Explore ways to honour more cultural dates and annual events, such as Red Dress Day



PORT RENFREW SCHOOL



GOALS FOR 2026-2027

- Increase our time learning from and on the land.
- Continue improving student attendance through family and community connections.
- Work with Paaʔčiidʔath fisheries and mill to increase land based learning opportunities.
- Incorporate a daily drumming circle with every student participating.
- Make drums with all students and staff.
- Increase participation in community events and activities to increase local cultural knowledge and understanding.
- Cedar Bark Harvesting, Prepping, and Creating with students.
- Continue introducing Ditidaht words to students and add signage to our school.
- Teach our students Lahal and play a tournament in community.

EQUITY TEAM:

- KAILEE PURNELL
- KYSA WADSWORTH
- ALEX WALMSLEY
- LAURIE KUZMAN
- TRYSTAN DUNN-JONES
- TESS VALLY



Taking advantage of our location to learn at our local Beaches.



Practicing Ditidaht at the beach.



Trail building at our school.

TOGETHER WE :

- Learned and celebrated cultural Nuu-chah-nulth teachings.
- Joined Paaʔčiidʔath Fisheries to prepare fry for release into the river.
- Harvested and planted Camas with Paaʔčiidʔath Fisheries.
- Worked with a local elder to create art.
- Learned drumming with a local elder.
- Began learning Ditidaht names for local landmarks.
- Walked to our forest and beach for learning on and from the land.
- Made and planted a school garden.
- Invited family into our school to strengthen trust and ties with community.
- Joined community to share food, celebrations, and learn together.
- Included Middle School Grades in our school to keep children in community.
- Learned to surf at our local beaches from community members.
- Planted Eel Grass and Crab Apple Trees in the fall.



Planting locally harvested Camas in community.



Clipping fish with Paaʔčiidʔath Fisheries.



Visiting other schools to learn together.



Working on the land.



EQUITY GOALS AND FOCUS AREAS

Our school has intentionally embedded the First Peoples Principles of Learning into our daily practice and culture by embracing *Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being, and Doing* across a range of authentic experiences. Events such as drumming, beading, and storytelling bring to life the interconnectedness of culture. Through class-personalized territorial acknowledgments, the study of the Coast Salish Moons, and school and community-wide recognition of Orange Shirt Day, Red Dress Day (MMIWG2S+), Indigenous Veterans' Day, we foster learning that is rooted in history, memory, and respect. Students and staff engage in deeper learning about the culture and continued presence of community. Indigenous perspectives are woven into learning through the use of Coast Salish shapes, Wexes beading, and updated library resources that celebrate Indigenous voices and ways of knowing.

EQUITY TEAM:

ADDIE DE CANDOLE
TRISH MCNABB
SARAH FINNIE
GORD JOHNSON



Orange Shirt Day March



Drumming with Grandma Clifton



Red Dress Day March with Dorreen Scow

LOOKING FORWARD

Our school will continue to strive to align our practices and teaching methods with Indigenous teachings by incorporating cultural practices into school events. We create space where all students and staff can engage meaningfully with Indigenous perspectives, honour diverse ways of knowing, and build a school culture grounded in respect, reciprocity, relationship and high academic standards.

- High expectations for everyone who walks through the door
- Equity Team to focus on the Coast Salish Moons throughout the year with monthly bulletin boards and scheduled meeting times
- Monthly staff meeting with a learning spotlight focused on sharing NIE resources
- Collaborative art project around the Coast Salish Moons
- Continue to use sharing circles and restorative justice practices
- Outdoor land-based learning



Nats'a'maht Dinner



Indigenous Veteran's Day Ceremony



Coast Salish Shapes Artwork



Library resources



Derrick, our NCPA, & peer helpers making bannock.

EQUITY GOALS/FOCUS

- Ensure Indigenous cultures, languages, and ways of knowing are meaningful & presented across the school (artwork, signage, land acknowledgements connected to learning, school events).
- Establish consistent cultural safety practices so Indigenous students experience school as a place free from racism, stereotyping, or deficit thinking.
- To increase the connection between the core competency animals and posters that were created a few years ago.
- To increase student awareness of our local Coast Salish culture by honoring Indigenous Seasonal Celebrations and Annual Events and by participating in land-based learning & Indigenous cultural practices

EQUITY TEAM:

- CYNTHIA BERENYI
- SINCLAIRE LOVETT
- HEATHER MILES
- LORRAIN BUCKERT
- KATELYN PERRY
- DERRICK TITIAN
- KRISTA LEAKEY

SANGSTER'S HIGHLIGHTS, STRATEGIES AND COMMITMENTS

- All classes enjoyed bannock made by our NCPA & peer helpers
- Students requesting to say territorial acknowledgement to start the week & during assemblies; making bannock during primary imaginative playtime
- Collaborated with Artist in Residence, Dahlila Charlie, using Coast Salish shapes to create artwork
- All classes viewed the Coast Salish Weave; collaborative lessons with our NCPA & classroom teachers
- Classes enjoyed visits from the following role models: Ren Louie who did drumming & Lahal; Brother Rick who sang & taught Lahal; Grandma Clifton who did drumming; Julie Cohan who shared her Metis culture; & Glenn Grande who did Powwow drumming
- All classes participated in place-based learning in the forest (asking permission and leave no trace, nature stays in nature, quiet reflections, thanking the forest when we leave)



Forest exploration



Nature-based story workshop

LOOKING AHEAD AND NEXT STEPS

- incorporate Saanich moons into morning announcements, memos, & newsletters
- organize students into family groups using SENĆOŦEN plant & animal names; groups meet one afternoon a month to focus on whole-school Indigenous content



EQUITY GOALS/FOCUS OF 2026/27

- Further incorporate Indigenous cultural learning in authentic ways throughout the year. Ensuring Indigenous Ways of Knowing are represented in our teaching and showcased in our school.
- Learn and teach about the Coast Salish Moons and incorporate SENĆOŦEN language at school assemblies and daily announcements.
- Signage in SENĆOŦEN will be added to our school.
- We will incorporate drumming into class and whole school events by learning the Coast Salish Anthem.
- Understanding the meaning of and personalizing T'Souke Territory Acknowledgement through our daily announcements.
- Add staff resources to support understanding and increase confidence in our ability to support our Equity Goals.

EQUITY TEAM:

ELAINE HADDAD
 KATIE LIEBAULT
 HAILEY RIDLEY
 ALYSSA RICHARD
 TESS VALLY



Elder Jackie pressing apples with Nature K



Exploring and learning in our natural surroundings



Grade 1 presenting on Orange Shirt Day

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Students once again had the opportunity to experience Kookum Jo-Ina's Métis 101. Some activities included a chance to explore and try on Métis regalia, put themselves in the shoes of Métis people through games and beading activities, and learning about the Bison. They also had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of Métis culture later in the year with role model Julie Cohen who taught about Métis jigging and fiddling. Our River Runners were excited to participate in activities that connected learning to stories, traditions, music, movement, and art.

Saseenos is fortunate to benefit from extra time with Elder Jackie, who spends time with our Nature K students in the beautiful T'Souke Forest surrounding our school. Through these experiences, students are developing deeper connections to the land, local teachings, and Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Students participated in an array of educational activities to honor National Indigenous People's Day. Students walked in mixed grade groupings around community with stops to learn about local languages, flora and fauna as well as traditional and current customs. We learned SENĆOŦEN words from EMCS students who came to our classes to share their knowledge. We are individualizing and expressing understanding of acknowledging the T'Souke Territory when we gather.



Art with local elder for Red Dress Day



Coast Salish moons, and learning about Red Dress Day



Julie Cohen showing students her Métis scarf



Drumming with Brother Rick scarf





Brother Rick with the Golden Lahal Stick

EQUITY GOAL & FOCUS

Our goal at Savory is to create an inclusive culture of connection and belonging for our learners – connecting students with themselves, their learning, their community and their environment.

This year we have continued and refined our equity work with a focus on:

- Weaving first peoples principles of knowing, being and doing into our practice and culture
- Connecting to land and place through outdoor learning
- Fostering community connections and increasing opportunities for collaborative learning

EQUITY TEAM:

DERRICK TITIAN
 COURTNEY SIMCOFF
 DAVID VARGAS
 XIMENA MATHEWS
 CEILIDH DEICHMANN

SUPPORTING LEARNERS & HIGHLIGHTS

Strengthening identity and belonging:

- Student-led territorial acknowledgements and increased presence of SENĆOŦEN language during announcements has helped students connect to local culture, land, and identity in meaningful, everyday ways.

Enhancing cultural awareness and learning:

- Engagement with Elders, role models, storytelling experiences, and school-wide Indigenous learning events has served to deepen students' understanding of Indigenous perspectives, histories, and traditions.

Fostering engagement and community through culture and play:

- Events like the Lahal tournament, Literacy Week and our first ever Indigenous Day of Learning has integrated cultural practices with active, collaborative learning and community building.

Supporting reconciliation and social awareness:

- Participation in events such as Red Dress Day helped students develop awareness, empathy, and understanding of important social and historical issues.



Red Dress Paper Dolls



Red Dress Day Gathering



Truth and Reconciliation Day



Artist - Dahlila Charlie



Author - Robert "Lucky" Budd

LOOKING AHEAD

For the **2026-2027 school year**, Savory will work towards:

- Strengthening community through shared drumming and singing experiences and more mindfully embedding the practice of gathering in circle.
- Continuing to increase opportunities to learn and use SENĆOŦEN language, alongside a sustained emphasis on outdoor, land-based learning and collaborative experiences in nature.
- Students taking on leadership roles through cultural learning activities such as Lahal, with older students supporting younger peers.



Chief Chipps and Elder Shirley During our School Blessing

BEGINNING OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

Our new school was gifted our name from SC'IANEW Nation, and means Salmon Children. In August we invited Chief and Council to our opening and our school was blessed by Elder Shirley Alphonse. We are grateful to have had Elders, Role Models, and Chief Chipps present on our first day of school and to drum our students into our new school. As we began our journey, we worked closely with SC'IANEW Nation in the development of our logo, which represents the beginning of the salmon life cycle.

EQUITY TEAM:

ERIN BUTTE

LISA LOCKERBIE

LISA PARK

KRISTIN HOLLAND

CAMILLE MCFARLANE

SCHOOL LEARNING

Throughout the year, our school Equity Goals were based around learning and understanding. We invited members of the SC'IANEW Nation and our Logo Artist to our start of year assemblies. Our staff and students learned the pronunciation of our name and gained a better understanding of the significance of our name. All students learned about the Salmon Life Cycle through participation in the Salmonids in the Classroom Program. Our Grade 1 students visited Goldstream to release them. Our whole school also focused on the WSÁNEĆ Moons, with all students learning about the moons and participated in activities throughout the year to support this learning. All students also learned how to play Lahal in class, and we had a Lahal Club. Our school also recognized Red Dress Day. In order to increase connection to the land and place based learning, one of our teachers led a PD session on outdoor learning and Indigenous plants, which encouraged staff to take students into the forest and participate in place-based learning. We were fortunate to have various Elders and Role Models in Residence to share about drumming, art, and Métis Culture. Our Grade 5s made drums that will stay in our school for all future students.



Salmon Release

Learning about SAANICH Moons



Drum Making with Brother Rick





Building nests under the Cedars

PLANTS

Kindergarten students observe seasonal changes and explore local plants, deepening their understanding of growth and the traditional uses of medicinal plants. Primary students often visit the Camas Meadow or sit under the cedars to reflect and gather ingredients for teas and salves, fostering curiosity and a meaningful relationship with the land. Intermediate students take weekly nature walks and engage in sit-spot activities, followed by learning experiences that strengthen their connection to place. These practices emphasize that learning is experiential, holistic, and rooted in an understanding of the environment. Through these experiences, students develop a deeper appreciation for the land and its teachings.

GOALS:

CO-CREATE PLACE-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WITH STAFF AND STUDENTS WHILE FOSTERING STEWARDSHIP AND MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS TO THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE.

EQUITY TEAM:

- MARION MAHONEY
- LISA MARIA SCHLOSSER
- MICHELLE NAHANE
- JACQUI OULDALI
- EMILY HARRIS
- LISA STUART
- LIZ STANNARD
- GLENN GIBSON
- JENNIFER HUNT

PEOPLE

Na'tsa'maht, Indigenous Education Department, along with staff including Classroom Program Assistants, ESD educators, and teachers, provides daily support for our students.

Role Models offer meaningful opportunities for students to build multi-generational connections through learning, storytelling, and music.

These programs honor the voices and knowledge of First Peoples, fostering a deeper sense of belonging, identity, and respect for the land and one another.

As a staff, we remain committed to recognizing and decolonizing our teaching practices, ensuring that learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational.



Playing the spoons

PLACE

At SES, morning announcements include SENĆOŦEN language, bulletin boards proudly display Coast Salish art, and territorial acknowledgments are thoughtfully curated by students. The Coast Salish anthem is sung at assemblies and taught in Music class, accompanied by drumming. The school library features a collection of Indigenous literature, including Coast Salish stories, plant guides with SENĆOŦEN names and traditional uses. Additionally, the Coast Salish Weave Art Collection was displayed, and SENĆOŦEN signage is posted throughout the school.

"I learn more outdoors than I do in the classroom." – Grade 3 student



A visit from Kookum Jo-Ina and Rosie



WILLWAY ELEMENTARY

OUR YEAR TOGETHER



This year, Willway has continued to foster meaningful learning opportunities that celebrate Indigenous perspectives, community connections, and environmental stewardship. Beginning with our feather installation recognizing residential school survivors in the fall, we welcomed Indigenous Role Models into classrooms, highlighted animals of the month in SENĆOŦEN, hosted a school-wide art show featuring Indigenous artists, expanded our outdoor learning space/garden in partnership with the Flourish Society, and supported hands-on learning through Peninsula Streams watershed and salmon workshops. Students contributed to a collaborative school-wide art tapestry exploring sense of place, while our Métis picture book collection continues to grow in support of our lèllem.

EQUITY TEAM:

- PATTI CHRISTIANSON
- KEELY ROBERTS
- SHANNON MILLER
- ROBERTA STANDLEY
- POOJA NARANG
- CHELSEA MARLE
- GEORGIE WALKER
- BETHANY WIENS

LOOKING AHEAD

Moving forward, our Equity Team will focus on strengthening students' sense of belonging, connection, and safety by creating more intentional opportunities for relationship-building and regular check-ins with trusted adults throughout the school. To further support identity, representation, and belonging, we will make Indigenous learning more visible through interactive bulletin boards featuring Indigenous role models, SENĆOŦEN language, animals of the month, Saanich Moons, and the diverse cultures and languages represented within our school community. Students will continue to engage in hands-on, place-based learning through outdoor education, Peninsula Streams workshops, gardening, Indigenous plant identification projects, and collaborative art experiences such as the school-wide tapestry and Indigenous artist showcase. We also plan to expand opportunities for storytelling, cultural learning, and student participation through initiatives such as the Stories of the Land and Sea Club, increased access to Indigenous and Métis resources, and personalized land acknowledgement work. These practices are intended to build stronger relationships, deepen students' connection to land and culture, and create a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all students.





INTRODUCTION & REFLECTION ON OUR YEAR

The staff at Wishart Elementary put thought and effort into creating a learning community that is welcoming and inclusive. Indigenous content is woven throughout daily learning. The Equity team has expanded the SENĆOŦEN language learning kits for each classroom to include plant resources connecting to our Indigenous garden. We completed our collaboration and adopted our new Coast Salish STKAAŦE wolf logo. We enjoyed many rich learning opportunities with Role Models and an Artist in Residence including drumming, bead work, bentwood boxes, exploring Metis culture, spooning and jigging. Indigenous studies is interwoven throughout all subjects during the year and an interactive bulletin was prepared to explore each W̱SÁNEĆ Moon. We are very fortunate to have access to a forested area and a learning garden that hosts Indigenous plants and this year we have labeled the plants in SENĆOŦEN as well as learned what plants we have naturally occurring in our plant walk trail. Our team has created an environmental board to enable students with communication disabilities greater access to the learning.

EQUITY GOALS

TO CONTINUE TO BUILD AND DISTRIBUTE SENĆOŦEN LANGUAGE RESOURCES FOR STAFF & STUDENTS. TO PROMOTE A CULTURE OF BELONGING, AND TO DEVELOP CONNECTION TO PLACE.

EQUITY TEAM:

AMANDA GRAHAM
KRISTI BRYANT,
JANE SINCLAIR
MARY ADAIR



Tasting Miner's Lettuce



W̱SÁNEĆ Moon Bulletin Board



Drumming with Role Model

LOOKING AHEAD

The Equity Team at Wishart Elementary has developed substantial strategies to support an inclusive environment. We will continue to:

- Ensure our diverse community is represented in classrooms and around the school, using a distinctions based lens.
- Monitor progress and support academics and social/emotional.
- Recognize and acknowledge each individual's strengths, traits, skills and needs.
- Continue to support connection to place and sense of belonging
- Continue daily territory acknowledgements.

As we move forward, the staff at Wishart plan to:

- Continue to expand our Indigenous plant labelling to include more native plants naturally occurring along our plant walk trail
- Incorporate more SENĆOŦEN language in the learning environment.
- Continuing to add to our resources about Indigenous plants and support staff in accessing current resources and supports.
- Weave in W̱SÁNEĆ moons meaningfully into learning.



Land Acknowledgments



Scanning Garden Labels



SENĆOŦEN Communication Board



SENĆOŦEN Language Resources



HIGHLIGHTS



- Targeted academic support for Indigenous learners
- Cultural sharing through events such as the Salmon Bake
- Embedding cultural foods and learning within Feeding Futures
- School-wide learning on MMIW2S+ through a story walk
- Collaborative cross-curricular exploration of Truth and Reconciliation through a student-created video
- Promoting student equity through anti-racism and allyship development

TEAM MEMBERS

TARA COLBORNE, SARAH BAAS, CHRISTINE HOSKINS, KIM MARIER, MADISON DAH, SHANNON POON, KIM SCOTT

EQUITY GOALS/FOCUS

- DEEPEN EQUITY THROUGH STUDENT VOICE TO INFORM SCHOOL PRACTICES
- STRENGTHEN GRADUATION PATHWAYS FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS THROUGH TARGETED ACADEMIC SUPPORT.
- CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE CULTURE AND DEEPEN LEARNING ALIGNED WITH THE FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING.

WORKING TOWARDS OUR GOALS

This year, we continued to deepen understanding of territorial acknowledgements by supporting the creation of meaningful, locally grounded, and personalized expressions. We worked to strengthen graduation pathways through targeted academic and homework support, while also sharing culture through food.

Through a school-wide approach, we continued to seek opportunities for collaborative learning and shared experiences, including drumming.



LOOKING AHEAD

- Increase Indigenous student voice in school culture and decision-making.
- Expand visual representation of Indigenous cultures throughout the school.
- Strengthen staff practice in territorial acknowledgements and First Peoples Principles of Learning.
- Develop and embed a school-wide cultural plan across all departments.
- Support new staff in Indigenous learning, including engagement with Elder in Residence and Role Model programs.





OMBUDSPERSON BRITISH COLUMBIA

The *Ombudsperson Act* requires that investigations be conducted in private. Ombudsperson investigation documents are not available through the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and may be subject to rules preventing their use in court and tribunal proceedings. **Please contact the Office of the Ombudsperson before disclosing this document, or any responses, to any third parties.**

April 15, 2026

Ravi Parmar
Chair
School District 62 (Sooke)
3143 Jacklin Rd.
VICTORIA BC V9B5R1

Dear Ravi Parmar:

**Re: Office of the Ombudsperson Quarterly Report for the period covering
January 1 - March 31, 2026**

This package of documents details the complaint files the Office of the Ombudsperson closed for School District 62 (Sooke) between January 1 and March 31, 2026. Though no action is required on your part, we hope that you will find this information useful and share it within your organization.

These reports provide information about the complaint files we closed regarding your organization within the last quarter, including both files we investigated and files we closed without investigation. Files currently open with the office are not included in these reports.

If you would like further information about the complaints our office received about your organization, or you have identified inaccuracies in the data, please contact our office's Policy, Research and Continuous Improvement team. They can provide further details upon request and can be reached at PRCI@bcombudsperson.ca or by phone at 250-953-4171.

Enclosed you will find detailed reports containing the following:

- A one-page report listing the number of files closed and the category under which they were closed. The categories we use to close files are based on the sections of the *Ombudsperson Act*, which gives the Ombudsperson the authority to investigate complaints from the public regarding authorities under our jurisdiction. A more detailed description of our closing categories is available on our website at:

Mailing address: PO Box 9039 Stn Prov Govt • Victoria BC V8W 9A5

Phone in Victoria: 250-387-5855 • Toll-Free: 1-800-567-3247 • Fax: 250-387-0198 • bcombudsperson.ca



**OMBUDSPERSON
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

<https://bcombudsperson.ca/assets/media/QR-Glossary.pdf>.

- If applicable: Copies of closing summaries written about the complaint files we investigated. These summaries provide an overview of the complaint received, our investigation and the outcome. Our office produces closing summaries for investigated files only, and not for enquiries or those complaints we chose not to investigate.
- If applicable: A summary of the topics identified in the complaint files closed during the quarter. We track general complaint topics for all complaints we receive, and when applicable, we include authority-specific and/or sector-specific topics for your organization and/or sector. Our office tracks the topics of complaints we investigate and those we close without investigation, but not for enquiries. Because complaints to our office are confidential, we do not share complaint topic information if we received too few complaints to preserve the complainants' anonymity.

If you wish to update your organization's contact information, please contact us by email at info@bcombudsperson.ca.

To learn more about educational opportunities on administrative fairness provided by our office, or if you wish to consult with our office to enhance fairness within your organization's policies or procedures, our Public Authority Consultation and Training (PACT) Team can assist you. Please contact them by phone at 250-508-2950 or by email at consult@bcombudsperson.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Sandy Hermiston
Ombudsperson
Province of British Columbia

Enclosures



Quarterly Report for 1 January - 31 March, 2026
School District 62 (Sooke)

Type of complaint closure for Authority: School District 62 (Sooke)	# closed
<p>Enquiries – Many people who contact us are not calling to make a complaint, but are seeking information or advice. These contacts are classified as <i>Enquiries</i> to distinguish them from <i>Complaints</i>, which are requests that our office conduct an investigation.</p>	0
<p>Complaints with No Investigation – Our office does not investigate every complaint it receives. First, we determine whether we have authority to investigate the complaint under the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i>. We also have discretion to decline to investigate for other reasons specified in the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i>.</p>	1
<p>Early Resolution Investigations – Early Resolution investigations provide an expedited process for dealing with complaints when it appears that an opportunity exists for the authority to take immediate action to resolve the issue. Typical issues that are addressed through Early Resolution include timeliness, communication, and opportunities for internal review.</p>	0
<p>Complaint Investigations – When we investigate a complaint we may conclude with a determination that a complaint is not substantiated, or with a negotiated settlement of the complaint, or with public findings and recommendations. We may also exercise discretion to cease investigation for a number of other reasons specified in the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i>.</p>	0
<p>Reason for closing an Investigation</p>	
<p>Pre-empted by existing statutory right of appeal, objection or review.</p>	0
<p>Investigation ceased with no formal findings under the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i>.</p>	
<p>More than one year between event and complaint</p>	0



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Insufficient personal interest	0
Available remedy	0
Frivolous/vexatious/trivial matter	0
Can consider without further investigation	0
No benefit to complainant or person aggrieved	0
Complaint abandoned	0
Complaint withdrawn	0
Complaint settled in consultation with the authority – When an investigation leads us to conclude that action is required to resolve the complaint, we try to achieve that resolution by obtaining the voluntary agreement of the authority to settle the complaint. This allows matters to be resolved fairly for the complainant and authority without requiring a formal finding of maladministration.	0
Complaint substantiated with formal findings under the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i> .	0
Complaint not substantiated under the <i>Ombudsperson Act</i> .	0
Ombudsperson Initiated Investigations – The Ombudsperson has the authority to initiate investigations independently from our process for responding to complaints from the public. These investigations may be ceased at the discretion of the Ombudsperson or concluded with formal findings and recommendations.	0



Complaints Closed from 1 January - 31 March, 2026
School District 62 (Sooke)

The tables below summarize the complaint topics we are tracking for your sector and/or authority and the number of times this topic was identified in the files (investigated and non-investigated complaints) that were closed in the most recent quarter.

If you would like more information on the types of complaints we receive, please contact our Public Authority Consultation and Training Team: email us at consult@bcombudsperson.ca or call us at 250-508-2950.

Sector-Specific Complaint Topics – All School Districts

Bans from School Property (Section 177)	2	4%
Enrolment/Registration	5	10%
Other	18	38%
School Closures	1	2%
Special Education	9	19%
Student Safety	5	10%
Student Suspension or Exclusion	8	17%

General Complaint Topics – All School Districts

Accessibility	4	4%
Communication	14	16%
Delay	2	2%
Disagreement with Decision or Outcome	24	27%
Discrimination	3	3%
Employment or Labour Relations	1	1%
Process or Procedure	22	25%



**OMBUDSPERSON
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Review or Appeal Process	5	6%
Treatment by Staff	14	16%



Pacheedaht First Nation

350 Kalaid Street
Port Renfrew, BC
V0S 1K0
Phone: (250) 647-5521
Fax: (250) 647-5561

May 20, 2026

Dear Sooke School District Board of Education,

On behalf of paaʔčiidʔatx First Nation, we are writing to express our strong support for Ms. Kailee Purnell and the work she has done with our Grade 6–10 learners. We ask that you give serious consideration to maintaining her in this role moving forward.

Our middle years students require more than instruction, they require trust, relationships, and a deep sense of belonging. Ms. Purnell has built these foundations with care and consistency. She has taken the time to know our learners as individuals, meeting them where they are academically, socially and emotionally. She has created a classroom environment where our students feel safe, respected, and comfortable, so much so that they reach out to her for support beyond the classroom, including ensuring they arrive at school.

Her connection to our community extends well beyond the school walls. Ms. Purnell has built meaningful relationships with families and has shown a genuine commitment to understanding and honouring our culture. She has supported students through cultural learning opportunities, organized field trips that reflect their identities, and invested her own time coaching two community U17 basketball teams. These actions demonstrate not only professionalism, but care, consistency, and a long-term commitment to our youth.

We also wish to express concern regarding the hiring process for this position. Sections 2.3(a), (b), and (c) of the Local Education Agreement recognize that Indigenous families and communities have the right to shared responsibility in the education and well-being of their children, that First Nations have decision-making responsibility in First Nations education, and that First Nations must have a central role in the education of their students regardless of where they attend school. Given that every student in this middle years classroom is paaʔčiidʔatx, we believe our Nation should have been meaningfully included and consulted in the hiring process for this position as indicated in Section 9 of the LEA. Decisions that directly impact our learners, particularly those related to trusted adults working closely with them each day, should not occur without community voice and involvement.

We understand that a new teacher has been hired for September. However, we are concerned that this individual does not yet have established relationships with our students or families. For many of our learners, particularly those in the middle years, relationships are the foundation for engagement, attendance, and success. Disrupting a strong, trusted connection at this stage risks undoing the progress that has been made.



We often hear commitments to truth and reconciliation, to doing better for Indigenous learners, and to addressing the harms of the past. Ensuring continuity with a trusted adult who has built strong relationships with our students is one meaningful way to live those commitments. Replacing Ms. Purnell at this time would not align with those values and could be experienced by our community as another missed opportunity to do what is right for our learners.

We respectfully ask that you reconsider this staffing decision and prioritize the relationships, trust, and cultural connections that Ms. Purnell has established with our students and families.

Thank you for your time and for your continued work in supporting the success and well-being of our learners.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Jones".

Chief Jeff Jones

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tracy Charlie".

Councillor Tracy Charlie

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Natasha Jones".

Councillor Natasha Jones

Councillor Mariyah Dunn-Jones

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mariyah dj".

Jenny Seal

From: Chelsea R [REDACTED]
Sent: May 15, 2026 7:43 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep ECEs in classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am a TTOC with the Sooke School District and a parent of a child starting kindergarten in SD 62 in September. I know the value of having ECEs in Kindergarten classrooms. I see it in schools when I work and I want my daughter to have the support they offer, when she goes to Kindergarten. All Kindergarten classrooms should have an ECE. They provide so much support to classroom teachers and to students. It would be devastating to lose that support. I ask that you continue to support ECEs in Kindergarten classrooms. ECEs are experts in early childhood development and we need to give our children the best chance of success from the start! Keeping them in the classroom with Kindergarten students is important.

Thank you!

Take care,
Chelsea R [REDACTED]
Sent from my iPhone

Jenny Seal

From: em_ [REDACTED]
Sent: May 15, 2026 10:43 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE jobs at line.

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To the school board or whomever it may concern,

I wanted to personally Reach Out after I heard that the ECE funding may be cut in kindergarten classes in the sooke District or at least at [REDACTED]

Although I dont know all of them, I can personally say im writing this email in tears at the thought of [REDACTED] not being part of the kindergarten wing and over all school.

In [REDACTED] and grade [REDACTED] my [REDACTED] had the benefit of staying in [REDACTED] class with [REDACTED]

He provided a safe, calm, fun place where kids felt valued and protected in there own ways. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] spent every SINGLE DAY helping the teachers navigate the children that needed help, such as [REDACTED] I remember hearing in 2024 the same message that they might lose funding and I burst into tears and wrote in then too. Not only is it completly unfair to the ECE's that have a very difficult job in itself, but detrimental to the children and teachers who need them. Without them, there wouldnt be enough support to hold the same structure and order, the very fou Nation and support we are teaching them is available at there need.

In 2026 we have staggering numbers of kids struggling, and imagine how it would be without them.

[REDACTED] has worked very closely with my family and [REDACTED], and has always been an advocate for [REDACTED] in every sence. I fought for 4 years to have my [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and it wasnt untill [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] helped me advocate that I was taken seriously, she was another voice, a professional oppinion to say "hey, this kid needs something different, a bit of extra help".

They set things in motion for my [REDACTED] to succeed and excell in areas [REDACTED] couldnt before. When [REDACTED] was struggling, she could always bring his temper back down with nothing but compassion, a skill VERY little people including myself at times can hold.

She is a massive part of our support system and I would have no idea what schooling would look like without her. (certainly not what it looks like today)

[REDACTED] landed [REDACTED] in the hospital this month and she has checked in daily with me to see updates and how [REDACTED] doing.

Not because she had to but because she genuinely cared. When I share his updates I feel like im updating family as aposed to a school employee.

She treats the children as if there family and makes them all feel like they are.

I would seriously hope they would take this into effect when cutting there funding.

My [REDACTED] as well as many kids get out of hand often, and if not for them, where do they go in those times? Who brings them back down ? How does the rest of the class focus through it?

The answer is simple, they wouldnt. It would end up a mess.

I wish upon every star in the sky I had a [REDACTED] when I was in school, I would have believed in myself, I wouldnt have hated going to school, I would have had a safe alternative to talk to. But I didnt, and i loathed my school experience.

Please dont cut the funding to them. I would personally be willing to do fundraisers or anything we could to try and raise more money to keep them. Because without them, we will end up in a devestating place where kids dont feel heard and valued because the teachers will be way over worked. (more then they already are)

Im not a great author, and often opt out of writing my oppinions for things but for this, for my [REDACTED] and all the other kids that need them, for the other staff that need them, I will get loud, I will write in, I will attend meetings if I can. I will stand up for what is needed for the success of our kids.

Please dont take them away. Please dont cut them out of the lives of all the children at [REDACTED] It would be beyond devestating.

They mean the world to us parents that spend the day working and not being the support for there kiddos during that time. We NEED them. Even the kids that dont need them, need them to focus on the kids that do so that the ones that dont struggle, dont get held behind.

Please make the right choice. Ill write in every single day if I have to. But please reconsider this decision. We need them, everyone does.

-E [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Claire B [REDACTED]
Sent: May 18, 2026 10:14 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE letter
Attachments: ECE letter.pdf

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

Please see the attached letter in support of keeping the ECE program.

Regards,

Claire B [REDACTED]

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) program in kindergarten classrooms within School District No. 62. I strongly urge the Board to continue funding and supporting ECE positions in kindergarten settings because they provide invaluable support to students, teachers, and families during one of the most important transitions in a child's educational journey.

ECEs play a critical role in supporting the social and emotional development of young learners. Kindergarten children enter school with a wide range of experiences, abilities, developmental readiness, and emotional needs. Some children may have attended preschool or daycare programs, while others may be entering a structured learning environment for the very first time. ECEs help bridge these gaps by creating nurturing, responsive, and inclusive classroom environments where all children feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.

The early years are foundational. Research consistently shows that children learn best when their emotional well-being and sense of belonging are supported. ECEs bring specialized knowledge of child development, play-based learning, self-regulation, and early intervention strategies that are essential in kindergarten classrooms. Their expertise allows them to recognize developmental needs early, support positive peer interactions, and help children build confidence, independence, and social skills.

ECEs also provide critical support for classroom teachers. Kindergarten classrooms today are increasingly complex, with diverse learning needs and growing expectations. Having both a teacher and an ECE creates a collaborative team approach that benefits all students. Together, they can provide more individualized support, better classroom management, stronger relationships with families, and more opportunities for meaningful learning experiences.

In addition, ECEs help ensure smoother transitions into school. Starting kindergarten can be overwhelming for many children and families. ECEs offer consistency, reassurance, and understanding during this adjustment period. Their presence helps children feel emotionally secure, which directly impacts their ability to engage, participate, and succeed in learning.

Most importantly, ECEs are passionate, skilled professionals who care deeply about children and their development. They are not simply "extra support" — they are an essential part of a successful kindergarten program. Removing ECEs from classrooms risks reducing the quality of support available to young learners at a time when early intervention and strong foundations matter most.

Investing in early learning is an investment in long-term student success. Supporting children early helps build stronger academic outcomes, social-emotional skills, confidence, and positive school experiences that benefit students throughout their educational journey.

I respectfully ask the Board to reconsider any reductions to the ECE program and to recognize the immense value ECEs bring to kindergarten classrooms across the district. Our youngest learners deserve the strongest possible start to their education.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to supporting students and families in our community.

Sincerely,

Claire B [REDACTED]

Kindergarten Teacher

[REDACTED] Elementary School

Jenny Seal

From: Danielle H [REDACTED]
Sent: May 15, 2026 11:00 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Save our ECEs!

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

School District 62 Trustees,

Upon hearing the devastating news that ECE positions may be eliminated throughout SD62, I kindly request your reconsideration. ECEs are essential to our children's success during this crucial year. They urgently need more support and love, not less. I've witnessed firsthand the incredible impact they have when my oldest [REDACTED] began kindergarten in 2021, and I'm eager for my younger [REDACTED] to have the same opportunities starting in September 2026. Please allow these wonderful educators to continue their vital work in helping our future thrive!

Danielle H [REDACTED]

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Jenny Seal

From: JimandEstherS [REDACTED]
Sent: May 16, 2026 9:02 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE cuts

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Day,

I am writing to express my support for SD62 to keep Early Childhood Educators in the classroom. I was one of those ECEs up until last June when I retired. Removing ECEs from kindergarten classrooms will hurt students who need the most support, and reduce the quality of early learning at the exact stage where it matters most. If we want children to succeed later, we need to invest in them early. Keeping ECEs in kindergarten is not an extra. It is essential. ECEs help children feel safe, regulated, included, and ready to learn. Teachers and ECEs work as a team, and our children benefit from both. Please do not balance budgets on the backs of kindergarten students.

Thank you.

Esther S [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Isabelle D [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 2:40 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECEs in the classroom

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To whom this may concern,

ECEs are an essential part of successful kindergarten classrooms and should not be removed from the program. Children entering kindergarten are transitioning from early learning environments with significantly lower adult-to-child ratios — often 1:4 in infant daycare settings and approximately 1:8–10 in preschool programs — to classrooms with up to 20 students and only one teacher. Many students are still only four years old when they begin kindergarten.

At this stage, children are not only adjusting to a much larger classroom environment, but are also learning routines, self-regulation, social skills, and academic expectations simultaneously. In French Immersion settings, students are additionally navigating an entirely new language throughout the school day. This creates an even greater need for support within the classroom.

Without ECE support, teachers are expected to manage a wide range of developmental, behavioural, and learning needs while also delivering meaningful academic instruction. Many students enter kindergarten still developing emotional regulation, attention, and classroom readiness skills, while others may require additional support due to designations or diverse learning needs. When one adult is responsible for addressing all of these needs alone, valuable instructional time is lost, and both students and teachers are impacted.

The idea of reducing ECE positions is deeply concerning, particularly when the needs within kindergarten classrooms continue to grow. In fact, every kindergarten classroom would benefit from having an ECE to help support students through the critical transition into the school system. Their role is invaluable in fostering emotional regulation, classroom readiness, social development, and early learning success, while also allowing teachers to provide stronger academic instruction for all students.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

A concerned parent/ teacher

Jenny Seal

From: Janelle I [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 2:14 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Subject: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Removal of ECEs from Kindergarten Classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the School Board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed removal of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) from kindergarten classrooms due to budget cuts.

ECEs play a critical role in supporting the academic, emotional, social, and behavioural development of young children during some of the most formative years of their lives. Kindergarten classrooms are complex learning environments, and the partnership between teachers and ECEs is essential to creating safe, inclusive, and effective spaces where children can thrive.

Removing ECEs will have significant consequences not only for students, but also for teachers, families, and the broader school community. These professionals provide individualized support, help foster emotional regulation and positive peer relationships, assist children with diverse learning needs, and contribute greatly to classroom stability and success. Their presence allows educators to better meet the needs of all learners.

As a parent/community member, I am deeply concerned that this decision prioritizes short-term financial savings over the long-term well-being and educational outcomes of children. Cuts at the kindergarten level are particularly troubling because early intervention and support are widely recognized as foundational to future academic achievement and social development.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider this proposal and to explore alternative solutions that preserve ECE positions within kindergarten classrooms. Investing in early education is an investment in the future success of our children and our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will carefully reflect on the impact this decision will have on students, families, and educators alike.

Sincerely,
Janelle I [REDACTED]
Parent of [REDACTED] student in
Grade [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Alexandra S [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 2:34 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Proposed ECE removal

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the School Board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed removal of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) from kindergarten classrooms due to budget cuts.

ECEs play a critical role in supporting the academic, emotional, social, and behavioural development of young children during some of the most formative years of their lives. Kindergarten classrooms are complex learning environments, and the partnership between teachers and ECEs is essential to creating safe, inclusive, and effective spaces where children can thrive.

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As a parent/community member, I am deeply concerned that this decision prioritizes short-term financial savings over the long-term well-being and educational outcomes of children. Cuts at the kindergarten level are particularly troubling because early intervention and support are widely recognized as foundational to future academic achievement and social development.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider this proposal and to explore alternative solutions that preserve ECE positions within kindergarten classrooms. Investing in early education is an investment in the future success of our children and our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will carefully reflect on the impact this decision will have on students, families, and educators alike.

Sincerely,

Alexandra S

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Jenny Seal

From: Carolyn L [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 9:28 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: Support for ECE's in Classrooms
Attachments: SD 62 letter.pdf

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Please see the letter below in support of ECE's in kindergarten classrooms.

Thank you,
Carolyn L [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Elementary School

May 19, 2026

To the Board of Trustees, District 62

My name is Carolyn L [REDACTED] and I am the Early Childhood Educator working in partnership with a kindergarten teacher at [REDACTED] Elementary School.

While I am relatively new to this unique team approach, I have over 35 years as an ECE, and for the past 15 years, have worked within a school environment with parents and children as a StrongStart facilitator.

I would like to highlight some of the recent research that I am sure you are aware:

More than one in three kindergarten children in B.C. are entering school with challenges in one or more core areas of development – a rate higher than ever recorded in the province, according to new research from the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) based out of UBC’s School of Population and Public Health (SPPH).

“This is the highest vulnerability rate we have seen since we began collecting this data 24 years ago,” said Dr. Martin Guhn, associate professor at HELP and SPPH. “The pandemic disrupted many aspects of family life—employment, child care, social interactions and community supports—and we are now seeing the ripple effects in classrooms.”

“We need to invest in the early years. Societies that provide resources to communities and support families with young children do well in the long run,” said Dr. Guhn. “That means paying living wages, reducing child poverty, creating affordable, high-quality child care and having well-resourced family and

community programs and services. These are not just nice-to-have—they are essential if we want to reverse these trends.”

Early Childhood Educators focus on programming for the whole child, which supports a unique perspective on family and community.

Early Childhood Educators build relationships with both students and their families. This creates an environment where optimal learning and experiences take place.

What is unique and highly effective with the ECE-Kindergarten classroom, is the melding of curriculum driven skills of teachers with the child development and play based pedagogies of Early Childhood Educators.

This team teaching approach supports BC’s Early Learning Framework, helping teachers and ECE’s provide engaging play-based learning along side academic curriculum.

Academic Achievement: Longitudinal studies indicate that these team-taught, early learning models lead to improved vocabulary, writing, and math skills. Children are much more likely to meet provincial academic expectations by Grade 3.

Economic Benefits: Cost-benefit analyses in Canada suggest that investing in high-quality early childhood education and care pays for itself over time through improved school readiness, higher graduation rates, and long-term earnings.

<https://pondeshpande.ca/blog/the-workforce-behind-the-workforce-how-eces-power-the-economy/>

<https://memorial.scholaris.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/e244ffbb-6cac-4733-8cd5-8c8b223ddf6b/content>

<https://www.cdicollege.ca/study-on-campus/ontario/community/news/why-is-early-childhood-education-important/#gsc.tab=0>

More and more children are entering kindergarten with complex learning needs. Early Childhood Educators are equipped at meeting these complex needs and varying levels of learning.

The ECE helps support not only these children, but all the children in the classroom. Because of our expertise in child development, we are able to meet the social and emotional needs of diverse learners in partnership with the teacher in the classroom.

The benefits of a strong start in kindergarten extends beyond these early years, up to the primary grades. There is documented trickle up effect for learning outcomes for children who have participated in a team teaching K/ECE partnership.

I hope you will take into consideration these strong reasons to continue the K/ECE partnerships in SD62.

Carolyn L [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Elementary School

Jenny Seal

From: Debbie F [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 5:40 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECEs

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Dear Sir or Madame,

I have had children and now grandchildren raised in these schools. ECEs in Kindergarten made my [REDACTED] children feel safe, seen, and helped them all so much. They are invaluable!!! Do not take help away from our already stretched thin Teachers. Do not cut any staff whatsoever. You are playing with these children's futures and it will affect too many negatively.

Please hear me.

Deborah F [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Danielle V [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 8:13 AM
To: Paul Block; [REDACTED]; Trustees
Subject: Letter to save ECE educators

Dear Members of the Sooke School District 62 and the Board of Education,

I am writing to express a significant concern regarding the removal or reassignment of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) from our early-years classrooms. While I understand that staffing decisions often involve complex operational pressures, it is essential to recognize that ECEs are not interchangeable supports. Their presence is foundational to student well-being, social-emotional development, and long-term educational success.

SD62's Strategic Plan outlines a clear commitment to learning, engagement, and growth. These pillars emphasize supporting the whole child, fostering inclusive learning environments, and ensuring that every student has the foundation they need to thrive. ECEs are central to fulfilling these commitments. Their specialized training allows them to create responsive, relationship-based environments where young learners can develop the social-emotional competencies that underpin all future learning.

On a personal level, I have had the privilege of working alongside three deeply caring and highly skilled ECEs during the years this program has been operational. Each of them has walked this path with me — supporting students with compassion, professionalism, and unwavering dedication. Their presence has not only strengthened classroom environments but has also provided stability and continuity for children who rely on trusted adults to feel safe, regulated, and ready to learn. These relationships matter, and they are not easily replaced.

There is also a clear fiscal dimension to this issue. When students do not receive strong social-emotional foundations in the early years, the need for intensive interventions typically increases in later grades. This can include additional educational assistant support, behavioural intervention programs, specialized services, and increased administrative involvement — all of which carry significantly higher long-term costs. Maintaining ECE staffing is a proactive investment that aligns with SD62's commitment to responsible stewardship. By supporting early social-emotional development, the district reduces the likelihood of costly reactive measures later on.

In addition, I encourage the Board to consider the value of extending ECE involvement into Grade 1 classrooms. Many students form strong bonds with their ECEs during Kindergarten, and continuing that relationship for an additional year would strengthen existing connections, support smoother transitions, and reinforce the social-emotional skills developed in early learning. This continuity aligns directly with the strategic plan's focus on engagement and growth, ensuring that students feel supported by familiar, trusted adults as they move into more academically demanding years.

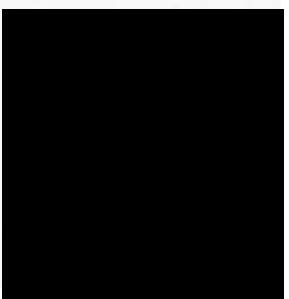
In short, keeping ECEs in classrooms — and considering their continued involvement in Grade 1 — is not only the right decision for student well-being; it is a financially responsible one that directly supports the goals outlined in the SD62 Strategic Plan. Early, consistent support helps prevent small challenges from becoming entrenched needs, ultimately saving the district resources while improving student outcomes.

I respectfully urge the Board to prioritize the protection of ECE staffing in early-years classrooms. Doing so demonstrates a commitment to SD62's core values and to the long-term success of our youngest learners.

Thank you for your time and for your continued dedication to supporting students, families, and staff across our district.

Sincerely,

Danielle V [redacted]



Danielle V [redacted] (she/her)
Kindergarten Teacher, [redacted] Elementary
Sooke School District
[redacted] Victoria, BC, [redacted]
www.sd62.bc.ca

With gratitude and respect, we acknowledge that we live, learn, and work on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation, SĆIΛNEW (Beecher Bay) Nation, and the Nuuchah-nulth: Paaʔčiidʔatḥ (Pacheedaht) Nation. We also recognize that some of our schools are located on the traditional territories of the MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nation, and the Ləkʷəŋən peoples of Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

Jenny Seal

From: Kristi L [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 6:30 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECEs in classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening,

I would like to extend my support of keeping ECEs in classrooms. My [REDACTED] attends kindergarten at [REDACTED], and has been lucky to have an ECE in his classroom - [REDACTED]. I have seen first hand how supportive she is to all the children, and helps ease the stress of only having one teacher. She not only helps the kids with their transition into a structured environment, but she helps the teacher with the load and I have unwavering support for our teachers who give so much. My [REDACTED] is [REDACTED], and having [REDACTED] in the classroom has eased our worry for needing a one on one support for [REDACTED]. In a time where [REDACTED] funding in BC is losing so much, I ask that you give the utmost consideration to keeping this resource alive.

Thank you
Kristi L [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Kerry C [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 3:02 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE support

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing in response to the district's plan to remove ECEs from our kindergarten classrooms. As a parent of two children who attended [REDACTED] Elementary, I have seen firsthand the difference that ECE support makes in a child's early learning experience.

One of my children was fortunate enough to fully benefit from having [REDACTED] in the classroom, while the other did not have the same level of support. The difference between their experiences has been significant. Having an ECE in the classroom provides children with additional guidance, emotional support, and individualized attention during such an important stage of development.

[REDACTED] is an integral part of our kindergarten team and our school community. Her presence supports not only the students, but also the teachers and the overall classroom environment. While she is one member of a larger team working with these kindergarten children, her absence would undoubtedly leave a noticeable hole in the classroom and school community.

I strongly urge the district to reconsider removing ECEs from kindergarten classrooms. Our youngest learners benefit tremendously from the additional support, and their success should remain a priority.

Sincerely,

Kerry C [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Jenny Seal

From: Laura R [REDACTED]
Sent: May 18, 2026 7:31 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: Support for ECE's in our Kindergarten Classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my support for maintaining strong Early Childhood Educator (ECE) support within kindergarten classrooms.

ECEs play an incredibly important role in the daily success of these classrooms and in the overall learning experience for young children. At this age, students benefit enormously from additional guidance, supervision, and emotional support throughout the school day. Managing a kindergarten classroom is no small task, and ECEs help create a calm, safe, and productive environment where children are able to learn and thrive.

Beyond classroom management, ECEs also help make valuable learning opportunities possible. For example, activities such as weekly forest walks and outdoor learning experiences often rely heavily on adequate adult supervision. Parent volunteers are appreciated, but they are not always available or able to participate consistently. Without ECE support, many of these important hands-on learning opportunities could be reduced or lost altogether.

These experiences are not just “extras” — they are meaningful parts of early childhood education that help children build confidence, independence, curiosity, social skills, and a connection to the outdoors.

ECEs are a vital part of the kindergarten team, and their contributions positively impact students, teachers, and families alike. I strongly encourage the district to continue supporting and prioritizing these positions within our schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura F [REDACTED]

Current and future [REDACTED] parent at [REDACTED] Elementary

Sent from my iPhone

Jenny Seal

From: lisa m [REDACTED]
Sent: May 16, 2026 7:39 PM
To: Trustees; [REDACTED]
Subject: The importance of ECE's

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Dear Board of Trustees,

I urge you to reconsider the decision to cut Early Childhood Educator positions from our classrooms.

Early Childhood Educators are not an added extra — they are an essential part of creating strong, supportive learning environments for our youngest students. Each year, these positions directly support approximately 40 kindergarten children, while also providing critical assistance to classroom teachers and families.

At a time when teachers have been consistently and clearly asking for more classroom support, cutting ECE positions sends the wrong message. Instead of strengthening the foundation of our education system, these cuts place greater strain on teachers, reduce the level of support available to students, and negatively impact families who rely on well-supported classrooms for their children's early learning success.

The kindergarten years are foundational. This is when children develop the academic, social, and emotional skills that shape their future success in school. Early Childhood Educators play a vital role in helping children build these skills through individualized attention, classroom support, and fostering positive learning experiences.

Cutting these positions is not simply a budget decision — it is a decision that directly affects the quality of education our children receive. If we are truly committed to supporting student success, teacher wellbeing, and strong school communities, then we must invest in the classroom supports that make this possible.

I respectfully ask that you prioritize keeping Early Childhood Educators in our classrooms and recognize the immeasurable value they bring to our schools every single day.

Sincerely,

Lisa M [REDACTED]

Early childhood educator at [REDACTED]

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Jenny Seal

From: Maegan C [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 2:33 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Re: keeping ECE in [REDACTED] Kindergarten classes

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Hello

My name is Maegan C [REDACTED] and I have had one child go through [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and another child set to also attend [REDACTED] [REDACTED] starting this September.

I hear that there is a possibility that ECE's would be removed from the classroom. I think that ECE's are invaluable in the classroom!! There were some children who had diagnosis and it was helpful for them, but so many kids struggled with different things and those ECE's provided so much support for everyone. It would be so hard on the Kindergarten teachers to provide emotional support, learning support, social support, and teach to every little on in the classroom with so many kids needing extra.

I would strongly support and encourage continued classroom support by ECE's.

Cheers Maegan C [REDACTED]

--

[REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: melissa h [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 2:29 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Ece's in kindergarten classes

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

The ECE in my child's class this year has been invaluable to our child. Not to mention the other kids getting diagnosed, with autism or ADHD. The kindergarten teachers cannot do it alone now if fact my child's class could even use a second ECE but that hasn't happened as it was not pre planned for. The extra hands are needed in the classrooms more than ever with more and more kids needing accommodations.

Getting rid of the ECE's in kindergarten classes would be a grave mistake and hurt so many students in the future.

Melissa [REDACTED]
A parent of a child in SD62

Jenny Seal

From: Michelle C [REDACTED]
Sent: May 18, 2026 10:15 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Support for ECE's in classrooms

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Dear Board of Education,

Hello, my name is Michelle, and I appreciate you taking the time to read the following letter in support of keeping ECEs in Kindergarten classrooms.

As someone with deep roots in this district, I care greatly about the future of early learning in our schools. I am a proud graduate of Sooke School District, following in the footsteps of my father, as well as many uncles, aunts, and cousins who also attended district schools. I completed all three of my practicums within the district and have now taught here for 18 years, 16 of which have been at [REDACTED] Elementary School.

As a teacher who has been part of the Kindergarten/ECE partnership since the spring of 2018, and as a parent of a child entering Kindergarten who may experience the loss of ECE support, I understand both the professional and personal realities of this issue. I know the challenges my [REDACTED] may face, as we have not been able to access a waitlist for assessments due to the overwhelming level of need within the current system. This experience is not unique to our family and reflects a growing challenge facing many children entering schools today.

Two years ago, many trustees, board executives, educators, and community partner groups gathered together at a "Village Initiative" dinner focused on early learning, collaboration, and supporting children and families in our community. At that event, data and presentations highlighted that many children in our district are entering school facing multiple vulnerabilities across areas of early development — including social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills, and physical well-being.

Research from the UBC Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) and the Early Development Instrument (EDI) continues to show that vulnerability in Kindergarten is linked to later academic, social, and mental health challenges. These findings reinforce the importance of strong early intervention and collaborative support systems within schools.

Kindergarten/ECE partnerships provide a highly effective, relationship-based model that strengthens early learning environments for all students. These partnerships offer preventative support during one of the most critical developmental windows in a child's life. The question remains: if only some classrooms have access to ECE support and the program has not expanded, how can we fully understand its impact across the district?

Kindergarten teachers are also facing the ongoing systemic challenge of backlogged assessments and limited access to outside supports. Many families are already on lengthy waitlists for psychoeducational assessments, speech-language services, occupational therapy, behavioural support, mental health services, and pediatric referrals before their children even enter school. As a result, many students arrive in Kindergarten without formal designations or documented support plans, despite clearly demonstrating significant needs. Classroom teams are often the first to identify, document, and respond to these challenges while simultaneously supporting the learning of the entire class.

ECEs play an essential role in strengthening classroom teams by supporting teachers in creating responsive, inclusive learning environments, while also supporting students' social-emotional learning, co-regulation, and

relationship-building. This includes guiding problem-solving processes, supporting children with complex emotional and behavioural needs, and enriching learning through hands-on, experiential opportunities such as cooking programs, forest play, and place-based learning. Their presence allows for deeper engagement, richer classroom environments, and more meaningful early intervention.

It is also important to remember that the “early years” are not limited to preschool or Kindergarten alone. Early childhood development spans ages 0–8, meaning the primary years are foundational for long-term learning, self-regulation, mental health, and future success. Reducing supports during these years risks widening inequities rather than addressing them.

I recognize the difficult financial decisions facing the district and appreciate the ongoing efforts to prioritize equity and student success. However, I respectfully ask that the Board carefully consider the long-term impact of reducing Kindergarten/ECE partnerships. Early intervention is not an extra support — it is foundational support. The needs entering our classrooms are growing increasingly complex, and the early years are when we have the greatest opportunity to positively influence a child’s trajectory.

As both an educator and a parent, I believe strongly that investing in our youngest learners is one of the most meaningful investments we can make as a community. The children entering our schools today will shape the future of this district tomorrow, and they deserve the strongest possible start.

Sincerely,
Michelle C. [REDACTED]
Teacher and Parent

Jenny Seal

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 1:46 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Please Keep ECEs in Kindergarten Classrooms

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Dear Trustees and School District Leadership,

I am writing to express my strong concern regarding the proposed removal of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) from kindergarten classrooms due to budget cuts.

ECEs play a critical role in supporting the learning, emotional wellbeing, and development of our youngest students. Kindergarten classrooms are complex environments where children are building foundational academic, social, and self-regulation skills. Having both a teacher and an ECE creates a more supportive, inclusive, and effective learning environment for all children.

Removing ECEs would negatively impact students, educators, and families in several important ways:

- ECEs help build strong, trusting relationships with children, helping them feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.
- They provide more individualized support, allowing children who need extra guidance—academically, socially, or emotionally—to receive it early.
- ECE support contributes to stronger learning outcomes in language, literacy, behavior, and problem-solving.
- ECEs help foster inclusive classrooms where every child feels they belong and can thrive.
- They reduce pressure on classroom teachers and improve the overall classroom environment for students and staff alike.

These early years are foundational, and investments made here have long-term impacts on student success and community wellbeing. Speaking from personal experience, the ECE in my daughter's classroom was instrumental in helping her adjust to elementary school and is an ongoing valued presence that helps her feel supported and cared for during the various difficult moments that come up for a five year old throughout the day.

I understand that difficult budget decisions must be made, but I urge the board to prioritize maintaining ECEs in kindergarten classrooms. Cutting these positions may create short-term savings, but the long-term educational and social costs to students and schools could be far greater.

Please reconsider this proposal and continue investing in the supports that help our youngest learners succeed.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to our children and schools.

Sincerely,

Nina B [REDACTED]

(Parent of a [REDACTED] student)

Jenny Seal

From: Rachael S [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 3:16 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Support for Keeping ECEs in Kindergarten Classrooms

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a parent of an [REDACTED] who will be entering Kindergarten, and I cannot stress enough how important ECE support is within the classroom setting.

For children like my [REDACTED], Early Childhood Educators are not just an “extra support.” They make a tremendous difference in helping children regulate emotions, build communication skills, transition between activities, and feel safe and supported in a school environment. These early years are critical for development, especially for neurodivergent children.

With [REDACTED] funding already being reduced next year, many families are already feeling worried and overwhelmed about the level of support our children will receive in the classroom. Removing ECEs from Kindergarten classes would create even more strain on students, teachers, and families who are already trying to navigate a system with fewer resources.

Kindergarten classrooms today are incredibly diverse in needs, and expecting one teacher alone to manage the growing complexity without ECE support will ultimately impact all students, but especially children who rely on additional guidance and consistency to succeed.

As a parent, I am asking you to please reconsider any plans to remove ECEs from Kindergarten classrooms. Families truly need this support, and our children deserve the best possible foundation as they begin their educational journey.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rachael S [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Sarah R [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 1:13 PM
To: Trustees; Paul Block
Subject: Cut to ECE/Teacher Partnership - Request to reconsider
Attachments: Letter to the board.docx

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Hello there,

I am writing to ask that the board reconsider the decision to cut the ECE/K teacher partnership program, consequently laying off 11 ECEs who work in kindergarten classrooms. Please see attached for a letter further outlining the of concerns.

Sarah R [REDACTED] *Instructor*
[REDACTED] | Early Learning and Care
[REDACTED] | Victoria, BC



Hello,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the decision to eliminate the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and Teacher Partnership Program and the resulting loss of 11 ECE professional roles within Sooke School District kindergarten classrooms. Removing ECEs from kindergarten classrooms significantly reduces the supports available to children during one of the most critical periods of development and transition.

ECEs bring specialized pedagogical knowledge in early childhood development, relationship-based practice, emotional regulation, play-based learning, and responsive care. ECEs help create environments where children feel safe, connected, and emotionally supported. They are skilled in recognizing and responding to children's mental and emotional needs, fostering emotional literacy, co-regulation, belonging, and resilience during the foundational early years.

The elimination of these positions is especially concerning given existing data demonstrating high rates of vulnerability among young children entering school. When vulnerability rates remain significantly high within SD62's service area, reducing supports in kindergarten classrooms sends the wrong message about the collective commitment to children and families.

Research consistently shows that early intervention and responsive relational support during the early years have long-term impacts on educational success, mental health, social inclusion, and lifelong well-being. Kindergarten classrooms are increasingly complex environments where children arrive with diverse developmental, emotional, sensory, and learning needs. The partnership between certified teachers and ECEs creates a collaborative model that benefits all children, not only those who may be identified as vulnerable.

ECEs support children through transitions, help scaffold peer relationships, facilitate play-based inquiry, and contribute to inclusive classroom communities where children can learn through exploration, movement, creativity, and connection. They also strengthen communication and partnerships with families, helping bridge home and school relationships during a critical developmental period.

At a time when there is growing awareness of children's mental health and wellness, now is not the time to reduce relational supports in early learning environments. Investing in early childhood education (0-8 years of age) is not an expendable enhancement; it is a vital foundation for equitable and responsive public education. The ECE and Teacher Partnership Program reflects a commitment to child-centred, developmentally appropriate, and inclusive learning environments. Its removal represents a significant loss for children, families and classrooms.

I strongly urge the Board of Education to reconsider the elimination of this program and to prioritize continued investment in collaborative early learning supports that honour the rights, well-being, and diverse needs of young children.

Sincerely,

Sarah R. [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Saza R [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 1:22 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and Teacher Partnership Program

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Dear Trustees,

I am an Early Childhood Educator, and since 2019 I have been a [REDACTED]. In this role, I continue to invest my passion, energy, and hope in the future of children, families, and early learning in our communities.

This morning, I was deeply saddened to learn of the decision to eliminate the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and Teacher Partnership Program, resulting in the loss of 11 ECE professional roles within Sooke School District kindergarten classrooms.

This partnership between ECEs and public-school teachers represents the kind of collaborative model that supports children and families holistically. It brings together the complementary strengths of both professions to create responsive, relationship-based learning environments and to support children in their transition into the school system.

ECEs bring specialized knowledge grounded in the *BC Early Learning Framework (2019)*, which emphasizes well-being, belonging, diversity, and inclusion as foundational to learning. Our work focuses on relationships, responsive curriculum, and meeting children where they are developmentally and emotionally. We strive to see children as capable, valued, and unique members of their communities. Importantly, this framework was intentionally designed to support children from birth through age eight, recognizing that early learning and care extends meaningfully into the primary school years.

The Sooke School District's partnership model has been visionary, and one I had hoped would continue to strengthen the bridge between early years education and the public school system. Within the field of early learning and care, there is ongoing discussion about how to support children in becoming "kindergarten ready." Equally important, however, is ensuring that schools are ready for children—that they are prepared to welcome each child with the message: "You are here. You belong."

Children thrive when educators take the time to know them within the context of their families, relationships, and communities. Collaborative models such as this help create the nested systems of care that allow children to feel safe, supported, and connected as they begin their educational journey.

I strongly urge the Board of Education to reconsider the elimination of this program and to continue investing in collaborative early learning supports that honour the rights, well-being, and diverse needs of young children and their families.

Sincerely,

Saza R [REDACTED]

My pronouns are: she/her/hers

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I acknowledge that Camosun College campuses are located on the traditional territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples and the ləkʷəŋən Peoples of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

I am an uninvited visitor on these territories, a settler of mixed ancestry, born and raised on the unsundered territories of the Haudenosaunee, Lenape, and Anishinaabek Peoples. Within my bloodlines there are confluences of French, English, and Salvadoran rivers. My bones carry stories that my tongue does not yet know, but that my heart is learning to interpret.

Jenny Seal

From: Sophia S [REDACTED]
Sent: May 18, 2026 12:22 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Supporting our ECE for district 62

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Please reconsider cutting back ECEs in kindergarten classes as part of your budget. A successful student starts at a young age. How are they supposed to get their support with just one main teacher, this puts more stress on the teacher as well as the students.

Kindergarten is a very important yet scary first step for kids as this is the start of their education. And without extra support from the start they will never build their confidence. Do not neglect the young, smart and intelligent minds!

Education matters! Keep our ECEs in every classroom possible!

Regards,
A concerned parent

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Jenny Seal

From: Tawnya D [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 4:10 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep ECEs in Kindergarten classrooms

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To whom it may concern,

It was brought to my attention that, due to budget cuts, the district is planning to remove ECEs from Kindergarten classrooms. This must be a misprint or a circulation of misinformation. For this to be true, there would have to be a shred of evidence out there that ECEs have not resulted in a world of difference to the youngest learners as they enter an already broken and difficult system. Can you please share the scientific evidence and the cited sources that back this decision?

If there is only evidence proving the impact ECEs have on learning, development, and inclusion for Kindergarten kids, but those at the top are wearing their red-bottom shoes and turning a blind eye for bUdGeT cUtS, please make that extremely clear so we know where our money and votes need to go.

How disappointing to line already full pockets only to deprive literal CHILDREN from their full potential.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Jenny Seal

From: Tiffany D [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 4:01 PM
To: Trustees; Amanda Dowhy (Trustee); Cendra Beaton (Trustee); Russell Chipps (Custodian); Christine Lervold (Trustee); Ebony Logins (Trustee); Trudy Spiller (Trustee); Allison Watson (Trustee)
Subject: Letter from a Concerned Parent

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing as a concerned parent to express my strong opposition to the elimination of the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) position in our kindergarten classrooms. This change will have significant negative impacts on children, families, and the overall quality of early learning in our district.

ECEs play a vital role in supporting young learners during one of the most important developmental stages of their lives. Kindergarten is a time when children are still learning how to regulate emotions, build social skills, and navigate the routines of a school environment. Having both a certified teacher and a trained ECE in the classroom ensures that every child receives the attention, guidance, and support they need to thrive.

I have seen firsthand how essential this support is. My [REDACTED], who is now in Grade [REDACTED], had an incredibly positive experience in kindergarten because of the ECE in her classroom. The ECE provided [REDACTED] with the extra reassurance, connection, and developmental support [REDACTED] needed during those early months of school. If that ECE had not been there, [REDACTED] simply would not have had the same level of confidence, comfort, or success. The impact was meaningful, and it stayed with her as [REDACTED] transitioned into Grade [REDACTED].

Removing the ECE position will increase adult-to-child ratios and make it far more difficult for educators to meet the diverse needs of young learners. Especially those who require additional help with transitions, emotional regulation, or early academic skills. Without an ECE present, many children who need extra support may not receive it in time, leading to increased behavioural challenges, reduced engagement, and a more stressful environment for both students and staff.

ECEs bring specialized training in early childhood development that complements the teacher's instructional expertise. Together, they create a balanced, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate classroom. Eliminating this role diminishes the quality of early learning and sends a discouraging message about the value of early childhood education as a profession.

As a parent, I want my child and all children to enter school in an environment that is safe, supportive, and set up for success. Removing ECEs from kindergarten classrooms moves us in the opposite direction. I strongly urge the district to reconsider this decision and to prioritize the well-being and developmental needs of our youngest learners.

Sincerely

Tiffany D [REDACTED]

Parent to Child at [REDACTED] Elementary school

Jenny Seal

From: Erin V [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 4:39 PM
To: Paul Block; Trustees
Subject: Elimination of ECE/ teacher partnership program

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Hello,

I would like to express deep concern regarding the decision to eliminate the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and Teacher Partnership Program within Sooke School District kindergarten classrooms. I strongly urge the Board of Education to reconsider the elimination of this program and to prioritize continued investment in collaborative early learning supports that honour the rights, well-being, and diverse needs of young children entering the school system.

The elimination of these positions as well as the Early Learning curriculum coordinator and a reduction in Early learning district principal role is especially concerning given existing data demonstrating high rates of vulnerability among young children entering school in SD62. The most recent Early Development Instrument (EDI) results indicated that 41% of the district's kindergarten children are vulnerable or at risk in one or more of the five EDI developmental scales that are foundational for lifelong health, education, and well-being. This represents an increase of 14% since 2018. At a time when children are demonstrating increased needs in areas such as emotional maturity, social competence, communication, and overall well-being, reducing supports in kindergarten classrooms sends the wrong message about our collective commitment to children and families.

The significance and success of the ECE/Kindergarten Partnership program is praised across the province for its innovation in advancing early years supports for children in Kindergarten. In 2012, SD62 was the first district in B.C. to partner an ECE and Teacher to work together using their specific training and skills. Since then, the continued use of ECE's in kindergarten classrooms has demonstrated efficacy, evolving and expanding to many partnerships across the district.

It is imperative that we recognize the profound impact early support and interventions in Kindergarten can have on a child's academic, social, and emotional development. Research consistently demonstrates that early evidence-based strategies implemented during kindergarten years can yield significant long-term benefits for students. These benefits extend beyond academic achievement to encompass socio-emotional skills, behavioral outcomes, and overall well-being. The kindergarten years represent a critical period for the acquisition of social skills, emotional regulation, and self-esteem. By implementing evidence-based programs that promote positive peer interactions, teach conflict resolution strategies, and cultivate empathy and compassion, we can help children develop the social and emotional competencies they need to navigate relationships, manage emotions, and make responsible decisions throughout their lives.

Research consistently shows that early intervention and responsive relational support during the early years have long-term impacts on educational success, mental health, social inclusion, and lifelong well-being. Kindergarten classrooms are increasingly complex environments where children arrive with diverse developmental, emotional, sensory, and learning needs. The partnership between certified teachers and ECEs creates a collaborative model that benefits all children, not only those who may be identified as vulnerable.

ECEs support children through transitions, help scaffold peer relationships, facilitate play-based inquiry, and contribute to inclusive classroom communities where children can learn through exploration, movement, creativity, and connection. They also strengthen communication and partnerships with families, helping bridge home and school relationships during a critical developmental period.

In light of these accomplishments and ongoing initiatives, I urge your continued support for the ECE/Kindergarten Partnership program in the Sooke School District. By doing so, the district can excel their commitment to innovation in early years/primary education, ultimately enriching the lives and educational experiences of students.

Investing in early childhood education is not an expendable enhancement; it is a vital foundation for equitable and responsive public education. The ECE and Teacher Partnership Program reflects a commitment to child-centred, developmentally appropriate, and inclusive learning environments. Its removal represents a significant loss for children, families, educators, and the broader community.

Thank you for taking the time to read and I hope you will reconsider.

Erin

Jenny Seal

From: Cynthia H [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 4:39 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE's

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,

It has come to my attention that there is going to soon be a decision made as to whether or not ECEs are going to be in kindergarten classrooms. As a parent of a child going to kindergarten in September and to another going to kindergarten in two years, I do not believe that removing ECEs from kindy classrooms would be beneficial to these new young students nor would it be beneficial in the coming years to other kids attending kindergarten. ECE's are an invaluable resource to children and teachers and I believe that they should remain in kindergarten classrooms to help students and teachers with more individual support amongst so many other positives that ECE have in the classroom. I do hope that the decision to remove ECEs from kindergarten classroom is not approved.

Thank you for your time,
-Cindy H [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Jasmine M [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 4:59 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE Support

The purpose of this letter is to express support of the K-ECE partnership program, and to ask you to reconsider the budget in cutting this program. At [REDACTED] I have been fortunate to work alongside our ECE for 8 years and it has benefited our Kindergarten students greatly. While our ECE has been mostly based in one classroom, her outreach into the other classrooms has allowed her to support all of our kindergarten students in some capacity.

One of the significant advantages of having an ECE in our kindergarten classroom is the provision of an additional adult to support early learning practices. With the ECE's lens and expertise, she has been able to ensure that many students receive personalized attention and guidance, particularly during crucial early learning activities such as outdoor play and exploration. By having an ECE present, I have been able to facilitate smaller groupings of students based on their interests and learning styles, allowing for more focused and meaningful learning experiences. This targeted approach fosters a deeper engagement with the curriculum and promotes a sense of curiosity and enthusiasm for learning from an early age. The presence of an ECE greatly contributes to the smooth transition of students into the school system. Many students may experience separation anxiety or require assistance with basic tasks such as bathrooming, dressing, and eating during their early days in kindergarten. Most students are coming from a ratio of 1:8 adults/children in preschools to 1:20 in Kindergarten, with many added expectations.

In addition to their role in supporting early learning practices and easing the transition into school, our ECE collaborates closely with our team of teachers to create a holistic learning environment that fosters the social, emotional, and cognitive development of each student. Through their expertise in child development and pedagogy, they contribute valuable insights and strategies that enhance the overall quality of education provided in our kindergarten classrooms.

Thank you for your time in considering this,
Jasmine M [REDACTED]



Jasmine M [REDACTED]

B.Ed, Early Childhood Education Certificate

Kindergarten Teacher [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

We acknowledge the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation and Sc'ianew Nation and Nuu-chah-nulth: Pacheedaht Nation. We also recognize some of our schools reside on the traditional territory of the Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation.

Jenny Seal

From: Rafaela R [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 6:02 PM
To: Trustees
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 2027/2028 Budget

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Dear School Board Members,

I am writing as a parent to express my strong support for maintaining Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in kindergarten classrooms.

Having an ECE in my [REDACTED] classroom has been incredibly valuable during [REDACTED] transition from daycare into a much larger school environment. Starting kindergarten is a significant emotional, social, and academic adjustment for young children, and the presence of an ECE has provided an additional layer of support that has made a meaningful difference in her confidence, comfort, and overall experience at school.

For many families, kindergarten is the first experience their children have in a large institutional setting, and the support provided by ECEs helps bridge that transition in a way that feels safe and developmentally appropriate. I truly believe that removing this support would have a negative impact on many students and families.

I respectfully ask the Board to consider the important role ECEs play in supporting kindergarten students and to prioritize keeping these positions within classrooms.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to supporting young learners and their families.

Sincerely,
Rafaela D [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: quynne [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 6:12 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Please do not cut ECEs from Kindergarten classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I just learned that SD62 is considering removing ECEs from Kindergarten classrooms due to budget cuts.

The most recent EDI results indicate that 41% of Sooke School District kindergarten children are vulnerable or at risk in one or more developmental areas linked to lifelong health, education, and well-being — an increase of 14% since 2018. Eliminating supports at a time of rising vulnerability is deeply concerning!!!

Please do not cut ECEs from Kindergarten classrooms. Not only would that result in a decrease in the quality of learning for vulnerable students, but it would negatively effect the learning experience for all of the students, not to mention increase the stress on the teachers who are already under a lot of pressure with the large number of students they teach.

Warm regards,

Quynne P [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Elementary School students

Jenny Seal

From: Victor C [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 6:18 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Expressing Strong Opposition to ECE Budget Cuts

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Dear Trustees of the Board of Education,

I am writing to you as a concerned parent to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts that put the district's Early Childhood Educator (ECE) positions at risk.

While I understand the board faces an incredibly difficult task in balancing the budget, cutting the ECE role is a counterproductive measure that directly impacts the well-being, safety, and foundational learning of our students.

The ECE role is unique and irreplaceable for several essential reasons:

- Bridging a Massive Transitional Gap: Children entering Kindergarten are transitioning from daycare, preschool, or home environments with small, intimate care ratios (often 8:1 or fewer). Moving abruptly to a 20:1 student-to-teacher ratio is a massive shock to a child's system. Having an ECE in the room ensures there are two qualified adults to manage this huge transition smoothly.
- Classroom-Wide Support: An ECE is there to support all students. They provide a critical layer of community care, ensuring no child falls through the cracks as they adapt to a structured school environment.
- Emotional and Academic Foundations: Early childhood is the most critical window for emotional regulation and social development. The collaborative partnership between a Kindergarten Teacher and an ECE allows for proactive, compassionate, and attentive care that sets the trajectory for a child's entire educational journey.

Reducing ECE support in Kindergarten classrooms does not save money in the long run; it simply shifts the burden onto overloaded teachers and results in higher burnout, more classroom disruptions, and fractured learning environments. Rather than eliminating these roles, our district should be treating them as a gold standard and looking for ways to expand them.

I urge the board to listen to the community, protect our youngest learners, and find alternative solutions to balance the budget without sacrificing the essential presence of ECEs in our classrooms.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and dedication to our children's future.

Sincerely,

Victor
Parent

Jenny Seal

From: Ola K [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 6:35 PM
To: Trustees
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: ECE Cutting Decision

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Hello Board of Trustees,

I am very disappointed to hear that our ECEs are being considered for termination. They are an extremely important part of the school team. My own kids are at J [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (as well as other ECEs) in kindergarten is so especially important to the children. These teachers help all the children in their transition from daycare to elementary school.

Children at such a young age need extra attention and going from a ratio of one to eight or less and then one to 20 in the span of one year is simply not doable. The children thrive by having the extra attention . The ECE is there to help with development and behaviour issues and to keep the children on track. This benefits the kids and benefits the teachers and benefits the school. Why would you consider cutting here? Why is the decision always to give our kids the least amount possible - the bare minimum?

Other countries are prioritizing education. So should we. We should be working to give the children in our area the best chance to be successful that we can. The world is getting more competitive. Children are requiring more one-on-one attention and yet we are just moving away from that. It is bewildering to me that quality education is taking such a low priority. If you must budget, please look to other areas as cutting teachers and support for student is absolutely the wrong move.

Please do not cut [REDACTED]. Please don't cut the other ECEs. This is not what we want and at some point what the parents and kids want has to matter too. Otherwise, who are you representing?

[REDACTED] (Ola) K [REDACTED]
Mother of 2 [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Laurel K [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 6:45 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE Support

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Good evening,

My [REDACTED] is currently in a kindergarten classroom that has the privilege of being supported by an ECE staff member. [REDACTED] has had a fantastic year and learned much from this trusted person in her classroom. I believe that it has made [REDACTED] kindergarten experience exponentially better!

I would like to express my support for keeping the ECE program in schools in the coming years. Our children and their needs are becoming more and more complex every year, and the additional support of these educators is invaluable.

ECE presence in classrooms is money well spent, in this taxpayers opinion.

Kind regards,

Laurel K [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Jenny Seal

From: Jennifer K [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 9:16 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep ECEs in the classrooms

Dear trustees,
It is very wrong to remove ECEs from the classrooms. Our students deserve better!

Jenny Seal

From: Kristi S [REDACTED]
Sent: May 19, 2026 3:11 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: District Kindergarten ECE removal

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing as the parent of two children within the school district. My oldest child is [REDACTED] years old and currently attends grade [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] Elementary School. My youngest is scheduled to begin kindergarten this fall.

My [REDACTED] has an [REDACTED] and will require additional support beyond what would typically be expected in a kindergarten classroom. While I understand that funding is allocated to support students with designated needs, I am deeply concerned about how the proposed removal of ECEs from kindergarten classrooms will affect not only my [REDACTED], but all children entering school for the first time.

Starting kindergarten is already a major transition for young children. For children with disabilities or additional support needs, that transition can be even more overwhelming. As a parent, it is scary and emotional to send your child into an environment where you are unsure whether the appropriate supports will be available. ECEs play an important role in helping kindergarten classrooms function successfully. Their support benefits not only students with diverse needs, but also the entire classroom community and the teachers themselves.

I urge those responsible for these budget decisions to please reconsider the proposed cuts to ECE positions in kindergarten classrooms. Our youngest students are at one of the most vulnerable and formative points in their educational journey, and reducing supports at this stage feels both shortsighted and even potentially harmful to student success.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my concerns.

Sincerely,
Kristi S [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Andfer F [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 6:50 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: KEEP ECE'S IN KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

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Hello School Trustees,

Good day to all of you.

My name is Maria F [REDACTED] and despite of may super busy time handling 4 kids, full time job as a health care worker, owning a small business and doing house chores I am writing and sending you this email to show SUPPORT to all the ECE's out there. My kids are from [REDACTED] School. My eldest is [REDACTED], second is [REDACTED] and the 3rd will be entering Kinder this year. All, my 4 kids have attended and still attending Strong start. I remember before it was run by one of the Super Dedicated and Passionate ECE's ([REDACTED]). She was also my 2nd child's ECE's in their classroom when she was in Kinder. My child struggles almost the whole year crying, scared and it's not just [REDACTED], 3 of them in the class and [REDACTED] always showed extra support to them and everyone. There's no way the teacher can handle those kids melting down everyday and attending to the rest of the class in order for them not to get distracted. This are little kids needing extra help to build their confidence to be able to succeed in the future. That extra help from ECE's goes a long way more than you could imagine. I was confident to send to their field trip as there's extra help to look after them. I know what it meant for them (the kids) as working in the health care field attending the needs of our patients and clients in the community, I know how they feel when their Visits, Needs, care are not being met as we don't have enough people to work and do it. They are anxious, scared and always worries if they are going to get a visit. The same with children who goes to school. It makes them confident and secured that there's an extra help attending to their needs.

I know we are deficit of our budget but this is something that is IMPORTANT and will make and Impact for the kids, teachers and parents as well.

Again, thank you for reading this lengthy message or mine. I appreciate your time...

Maria F [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] School Parent

Jenny Seal

From: Jennifer E [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 6:54 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: Early Childhood Educator's

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Good morning,

I want to take a minute and say that I am sorry, that we are in this position to have to make budget cuts, and the positions of Early Childhood Educators are on the table. I am sure this decision is a hard one. I understand it's probably a hard decision, because they are so needed.

I like to think I am well connected in our community, with the parents and teachers, at our school Millstream Elementary. If ECE's are taken out of our schools, this would be a huge loss. My family has personally benefited from the wonderful ECE's in our kindergarten classes. My [REDACTED] had a bit of a tough time transitioning into school and I couldn't imagine what it would have been for him, had it not been for these educators.

I think we need to desperately reconsider this decision. There has to be another way to stay on budget while not cutting staff. These educators are the backbone to our children's education. Not to mention, the teachers right hand.

There is nothing more important to our family than the health and education of our children. Losing our Early Childhood Educator's would definitely be a step backward and a negative impact on our children. I hope you will make a decision that keeps us moving forward not backwards.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Kindly,
Jenny E [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: kayr [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 8:04 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECEs in Kindergarten

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Dear Members of the School Board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed removal of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) from kindergarten classrooms due to budget cuts.

ECEs play a critical role in supporting the academic, emotional, social, and behavioural development of young children during some of the most formative years of their lives. Kindergarten classrooms are complex learning environments, and the partnership between teachers and ECEs is essential to creating safe, inclusive, and effective spaces where children can thrive.

Removing ECEs will have significant consequences not only for students, but also for teachers, families, and the broader school community. These professionals provide individualized support, help foster emotional regulation and positive peer relationships, assist children with diverse learning needs, and contribute greatly to classroom stability and success. Their presence allows educators to better meet the needs of all learners.

As a parent/community member, I am deeply concerned that this decision prioritizes short-term financial savings over the long-term well-being and educational outcomes of children. Cuts at the kindergarten level are particularly troubling because early intervention and support are widely recognized as foundational to future academic achievement and social development.

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider this proposal and to explore alternative solutions that preserve ECE positions within kindergarten classrooms. Investing in early education is an investment in the future success of our children and our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will carefully reflect on the impact this decision will have on students, families, and educators alike.

Kayla R [REDACTED]

Sent from my Galaxy

Jenny Seal

From: Francisca C [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 11:22 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: in support of retaining ECEs in Kindergarten classrooms

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Dear Members of the School Board,

As we were unable to attend yesterday's meeting, we wanted to share our concerns in writing regarding the potential elimination of ECEs from kindergarten classrooms.

Our school has a unique reality: every child enters kindergarten learning French for the first time. On day one, they are simultaneously acquiring a new language, adapting to a new academic structure, and navigating a diverse classroom community with peers from many different backgrounds. This is an extraordinary amount to ask of a five-year-old, and we think most people would agree that one teacher simply cannot do this alone. Managing a room of 20 young children is already a demanding job. Doing it while guiding every single one of them through language immersion, emotional regulation, and social adaptation at the same time is not realistic without support.

In our own experience, the ECE was a crucial bridge in this process: a second pair of eyes, hands, and heart that made it possible for our child to feel safe enough to learn. There were moments that would have been truly overwhelming without that presence.

We worry that cutting ECE's would mean more behavioral challenges born of frustration, children falling behind, and less learning time for everyone. And what worries us most is the long-term cost: children losing confidence, remedial programs, delayed interventions. Kindergarten is the foundation, and investing here prevents far greater costs later.

We respectfully urge the Board to protect this role and find budget solutions elsewhere. Our kindergartners deserve a real chance to succeed in this new journey, and a good start can set up what the rest of their years look like.

Thank you sincerely for your time and for everything you do for our school community.
 Respectfully,

Francisca C [REDACTED] & Miguel B [REDACTED]
 Parents of a [REDACTED] Kindergartner

Jenny Seal

From: Samantha A [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 11:22 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECEs in the classroom

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I am writing to advocate that ECEs remain in the classroom in SD62. As a teacher as well as a parent in this district it is an essential role to support those students who are just beginning their school experience in our district. I strongly believe that ALL Kindergarten classrooms should have an ECE quite frankly but bare minimum, those that are already in the classrooms should stay. If you want to cut budgets, cut it in the school board office. We need people 'on the ground' more than ever right now. So many students are at risk and behaviour is showing no improvement, the more adults and support classes have right now the better.

Thank you for your time,
I hope that ECEs remain in our K classroom!

Samantha [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Sue I [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 3:37 PM
To: Trustees
Cc: Paul Block; Emily M [REDACTED]
Subject: SD 62 - ECEBC Letter of Concern
Attachments: SD 62 - ECEBC Letter of Concern May 20-2026.pdf

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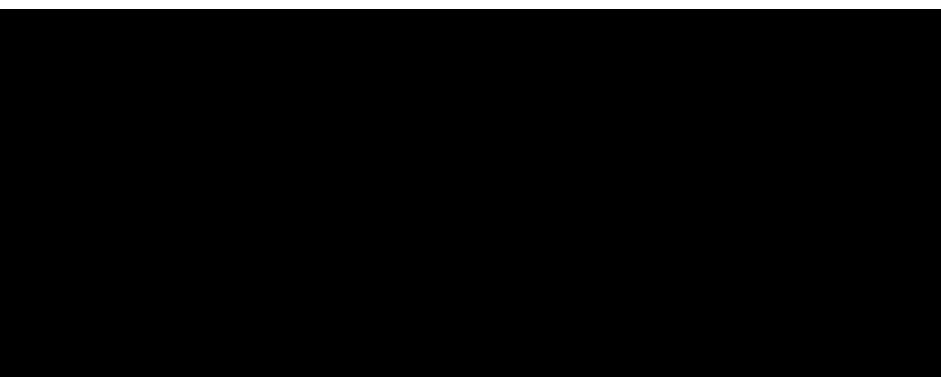
To whom it may concern,

Please find attached a letter of concern for your upcoming discussion regarding the proposed closure of the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and Teacher Partnership Program within School District 62.

If you require any further information from the Early Childhood Educators of BC, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support of the early years.

Sincerely, on behalf of,
Emily M [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Executive Director



I would like to acknowledge that I live, learn and work on the stolen traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples and the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations land. I thank the traditional land keepers and commit to learning as an ally and moving forward with an open mind and good heart. ECEBC is learning actions that uphold our commitment to allyship.



May 20, 2026

Dear Sooke School District Trustees,

On behalf of the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC), I am writing to express our deep concern regarding the potential decision to eliminate the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and Teacher Partnership Program and the resulting loss of 11 ECE professional roles within kindergarten classrooms.

Since 1969 ECEBC has worked to advance the quality and professionalism of early care and learning. As part of our ethical responsibility to the profession, we strategically commit our time and resources to educating the sector and community by, investigating, and promoting the development of strong public policies and best practices that are based in research and evidence.

The removal of ECEs from kindergarten classrooms significantly reduces the relational, pedagogical, and developmental supports available to children during one of the most critical periods of growth, learning, and transition.

ECEs bring specialized expertise in early childhood development, relationship-based practice, emotional regulation, play-based learning, and responsive care. Their presence in kindergarten classrooms helps create environments where children feel safe, connected, and emotionally supported as they navigate the transition into formal schooling. ECEs are uniquely skilled in fostering emotional literacy, co-regulation, belonging, resilience, and inclusive participation during the foundational early years.

The elimination of these positions is especially concerning given existing data demonstrating significant levels of vulnerability among children entering school within SD62's service area. At a time when children, families, and educators are navigating increasing complexity in early learning environments, reducing supports in kindergarten classrooms undermines the collective commitment to children's well-being and long-term success.

Research consistently demonstrates that early intervention and responsive relational support in the early years have profound and lasting impacts on educational achievement, mental health, social inclusion, and lifelong well-being. Kindergarten classrooms are increasingly diverse learning environments where children arrive with varying developmental, emotional, sensory, cultural, and learning needs. The collaborative partnership between certified teachers and ECEs strengthens the capacity of classrooms to respond meaningfully to all children, not solely those



identified as vulnerable. In addition, it supports the global goals articulated in the BC Early Learning Framework.

ECEs play a vital role in supporting transitions, scaffolding peer relationships, facilitating inquiry through play, and nurturing inclusive classroom communities grounded in exploration, creativity, movement, and connection. They also contribute significantly to strengthening communication and partnerships with families, helping bridge relationships between home and school during a foundational developmental stage.

As awareness continues to grow regarding children's mental health and wellness, now is not the time to reduce early years expertise and relational supports within early learning environments. Investment in early childhood education from birth through age eight is not an optional enhancement to public education; it is a necessary and evidence-informed foundation for equitable, responsive, and inclusive learning systems.

The ECE and Teacher Partnership Program reflects a meaningful commitment to child-centred and developmentally appropriate practice. These programs should be celebrated and upheld as the vision moving forward. Its removal represents a significant loss for children, families, educators, and school communities.

We strongly urge the Board of Education to reconsider the elimination of this program and to prioritize continued investment in collaborative early learning supports that honour the rights, dignity, well-being, and diverse needs of young children.

Sincerely,

E.M. [REDACTED]

Emily M [REDACTED]

ECEBC [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Uelen T [REDACTED]
Sent: May 21, 2026 1:47 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Maintaining ECEs Means Supporting Students and Teachers

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Dear School Board Trustees,

I am writing as a parent to express my strong support for keeping Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in kindergarten classrooms across our elementary schools.

ECEs play an essential role in creating a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment for young children during one of the most important stages of development. Their presence helps ensure that students receive the individual attention, emotional support, and guidance they need to succeed socially, emotionally, and academically.

As a parent, I have seen firsthand the positive impact ECEs have on children. My own kids love and appreciate the ECEs they work with every day. They build trusting relationships with students, help children feel confident and included, and provide invaluable support throughout the school day.

ECEs are also a critical support within classrooms, especially given the realities of teacher-to-student ratios. Kindergarten classrooms are busy, dynamic environments where children have a wide range of learning, behavioural, emotional, and physical needs. ECEs help ensure students receive timely support and attention while allowing teachers to focus more effectively on instruction and learning outcomes. Removing or reducing ECE positions would place additional strain on educators and could negatively affect the quality of learning and care students receive.

Beyond academics, ECEs contribute to children's emotional well-being, conflict resolution, communication skills, and daily routines. Their training and expertise in early childhood development complement the work of classroom teachers and strengthen the overall educational experience.

I respectfully urge the Board to continue investing in and protecting ECE positions within kindergarten classrooms. Maintaining these roles demonstrates a commitment to supporting students, educators, and families alike.

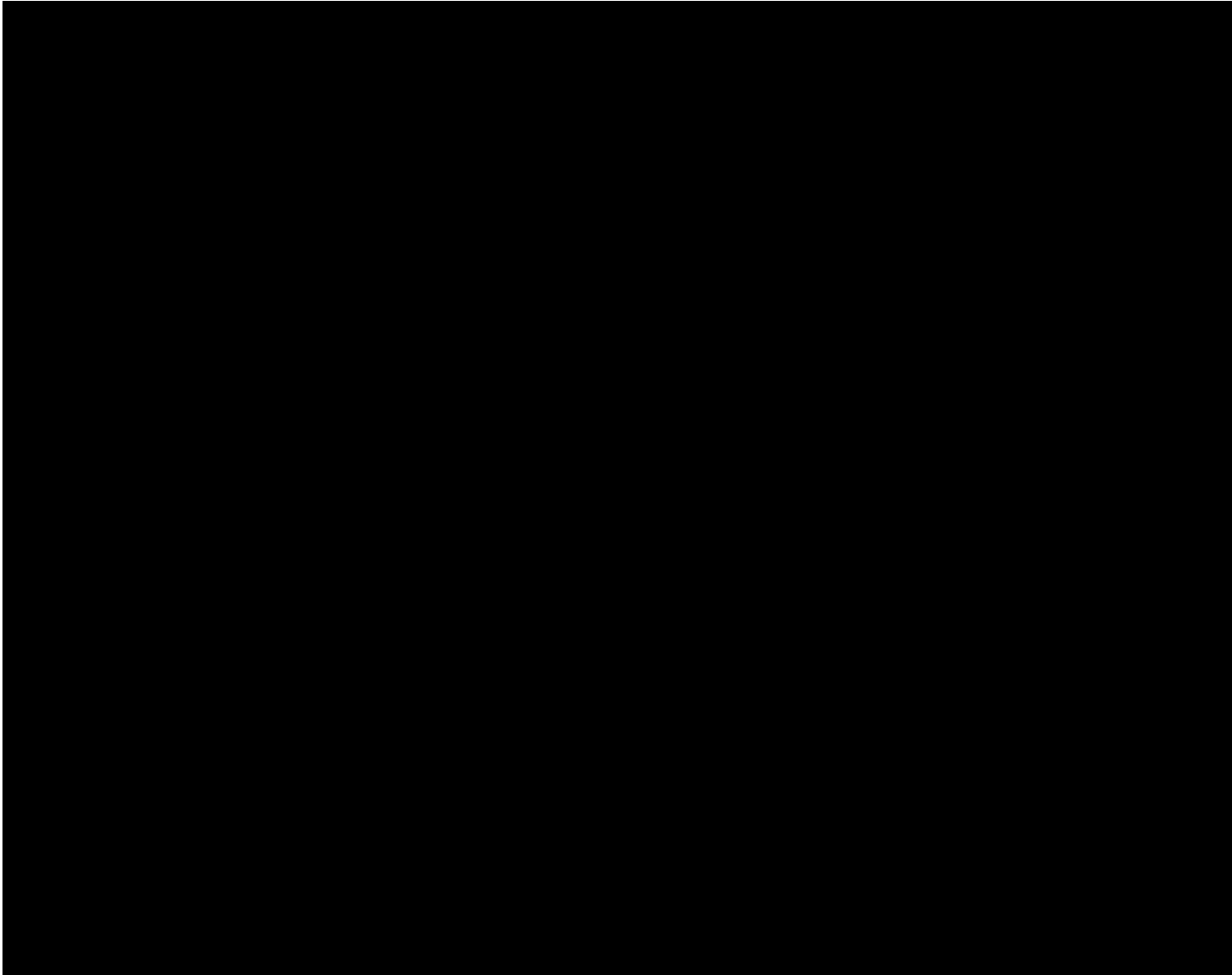
Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued dedication to our schools and children.

Sincerely,

Uelen T [REDACTED]

Parent of students at [REDACTED] Elementary, [REDACTED], BC.

Jenny Seal



From: [REDACTED] EstherS [REDACTED]
Date: May 20, 2026 at 5:08:56 PM PDT
To: "Amanda Dowhy (Trustee)" <adowhy@sd62.bc.ca>, "Cendra Beaton (Trustee)" <cbeaton@sd62.bc.ca>, "Christine Lervold (Trustee)" <clervold@sd62.bc.ca>, "A. Russell Chipps (Trustee)" <archipps@sd62.bc.ca>, "Trudy Spiller (Trustee)" <tspiller@sd62.bc.ca>
Subject: Clarification on Paul Block's comment

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Dear Trustee,

I attended the meeting yesterday evening and would like to thank you for listening to those of us who expressed concerns regarding the possible termination of the ECE in Kindergarten program.

I will not repeat what others stated yesterday, but I would like to clarify one point. Paul Block stated that only 11 classes were supported. When several of us reacted by saying, “No,” we were told to be quiet, which was understandable in the context of the meeting. However, Mr. Block’s statement is incorrect.

I was one of the ECEs involved in the program from its beginning until my retirement in June 2025. At no point did I have the luxury of working with only one teacher in one classroom. Depending on the year, I worked in two classrooms, and in some years, three classrooms.

I simply wanted to ensure that accurate information is being considered going forward.

Thank you again for your time and for listening to the concerns being raised.

Thank you.

Esther S [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Brian Jonker <bjonker@sd62.bc.ca>
Sent: June 1, 2026 1:21 PM
To: Jenny Seal
Subject: FW: Help save our ECE's

-----Original Message-----

From: Suzanne M [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 8:21 PM
To: ravi.parmar.mla@leg.bc.ca
Cc: Lisa Leclerc <lleclerc@sd62.bc.ca>; Amanda Dowhy (Trustee) <adowhy@sd62.bc.ca>; A. Russell Chipps (Trustee) <archipps@sd62.bc.ca>; Paul Block <pblock@sd62.bc.ca>; ddescon@sd62.bc.ca; Brian Jonker <bjonker@sd62.bc.ca>; lisabeareecc.minister@gov.bc.ca; dm.education@gov.bc.ca; Christine Lervold (Trustee) <clervold@sd62.bc.ca>
Subject: Help save our ECE's

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Attention all!!

I am dismayed at the proposal to cut the K/ECE partnership within the Sooke School District. This partnership has made a positive difference in the lived experiences of the children, families and school staff as well as the wider community. Listen to what the families have to say. Listen to the kindergarten teachers. Listen to the ECE's!!

Please make yourself familiar with the EDI Metrics. Take a look at the facts...the harsh reality that 41% of the children entering kindergarten in the Sooke School District are at risk in AT LEAST one or more domains. These numbers don't lie!

How do you propose to keep student support for our youngest learners when you plan to cut this K/ECE partnership within our district? Your budget clearly does not reflect the need to help support children and families. It's sad that their education is only a dollar number to all of you.

Last night at the budget meeting you spoke so proudly of the \$40,000 survey that was sent and completed by approximately 1300 families. In the "big picture" that is not a very good turnout. Actually the response received was less than the enrollment of 1 of the high school. Please explain how this \$40,000 benefits all students? IT DOESN'T! And if I am correct from this survey the response you received was they wanted to see "less impact on the classrooms" How is cutting 11 full time ECE's that each partner with 1-3 kindergarten classes per day not have a negative impact on students social, and emotional well-being?

This board of trustees has to do better than this!
 Cuts made directly to student learning are not acceptable.

Sincerely
 Suzanne M [REDACTED]
 Proud Early Childhood Educator

Sent from my iPhone

Jenny Seal

From: enid e [REDACTED]
Sent: May 21, 2026 8:55 AM
To: Trustees; [REDACTED] Frances Krusekopf
Subject: elimination of ECE's from kindergarten
Attachments: Sooke SD Nov2024.pdf

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Dear Trustees,

I am writing to strongly encourage you to keep the ECE-Kindergarten teacher partnership. If we want children to succeed in the school career we should ensure they feel welcome from the beginning.

Last year Dr. Jodi S [REDACTED] and I put together a report of our research into the partnership of Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators. I have attached it here for your review. The importance of that partnership to ensure a good beginning for young children in their academic journey was clear. As we said in our report, “ the importance of creating a rich and positive first formal school experience for each child can make a difference to their subsequent years in school.”

We understood that SD 62 is a diverse community with a variety of strengths and challenges that can make teaching complex. At a time when children are most vulnerable, school must welcome them and support their learning to the best of our abilities. Together teachers and early childhood educators formed a partnership who could engage all the students more fully than one teacher with a class of new-to-school learners. We heard from teachers, educators, and children that this was a model that worked by creating a safe space that could support the needs of different children.

It would be a shame to throw out a successful program that supports the beginning of a child’s educational journey. Please read the report and imagine yourself as a five year old kindergartener. Listen to the children’s voices.

Thank you, enid e [REDACTED]

enid e [REDACTED], phd
[REDACTED]
Victoria, BC

“The land is the real teacher. All we need as students is mindfulness. Paying attention is a form of reciprocity with the living world, receiving the gifts with open eyes and open heart.”
Robin Kimmerer

Final Report

Listening to the voices of Kindergarten Teachers, Early Childhood Educators, and Young Children on Their Experiences of the Kindergarten-ECE Partnership in Sooke School District Kindergarten Classrooms



Prepared by:

Dr. Jodi S [REDACTED]

Dr. Enid E [REDACTED]

Victoria, BC

November 2024

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I like playing with the parachute in the gym with my friends and my teachers – it's so much fun!

Kinsley, Age 5

Acknowledgments

The researchers wish to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation, Scia'new Nation, and Nuu-chah-nulth Pacheedaht Nation within which the Sooke School District operates. We also respectfully acknowledge the kindergarten children, early childhood educators, and kindergarten teachers who graciously welcomed us to their classrooms and shared their perspectives so willingly.

Executive Summary

Since 2018 Sooke School District has utilized a teacher-early childhood educator partnership to optimize children's first year in public school, Kindergarten. We listened to individuals involved in such an educational partnership in two different schools, as well as the children in their classrooms.

Our findings are that:

- Teachers and educators felt that the partnership provided the mutual support needed to establish a caring environment that could attend to both individual and group learning
- Teachers and educators expressed that the value of early education is not always appreciated for its impact on how children will view their school experience
- The children understood that “two teachers” meant there was “more help” for everyone.
- The skills and knowledge provided by an early childhood educator is not always visible in the larger picture, as mentioned in the [REDACTED] discussion

The importance of creating a rich and positive first formal school experience for each child can make a difference to their subsequent years in school.

Introduction

In 2012 the Sooke School District began the Nature Kindergarten (NK) program. To ensure an optimal learning environment for the children as they learned outside, an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) was hired to work alongside the classroom teacher.

In the first two years of the Nature Kindergarten program at Sangster Elementary School, the partnership received support from a steering committee and Dr. Enid [REDACTED] (Camosun College) who visited the program on a weekly basis to learn and play with the children and educators ([REDACTED] 2019; [REDACTED] & Krusekopf, 2018). The program provided the children a good start on their educational journey ([REDACTED] et al., 2014). Part of the success was the collaboration of teacher and ECE.

In the fall of 2017, a second NK program was initiated at Saseenos Elementary School, resulting in the formation of a second Kindergarten teacher-ECE partnership. School District leadership considered the Sangster partnership to be successful and replicated that model at Saseenos.

In both settings, the skills and knowledge of the ECE supported and enhanced the teacher's expertise and provided support to the children's start to school. In 2018, the district built upon this success and eight additional Kindergarten – ECE partnerships were developed in regular kindergarten programs. In 2021, a guiding framework (Figure 1) was collaboratively developed by the teachers, ECEs, school district personnel from the Sooke School District Curriculum Department and additional stakeholders.

The Early Learning & Child Care Department in the Sooke School District currently supports 15 Kindergarten teacher – ECE partnerships, including the Nature Kindergartens and other early childhood programs and initiatives.

Impact of the Kindergarten-ECE Partnership on the Broader Community

Research has consistently revealed that investment in early childhood education produces positive returns for the child, the family, and the broader community (Geelhoed et al., 2020; Heckman, Garcia, Ermini Leaf, & Prados, 2019). Benefits of positive early childhood education experiences in the short term include the development of resilience, improved cognitive skills, reduced school absenteeism, and reduced risk of disease. Longer term benefits of early intervention have shown to be significant across multiple sectors including health, education, and social welfare (Geelhoed et al., 2020).

Research indicates that children who have experienced early years interventions may have better employment pathways, improved health, and reduced dependency on welfare, which have the potential to result in reductions in inequality (Reynolds et al., 2017).

In relation to the efficacy of a co-teaching model (teacher and ECE in kindergarten classrooms), qualitative studies have identified factors that ECEs believe are helpful in co-teaching. These factors include having positive administrative support, planning time, training, and the

compatibility of the team members (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). A co-teaching kindergarten model initiated in another Canadian school district (Underwood et al., 2016) identified planning time and professional development as critical to the co-teaching model, with varying degrees of administrative support for their work. Underwood et al., note that the power dynamics in relationships was important for both kindergarten teachers and ECEs. For ECEs to be contributors and for the children to be beneficiaries of their expertise, Underwood et. al's participants stated that their relationship needed to be grounded in respect and communication, (Scruggs et al., 2007). This was also a significant finding from our data.

Research Process

Our intent was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the teachers, ECEs and children, and their perspectives on those experiences, in this unique model of early education in the public school system. We hoped to be able to explore the lived experiences of these teachers and ECEs who support kindergarten children's learning and development. We also wanted to document the children's understandings of this partnership in the classroom by asking them to share their perspectives on the learning and environment through modes (e.g., storytelling, conversation, drawing) of their choosing. We spent time in the classroom and were able to informally observe the relationship between the ECE and teacher and their interactions with the children.

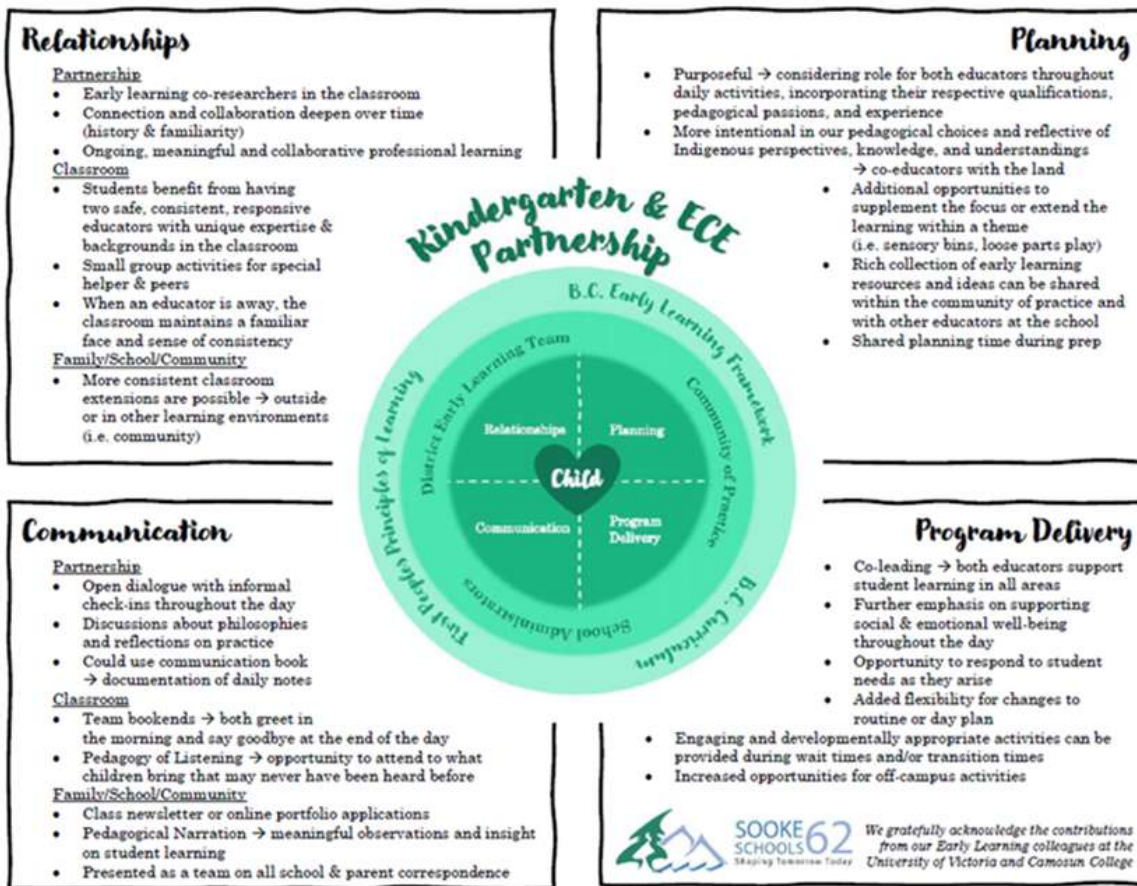
In this study, the researchers, we collected data in two kindergarten classrooms using the following data collection methods: observations; participant-observations (e.g., playing with the children); conversations with the adults and children; and the collection of children's multimodal texts (e.g., drawings, oral stories).

The objectives of this study were:

- i) to examine the ways kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators collaborated in their practice with young learners, including learning of the highlights and challenges of this partnership;
- ii) to investigate the impact of this pedagogical model on the children who are experiencing this partnership in the classroom by asking them to share their views on their learning and learning environment;
- iii) to assemble and analyze the personal narratives from the kindergarten teachers, early childhood educators, and children which will contribute to our evolving understanding of the importance of creating supportive and inclusive spaces for young children that promote interconnected learning and relationships; and,
- iv) to develop new ways of thinking and being in relation to supporting kindergarten children, and the impact and possibilities of collaborative partnerships with early childhood educators in kindergarten classrooms to foster intercultural understanding, curiosity, wonder, and mutual respect.

Figure 1

Kindergarten and ECE Partnership model, Sooke School Board



Research Participants

The research participants included two Kindergarten teachers (Andrea [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] Elementary School; Michelle [REDACTED] – [REDACTED] Elementary School) and two Early Childhood Educators (Monique [REDACTED] – [REDACTED]; Anne [REDACTED] – [REDACTED]). Andrea has a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education and Michelle has a Master of Education in Language & Literacy Education. Monique and Anne have both received education in early childhood learning and development. Both ECEs were very familiar with the school communities as they were the former StrongStart¹ educators at their respective schools. All the adults took part in multiple conversations throughout the study regarding their perspectives on the teacher-ECE partnership.

¹ “StrongStart BC programs provide rich learning environments designed for early learning development – language, physical, cognitive, social and emotional. Qualified early childhood educators lead learning activities where children find opportunities to make friends and interact with others of similar ages.”

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/support/programs/strongstart-bc>

The ECEs were not in the kindergarten classrooms full-time. Anne was in the kindergarten classroom 53% of the week (she was also assigned to other primary classrooms in the school), and Monique was in the kindergarten classroom 70% of the week (she was also assigned to another primary classroom and the school library). The teachers and ECEs provided informed consent to participate in this project.

Across both classrooms, 25 families provided consent for their child to participate; 25 children were involved in the study. The children were 5 and 6 years old, and several of the children received additional Educational Assistant and English Language Learning support. Some children also had Individual Education Plans. In addition to receiving adult caregivers' consent for their children to participate in the study, the researchers also acquired the children's assent to engage in discussions with them about their classroom experiences. The children shared their views on the model through conversations, and by creating drawings and sharing stories of their experiences in the classroom.

Context & Site Visits

Data was collected with the participating kindergarten classes at [REDACTED] Elementary School by [REDACTED] and at [REDACTED] Elementary School by [REDACTED]. Both schools have an enrollment of students from Kindergarten-Grade 5 and have StrongStart programs.

The full-day and half-day site visits took place in the kindergarten classrooms, outdoor school playgrounds, outdoor classroom, school garden, and at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park on:

[REDACTED] Elementary School:

- May 2, 9, 16, 27, June 4, 11, 18, 2024

[REDACTED] Elementary School:

- February 21, March 4, April 15, May 7, 28, June 7, 17, 24, 2024

Findings

The partnerships

Based on our observations and through conversations with the participants, it was obvious that both partnerships were grounded in principles of mutual respect and admiration for each other and both teaching teams were caring, supportive, and purposeful in their interactions with the children. Both partnerships shared their perspectives on their collaboration, the skill set each brought to the classroom, and their views on early learning, care, and development. In one context, the teacher and ECE described their relationship as “being like a marriage.” In both partnerships, we observed the ease and comfort the teaching teams had with each other, most likely due to their long-standing partnerships in the kindergarten classroom, and their compatible views on teaching, children, and how to effectively work together.

Due to the composition and complexity of both kindergarten classrooms, both teaching teams expressed their desire to have the ECE in the classroom full-time. Children arrive in kindergarten from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with a variety of social skills and different emotional needs. The teachers and ECEs often discussed the social-emotional development of children and felt this aspect of children's development played a central role in planning their pedagogy.

All team members were able to discuss their values and philosophies of early childhood education and come to a common understanding and approach while also appreciating each other's strengths. The partnership model enabled the educators to share their perspectives on children, approaches to behaviour, and on ways to negotiate the rhythm and movement of the day with each other. They appreciated having another professional in the classroom to discuss plans for individual children and communication with families.

Finally, the teams shared how each member brought knowledge of educational practice from different fields that complemented each other, enabling a rich experience for the educators, children, and families. By being there working together most of the time, they hoped to provide continuity for the children and build the children's trust and feeling of safety within the classroom.

What was heard: [REDACTED] ***School Teacher and Early Childhood Educator***

Michelle and Anne were eager to share their experiences. They spoke passionately of their work together. In our discussion they often finished each other's sentences and expanded on each other's points. Conversation flowed easily back and forth. It was clear that they had had many deep discussions about children, education and their collaboration and were focused on children's wholistic growth and development.

Teacher and ECE felt that children needed to learn a certain amount of compliance to succeed in school; children had to follow directions and understand school, as well as individual teacher's expectations. In kindergarten, children have to learn to walk down the hall quietly, get into line, shift to accommodate the "bell", tidy up for next activity, take care of themselves (put on coats, shoes, put away lunch). Children also must learn to wait, shift attention and follow the "rules". Holding these ideas in one's head and knowing when to do what requires a certain level of maturity that not all children will have achieved by the time they arrive at the kindergarten door.

To support children as both individually and as members of a group, Michelle may have led an activity while Anne documented or dealt with a particular child; sometimes it was the other way around. They trusted each other and played to each other's strengths as they knew each other well.

Together, they felt they were able to offer the children more opportunities than if there was only one teacher in the classroom. As they worked together, they felt that they were able to better support children's social and emotional well-being. Michelle mentioned that she felt less "burnt

out” having Anne in the classroom to discuss children and families and to offer a variety of activities. They shared a “child first philosophy” and felt that hugging or a reassuring hand on a child was completely congruent with their shared philosophy.

Michelle and Anne discussed how many of the kindergarten children are missing consistent out-of-school connections in their family lives and that school is their connection to the larger community.

What was heard: [REDACTED] **School Teacher and Early Childhood Educator**

Andrea and Monique displayed a natural ease with each other and were happy to share their experiences in the classroom. They both enjoyed learning from each other, supporting each other, and they engaged with the kindergarten children in respectful, calm, and engaging ways. Their commitment to early learning, young children’s social and emotional well-being, and children’s overall wholistic development was evident during each visit.

As previously stated, supporting and scaffolding the children’s social-emotional development was a significant focus of the teaching team. Assisting the children in problem-solving, self-regulation, and supporting and nurturing respectful peer relationships were consistently observed in the classroom. Documenting the children’s growth in these areas was also evident, as displays of the children’s artwork, conversations, and other forms of learning were visible throughout the classroom. The teaching team also valued outdoor engagement and play and recognized how many of the kindergarten children benefitted from the wide, open spaces of the playground, the forested area in front of the school, and local outdoor field trips.

The pedagogical model used by the teaching team was child-centred and balanced. Andrea and Monique both read storybooks to the children, modelled how to participate in new learning activities, and when there was conflict in the classroom between children or a group of children, both adults took turns helping resolve issues.

Throughout the data collection sessions, it was obvious that Andrea and Monique were a cohesive team in the classroom, and their relationship was grounded in mutual respect. Another strong component of their bond was the humour and laughter they displayed when relaying stories about their experiences with the children, and their enjoyment of working with each other. Their dedication to early learning, young children, and their families make them an exemplary teaching team who provided children with optimal learning experiences in a safe, welcoming, and caring environment.

What was heard: Challenges

Both teaching teams identified challenges to their partnership.

While they saw Kindergarten as critical to children’s educational experience, they felt that this understanding was not always shared by their colleagues or the community in general.

In both schools the ECE's experienced being pulled to other classrooms due to staff absences or other identified needs. Teachers in other Kindergartens or Grade 1's needed another skilled person to help support the learning in the classroom.

Michelle also noted that it was important for her to let go some of the control in the classroom planning and activities so that she and Anne could have a partnership and share the power in the classroom. However, this could be a challenge in some partnerships.

What was heard: The children's perspectives

In our research, both adults and children were provided with opportunities to share their perspectives on this unique pedagogical approach/teaching model in a kindergarten classroom. We believe providing opportunities for young children to share their views on their lived experiences in the classroom has the potential to transform teachers' and ECEs' pedagogical practice and impact the way these adults support, value, and celebrate young children's experiences and development. We believe this is significant, as historically, young children have rarely been asked to share their perspectives on their school experiences in research. Many contemporary early childhood researchers view children as competent experts on their own experiences who actively shape their own lives, cultures and spaces (Lansdown, 2005, United Nations, 1989). In this study, we drew on this perspective by asking the young children to share their experiences through drawings and conversations about their lived experiences in kindergarten.

█ *Elementary School*

The kindergarten children at █ Elementary School articulated their thoughts in multiple ways that included individual and group conversations with the researcher, and by drawing images of what they liked best about school and the kindergarten teacher - ECE partnership. The following three images and narratives represent a snapshot of the data.



Figure 2: We are going to the campsite at school with both my teachers – I really like being outside.

Charlotte, Age 5

Figure 3



Figure 3: I like going outside and making concrete on the playground. I like having two teachers because they let us play with toys and police stuff.

Jaxton, Age 5



Figure 4: I love playing with cars on the carpet with my friends. I like having two teachers because then there's more people to help!

Maddox, Age 6

Elementary School

The children at [redacted] also shared their views on school and on having a kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator in the classroom. In small groups, and sometimes using puppets, the children discussed what they might tell someone about kindergarten.

The children met in two groups of four or five to share their thoughts on kindergarten and their perspectives on having a teacher and ECE. When asked what they might tell another child about kindergarten, both groups acknowledged they were scared when they started kindergarten. One child felt “shy and nervous”, another “felt weird” and one child said she was “sad to leave her

preschool”. One child wanted to be in Ms. [REDACTED] class because she knew she was a “good teacher”. The children liked both Ms. [REDACTED] and Ms. Anne; one said that “Ms. Anne makes me laugh” and another said, “Ms. [REDACTED] is nice.” Children in one group said that having two teachers was better because more people are helped. Other comments were that the “teachers keep you safe” and “make you feel better when you are sad” and “help you learn”. One child said that the “teachers talk it out with us”.

The children all agreed there was a great deal to learn in kindergarten; they had to learn about writing, painting, and counting, and also “when to talk”, “not to throw wood chips”, “to be safe and to be kind”, and “to push in your seat”. As it was the end of the school year when they spoke to the interviewer, at that point they felt they were “used to it” and that they had friends and school was “fun”.

At [REDACTED] the ECE cooked with the children once a week, did a weekly nature walk, and engaged the children in gardening in the school gardens; the teacher focused on the literacy and numeracy activities. While each adult had taken on responsibility for certain activities, either of them could move in to support a group activity while the other supported a child who needed attention. If a particular child was struggling, either of the adults could help them so that an activity or lesson could continue. Several times, [REDACTED] observed one adult focusing on a child who was struggling emotionally or who did not understand the expectations due to language or comprehension problems, while the other carried on the activity with the group. This collaboration minimized disruptions.

Discussions with the children and observations in the classrooms made it clear that children felt comfortable and safe with both adults in their classroom; some even articulated an awareness that more children could be helped when there was another adult in the room. The collaboration of ECE and teacher seemed to be a positive step to insure the children were able to truly engage with school and feel that it was a welcoming space for them. Both teacher and ECEs have the knowledge and skills to support the group as well as individual children. These abilities overlap and reinforce each other. Developing a positive image of school and feeling validated as learners can help to start a child’s school experience on a positive note.

Discussion

While this was a small study, we clearly heard from teachers and ECEs that there were significant benefits of the partnership model for the teachers, educators and children.

We found that the positive impacts of this partnership related, in particular to the participants feeling highly effective in their work, valued and supported in their roles, and respected and celebrated for their expertise and deep investment in the children’s holistic learning. Being able to work within a relationship of trust and collegiality, teacher and educator were able to use their skills and knowledge together to create a caring learning environment. As Michelle said, when supporting each other they were less likely to “burn out”.

The children seemed to understand that having “two teachers” enabled them to engage in more diverse learning experiences in a safe environment; “two teachers” meant “more help.” Having two engaged and supportive educators in the classroom was perceived by the children to be a benefit. “Two teachers” meaning “more help” was also confirmed during our observations of the adults and children engaging with each other in the classroom, on the school playground, in the garden and outdoor classroom, and on a field trip to the beach. Both school partnerships addressed the importance of the presence of two consistent educators, both teacher and ECE, who brought their own sophisticated understanding of children into the classroom and outdoors.

Our hope is that the knowledge shared from this study will assist administrators, school district personnel, and policy makers to become more aware of, and value, the importance of creating a rich and positive first formal school experience for each child *through the creation of teacher/ECE partnerships*. We also note the value of drawing on various pedagogical approaches, inclusive practices and teaching models-- such as the teacher–ECE model demonstrated here-- that supports children's holistic development and might help to pave the way for a child’s future success in school.

Recently, the Sooke School District heard a presentation from UBC’s Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) Research team. HELP monitors the well-being of young children in BC through several measures. Their presentation focused on the Early Development Index, which asks kindergarten teachers to assess the children they have in their classrooms in terms of language development, physical health, social competences, emotional maturity, and communication skills. Based on the Sooke EDI data, the number of children with one or more vulnerabilities entering kindergarten has increased from 33% in 2019/2020 to 41% in 2023/24; the EDI data indicates that almost half of children entering kindergarten could use support.

Kindergarten is a child’s introduction to the next 12 years of their lives in the public schools. Hopefully, the welcome they receive in their first year makes each child feel they have a place in the school community and provides them with the support they need to succeed.

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Appendix



February 20th, 2024

Information and Consent Letter

Research Project Title: Valuing the Perspectives of Kindergarten Teachers, Early Childhood Educators, and Young Children on the Efficacy of the Kindergarten-ECE Partnership in the Classroom

Dear Potential Participant,

In October 2023, Frances Krusekopf (District Principal, Early Learning & Child Care, Sooke School District) contacted Dr. Enid E [REDACTED] and myself (Dr. Jodi S [REDACTED], [REDACTED]) about the possibility of engaging in a research project that will examine the efficacy of the Kindergarten-ECE partnership in the Sooke School District. In December 2023, Frances, Enid, and I also had a meeting with the outgoing CEO/Superintendent of Schools, Scott Stinson, who supported this research initiative. In this project, we are planning to investigate the ways 2 teaching teams in 2 different Sooke kindergarten classrooms are supporting the children in the classroom, along with challenges (and successes) of this pedagogical model. Dr. S [REDACTED] will visit/collect data in 1 classroom, and Dr. [REDACTED] will visit/collect data in the other classroom. We also plan to ask the kindergarten children about their current experiences with 2 adult supporters in the classroom. Our hope is that this research will enable us to develop new ways of thinking and being in relation to supporting kindergarten children, and the impact and possibilities of collaborative partnerships with early childhood educators in kindergarten classrooms. We are requesting your consent to visit your classroom approximately 6 times (1 visit to introduce ourselves and ask any questions you may have about the research; 1 full-day initial visit; and 4 half-day visits). An additional full or half-day visit may be required to collect data from the children. We are also requesting your consent to participate in 1 interview in the spring of 2024. Our conversation will focus on:

- 1) *the ways you are working with your colleague to support kindergarten children*
- 2) *the barriers or challenges of this pedagogical model*
- 3) *the highlights and successes of this teaching approach*

Confidentiality

If you choose, your identity will be kept confidential. You will also have the option to allow your first name and photograph to be used in the study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw from the study, the information you provided will not be used in the research and the data will be destroyed. Please contact me ([REDACTED]) if you wish to withdraw from the study.

Risks and Benefits

There are not any foreseeable risks for you in regards to your involvement in this research. The potential benefits of this study to participants and the education community include: i) the kindergarten children you are supporting will be provided with an opportunity to share their perspectives on their school experiences with you; ii) you will be provided with an opportunity to share your journey in relation to supporting kindergarten children in collaboration with a colleague; and, iii) this study will provide information to the broader education community and policy makers on the ways kindergarten children can be supported using a unique and innovative pedagogical model.

However, there is a potential risk of lack of anonymity due to the small participant sample size, and if you choose to include your photograph in a child-friendly book about the study that will be stored in the school library.

All data (interview transcripts) will be stored on password protected digital files (sync.com) on my (Dr. [REDACTED]) laptop computer that will only be accessed by me and Dr. [REDACTED]. The data will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the study (digital files will be deleted).

Sharing Research Findings

Our intent is to share what we learn from the study with university and college students, teachers and administrators, and colleagues at national and international conferences, such as the European Early Childhood Research Association Conference. The findings will also be shared in peer-reviewed early childhood journals (e.g., *Young Children*), and in a child-friendly book stored in the school library.

Inquiries

I will be happy to answer any questions about the research at any time. Please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail ([REDACTED]) or telephone ([REDACTED]).

Concerns

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant while participating in this study, or you wish to verify the ethical approval of this study you can contact the Uvic Human Research Ethics Office (250) 472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca.

Jenny Seal

From: Renata R [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 9:23 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Appeal

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening,

Please endorse the position of keeping Early Childhood Education positions for Kindergarten classes at SD 62.

Our youngest students need extra support as they transition into school environment, especially those with undiagnosed behavioural and developmental conditions that affect their ability to participate and learn in class. Kindergarten teachers also hugely benefit from the skillset of ECEs.

Daycare/preschool programs are struggling to retain experienced ECEs, since their compensation is meager compared to the high cost of living in our district.

Please use your influence as trustees to **push for improved base funding to retain and expand existing resources** especially for underserved and vulnerable children.

It's tragic that school districts are being asked to accommodate for on-site early childhood programs, and yet existing resources and programs are underfunded to the point that trustees are potentially removing ECEs from the classroom.

Sincerely,

Renata R [REDACTED]
Parent of a future "Class of 2040" graduate

Jenny Seal

From: Michelle C [REDACTED]
Sent: May 20, 2026 7:32 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep ECE's in the classroom

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Board of Education,

I am writing as a parent of a son who will be starting Kindergarten next year at [REDACTED] Elementary which may lose an Early Childhood Educator (ECE). I wanted to share how important ECEs are to families like ours.

Our [REDACTED] has been in the amazing care of ECEs since [REDACTED] was 14 months old, and we have seen firsthand the difference they make in helping young children feel safe, supported, confident, and ready to learn. The early years matter so much, and the support ECEs provide during this transition into school is incredibly valuable.

Starting Kindergarten is a big adjustment for many children. ECEs help support emotional regulation, social skills, play-based learning, and relationship-building, while also strengthening the classroom team so children can get support earlier when they need it.

As parents, it is reassuring to know there are multiple caring and trained adults in the classroom supporting our children during these foundational years.

I understand the district is facing difficult financial decisions, but I respectfully ask the Board to reconsider reducing ECE support in Kindergarten classrooms.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Matthew M [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Kendra U [REDACTED]
Sent: May 21, 2026 7:43 PM
To: Trustees
Cc: Tim Aussie
Subject: Voicing concern as a parent re: the removal of ECEs from classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

ÍY SŁÁĆEL SIÁM,

I am writing this email today as a very concerned parent of a little one in Sooke school district. I learned late on Thursday last week that the district announced it would remove ECEs from the classroom next school year. This seems like a massive setback after years of advocacy to have their value recognized within the K-12 school system, following the move of childcare under the MoE and the formation of the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

My kindergarten-aged [REDACTED] is registered at [REDACTED] Elementary. [REDACTED] is very close to the early childhood educators who support [REDACTED] seamless program (before- and after-school support). They are there throughout the school day, which makes such a difference! The ECEs run invaluable programs like Food Explorers throughout the school day and read to all the kindergarten children.

For the seamless families, hearing from the ECEs at drop-off and pick-up about how the kindies are doing throughout the day is so helpful. I want to praise the early childhood educators at my [REDACTED] school, Ms. Erin [REDACTED] and Ms. Tanya [REDACTED]. They're incredible and a huge asset to the school.

Please kindly hear this letter and the advocacy surrounding this issue, and urge SD62 to restore early childhood educators to programming next year. If you would like to discuss this further or have any questions, my phone number is [REDACTED]

HÍ,SWŁKE SIÁM,

Kendra U [REDACTED] and Tim S [REDACTED]

Parents of [REDACTED], at [REDACTED] Elementary in Ms. [REDACTED] Class

Jenny Seal

From: B B <[REDACTED]>
Sent: May 22, 2026 12:42 AM
To: Ravi.parmar.mla@leg.bc.ca; Trustees; Paul Block
Cc: Ruchi McArthur
Subject: Protect Early Childhood Educators in SD62 Classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Ravi Parmar, MLA, and the SD62 Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to Early Childhood Educator (ECE) positions within School District 62 due to budget pressures.

ECEs are not an “extra” support in elementary schools, they are an essential part of a child’s early learning experience. These professionals are specifically trained in child development, emotional regulation, communication, play-based learning, and supporting young learners as they transition into the school environment. In increasingly crowded classrooms with growing student needs, ECEs provide critical support not only for students, but also for teachers and families.

As highlighted in the recent Goldstream Gazette article regarding the proposed cuts, educators emphasized that many children are entering kindergarten with increased vulnerabilities and developmental needs. The article referenced district and provincial data showing that 41% of children entering kindergarten in SD62 are vulnerable in at least one developmental area, including emotional maturity and communication skills. Reducing support during these foundational years risks widening inequities instead of addressing them.

ECEs help create calm, inclusive, and supportive classroom environments where children can succeed socially, emotionally, and academically. Their presence allows teachers to better meet the diverse needs of students while improving outcomes for the entire classroom community.

Rather than cutting ECE positions, SD62 should be moving toward ensuring there is an ECE in every kindergarten classroom.

I am also concerned that, as Superintendent Paul Block reportedly acknowledged during previous discussions about eliminating ECEs approximately two years ago, the district

had not yet begun collecting meaningful data on the impact ECEs have had in schools. Before any reductions are considered, SD62 should be gathering and publicly sharing evidence-based data on how ECEs affect student learning, behaviour support, classroom functioning, inclusion, and long-term outcomes.

It is difficult to justify removing positions that directly support our youngest learners without first fully understanding and measuring their value.

Budget challenges are real, but balancing budgets on the backs of early learners is not the answer. Investments made in the early years have lasting impacts on student success, mental health, literacy, and community well-being. Cutting ECEs now will create greater challenges and costs in the future.

I urge the SD62 Board of Trustees and the provincial government to:

- Reject cuts to ECE positions in elementary schools
- Commit to maintaining and expanding ECE supports in kindergarten classrooms
- Collect and publish comprehensive data on the impact of ECEs in SD62 schools
- Prioritize early learning and inclusive education in future budgeting decisions

Our children deserve strong support during their most important developmental years. Please protect the ECEs who help make that possible every day.

Sincerely,

Beth B [REDACTED]

Very concerned parent at [REDACTED] Elementary and DCPAC Vice President

Jenny Seal

From: Amanda T [REDACTED]
Sent: May 23, 2026 1:04 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE support

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern,

I was recently informed that our school, and others, is at risk of losing our amazing ECE's. My [REDACTED] was diagnosed at the age of 4 with [REDACTED]. Most don't recognize [REDACTED] as it is uncommon and affects less than 1% of children. Obviously, as a mother, I was very worried with [REDACTED] starting kindergarten. On the very first day of school, I was introduced to two individuals, who I believe have helped shape who my [REDACTED] is today... Tanya [REDACTED] and Erin [REDACTED] (ECE's at [REDACTED] Elementary) Their kindness, understanding and genuine love for their job is the reason why. Currently in grade [REDACTED], [REDACTED] is excelling and has finished [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. That is very rare in such a short amount of time. I owe a lot of gratitude to those amazing women. Please don't cut funding for this. There will be many more children who need that extra support. Kindergarten is a hard adjustment ...don't make it harder. On a side note our property tax for Langford has significantly increased. I know ECE's are not included in the "school tax" but maybe they should be.... If the mayor can get a \$30,000 annual increase and each councillor \$13,000 more 🙏 I, and many others, will make our voices heard.

Amanda T [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: candaced [REDACTED]
Sent: May 25, 2026 4:52 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE Cuts

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Trustees,

I am writing as a former student of this district, an educator in it for fifteen years, a parent of children in our schools, and a long-time local resident. I care deeply about the well-being of our community, which is why I am urging you to reconsider the proposal to remove Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) from Kindergarten classrooms.

As a Kindergarten Teacher, I can tell you first-hand that ECEs are an essential support, not an inequity. They work across multiple classes, providing continuity and stability that allow Kindergarten to function safely and effectively. All build connections across classrooms and grade levels with all of our students. Their presence directly supports district priorities in safety, learning, inclusion, and student belonging. Their presence means being able to spend more time on focused learning both inside and outside of the school walls.

Our Sooke School District Early Development Index (EDI) data shows that 41% of children enter Kindergarten vulnerable in one or more developmental domains. That means nearly half of our incoming students are already struggling with social-emotional regulation, communication, physical development, or early learning skills before they even begin school. These needs are increasing, not decreasing.

More children are arriving at school without assessments or diagnoses because waitlists are so long. They begin school without designations and without the support they urgently require. ECEs are the early intervention- the adults who help make it possible for all children to remain safely learning while some wait for services.

We must acknowledge the dramatic shift in ratios. Preschool and childcare settings operate at 8:1 or lower. Each September, these same children enter Kindergarten at 20:1, with very little increase in independence or emotional regulation. Expectations rise sharply, but adult support drops. ECEs are the bridge that makes this transition more developmentally appropriate. We should be fighting to preserve the ECEs we have and working towards having them in every Kindergarten classroom.

Removing ECEs will increase unsafe incidents, classroom evacuations, and teacher injuries. Teacher absences are not only disruptive, they are costly. Teacher replacement coverage, burnout, and turnover all carry significant financial impacts. Cutting ECEs will not save money; it will shift costs elsewhere in the system. In my classroom, in the years I have had an ECE working alongside me, I was able to show up at work, even when classroom struggles have been immense. It has been a partnership in which we were able to problem-solve with developmental appropriateness, and meet students where they are at so that all students could be as successful as possible.

ECEs are often the only reason students with emerging or complex needs can consistently remain safely and successfully included while they wait for assessment and/or designation. It is not because they support these students one-to-one, as an Education Assistant (EA) might, but because they are able to support whole class learning. They are in the room full-time. There is no need for a teacher to take time away from teaching and learning to call for assistance. The ECEs are there and they are already acting to prevent and intervene before outside help is needed. Removing these positions will not create equity. It will create instability. It will disproportionately affect the students who rely most on skilled, relational support and it will undermine the district's goals in literacy, numeracy, inclusion, and student voice.

ECEs are a cornerstone of safe, inclusive, developmentally appropriate Kindergarten education. Budget decisions need to be made but I urge the Board to protect the ECE positions we do have and explore solutions that do not compromise the well-being of our youngest learners. They are the future of our district.

Sincerely,

Candace D [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Lana D [REDACTED]
Sent: May 25, 2026 8:46 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Early Childhood Educators in Kindergarten classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Trustees:

As a concerned grandparent of students in our school district, I would like to urge you to reconsider cutting the Early Childhood Educator positions in kindergarten classrooms.

This important position is helpful to all concerned. With the integration of all children, it is necessary to include an extra pair of eyes and ears to ensure the safety of all students and continued learning. In these very early years of learning proper life skills, including independence and social skills, ECEs are essential. There will always be some disruptions with young learners but with the valuable support of Early Childhood professionals, volatile situations can be prevented by building a supportive community in the classroom.

Please reconsider their essential role and make a cut somewhere else. Kindergarten is an integral, first step into the education system and will determine the experience for our young students.

Sincerely

Lana D [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Jeffrey Z [REDACTED]
Sent: May 26, 2026 11:50 AM
To: Trustees
Subject: Early Childhood Educators

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,

As a parent of two children in the SD62 district, and a community member, I am writing in order to express my opposition to the proposed cuts to the Kindergarten Early Childhood Educator positions.

When my family and I relocated to Vancouver Island last year, the quality of education available at the local schools was one of the deciding factors in where we chose to live. The values expressed by SD62 seemed to compliment what we were looking for, and we were happy to move to Langford, with one child enrolling in middle school, and our youngest starting Kindergarten this fall.

Hearing that the trustees are considering balancing the budget on the back of some of the youngest and most vulnerable learners has been discouraging, to say the least. My family has seen first-hand the benefit that additional learning supports (like ECEs) can have on a child. The idea that extra supports would be removed from the newest learners, who could benefit so greatly from the added support and assistance they provide is deeply disappointing.

Please listen to the concerned parents, as well as the Teacher's Association and the CUPE, and reject the proposal to eliminate the ECE positions in kindergarten classrooms.

Thank you,

Jeffrey Z [REDACTED]

Jenny Seal

From: Christy B [REDACTED]
Sent: May 26, 2026 12:09 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: ECE concern

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Sooke School District Board Members,

I'm writing because I'm deeply concerned about the loss of ECEs in our kindergarten classrooms. ECEs are such an important part of our schools, and I don't think their impact can be measured by numbers alone.

There may only be 11 of them, but in reality they support more than 20 classes and countless students every single day. They build relationships with kids, help regulate emotions, support learning, step in during difficult moments, and provide the kind of care and connection our youngest learners desperately need.

Kindergarten classrooms today are not what they were even ten years ago. Children are going to school with more diverse needs, and teachers are being asked to do more than ever before. Removing support from classrooms doesn't help anyone — especially not the kids. If anything, this is the time we should be adding support, not taking it away.

ECEs are often the calm, steady presence helping children feel safe enough to learn. They notice the little things, support social development, and help create classrooms where kids can actually thrive. Their work matters immensely, even if much of it happens quietly in the background.

Taking ECEs away will fundamentally change our kindergarten programs, and not for the better. It feels wrong to take away something so valuable from our youngest students when we already know how much children are struggling socially, emotionally, and academically right now.

These early years matter. The support, care, and relationships children build in kindergarten stay with them long after they leave the classroom. I truly hope the Board considers the long-term impact this decision will have on students, educators, and families.

Please keep ECEs in our kindergarten classrooms.

Sincerely,

Christy W [REDACTED]

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Jenny Seal

From: Kendall C [REDACTED]
Sent: May 29, 2026 10:18 PM
To: Trustees
Subject: Keep ECEs in the Kindy Classrooms

CAUTION - EXTERNAL SENDER: This email originated from outside of School District 62. Do not click links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender and know the content is safe.

I have explored ALL options to support my “deeply feeling” [REDACTED] year old [REDACTED]. With ONE doctor on the island with a 2 year waitlist, and paid assesments not even being available for children under 6... Kindy students need ECEs just as much as other grades. Please consider keeping ECEs in our classrooms. Kindergarden is SUCH a big step for the littles. Especially those with setbacks.

Thanks for your consideration,
Kendall C [REDACTED]
Mom of 2 at [REDACTED] Elementary School.

RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT

June 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

Present: Christine Lervold, Trustee (Committee Chair)
Cendra Beaton, Trustee (Committee Member) (Online via MS Teams)
Amanda Dowhy, Trustee (Acting Committee Member)
Paul Block, Superintendent
Brian Jonker, Secretary Treasurer
Monica Braniff, Deputy Superintendent
Mhairi Bennett, Director of Facilities
Dana Savage, CUPE
Wanda Falle, CUPE
Tom Davis, SPEAC
Beth Kim, Network Analyst, IT Department
Ceilidh Deichmann, SPVPA
Ed Berlando, STA (Online via MS Teams)

Regrets: Russ Chipps, Trustee (Committee Member)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST NATIONS TERRITORIES

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Committee Chair. The Chair acknowledged the traditional territories of the First Nations.

The Chair provided virtual participation instructions to Trustees and attendees joining online.

2. COMMITTEE REPORT

The Board of Education of Sooke School District 62 (Sooke) received the Resources Committee Report dated May 12, 2026, at its Public Board Meeting of May 24, 2026.

3. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

4. BUSINESS

4.1 Climate Change Accountability Report – Mhairi Bennett

The Climate Change Accountability Report was reviewed and discussed.

4.2 Low Barrier Means Assessment for Transportation Fee Waiver – Mhairi Bennett and Brian Jonker

The Low Barrier Means Assessment form was presented to the Committee. Discussion was held surrounding timelines, communication, privacy, stigma, accessibility and workload. The Committee supported the following motion going forward to the Board at its next meeting:

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) support implementation of the low barrier means assessment for transportation fee waiver eligibility as presented at the June 9, 2026 Resources Committee meeting.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2026.



Committee Information Note Resources Committee Meeting

June 9, 2026

Agenda Item 4.2 - Transportation Fee Waiver

TOPIC: Implementation of a low barrier means assessment for the transportation fee waiver.

BACKGROUND:

- At its February 24, 2026, meeting, the Board resolved motion #92 as follows:

“That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) direct staff to explore a low barrier means assessment for families requesting fee waivers.”

- School districts in BC are not required to provide transportation (busing), Boards of Education may choose to provide busing and to charge fees to recover the related costs.
- The district implemented transportation fees in 2024/25 to address budgetary challenges. Along with the fees, a “no barrier” fee waiver process was implemented.
- With the benefit of two years of data, it has become evident that the number of fee waivers as a percent of ridership is high. Approximately 28% of riders (780) are riding with a fee waiver.
- Even with the implementation of transportation fees, the district offsets \$2.59M in costs to provide transportation services annually from its operating budget including approximately \$.250M in fee waivers.

Total Cost to Provide Transportation Services	\$3,600,000	100%
Less: Transportation Fee Revenue	\$650,000	18%
Less: Provincial Transportation Grant	\$360,000	10%
= District Operating Funds Required*	\$2,590,000	72%

*Of the district operating funds required, approximately \$.250 million is fee waivers.

ANALYSIS:

- The objectives of implementing the low barrier means assessment as part of the transportation fee waiver process is two-fold:
 - Provide an accountability mechanism to ensure that families with fees waived have a basis of eligibility rather than just opposition to paying the established fees.
 - Over time, bring the number of riders with waived fees in better alignment with expectations based on data, with a goal of moving from 30% to 10% of riders on a fee wavier.
- In setting the goal of 15% of riders with waived fees, staff used the Social Economic Status (SES) data from the Ministry of Education and Child Care which identifies, by postal code, the percentage of households in our school district considered low income in relation to the statistic Canada low-income cut-off with consideration of the passage of time reflect the passage of time since the 2021 census. (See attachment 1).



- In defining “Low Barrier” staff used the working description as follows:
 - Not requiring applicants to provide a significant amount of information, minimizing the collection of sensitive personal or financial information, leveraging technology to centralize administration of waivers including both submission and processing and using audit processes rather than requiring upfront proof documentation from applicants.
- In developing the low barrier means assessment, staff:
 - Reviewed models from other districts in BC. These include SD22 Vernon and SD23 Kelowna.
 - These districts use the Statistics Canada low-income cut-off and require submission of applicants CRA tax assessment information to validate eligibility.
 - Explored several different options that would support a low barrier fee waiver process including identifying a variety of provincial and federal programs that could be used as a benchmark to identify families participating in supports that could be considered “proof” of need.
- Staff have developed a draft fee waiver form (see attachment 2) that embeds a low barrier means assessment and will rely primarily on a selective audit program to validate eligibility.
- It is important to note that given the simplicity of the form and centralizing administration along with electronic submission, staff believe that there could be an initial increase in fee waiver applications beyond current levels.
- The fee waiver audit program will be implemented concurrently, with a target of 15%-20% of applications being audited. The audit process will require selected applicants to provide proof of eligibility based on the information provided on the applications form.
- Should the audit program and results of implementation of the low barrier means assessment as proposed not translate to achieving the goals, future year means assessments will be adjusted to require proof of eligibility on application.

NEXT STEPS:

- That the Resources Committee endorse the following motion for consideration by the Board at its June 23, 2026 meeting:

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) support implementation of the low barrier means assessment for transportation fee waiver eligibility as presented at the June 9, 2026 Resources Committee meeting.

- Development of the online fee waiver form and associated operational processes and procedures.
- Communications plan development for implementation in July 2026.

Prepared by: Mhairi Bennett, Director of Facilities and Brian Jonker, Secretary Treasurer

Attachments:

1. Socio-Economic Status (SES) Data Summary
2. Fee Waiver Application with Low Barrier Means Assessment



Attachment 1: Socio-Economic Status (SES) Data Summary

- The SES index provides an overall measure of the resources typically available to households within a given postal code. All inputs are drawn from 2021 Census data.
- The SES_INDEX uses the following sub-indexes in its overall analysis:
 - EDUCATION_INDEX
 - OCCUPATION_INDEX
 - ECONOMIC_INDEX
 - FAMILY_INDEX
 - COMMUNITY_INDEX
- An SES score of -1 represents one standard deviation below the provincial mean
- The data includes almost 2000 postal code areas that together represent the Sooke School District boundaries.
- Areas with $SES \leq -1$ have fewer resources than approximately 84% of all postal areas in BC

Median Family Income

- 10% of students live in postal code areas where the median family income is \$80,000 or less
- 30% of students live in postal code areas where the median family income is \$90,000 or less

Socio-Economic Status (SES)

- 10% of students live in postal code areas where the SES index is -0.9 or lower
- 30% of students live in postal code areas where the SES index is -0.5 or lower

Provincial Values (Public school population)

- Public students in postal code areas with $SES \leq -1.0$ have fewer resources than approximately 83% of all other BC public school students in BC
- Public students in postal code areas with $SES \leq -0.9$ have fewer resources than approximately 81% of all other BC public school students in BC
- Public students in postal code areas with $SES \leq -0.5$ have fewer resources than approximately 68% of all other BC public school students in BC

ATTACHMENT 2 – LOW BARRIER MEANS ASSESSMENT: TRANSPORTATION FEE WAIVER FORM
Transportation Fee Waiver Request Form
 MUST BE SUBMITTED ANNUALLY
Parent/ Legal Guardian Information

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____

Province: ____ Postal Code: _____

Contact Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Enter information for the students you are applying for in the 2026/27 school year.

First Name	Last Name	School	Grade	Student Number (Pupil ID)

Declaration/Attestation

I confirm that the information provided in this application is accurate and complete.

I understand that:

- This fee waiver applies only to the 2026/27 school year.
- Providing false or misleading information may result in the fee waiver being cancelled.
- The school district may conduct random audits of applications. If selected, I/we will be required to provide supporting documentation.
- Failure to provide requested supporting documentation may result in the fee waiver being revoked, and transportation fees due within 21 days.
- Failure to pay these fees may result in the suspension of transportation services for the student(s).

Signatures

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Fee Waiver Eligibility

Please check one or more of the following that apply to your household.

A. Household receives support from one or more of these programs (select all that apply):

- BC Income Assistance (Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction)
- BC Disability Assistance (Persons with Disabilities – PWD designation)
- BC Housing – Rental Assistance Program (RAP)
- Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) coverage for refugee claimants / protected persons
- Other government income-tested benefit (specify): _____

AND/OR

B. Household income is below national low-income thresholds:

- Our total family income* is below the [Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Off](#) for our household size, adjusted for inflation.

Number of People Residing in Household	Low Income Cut-Off for Waived Fees Eligibility	Number of People Residing in Household	Low Income Cut-Off for Waived Fees Eligibility
2 persons	\$35,457	5 persons	\$60,024
3 persons	\$43,590	6 persons	\$67,700
4 persons	\$52,924	7 or more persons	\$75,373

If you do not meet the above criteria but are experiencing financial hardship, please briefly describe your situation:

*Total family income: Total family income means the total income from all sources for all adults in the household, before taxes are deducted, for the most recent tax year, as shown on your Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment (Line 15000). For parents/guardians who live in separate households, total family income is the combined total income of each parent/guardian.

Privacy Collection Notice / FOIPPA Statement

Personal information collected through the Transportation Fee Waiver Online Form is collected by School District No. 62 (Sooke) under the authority of section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) for the purposes of administering and processing Transportation Fee Waiver Requests, validating eligibility, supporting operational decision-making, communicating with applicants, and maintaining records related to District transportation services.

Information collected may include parent or guardian contact information, student information, financial information, supporting documentation, and other information necessary to evaluate and process the request.

Information submitted through this form will be securely stored within approved School District No. 62 Microsoft 365 and SharePoint Online environments hosted in Canada and accessed only by authorized District staff and approved service providers supporting the administration of the process.

Personal information will only be used, disclosed, retained, and disposed of in accordance with FOIPPA, School District No. 62 policies, records retention requirements, and applicable privacy and security standards.

Questions regarding the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information related to this process may be directed to:

Records Manager / Privacy Office
School District No. 62 (Sooke)
3143 Jacklin Road
Victoria, BC V9B 5R1
Email: foippa@sd62.bc.ca
Phone: 250-474-9800

Annual Budget

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

June 30, 2027

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

June 30, 2027

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*NOTE - Statement 1, Statement 3, Statement 5, Schedule 1 and Schedules 4A - 4D are used for Financial Statement reporting only.

ANNUAL BUDGET BYLAW

A Bylaw of THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 62 (SOOKE) (called the "Board") to adopt the Annual Budget of the Board for the fiscal year 2026/2027 pursuant to section 113 of the *School Act*, R.S.B.C., 1996, c. 412 as amended from time to time (called the "Act").

1. The Board has complied with the provisions of the *Act*, Ministerial Orders, and Ministry of Education and Child Care Policies respecting the Annual Budget adopted by this bylaw.
2. This bylaw may be cited as School District No. 62 (Sooke) Annual Budget Bylaw for fiscal year 2026/2027.
3. The attached Statement 2 showing the estimated revenue and expense for the 2026/2027 fiscal year and the total budget bylaw amount of \$245,935,907 for the 2026/2027 fiscal year was prepared in accordance with the *Act*.
4. Statement 2, 4 and Schedules 2 to 4 are adopted as the Annual Budget of the Board for the fiscal year 2026/2027.

READ A FIRST TIME THE 26th DAY OF MAY, 2026;

READ A SECOND TIME THE 26th DAY OF MAY, 2026;

READ A THIRD TIME, PASSED AND ADOPTED THE 23rd DAY OF JUNE, 2026;

Chairperson of the Board

(Corporate Seal)

Secretary Treasurer

I HEREBY CERTIFY this to be a true original of School District No. 62 (Sooke) Annual Budget Bylaw 2026/2027, adopted by the Board the 23rd DAY OF JUNE, 2026.

Secretary Treasurer

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Revenue and Expense

Year Ended June 30, 2027

	2027 Annual Budget	2026 Amended Annual Budget
Ministry Operating Grant Funded FTE's		
School-Age	14,467,000	14,189,125
Adult	40,000	32,250
Total Ministry Operating Grant Funded FTE's	14,507,000	14,221,375
Revenues	\$	\$
Provincial Grants		
Ministry of Education and Child Care	213,857,672	211,815,053
Other	142,050	169,121
Tuition	8,758,703	8,276,500
Other Revenue	7,648,342	9,109,878
Rentals and Leases	589,114	589,114
Investment Income	919,286	933,246
Amortization of Deferred Capital Revenue	13,202,377	13,109,632
Amortization of Deferred Capital Revenue - For Lease	61,477	61,477
Total Revenue	245,179,021	244,064,021
Expenses		
Instruction	202,924,738	201,862,620
District Administration	8,579,286	8,704,798
Operations and Maintenance	29,264,655	29,806,567
Transportation and Housing	5,167,228	5,180,175
Total Expense	245,935,907	245,554,160
Net Revenue (Expense)	(756,886)	(1,490,139)
Budgeted Allocation (Retirement) of Surplus (Deficit)		3,907,014
Budgeted Surplus (Deficit), for the year	(756,886)	2,416,875
Budgeted Surplus (Deficit), for the year comprised of:		
Operating Fund Surplus (Deficit)	263,071	1,017,579
Special Purpose Fund Surplus (Deficit)		
Capital Fund Surplus (Deficit)	(1,019,957)	1,399,296
Budgeted Surplus (Deficit), for the year	(756,886)	2,416,875

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Revenue and Expense

Year Ended June 30, 2027

	2027	2026 Amended
	Annual Budget	Annual Budget
Budget Bylaw Amount		
Operating - Total Expense	190,840,472	187,642,833
Operating - Tangible Capital Assets Purchased		2,328,094
Special Purpose Funds - Total Expense	40,072,117	42,540,149
Capital Fund - Total Expense	15,023,318	15,371,178
Total Budget Bylaw Amount	245,935,907	247,882,254

Approved by the Board

 Signature of the Chairperson of the Board of Education

Date Signed

 Signature of the Superintendent

Date Signed

 Signature of the Secretary Treasurer

Date Signed

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Statement 4

Annual Budget - Changes in Net Financial Assets (Debt)

Year Ended June 30, 2027

	2027 Annual Budget	2026 Amended Annual Budget
	\$	\$
Surplus (Deficit) for the year	(756,886)	(1,490,139)
Effect of change in Tangible Capital Assets		
Acquisition of Tangible Capital Assets		
From Operating and Special Purpose Funds		(2,328,094)
From Deferred Capital Revenue	(7,455,000)	(9,801,882)
Total Acquisition of Tangible Capital Assets	(7,455,000)	(12,129,976)
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets	14,222,334	14,038,430
Total Effect of change in Tangible Capital Assets	6,767,334	1,908,454
	-	-
(Increase) Decrease in Net Financial Assets (Debt)	6,010,448	418,315

School District No. 62 (Sooke)
Annual Budget - Operating Revenue and Expense
Year Ended June 30, 2027

	2027 Annual Budget	2026 Amended Annual Budget
	\$	\$
Revenues		
Provincial Grants		
Ministry of Education and Child Care	178,631,875	175,076,663
Other	142,050	169,121
Tuition	8,758,703	8,276,500
Other Revenue	2,092,515	2,116,219
Rentals and Leases	589,114	589,114
Investment Income	889,286	853,875
Total Revenue	191,103,543	187,081,492
Expenses		
Instruction	163,207,697	159,659,348
District Administration	8,579,286	8,704,798
Operations and Maintenance	15,045,534	15,257,785
Transportation and Housing	4,007,955	4,020,902
Total Expense	190,840,472	187,642,833
Net Revenue (Expense)	263,071	(561,341)
Budgeted Prior Year Surplus Appropriation		3,907,014
Net Transfers (to) from other funds		
Tangible Capital Assets Purchased		(2,328,094)
Total Net Transfers	-	(2,328,094)
Budgeted Surplus (Deficit), for the year	263,071	1,017,579

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Schedule of Operating Revenue by Source
Year Ended June 30, 2027

	2027 Annual Budget	2026 Amended Annual Budget
	\$	\$
Provincial Grants - Ministry of Education and Child Care		
Operating Grant, Ministry of Education and Child Care	177,627,278	174,072,066
ISC/LEA Recovery	(631,134)	(631,134)
Other Ministry of Education and Child Care Grants		
Pay Equity	931,052	931,052
Funding for Graduated Adults	40,000	40,000
Student Transportation Fund	358,365	358,365
Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Scorer Grant	12,000	12,000
Child Care Funding	294,314	294,314
Total Provincial Grants - Ministry of Education and Child Care	178,631,875	175,076,663
Provincial Grants - Other	142,050	169,121
Tuition		
Continuing Education	90,000	90,000
International and Out of Province Students	8,668,703	8,186,500
Total Tuition	8,758,703	8,276,500
Other Revenues		
Funding from First Nations	631,134	631,134
Miscellaneous		
Grants for Crossing Guards	156,000	156,000
Rebates	61,000	51,000
SGF Discretionary	200,000	200,000
Transportation Safety Fees	80,000	80,000
Miscellaneous	-	111,920
Bus Fees	650,000	600,365
Child Care Fees	314,381	285,800
Total Other Revenue	2,092,515	2,116,219
Rentals and Leases	589,114	589,114
Investment Income	889,286	853,875
Total Operating Revenue	191,103,543	187,081,492

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Schedule of Operating Expense by Object
Year Ended June 30, 2027

	2027 Annual Budget	2026 Amended Annual Budget
	\$	\$
Salaries		
Teachers	69,035,990	67,197,647
Principals and Vice Principals	11,729,673	11,510,769
Educational Assistants	22,995,311	21,984,311
Support Staff	16,317,836	16,791,318
Other Professionals	7,146,433	6,926,937
Substitutes	7,217,120	7,212,657
Total Salaries	134,442,363	131,623,639
Employee Benefits	37,781,332	35,639,587
Total Salaries and Benefits	172,223,695	167,263,226
Services and Supplies		
Services	8,794,474	9,650,459
Professional Development and Travel	1,321,488	1,270,035
Rentals and Leases	445,809	394,114
Dues and Fees	200,456	188,596
Insurance	618,154	740,451
Supplies	4,954,252	5,763,808
Utilities	2,266,344	2,346,344
Bad Debt	15,800	25,800
Total Services and Supplies	18,616,777	20,379,607
Total Operating Expense	190,840,472	187,642,833

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Operating Expense by Function, Program and Object

Year Ended June 30, 2027

	Teachers Salaries	Principals and Vice Principals Salaries	Educational Assistants Salaries	Support Staff Salaries	Other Professionals Salaries	Substitutes Salaries	Total Salaries
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1 Instruction							
1.02 Regular Instruction	58,022,677	290,691	227,500	1,906,098	693,469	4,545,971	65,686,406
1.03 Career Programs	431,529			189,260		28,600	649,389
1.07 Library Services	544,466			293,672		6,699	844,837
1.08 Counselling	2,436,013						2,436,013
1.10 Inclusive Education	4,830,757	469,292	21,814,819	171,634	1,584,375	1,731,510	30,602,387
1.20 Early Learning and Child Care			260,192	4,268		12,814	277,274
1.30 English Language Learning	811,126			155,100		24,032	990,258
1.31 Indigenous Education	651,000	281,235	551,000	104,511		10,000	1,597,746
1.41 School Administration		10,187,106		3,114,378		256,680	13,558,164
1.61 Continuing Education							-
1.62 International and Out of Province Students	1,294,222	330,555		418,212			2,042,989
Total Function 1	69,021,790	11,558,879	22,853,511	6,357,133	2,277,844	6,616,306	118,685,463
4 District Administration							
4.11 Educational Administration	14,200	135,794	141,800	9,000	1,077,677	2,000	1,380,471
4.20 Early Learning and Child Care		35,000			80,000		115,000
4.40 School District Governance					166,884		166,884
4.41 Business Administration				720,992	2,692,840	43,997	3,457,829
Total Function 4	14,200	170,794	141,800	729,992	4,017,401	45,997	5,120,184
5 Operations and Maintenance							
5.41 Operations and Maintenance Administration				136,297	171,346		307,643
5.50 Maintenance Operations				6,080,550	449,950	405,514	6,936,014
5.52 Maintenance of Grounds				845,000			845,000
5.56 Utilities							-
Total Function 5	-	-	-	7,061,847	621,296	405,514	8,088,657
7 Transportation and Housing							
7.41 Transportation and Housing Administration				132,909	229,892		362,801
7.70 Student Transportation				2,035,955		149,303	2,185,258
Total Function 7	-	-	-	2,168,864	229,892	149,303	2,548,059
9 Debt Services							
Total Function 9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Functions 1 - 9	69,035,990	11,729,673	22,995,311	16,317,836	7,146,433	7,217,120	134,442,363

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Operating Expense by Function, Program and Object

Year Ended June 30, 2027

	Total Salaries	Employee Benefits	Total Salaries and Benefits	Services and Supplies	2027 Annual Budget	2026 Amended Annual Budget
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1 Instruction						
1.02 Regular Instruction	65,686,406	19,035,295	84,721,701	3,417,198	88,138,899	87,308,426
1.03 Career Programs	649,389	195,022	844,411	781,266	1,625,677	1,512,961
1.07 Library Services	844,837	239,985	1,084,822		1,084,822	1,130,223
1.08 Counselling	2,436,013	687,098	3,123,111	4,000	3,127,111	2,917,503
1.10 Inclusive Education	30,602,387	8,715,144	39,317,531	898,938	40,216,469	38,418,440
1.20 Early Learning and Child Care	277,274	101,732	379,006	84,189	463,195	414,856
1.30 English Language Learning	990,258	277,743	1,268,001	24,200	1,292,201	1,362,906
1.31 Indigenous Education	1,597,746	388,500	1,986,246	353,224	2,339,470	2,330,580
1.41 School Administration	13,558,164	3,465,115	17,023,279	604,039	17,627,318	17,303,121
1.61 Continuing Education	-		-	40,405	40,405	40,405
1.62 International and Out of Province Students	2,042,989	540,959	2,583,948	4,668,182	7,252,130	6,919,927
Total Function 1	118,685,463	33,646,593	152,332,056	10,875,641	163,207,697	159,659,348
4 District Administration						
4.11 Educational Administration	1,380,471	294,346	1,674,817	719,191	2,394,008	2,397,903
4.20 Early Learning and Child Care	115,000	28,000	143,000	2,500	145,500	165,258
4.40 School District Governance	166,884	10,527	177,411	187,923	365,334	472,755
4.41 Business Administration	3,457,829	875,998	4,333,827	1,340,617	5,674,444	5,668,882
Total Function 4	5,120,184	1,208,871	6,329,055	2,250,231	8,579,286	8,704,798
5 Operations and Maintenance						
5.41 Operations and Maintenance Administration	307,643	79,304	386,947	439,800	826,747	890,698
5.50 Maintenance Operations	6,936,014	1,935,285	8,871,299	1,654,815	10,526,114	10,602,654
5.52 Maintenance of Grounds	845,000	234,240	1,079,240	347,089	1,426,329	1,418,089
5.56 Utilities	-		-	2,266,344	2,266,344	2,346,344
Total Function 5	8,088,657	2,248,829	10,337,486	4,708,048	15,045,534	15,257,785
7 Transportation and Housing						
7.41 Transportation and Housing Administration	362,801	96,349	459,150	54,991	514,141	504,849
7.70 Student Transportation	2,185,258	580,690	2,765,948	727,866	3,493,814	3,516,053
Total Function 7	2,548,059	677,039	3,225,098	782,857	4,007,955	4,020,902
9 Debt Services						
Total Function 9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Functions 1 - 9	134,442,363	37,781,332	172,223,695	18,616,777	190,840,472	187,642,833

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Schedule 3

Annual Budget - Special Purpose Revenue and Expense
Year Ended June 30, 2027

	2027	2026 Amended
	Annual Budget	Annual Budget
	\$	\$
Revenues		
Provincial Grants		
Ministry of Education and Child Care	34,486,290	35,467,119
Other Revenue	5,555,827	6,993,659
Investment Income	30,000	79,371
Total Revenue	40,072,117	42,540,149
Expenses		
Instruction	39,717,041	42,203,272
Operations and Maintenance	355,076	336,877
Total Expense	40,072,117	42,540,149
Budgeted Surplus (Deficit), for the year	-	-

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Changes in Special Purpose Funds

Year Ended June 30, 2027

	Annual Facility Grant	Learning Improvement Fund	Scholarships and Bursaries	School Generated Funds	Strong Start	Ready, Set, Learn	OLEP	CommunityLINK	Classroom Enhancement Fund - Overhead
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$
Deferred Revenue, beginning of year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Add: Restricted Grants									
Provincial Grants - Ministry of Education and Child Care	355,076	614,860			204,000	49,000	306,705	800,343	1,630,981
Other				4,140,000					
Investment Income			30,000						
	355,076	614,860	30,000	4,140,000	204,000	49,000	306,705	800,343	1,630,981
Less: Allocated to Revenue	355,076	614,860	30,000	4,140,000	204,000	49,000	306,705	800,343	1,630,981
Deferred Revenue, end of year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revenues									
Provincial Grants - Ministry of Education and Child Care	355,076	614,860			204,000	49,000	306,705	800,343	1,630,981
Other Revenue				4,140,000					
Investment Income			30,000						
	355,076	614,860	30,000	4,140,000	204,000	49,000	306,705	800,343	1,630,981
Expenses									
Salaries									
Teachers							92,370	123,064	
Principals and Vice Principals								54,106	
Educational Assistants		472,969						5,000	
Support Staff				10,026	144,844			5,000	
Other Professionals								301,609	
Substitutes				56,333		20,237	6,700	73,275	1,336,870
	-	472,969	-	66,359	144,844	20,237	99,070	562,054	1,336,870
Employee Benefits		141,891		526	46,928	4,047	23,485	137,184	294,111
Services and Supplies	355,076		30,000	4,073,115	12,228	24,716	184,150	101,105	
	355,076	614,860	30,000	4,140,000	204,000	49,000	306,705	800,343	1,630,981
Net Revenue (Expense)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Changes in Special Purpose Funds

Year Ended June 30, 2027

	Classroom Enhancement Fund - Staffing	First Nation Student Transportation	Mental Health in Schools	ECL Early Care & Learning	Feeding Futures Fund	National School Food Program	Academies	Donations	Theatres
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Deferred Revenue, beginning of year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Add: Restricted Grants									
Provincial Grants - Ministry of Education and Child Care	28,279,220	31,000	51,000	228,019	1,683,076	253,010			
Other							1,375,327	37,000	3,500
Investment Income									
	28,279,220	31,000	51,000	228,019	1,683,076	253,010	1,375,327	37,000	3,500
Less: Allocated to Revenue	28,279,220	31,000	51,000	228,019	1,683,076	253,010	1,375,327	37,000	3,500
Deferred Revenue, end of year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revenues									
Provincial Grants - Ministry of Education and Child Care	28,279,220	31,000	51,000	228,019	1,683,076	253,010			
Other Revenue							1,375,327	37,000	3,500
Investment Income									
	28,279,220	31,000	51,000	228,019	1,683,076	253,010	1,375,327	37,000	3,500
Expenses									
Salaries									
Teachers	22,240,834						137,509		
Principals and Vice Principals				43,200			96,721		
Educational Assistants									
Support Staff				13,697	213,279		47,062		
Other Professionals				83,103					
Substitutes			13,154				8,707		
	22,240,834	-	13,154	140,000	213,279	-	289,999	-	-
Employee Benefits	6,038,386		3,497	35,000	49,154		77,053		
Services and Supplies		31,000	34,349	53,019	1,420,643	253,010	1,008,275	37,000	3,500
	28,279,220	31,000	51,000	228,019	1,683,076	253,010	1,375,327	37,000	3,500
Net Revenue (Expense)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

School District No. 62 (Sooke)

Annual Budget - Changes in Special Purpose Funds

Year Ended June 30, 2027

	<u>TOTAL</u>
	\$
Deferred Revenue, beginning of year	-
Add: Restricted Grants	
Provincial Grants - Ministry of Education and Child Care	34,486,290
Other	5,555,827
Investment Income	30,000
	<u>40,072,117</u>
Less: Allocated to Revenue	<u>40,072,117</u>
Deferred Revenue, end of year	<u>-</u>
Revenues	
Provincial Grants - Ministry of Education and Child Care	34,486,290
Other Revenue	5,555,827
Investment Income	30,000
	<u>40,072,117</u>
Expenses	
Salaries	
Teachers	22,593,777
Principals and Vice Principals	194,027
Educational Assistants	477,969
Support Staff	433,908
Other Professionals	384,712
Substitutes	1,515,276
	<u>25,599,669</u>
Employee Benefits	6,851,262
Services and Supplies	7,621,186
	<u>40,072,117</u>
Net Revenue (Expense)	<u>-</u>

School District No. 62 (Sooke)Annual Budget - Capital Revenue and Expense
Year Ended June 30, 2027

	2027 Annual Budget			2026 Amended Annual Budget
	Invested in Tangible Capital Assets	Local Capital	Fund Balance	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Revenues				
Provincial Grants				
Ministry of Education and Child Care	739,507		739,507	1,271,271
Amortization of Deferred Capital Revenue	13,202,377		13,202,377	13,109,632
Amortization of Deferred Capital Revenue - For Lease	61,477		61,477	61,477
Total Revenue	14,003,361	-	14,003,361	14,442,380
Expenses				
Operations and Maintenance	800,984		800,984	1,332,748
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets				
Operations and Maintenance	13,063,061		13,063,061	12,879,157
Transportation and Housing	1,159,273		1,159,273	1,159,273
Total Expense	15,023,318	-	15,023,318	15,371,178
Net Revenue (Expense)	(1,019,957)	-	(1,019,957)	(928,798)
Net Transfers (to) from other funds				
Tangible Capital Assets Purchased			-	2,328,094
Total Net Transfers	-	-	-	2,328,094
Other Adjustments to Fund Balances				
Total Other Adjustments to Fund Balances	-	-	-	
Budgeted Surplus (Deficit), for the year	(1,019,957)	-	(1,019,957)	1,399,296



**Financial Plan
2026-2029**

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

With gratitude and respect, we acknowledge that we live, learn, and work on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation, SĆIΛNEW (Beecher Bay) Nation, and the Nuu-chah-nulth: Paaʔčiidʔath (Pacheedaht) Nation. We also recognize that some of our schools are located on the traditional territories of the MÁLEXEΛ (Malahat) Nation, and the Ləkʷəŋən peoples of Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

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Executive Summary

The Sooke School District Board of Education presents this financial plan as a multi-year framework aligning resources with the priorities of the Strategic Plan 2025–2029. It outlines projected revenues and expenditures from 2026 to 2029, ensuring that financial decisions are purposeful, transparent, and focused on supporting student success and the systems that sustain it.

Guided by our Strategic Plan, we focus on three defining priorities: learning, engagement, and growth. These commitments shape our decisions and inform how resources are allocated across the organization.

The financial environment in which this plan is developed is increasingly complex. Inflationary pressures, rising capital demands, and global uncertainty continue to influence costs and funding assumptions. These are immediate and evolving pressures that require careful planning, disciplined stewardship, and a strong commitment to long-term stability.

At the same time, slowing enrolment growth presents additional challenges that require adaptability and thoughtful planning. The plan also assumes full provincial funding for recently negotiated collective agreements with both teachers and support staff.

Within this context, the financial plan reflects a balanced approach: managing limited resources responsibly while remaining responsive to the needs and priorities of our community. It is grounded in long-term thinking, collaboration, and a shared commitment to educational excellence.





Creating the Budget

The Board of Education has established a budget process rooted in collaboration, purpose and transparency. It ensures that the priorities of the Strategic Plan are fully supported by the resources required to bring them to life and that we are fulfilling our mandate in the School Act.

This process invites meaningful engagement through communication and consultation with partners and the public, while reinforcing trust by reporting decisions back to the community. At every stage, it remains aligned with the requirements of the *School Act*, collective agreements, Board Policy and all regulatory obligations.

In a complex and evolving environment, this approach ensures that financial decisions are both responsible and responsive, grounded in integrity and focused on the needs of those we serve.

Timelines

As per the *School Act*, the Board must adopt an annual budget on or before June 30 of each year for the next fiscal year. The District started the budget process in November with the first reading of the budget planned for May. Through the Resources Committee, a special Education Committee of the Whole meeting in May, public Board Meetings, surveys, and communication through the District website and social media, the process is transparent and provides multiple consultation opportunities for partner and public input.

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Partner, Public and Student Engagement

GROUP	ENGAGEMENT	DATES
IEC	Budget Presentation Written Submission	February 3, 2026 March 31, 2026
CUPE STA	Written Submissions	February 13, 2026 February 17, 2026
SPEAC SPVPA	Partner Budget Presentations	February 18, 2026
Leadership Budget Working Group	Advisory	February - March, 2026
Public	Survey	March 11 - April 2, 2026
Students	Survey	March 13 - April 17, 2026
SPEAC	Presentation	April 15, 2026



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Board Engagement

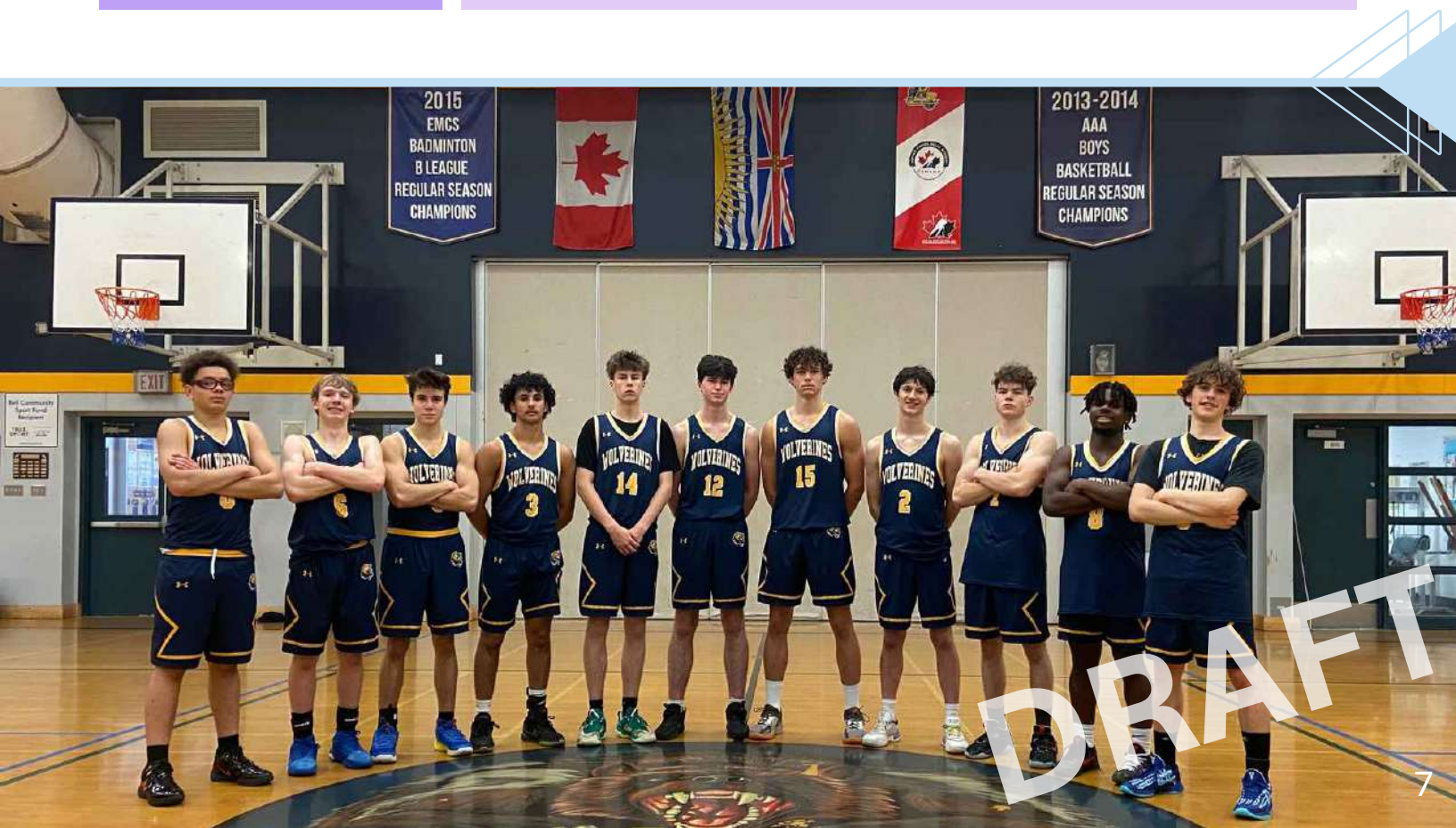
TOPIC	COMMITTEE	BOARD TABLE
Budget principles, assertions and process	Resources Committee November 18, 2025	November 25, 2025
2026/27 Fees	Resources Committee February 10, 2026	February 24, 2026
Budget Development Update	Resources Committee April 14, 2026	April 28, 2026
Presentation of Draft Budget	Education Committee of the Whole May 19, 2026	N/A
1st & 2nd Reading of Budget	N/A	May 26, 2026
3rd Reading of Budget	N/A	June 23, 2026

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Budgeting Strategic Priorities

Our budget allocations are intentionally aligned with the priorities of our Strategic Plan, balancing operational needs with Ministry mandates and the unique values of our community. This alignment sharpens our focus from the district level to each individual learner, fostering a cohesive and responsive environment that delivers on our mission.

PRIORITY	ACTION
Learning	Develop and support adaptable learners who are creative, critical, and social thinkers with the capacity to be educated citizens.
Engagement	Foster a strong sense of community and belonging among students, families, staff, and the wider community, encouraging a shared responsibility for education.
Growth	Strive for operational excellence by using sustainable practices and constantly improving our ability to meet the needs of our growing community.





Budget Fund Types

The District's Budget is comprised of three separate Funds: Operating Fund, Special Purpose Fund, and Capital Fund. The District's total budget bylaw amount includes expenses and asset purchases from all funds. The Operating Fund is where the majority of the District's expenses are reported and is driven by domestic and international student enrolment.

OPERATING FUND

Revenue

- Operating Grant Revenue
- International Revenue
- Other Revenue

Expenditures

- Instruction
- District Administration
- Operations and Maintenance
- Transportation

SPECIAL PURPOSE FUND

- Classroom Enhancement Fund (CEF)
- Annual Facilities Grant (AFG)
- Feeding Futures Fund
- Community Link
- Academies
- School Generated Funds

CAPITAL FUND

- New Schools
- School Enhancement Programs (HVAC, Roofing Upgrades)
- Seismic Mitigation Projects
- Bus Purchases
- Playgrounds
- Land Purchases

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Operating Grant Allocation

In March 2026, the Ministry announced the preliminary operating grants for school districts for 2026-2027 based on enrolment estimates provided by school districts. The District’s preliminary operating grant allocation is \$177.63 million. These grants do not include any increases to address inflationary cost pressures or estimated labour settlement costs. As such, each of the per FTE funding levels remained unchanged from the 2025/26 funding levels, including the Basic Allocation for standard, continuing education and alternate schools at \$9,015 per school age FTE.

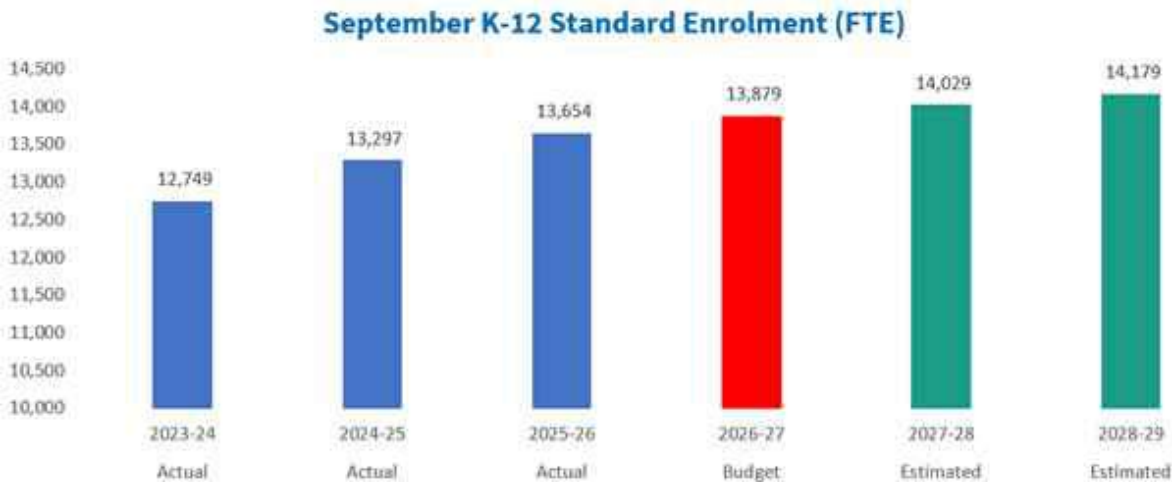
Basic Allocation per FTE



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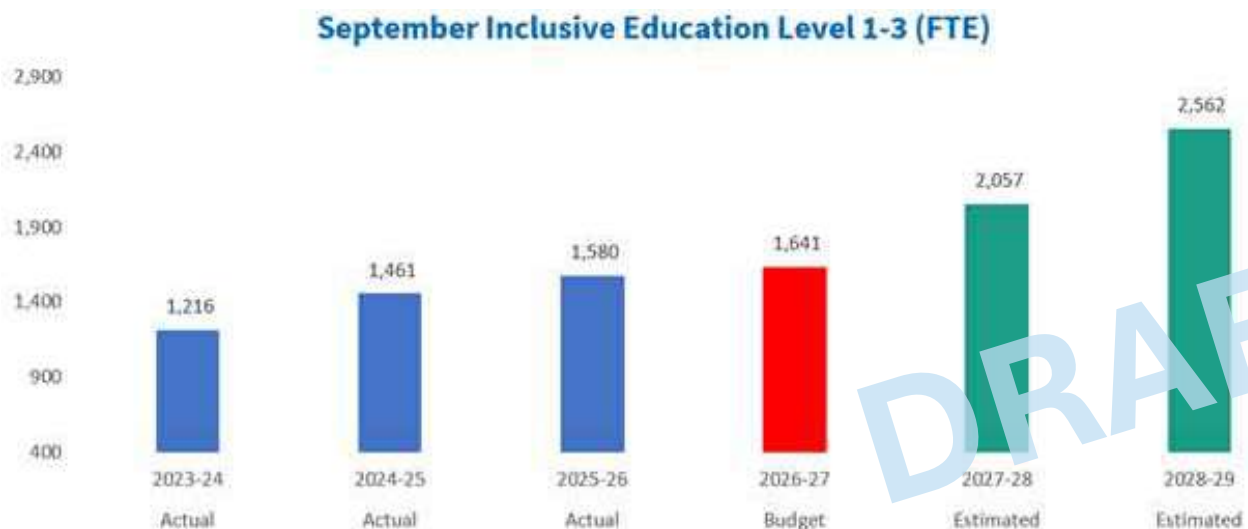
September K-12 Standard Enrolment

The chart below shows 3 years of historical September K-12 Standard Enrolment, and the projected enrolment for the next 3 years. At 13,879 FTE in 2026/27, enrolment is expected to increase by 225 FTE over the prior year which is 1.65% of anticipated growth from the prior year. This growth is contrary to the estimated enrolment decline of 5,442 FTE (4.13%) across the province. Enrolment growth is expected to continue to slow with an increase of 150 FTE in 2027/28 and another increase of 150 FTE in 2028/29.



September Inclusive Education Enrolment

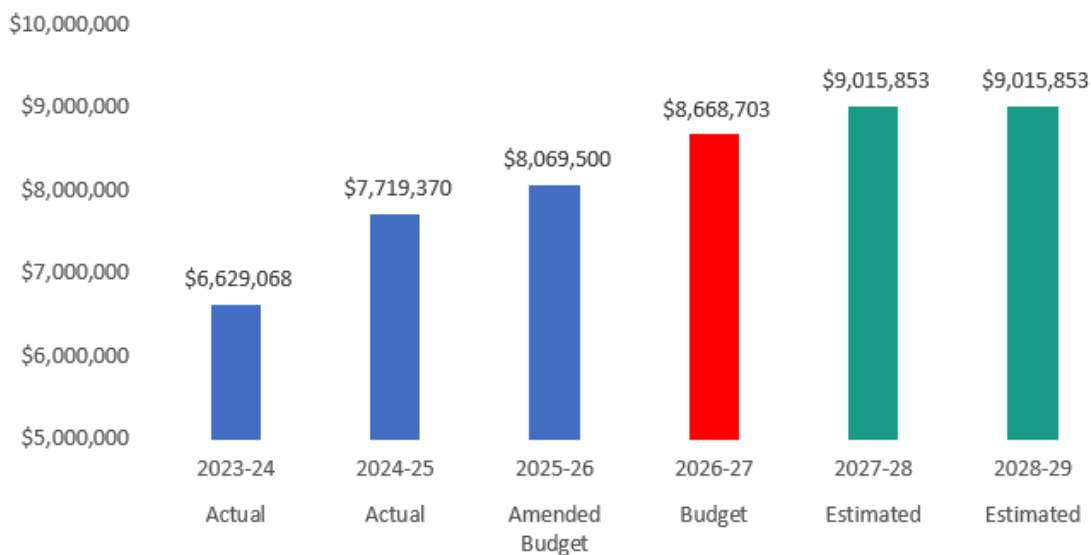
School districts also receive supplemental funding in the Operating Grant for those students with disabilities or diverse abilities in order to provide additional supports and resources. The enrolment count of students with disabilities or diverse abilities is reported in September and February. With an estimated September enrolment of 1,641 FTE in 2026/27, the chart below shows a budgeted increase of 61 FTE (4%) from the prior year. Based on Ministry projections, enrolment is expected to increase with another 416 FTE in 2027/28 and an increase of 505 FTE in 2028/29.



International Student Program

The International Student Program (ISP) generates additional tuition revenue separate from the Operating Grant and helps fund existing infrastructure and services elsewhere in the District. Due to the competitive nature of the international student programs around the world as well as the current geopolitical climate and space constraints within the District, the projected enrolment is estimated to remain relatively static at 262 FTE in 2026/27 and for the subsequent two years. Additionally, to pay for program cost increases, the ISP fees are increasing by \$1,325 per FTE to \$31,650 in 2026/27, and another \$1,450 to \$33,100 in 2027/28. As the tuition rates have yet to be set for 2028/29, they are estimated to remain the same as the prior year.

International Student Program Revenues



Operating Fund Expenses

Staffing levels take various factors into consideration including student and educational needs, funding availability, enrolment growth, and organizational capacity. As student enrolment is projected to increase so will staffing levels. For the 2027/28 to 2028/29 years, teacher staffing increases assume additions at a 1 to 24 teacher to student ratio. Staffing for educational assistants is still to be determined and will depend on the distribution of identified student needs and available resources.

Staffing Chart - Total FTE - Operating Fund

	Actual 2023-24	Actual 2024-25	Amended Budget 2025-26	Budget 2026-27	Estimated 2027-28	Estimated 2028-29
Teachers*	653	649	678	691	697	703
Principals and Vice Principals	71	70	74	75	75	75
Educational Assistants	452	520	567	TBD	TBD	TBD
Support Staff	297	294	295	296	296	296
Other Professionals	48	49	56	56	56	56
Total	1,521	1,581	1,670	TBD	TBD	TBD

*Total teachers (including CEF) for Budget 2026-27 is 900 FTE

NOTE - Final staffing for educational assistants in 2026/27 is estimated at an additional 10-15 FTE from prior year

Staffing Chart - Year over Year Changes in Total FTE - Operating

	Actual 2024-25	Amended Budget 2025-26	Budget 2026-27	Estimated 2027-28	Estimated 2028-29
Teachers*	(4)	29	13	6	6
Principals and Vice Principals	(1)	4	1	-	-
Educational Assistants	68	47	TBD	TBD	TBD
Support Staff	(3)	1	1	-	-
Other Professionals	1	7	-	-	-
Total	60	88	TBD	TBD	TBD

*Total teachers (including CEF) year over year increase for Budget 2026-27 is approximately 13 FTE

NOTE - Final staffing for educational assistants in 2026/27 is estimated at an additional 10-15 FTE from prior year

As labour settlement funding was not released in the preliminary operating grants in March 2026, the 2026/27 budget assumes collective agreement costs will be fully funded by the Province and will be reflected in the 2026/27 Amended Budget in February 2027.

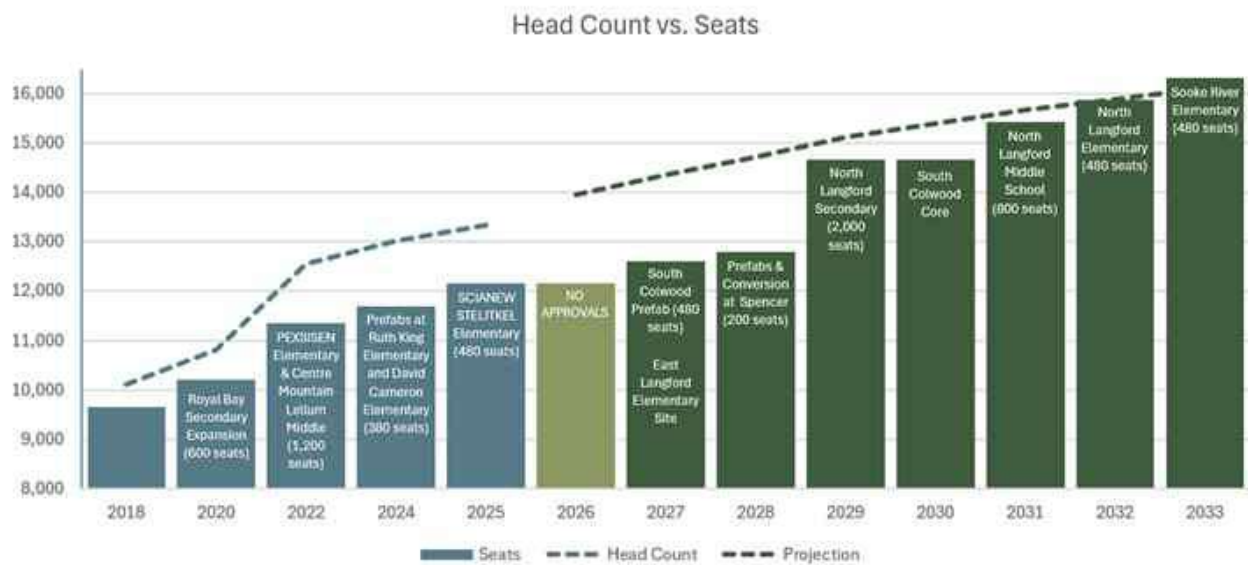
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Interfund Transfers and Capital Planning

When capital assets are purchased with operating funds, they must be transferred from the Operating Fund to the Capital Fund in order to be properly capitalized and amortized (expensed) over the life of the asset. This transfer is reflected as an inter-fund transfer.

The District is not anticipating any inter-fund transfers for 2026/27.

The response from the Ministry to the District's 2026-27 Annual Five-Year Capital Plan submission did not include support for any new expansion program capital projects. Despite the additions of the new SCIANEW STELITKEĒ Elementary School and 18 prefabricated classrooms at David Cameron Elementary and Ruth King Elementary, the District is anticipating continued space challenges in the future as a result of estimated future growth until the new secondary school in North Langford becomes operational.



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Accumulated Operating Surplus

The use of the operating surplus enables the Board to engage in long-term planning, mitigate financial risk and support consistent services. The Board believes that the maintenance of a strong financial position is fundamental to the District's overall fiscal strategy, and as such, an appropriate level of unrestricted surplus funds should be established. The Board has a policy to build and maintain a unrestricted surplus of 2% of operating expenses.



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Multi-Year Operating Fund Financial Plan Summary

The following table is a detailed financial plan summary for the Operating Fund. It considers the projected enrolment and related effects on staffing and expenditures, interfund transfers, and the Accumulated Operating Surplus.

	Actual 2024/25	Amended 2025/26	Budget 2026/27	Estimated 2027/28	Estimated 2028/29
Revenues					
Provincial Grants					
Ministry of Education and Child Care	167,904,326	175,076,663	178,631,875	188,631,525	200,493,555
Other	145,071	169,121	142,050	142,050	142,050
Tuition	7,840,268	8,276,500	8,758,703	9,105,853	9,105,853
Other Revenue	2,050,040	2,116,219	2,092,515	2,092,515	2,092,515
Rentals and Leases	610,131	589,114	589,114	589,114	589,114
Investment Income	1,093,499	853,875	889,286	889,286	889,286
Total Operating Revenue	179,643,335	187,081,492	191,103,543	201,450,343	213,312,373
Salaries					
Teachers	63,672,448	67,197,647	69,035,990	70,445,572	71,855,154
Principals and Vice Principals	10,528,971	11,510,769	11,729,673	12,001,363	12,273,053
Educational Assistants	19,926,893	21,984,311	22,995,311	29,745,700	37,949,912
Support Staff	16,228,256	16,791,318	16,317,836	16,382,836	16,382,836
Other Professionals	6,251,259	6,926,937	7,146,433	7,317,930	7,489,427
Substitutes	7,569,033	7,212,657	7,217,120	7,247,120	7,277,120
Total Salaries	124,176,860	131,623,639	134,442,363	143,140,521	153,227,502
Employee Benefits	32,196,907	35,639,587	37,781,332	41,199,211	45,005,647
Employee Benefit Rate (as a % of Total Salaries)	25.93%	27.08%	28.10%	28.78%	29.37%
Services and Supplies					
Services	8,379,961	9,650,459	8,794,474	9,141,624	9,141,624
Professional Development and Travel	1,316,892	1,270,035	1,321,488	1,321,488	1,321,488
Rentals and Leases	486,248	394,114	445,809	445,809	445,809
Dues and Fees	198,420	188,596	200,456	200,456	200,456
Insurance	557,648	740,451	618,154	618,154	618,154
Supplies	5,649,412	5,763,808	4,954,252	4,999,252	4,999,252
Utilities	2,038,580	2,346,344	2,266,344	2,336,344	2,336,344
Bad Debt	15,432	25,800	15,800	15,800	15,800
Total Services and Supplies	18,642,593	20,379,607	18,616,777	19,078,927	19,078,927
Total Operating Expense	175,016,360	187,642,833	190,840,472	203,418,659	217,312,076
Net Revenue (Expense)	4,626,975	(561,341)	263,071	(1,968,316)	(3,999,703)
Interfund Transfers					
Tangible Capital Assets Purchased and Work in Progress	(436,749)	(2,328,094)	-	-	-
Local Capital	(300,000)	-	-	-	-
Total Interfund Transfers	(736,749)	(2,328,094)	-	-	-
Total Operating Surplus (Deficit), for the year	3,890,226	(2,889,435)	263,071	(1,968,316)	(3,999,703)
Operating Surplus, beginning of year	3,746,823	7,637,049	4,747,614	5,010,685	3,042,369
Total Operating Surplus (Deficit), for the year	3,890,226	(2,889,435)	263,071	(1,968,316)	(3,999,703)
Operating Surplus, end of year	7,637,049	4,747,614	5,010,685	3,042,369	(957,334)
Operating Surplus, end of year					
Internally Restricted Operating Surplus	3,907,014	-	1,193,876	-	-
Unrestricted Operating Surplus (Contingency)	3,730,035	4,747,614	3,816,809	3,042,369	(957,334)
Total Operating Surplus, end of year	7,637,049	4,747,614	5,010,685	3,042,369	(957,334)
Contingency as % of Operating Expense	2.13%	2.53%	2.00%	1.50%	-0.44%

As labour settlement funding was not released in the preliminary operating grants in March 2026, the 2026/27 budget assumes collective agreement costs will be fully funded by the Province and will be reflected in the 2026/27 Amended Budget in February 2027.

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Special Purpose Funds

Contributions restricted from an external party are reported as Special Purpose Funds (SPF). The annual funding received varies from year to year and the funding is not always confirmed at the time that the budget is prepared. The more significant SPF of the District include the Classroom Enhancement Fund (CEF), Learning Improvement Fund (LIF), Community LINK, Official Languages in Education French Programs (OLEP), Strong Start, Academies, School Generated Funds, and the Feeding Futures Fund.

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Capital Funds

The Capital Fund includes capital expenditures for land, buildings, buses and other tangible capital assets that are funded from the Ministry capital grants, local capital, the Operating Fund, and Special Purposes Funds.

The 2026/27 budget includes \$7.5 million in anticipated total capital additions that are to be amortized (expensed) over the useful life of the asset.

Some of the more significant capital projects include:

- Expansion Program (EXP) – An initial \$2.1 million for the construction of the new secondary school in North Langford. This will grow in future years.
- School Enhancement Program (SEP) – \$1.2 million for HVAC upgrades at John Muir Elementary and \$0.8 million for HVAC upgrades at Willway Elementary.
- Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP) – \$0.5 million for HVAC upgrades at Sangster Elementary.
- Food Infrastructure Program (FIP) – \$0.125 million for a new kitchen and equipment upgrades at various schools.
- Playground Equipment Program (PEP) - \$0.2 million for a new universally accessible playground at Sangster Elementary.
- The new childcare centre at Hans Helgesen Elementary, with project costs of approximately \$1.0 million in 2026/27, is expected to be completed in Fall 2026.



Summary of Budget Bylaw Changes

Summary of Budget Bylaw Changes 25-26 Amended Budget to 26-27 Budget (in \$ millions)

Type	Strat Plan Link	FTEs	Operating	SPF	Capital	Total
25/26 Amended Budget (net of carry overs)			186.064	39.845	15.371	241.280
Inflation and Growth						
Targeted:						
Inclusive Education Services	Learning	TBD	1.294			1.294
Na'tsa'maht Indigenous Education	Learning		-0.016			-0.016
Indigenous Education Councils	Engagement		-0.069			-0.069
International Student Program	Learning		0.461			0.461
Child Care	Learning		0.029			0.029
Seamless Day	Learning		-0.089	-0.055		-0.144
Staffing:						
Teachers	Learning	13.00	1.774			1.774
Port Renfrew Elementary Vice Principal	Learning	1.00	0.177			0.177
Bus Driver - accessible route	Growth	1.00	0.051			0.051
Other pressures:						
Employee Benefits	LEG		1.355			1.355
Increments	Learning		1.292			1.292
Inflationary	LEG		0.139			0.139
Ratios - enrolment driven services and supplies	LEG		0.223			0.223
NA'TSA'MAHT Indigenous Education Department	Learning		0.025			0.025
Other:						
Feeding Future Fund SPF	Learning			0.021		0.021
Learning Improvement Fund SPF	Learning			0.034		0.034
Early Care and Learning Fund SPF	Learning			0.053		0.053
Classroom Enhancement Fund SPF	Learning			0.107		0.107
Academies Program	Learning			0.075		0.075
Various SPF	Learning			-0.008		-0.008
Annual Facilities Grant non-capital expenditures	Growth				-0.532	-0.532
Amortization Expense	Growth				0.184	0.184
Reallocation						
Administrative savings	LEG		-1.307			-1.307
Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program	Learning	-11.00	-0.562			-0.562
26/27 Budget			190.840	40.072	15.023	245.936

NOTE - Final staffing for educational assistants in 2026/27 is estimated at an additional 10-15 FTE from prior year.

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**COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE
EDUCATION-POLICY COMMITTEE
School Board Office
June 2, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Trudy Spiller, Trustee (Chair)
Cendra Beaton, Trustee (Committee member)
Russell Chips, Trustee (Committee Member)
Amanda Dowhy, Board Chair (Ex-Officio)
Dana Savage, CUPE
Amanda Culver, STA
Corrinne Kosik, SPVPA
Ash Senini, SPEAC
Paul Block, Superintendent/CEO
D'Arcy Deacon, Associate Superintendent

Guest: Kira Booth
Madi Rowat
Mark Kaercher, District Principal – Capital Planning

Regrets: Lisa Leclerc, Associate Superintendent

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FIRST NATIONS TERRITORIES

With gratitude and respect, we acknowledge that we live, learn, and work on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish: T'Sou-ke Nation, SCÍÁNEW (Beecher Bay) Nation, and the Nuu-chah-nulth: Paaḡčiidḡath (Pacheedaht) Nation. We also recognize that some of our schools are located on the traditional territories of the MÁLEXEL (Malahat) Nation, and the Ləkʷəŋən peoples of Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

2. Opening Remarks from Chair

The Chair opened the meeting and acknowledging a busy month of May across the school district.

3. COMMITTEE REPORT of May 5, 2026 Education-Policy Committee meeting

The committee report for the May 5, 2026 Education-Policy Committee meeting was received by the committee.

4. BAA COURSE PROPOSALS

There were no BAA course proposals for this meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Project for Change Presentation – Student Voice – Kira Booth and Madi Rowat

Students Kira Booth and Madi Rowat presented on their initiative at Royal Bay Secondary School entitled “Project for Change”. The students outlined a vision for developing a website that is focused on supporting student transitions beyond the K - 12 experience. Components of this website include a student experiences, opportunities Hub, course planning, career support, and

questions and answers. The goal is to start as a pilot project at Royal Bay that can then grow to other schools. Ideally, future student leaders would play a key role in maintaining and further developing the website. The students are seeking feedback and recommendations to refine the platform based on district input. The goal is to develop a site alongside the school and the district.

Members of the committee reflected positive feedback and encouragement to the students on their presentation. All members reflected on how refreshing it is to have students speaking directly at an Education-Policy Committee meeting. Committee members asked questions about how support for the initiative could be offered, and how the students see their voice engaging with the broader community. The committee encouraged the students to outline their next steps after this presentation and to engage members of the school community in supporting them.

b. 2026/27 District Catchment Review Process – Mark Kaercher

District Principal Mark Kaercher introduced a district catchment review process that is partially influenced by the establishment of a future secondary school in North Langford. **Note** - Mr. Kaercher identified that the information note referred to a Belmont catchment review in some areas; however, the process being introduced is a district catchment review. The district has an uneven distribution of students enrolled in schools with heavy pressure or over-enrolment in some areas, and with low enrolment in others. The purpose is to ensure equitable access to as many students as possible to attend the school closest to their primary residence. Factors considered in the process will be enrolment and capacity, transportation, community impact, and program delivery. Timelines for the process will include planning and design in summer 2026 with broad public engagement and targeted analysis from September to November 2026. Further analysis and draft development will follow until February 2027 and then shift to board consideration March/April with final decision making in May/June 2027.

Members of the committee asked questions about enrolment priorities around keeping families together. Staff responded by acknowledging that all factors need to be considered in the analysis; however, keeping families together has long been a priority for the Sooke School District. Committee members also asked about French Immersion and the option of adding programming, something that staff acknowledged would be considered as part of the analysis. The committee discussed a communications strategy to support a series of engagements with relevant partner groups and impacted parties. Examples of engagement activities would include broad surveys, school-based engagements, neighbourhood town halls, regional consultations, and engagement with communities that are affected.

6. **REVIEW OF POLICIES/REGULATIONS**

There were no Policies/Regulations for this meeting.

7. **FOR INFORMATION**

8. **FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**



Sooke School District
3143 Jacklin Road, Victoria, BC V9B 5R1
(250) 474-9800
www.sd62.bc.ca

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9. **ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING DATE:** The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m. Next meeting - Sept. 15, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

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Board Information Note

Public Board Meeting

June 23, 2026

Agenda Item 10.1 : Superintendent's Report

LEARNING

Ruth King Choir Festival

Ruth King Elementary hosted its 3rd Annual Choral Festival on May 19. It originally started as a small event but has grown to include seven schools from across the District. The choirs come together and perform for each other. Mme. Goehner who conducts the Prelude Choir at the Victoria Children's Choir adjudicated. Special thank you to Ruth King music teacher Jack Siu for organizing and to the student leaders who helped the event run smoothly.



Graduating Class of 2026

I would like to extend my congratulations to the graduating Class of 2026. This year, 1,113 students across our district have successfully met the requirements to earn their British Columbia Dogwood Diploma, marking an important milestone in their educational journey.

Our graduates include 430 students from Belmont Secondary School, 195 from Edward Milne Community School (EMCS), 420 from Royal Bay Secondary School, 54 from Westshore Secondary School, and 14 graduates from QELEŅSEN Á, LEN.

It has been a privilege to celebrate with our graduates and their families at commencement ceremonies throughout the District. I was honoured to attend the Indigenous Education Graduation Ceremony on May 25, EMCS on June 6, Royal Bay on June 7, Belmont on June



14, and QELEÑSEN Á, LEN on June 19. I look forward to joining the Westshore Secondary School graduation ceremony on June 24.

Graduation is more than the completion of a program of study, it is a celebration of perseverance, growth, and possibility. Our graduates have demonstrated resilience, determination, and courage throughout their educational journeys. As they take their next steps into post-secondary education, careers, apprenticeships, service, and other pathways, they carry with them the knowledge, skills, and relationships that will help shape their futures.

Read & Ride

With 992 kindergarten students registered to start in September and the expectation those numbers will continue to grow over the summer, we will be welcoming as many students as we say goodbye to.

Throughout the spring, our school teams, in partnership with our Early Learning teams, hosted Read & Ride events at each of our elementary schools. These events gave incoming kindergarten students and their families the opportunity to tour their new school, explore a school bus, meet staff, and receive a free book. Thank you to all the staff members who helped make these events possible. We also extend our appreciation to the families who joined us and took the opportunity to learn more about their new school community.

Recent Athletics Achievements

The end of May and June saw many of our school teams and athletes experience success. There are too many to name, so I'll just share a few from the secondary level.

Belmont Secondary

Rugby 7s

Senior Girls – Island Champions and 3rd place at the Provincial Championships

Junior Boys – Island Champions

Senior Boys – Earned a Wild Card berth to the Provincial Championships and finished 4th provincially

Track & Field

Senior Girls High Jump – 3rd at Islands

Boys 100m & 200m – 6th at Islands



Boys Senior 4x100 Relay – 3rd at Islands

Girls Triple Jump – 1st at Islands & 11th in Provincials

Royal Bay Secondary

Track & Field

Girls 4x100m Relay – Island Champions (1st at Islands) and 4th at Provincials

Senior Boys 3000m – Island Champion and 8th at Provincials

Junior Boys 3000m – Island Champion and 5th at Provincials

Senior Boys 110m Hurdles & 400m Hurdles – Island Champion and Provincial Champion in both events

Senior Boys 400m – Island Champion

Rugby

Girls Rugby 15s – Qualified for the Provincial Championships and finished 6th provincially

Mountain Biking

Junior Boys Enduro – 2nd and 3rd place provincial finishes

Golf

AAA Golf Team – Island Champions and 5th overall at Provincials

Emma Kral – 3rd place individually at the Provincial Championships

Soccer

Senior Girls AAA Soccer – Island Champions and 4th place at Provincials

Edward Milne Community School (EMCS)

Track & Field

Boys Shot Put – 2nd place at Islands and 4th place at Provincials

Girls 4x100m Relay – 5th place at Islands and qualified for the Provincial Championships



Royal Bay Student Accepted to Shad Canada Program

Congratulations to Emma Preece, a Grade 11 student at Royal Bay Secondary School, on her acceptance to the highly competitive Shad Canada summer program. Shad is a national enrichment program that brings together high-achieving students from across Canada for a month-long immersive experience focused on STEAM, entrepreneurship, and leadership development.

This summer, Emma will attend a Canadian post-secondary institution where she will collaborate with peers from across the country, develop new skills and explore future career pathways, and engage with real-world challenges. We wish Emma every success in the program and hope her achievement inspires other students to seek out experiences during their secondary studies that broaden their horizons and support their personal and academic growth.

Belmont Business Students Win Provincial and National Awards

Belmont Secondary's business education program is receiving provincial and national recognition this year, with students and staff earning three significant honours. Earlier this semester, Tomas, Ali, and Abdul from Mr. Archibald's Marketing 11 class won Junior Achievement's National Student Stock Market Challenge, placing first among more than 2,000 teams from across Canada. Their achievement highlights both their financial literacy skills and entrepreneurial thinking.

This month, students in Mr. Grainger's Accounting 12 class captured first place in CPA BC's COIN Competition, a province-wide challenge that tests students' accounting knowledge and problem-solving abilities. In addition to earning the top ranking, the class received a \$500 classroom grant from CPA BC and was recognized as one of British Columbia's leading accounting programs this year.

Adding to these accomplishments, Mr. Grainger was honoured at the Junior Achievement BC Awards Ceremony in Vancouver, where he received the 2026 Champion Educator Award. This annual award recognizes outstanding dedication to youth, business education, and student success. His recognition reflects the exceptional learning opportunities being provided to Belmont students and the strength of the school's business education program.



ENGAGEMENT

Parent Handbook

I'm pleased to share that with the assistance of SPEAC, the draft of the Parent Handbook has been completed, and we are now moving forward into the finalization of the document which will be ready for the beginning of the 2026/27 school year.

I'd like to thank SPEAC for their work in helping complete this resource for parents and hope it is something that parents and guardians find valuable over the years.

Groundbreaking of Foundry West Shore

On June 1, I had the opportunity to attend the ground-breaking ceremony with Board Chair Amanda Dowhy for the Foundry West Shore, a significant milestone in expanding access to youth wellness services across the region.

Foundry is an integrated youth services model that brings together mental health care, substance use supports, physical and sexual health services, peer support and employment and education resources in one accessible location for youth aged 12-24 and their families. Operated locally by Thrive Social Services Society, Foundry West Shore will serve communities from the West Shore to Port Renfrew both in-person and online.

This new centre will provide free, low-barrier access to care closer to home, helping young people connect with support early and receive the assistance they need before challenges escalate.

As a school district, we recognize and appreciate the extraordinary efforts of the organizations and individuals who have made this project possible, including Thrive, The Village Initiative and its many partners, the City of Langford, and the Government of British Columbia. We also extend our gratitude to the many community champions, advocates, and supporters whose dedication and collaboration helped bring this vision to life.

Once constructed, the centre will be located at 2805 Carlow Road in Langford, providing an accessible and welcoming space for youth and families in our community.

Municipalities invest in Regional Coordinator

As a founding member of the Village Initiative, the Sooke School District is pleased to see the traction of the 70 community service organizations and local governments that are working together to strengthen services for children, youth and families in the region.



The most recent achievement is the collaborative funding from Colwood, Langford, Highlights, Metchosin, and Sooke, in addition to a citizen group from the District of Metchosin with support from Island Health and the School District to create a regional coordinator position. The role will move collaboration into coordinated action with a focus on measurable outcomes and strategic implementation to leverage existing infrastructure, reduce duplication, strengthen partnerships and improve the efficiency of shared resources in the West Shore and Sooke.

Miranda Levert will serve as the new Regional Coordinator, to ensure that organizations and local government are working together to support the health and well-being of children, youth and families. Levert is currently completing her Master of Public health and has worked with youth across the region including mentoring in Metchosin, support work in Colwood and on the pediatric psychiatry unit at Victoria General Hospital.

We look forward to working with Miranda in the future as she steps into the role of Regional Coordinator for the Municipal Leaders Action Table (MLAT).

Indigo Love of Reading Foundation Grant Awarded to Spencer Middle School

Spencer Middle School received a \$60,000 grant from Indigo's Love of Reading Foundation through the Literacy Fund Grant. It is intended for high-needs communities who are committed to fostering a love of reading and have a robust plan for how they would utilize new books and resources to enhance their vision.

This grant will directly support their school goal of strengthening reading comprehension across curricular areas. In particular, their strategy of growing the reading culture at the school through equitable access to texts, family literacy events, book clubs, reading challenges and most importantly, a wide range of books to suit the needs and interests of every reader. We are grateful to Indigo for this investment in one of our schools and look forward to seeing the grant in action.

Sharing Musical Talent with the Community

On June 7, students from PACE Academy had the exciting opportunity to perform at Fan Con in Langford alongside Adassa, the voice actor and singer known for her role as Dolores in Disney's *Encanto*. This unique experience provided students with the chance to showcase their talents and connect with a celebrated performer. It was an unforgettable experience that inspired and energized our students and left them with lasting memories. My gratitude to Duey and Sandy for their efforts throughout the year to support PACE and its students.



In partnership with the City of Langford, students have been invited to perform national anthems live at Langford Station as part of the community FIFA Watch Party celebrations. The Belmont Secondary Choir proudly opened the first Canadian match on June 12 with a performance of the Canadian national anthem. In addition, individual student performers from several schools have sung, or will sing, national anthems before matches while school remains in session. Adding to this exciting opportunity, two district students will perform the anthem for Ecuador and the anthem for South Korea, showcasing both their musical abilities and the cultural diversity represented within our school communities.



Design Consulting Services Contract Awarded for NLSS

I'm pleased to announce that studioHuB architects has been selected to provide architectural and multidisciplinary consulting services for the new secondary school in north Langford.

We have previously collaborated with studioHuB on the prefabricated additions at David Cameron Elementary and Ruth King Elementary schools. The firm is also currently leading the design and construction of George Pringle Secondary School in West Kelowna, which is scheduled for completion in February 2027, and recently completed Snokomish Elementary School in Surrey in late 2025.

Based in Vancouver, studioHuB is a full-service architectural practice with extensive experience delivering innovative and sustainable educational facilities across British Columbia.

Capital Asset Management

As we head into one of the busiest seasons for our Facilities Department, teams across the District are preparing to undertake a wide range of capital, maintenance, and infrastructure projects that will enhance learning environments for students and staff.

Among the many projects scheduled for this summer are window glazing improvements at Royal Bay Secondary; carpeting and lighting upgrades at Edward Milne Community School; field remediation work at Saseenos Elementary; the final phase of HVAC upgrades at John Muir Elementary; septic system and roofing improvements at David Cameron Elementary; sewer, septic, and drainage system upgrades at Willway Elementary; replacement of the lift



at Wishart Elementary; and a fire alarm system replacement at Spencer Middle School. In addition, several schools will receive kitchen upgrades to support and enhance the growing food programming opportunities available to students across the District.

These projects represent only a portion of the work planned for the summer months. The breadth and scale of the Facilities Department's efforts are extensive, and we are grateful for the expertise and dedication of our facilities staff as they continue to maintain, improve and modernize our schools in support of student success.

School District #62 (Sooke)

ROLE OF THE BOARD	No.: A-2
	Effective: Revised: Reviewed: May 21/26; June 23/26

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

The Board of Education of School District No. 62 (Sooke) (the “Board”) is responsible for the development of goals and policies to guide the provision of educational services to students attending schools and program within School District No. 62 (Sooke) (the “District”), in a manner consistent with the *School Act* and other legislation.

The Board

Specific areas of Board responsibility include:

1. Accountability to Comply with Law
 - a. The Board must act in accordance with all legal requirements established by statute, regulation or order binding upon it, including but not limited to the School Act, School Regulation, and Ministerial Orders.
2. Accountability to and Engagement with Community
 - a. The Board shall:
 - i. Establish processes and provide opportunities for community engagement;
 - ii. Ensure Board decisions are responsive to the needs of the student population and community;
 - iii. Comply with all reporting requirements and communicate District results to the community at least annually;
 - iv. Develop procedures for and hear appeals as required by statute and/or Board policy;
 - v. Model a culture of respect and integrity; and
 - vi. Maintain collaborative relationships with all levels of government, rightsholders, students, parents and guardians and employees.
3. Strategic Planning
 - a. The Board shall:
 - i. Provide overall direction for the District by establishing the mission, vision, values, guiding principles and strategic direction;
 - ii. Approve the District's strategic plan;
 - iii. Set District goals and monitor key results and progress contained in the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (educational goals), and other results in the strategic plan; and
 - iv. Approve other plans as required by the *School Act*.
4. Fiscal Responsibility
 - a. The Board shall:
 - i. Approve the budget guiding principles and decision-making criteria;
 - ii. Approve the engagement process and timeline for budget deliberations;
 - iii. Approve the annual budget, amended budget and three-year financial plan;
 - iv. Monitor financial performance and fiscal management;
 - v. Appoint external auditor and review financial results and related reports;
 - vi. Approve the annual five-year capital plan and Long-Range Facilities Plan;
 - vii. Approve the acquisition and disposition of District land and buildings;
 - viii. Provide direction regarding the mandate for local employee negotiations;
 - ix. Ratify memoranda of agreement with employee bargaining units;

- x. Review and monitor all accumulated surpluses and reserve funds to ensure financial health and stability; and
- xi. Regularly monitor the Enterprise Risk Management Plan (ERM).

5. Policy Development

a. The Board shall:

- i. Create or amend Board policies as appropriate;
- ii. Identify the reason and/or intended purpose before creating a new policy;
- iii. Approve all policy statements;
- iv. Regularly review and evaluate policies; and
- v. Delegate authority to the Superintendent with respect to the creation, amendment or deletion of operational procedures, regulations or guidelines not specifically reserved to the Board.

6. Board/Superintendent Relations

a. The Board shall:

- i. Select the Superintendent;
- ii. Provide the Superintendent with clear corporate direction;
- iii. Delegate in writing, administrative authority and identify responsibilities subject to the provisions and restrictions in provincial legislation and regulations;
- iv. Evaluate the Superintendent and review compensation in accordance with the Superintendent's contract;
- v. Respect the delegated authority of the Superintendent to carry out executive action and support those actions which are exercised within the delegated discretionary powers of the position;
- vi. Ensure that all Board members interact and treat the Superintendent in a respectful manner; and
- vii. Upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of the Secretary-Treasurer.

7. Political Advocacy and Influence

a. The Board shall:

- i. Identify priorities for advocacy, including key messaging and focus;
- ii. Recognize the municipal/civic responsibilities of local governments and focus district partnerships on student success and positive District business outcomes; and
- iii. Advocate for the District's strategic priorities through appropriate channels, including the British Columbia School Trustee Association, British Columbia Public Sector Employees' Association and directly with the Provincial Government.

8. Board Development

a. The Board shall:

- i. Undertake a self-evaluation at least once during each Board term, and more frequently as the Board considers appropriate. The purpose of the self-evaluation is to support continuous improvement of the Board's governance practices. The Board shall determine the timing and process of self-evaluation for each cycle. Responsibility for coordinating the self-evaluation rests with the Board Chair or Vice Chair; and
- ii. Engage in professional development to ensure accountability, transparency and effective leadership.

9. Additional Responsibilities

The Board shall:

- i. Approve annual local school calendars in accordance with legislation.
- ii. Approve Board Authority Authorized Courses.
- iii. Approve the naming and renaming of District facilities, land and portions thereof.
- iv. Approve school catchment areas.
- v. Approve the "Board Annual Work Plan".

- vi. Work alongside the Indigenous Education Council to achieve the purposes established by legislation.
- vii. Hear appeals on the reconsideration of resource materials which are challenged.
- viii. Approve District partnerships and associated contracts.

Trustees Duties and Responsibilities

Trustees are members of a corporate board responsible for governing the District to improve student achievement. Trustees shall act in good faith, comply with the *School Act* and discharge their duties with care, skill, diligence, and integrity, in accordance with their oath of office.

The *School Act* gives no individual authority to Trustees. As members of the corporate board, Trustees are accountable to the public for the collective decisions of the Board and for the delivery and quality of educational services.

The Board is a single entity and a representative assembly, and no individual Trustee has any right of access to, or of agency, within or on behalf of the organization or operations of the District except as the result of a prior and express decision of the Board. Specifically, individual Trustees have no right to access information kept by the District regarding individual students and/or their parents or guardians, staff, volunteers, suppliers or contractors, or the public.

The decisions of the Board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. A Trustee who is given corporate authority to act on behalf of the Board may carry out duties individually but only as an agent of the Board. In such cases, the actions of the Trustee are those of the Board, which is then responsible for them. A Trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the District. A Trustee may not act as representing the Board or District, except as the result of a specific delegation of that representative function.

Trustee Orientation

The Board believes that an orientation program is necessary for effective governance.

As a result of elections, the Board may experience changes in membership. To ensure continuity and facilitate smooth transition from one Board to the next following an election, Trustees must be adequately briefed concerning existing Board policy and practice, statutory requirements, initiatives and long-range plans.

The District will provide an orientation program for newly elected Trustees to support effective governance and continuity of the District. Trustees are expected to participate in orientation sessions and review the materials provided.

The orientation program will provide information on:

1. Role of the Trustees, role of the Board, and role of management;
2. Organizational structures and procedures of the District;
3. Board policies, agenda setting process, meeting proceedings and decorum;
4. Duties with respect to preventing and addressing bullying and harassment, including of employees, District Leadership team members, and other Trustees;
5. Existing District strategic plan, annual reports, budgets, budget process, financial statements, capital plans, key initiatives and other long-range plan;
6. District programs and services;
7. Board's function as an appeal body; and
8. Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities regarding conflict of interest, freedom of information and protection of privacy, and human rights.

The Board Chairperson, the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer are responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the District's orientation program for Trustees.

Incumbent Trustees are encouraged to help newly elected Trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies and procedures of the District and Board.

The Board governs the District on a continuing basis. Changes in Board membership do not interrupt the authority or strategic direction of the Board. All duly adopted policies, bylaws, and resolutions remain in effect unless amended or repealed by formal Board action. The Board is committed to continuity in long-term initiatives and strategic priorities across election cycles.

Trustee Responsibilities

1. Specific responsibilities of individual Trustees include the responsibility to:
 - a. Become familiar with District and Board policies and procedures, meeting agendas, and reports to effectively participate in Board business.
 - b. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for consideration.
 - c. Refer queries, issues or problems raised by a parent or community member about a school or school policy to the Superintendent or designate.
 - d. Keep the Board and the Superintendent informed of all matters that might affect the District.
 - e. Provide the Superintendent with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the Trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
 - f. Regularly attend meetings of the Board and committee meetings as assigned by the chairperson; participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board in order to provide the best possible solutions for the education of children within the District.
 - g. Support the decisions of the Board.
 - h. When delegated responsibility, exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
 - i. Participate in Board/Trustee development sessions as described in the Annual Board Work Plan so that the quality of leadership and service in the District can be enhanced.
 - j. Share the materials and ideas gained from a Trustee professional development activity with fellow Trustees at the next available opportunity.
 - k. Stay current with respect to provincial, national and international educational issues and trends.
 - l. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the Board and the District.
 - m. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the *School Act* and all relevant legislation.
 - n. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.
 - o. Report any violations of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board during a closed session.

References

School Act, R.S.B.C., 1996, c. 412

Local Government Act, R.S.B.C., 2015, c. 1.

School District #62 (Sooke)

ROLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT	No.: A-11
	Effective: Revised: Reviewed: May 21/26; June 23/26

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

In accordance with the *School Act*, the Board of Education of School District No. 62 (Sooke) (the “Board”) will appoint the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent shall be the School District’s Chief Executive Officer and is responsible for the management and operation of the School District.

The Superintendent will report and be accountable to the Board.

The Superintendent’s key responsibilities are as follows: operational oversight, execution of strategic goals, organizational and educational leadership, community engagement, and ensuring compliance with the District’s policies and procedures, *School Act*, *School Regulation*, Ministerial Orders and Provincial Guidelines, and other applicable legislation.

The following describes the core mandate of the Superintendent:

1. Organizational Culture
 - a. Establish safe, caring, and orderly learning and working environments.
 - b. Ensure the welfare of students and staff.
 - c. Foster an environment of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - d. Promote ethical leadership and social responsibility across the organization.
2. Strategic Planning
 - a. Collaborate with the Board on development and implementation of the strategic plan.
 - b. Identify and execute plans to achieve strategic goals established by the Board.
 - c. Regularly report on strategic progress and results.
3. Educational Leadership
 - a. Champion student learning, well-being and achievement across all schools and programs.
 - b. Ensure implementation of provincial educational mandates.
 - c. Promote innovation in curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.
 - d. Support inclusive education, Indigenous education and equity and anti-oppression priorities.
 - e. Ensure facilities adequately accommodate students.
4. Policy and Administrative Procedures
 - a. Collaborate with the Board on development, implementation, and evaluation of Board policy.
 - b. Develop and implement policies and administrative procedures.
 - c. Inform the Board of material changes to administrative procedures as appropriate.
 - d. Inform the Board of federal, provincial, or local legislative developments that may impact the operations of the Board and/or the District.
5. Leadership Practices
 - a. Provide leadership in all matters relating to the operation of the District.
 - b. Provide supervision over and direction to staff.

- c. Implement policies/directions established by the Board and Ministry of Education and Child Care.
6. Superintendent/Board Relations
 - a. Establish and maintain positive and professional working relations with the Board.
 - b. Serve as principal advisor to the Board on educational, operational and policy matters.
 - c. Respect and honour the Board's role and responsibilities and facilitate the implementation of that role as defined in Board policy.
 - d. Provide timely, accurate, and relevant information to support Board decision-making.
 - e. Facilitate communication between the Board and senior leadership.
 - f. Consult with the Board to develop and implement the district's orientation program for newly elected trustees.
 7. Fiscal Responsibility
 - a. In consultation with the Secretary-Treasurer:
 - i. Oversee the development and implementation of the annual budgets;
 - ii. Oversee the development and implementation of the long-range facilities and five-year capital plans;
 - iii. Identify and manage organizational risks; and
 - iv. Maintain internal controls and reporting systems.
 8. Organizational Management
 - a. Demonstrate effective organizational skills resulting in District compliance with all legal, Ministerial and Board mandates and timelines.
 - b. Report to the Minister with respect to matters identified in and required by the *School Act* or Ministry of Education and Child Care.
 - c. Oversee development and implementation of processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for decision-making.
 9. Human Resources Management
 - a. Responsible for all personnel-related matters including hiring and termination decisions, except for with respect to matters specifically reserved to the trustees by legislation, collective agreements, or Board policy.
 - b. Ensure compliance with collective agreements, terms and conditions of employment and employment legislation.
 - c. Establish and maintain an effective organizational structure.
 - d. Ensure adequate succession planning is in place for key positions.
 - e. Support the Board in its role as employer by ensuring an understanding of the duties and responsibilities arising from relevant collective agreements and matters related to local collective bargaining.
 10. Communication and Community Relations
 - a. Ensure open, transparent, and positive external and internal communications are developed and maintained.
 - b. Act as primary spokesperson, in collaboration with the Board Chair, for the operations of the District.
 - c. Develop and maintain positive and effective relations with provincial and regional/local governments, departments, and agencies.

11. Accountability

- a. Report to the Board on progress of strategic and operational goals.
- b. Comply with reporting requirements as established by the *School Act*, *School Regulation*, Ministerial Orders and Provincial guidelines.
- c. Report to the Board with respect to performance reviews and related action plans.

12. Other Duties

- a. The Superintendent may assist the Board with:
 - i. Creating a positive and provincial profile of Sooke Schools.
 - ii. Other duties as assigned by the Board.

References

School Act, R.S.B.C., 1996, c. 412

School Regulation, B.C. Reg. 265/89

School District #62 (Sooke)

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY	No.: A-10
	Effective: Revised: Reviewed: May 21/26; June 23/26

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY**Introduction**

1. The Board of Education of School District No. 62 (Sooke) (the “Board”) is authorized under the *School Act* to delegate specific and general administrative and management duties to others.
2. The Board hereby delegates to the Superintendent of Schools the authority to perform any act or exercise any power that the Board is authorized or required to do except for:
 - a. Those matters reserved to the Board by this or any other Board policy; and
 - b. Those matters that cannot be delegated.
3. Notwithstanding the above, the Board also reserves the authority to make decisions on any matters within its authority under the *School Act* or in accordance with Board policies.

References

School Act, R.S.B.C., 1996, c.412
School Regulation, BC Reg 265/89

School District #62 (Sooke)

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY	No.: A-100
	Effective: Nov. 23/82 Revised: June 23/92; Feb. 24/15; May 23/23 Reviewed: Jan. 19/15; Apr. 17/23; Apr. 25/23; May 23/23; June 23/26 Rescinded:

School Board Policy

The Board of Education of School District No. 62 (Sooke) believes that it must make the best use of the resources provided to it, and must co-operate with parents, students, board employees and community agencies to enhance learning opportunities.

The Board believes it is important that all personnel have high regard for the integrity and well-being of students, so that such students are not denied freedom of thought and speech, or the right to personal dignity.

Board Beliefs:

- The quality of experience for students and staff should be engaging, purposeful and reflective of voice and choice.
- All education partners, staff and citizen in the communities we serve, have a role in supporting student learning, each with district responsibilities.
- In the commitment of fostering diversity and actively pursuing equity by understanding the complexities that affect achievement.
- In fostering a district-wide focus on learning and ensuring an equitable approach to enable everyone to have the opportunity to achieve their potential.
- In continuous improvement through decision-making, informed by gathering evidence that is strength and results based.
- We are growing at an unparalleled pace and it is necessary to manage this growth appropriately to ensure that the District continues to deliver successful education programs.
- That the shifting landscape due to the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of public education in our community and has provided the unique position to learn from its challenges and work with our partner groups to leverage the opportunities discovered.

Board Vision:

We honour student voice and choice through engaging, purposeful and experiential learning in a safe and respectful community.

Board Mission:

Our mission is to help develop informed, literate, and resilient citizens through engagement in a safe, respectful, inclusive and responsive SD62 learning community.

Board Values:

- Relationships
- Choice
- Respect
- Integrity
- Trust
- Safety
- Diversity
- Equity

School District #62 (Sooke)

BOARD-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS	No.: A-110
	Effective: Oct. 13/81 Reviewed: Nov. 17/14; Dec. 8/14; June 23/26 Revised: Dec. 9/14; Jan. 4/23 Rescinded:

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

The Board expects that through the Superintendent of Schools, it will be kept fully informed of district events and important developments. Where events of a critical nature are concerned, the Board expects its staff to ensure that the Superintendent of Schools is immediately notified, and that they will, in turn, ensure that Trustees are promptly informed.

The Board wishes to maintain a high level of awareness about the district and its operations. For this reason, it encourages open communication. However, on matters of specific suggestion, request, report or complaint, the avenue of communication with the Board is through the employee's supervisor and the Superintendent of Schools or designate.

Similarly, Trustees' and the Boards' normal channel of communication with staff, where information requests, directives, concerns or complaints are involved, is through the Superintendent of Schools or designate.

TO BE RESCINDED

School District #62 (Sooke)

BOARD OF EDUCATION – COMPOSITION & PURPOSE	No.: A-310
	Effective: Jan. 13/81 Revised: Dec. 11/90; Dec. 9/14 Reviewed: Nov. 17/14; Dec. 9/14 Rescinded:

School Board Policy

The Board of Education shall be composed of seven members elected or appointed for four year terms (in accordance with Sections 35 and 36 of the *School Act*).

The Board is considered to be a body politic and corporate, with perpetual succession and a common seal, having the rights, powers, duties and responsibilities set forth in the *School Act* and its accompanying regulations.

The Board concerns itself primarily with broad questions of policy rather than administrative operations. The application of policies is an administrative responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools, who shall be held responsible for the effective administration and supervision of the entire school system.

The Board fulfils its responsibilities by acting as follows in the execution of its duties:

1. Establishes policy.
2. Approves Board/Authority authorized curricula and provides funds for instructional materials.
3. Approves the appointment of all Executive staff members and prescribes their duties.
4. Approves the budget and policies whereby administrative staff may formulate procedures and regulations for the orderly accomplishment of business.
5. Estimates and seeks to provide funds for the operation, support, maintenance, improvement, and extension of the school system.
6. Provides for the planning, expansion, improvement, financing, construction, maintenance, use and disposition of physical plants of the school system.
7. Establishes goals and objectives for the educational program and the operation of the district.
8. Provides for the dissemination of information relating to the schools necessary for creating a well-informed public.
9. Carries out all other duties and responsibilities as outlined in the *School Act* and Regulations.

The rights, powers, duties and liabilities of a Board of Education rest only with the legally constituted Board and not with committees of trustees or individual trustees.



Information Note Public Board Meeting

June 23, 2026

Agenda Item 11.3 – August Board Meeting

TOPIC: Not holding an August 2026 meeting of the Board of Education

BACKGROUND / FACTS:

- For a number of years the District has held an August meeting of the Board of Education. In years of rapid growth, this provided a space for public engagement and information around enrollment projections and facilities.
- Board by-law 1-20 and regulation A-400 are inconsistent, and contradictory to each other, and not consistently aligned with the *School Act* as it relates to the requirement to hold an August Board meeting.
- Specific references are included below for ease:

School Act (67)(3)

A board must meet as often as is necessary to transact its business and in any event not less than once in every 3 months.

A-400

Regular meetings will be held each month on the fourth Tuesday except in the months of July and August and December, when one meeting may be held at the call of the Chair. A consent of the majority of Trustees is required for cancellation of a regular meeting.

By-Law 1-20

1.8.2 Regular meetings of the Board shall be held at least monthly from September to the following June, [and at least once in July or August each year.

ANALYSIS:

- Board regulation A-400 is consistent with the *School Act* requirements in that it maintains a meeting at least every three months and provides for the option of a meeting in one of July, August or December.
 - Regular meetings are defined as every month except July, August and December.
 - Practice has always included a December meeting in the Board calendar, meaning July and August are not required or “regular” meetings.
- By-law 1-20 is inconsistent with the requirements of the *School Act* and contradicts regulation A-400 by including December as a regular meeting during the school year and requiring a Board meeting in one of July or August.
- Regulation A-400 was most recently updated January 19, 2015 with By-Law 1-20 not in effect until January 23, 2018.

- One could assume that the intention of the Board at the time was to establish a revised frequency of Board meetings with that passage of by-law 1-20 and that there was an administrative oversight in not removing or amending the requirements established in regulation A-400.
- Regardless of intentions at the time of developing by-law 1-20, the Board finds itself in a position of conflicting requirements in its governance documents.
- As a result, the best course of action is for the Board to consider a motion with regards to whether to hold an August 2026 meeting as directed by the will of the current Board.

NEXT STEPS:

- Given the inconsistency between by law 1-20 and regulation a-400, and aligned with *School Act* section (67)(3), the Board consider the following motion:

Recommended Motion: That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) aligned to the requirements outlined in the School Act 67(3), hereby confirm the date of the next regular meeting of the Board of Education to be held on Tuesday, September 29, 2026.

- Staff will note the meeting schedule anomalies for reference and review of Governance Committee when by-law 1-20 and A-400 are next reviewed.

Prepared by: Brian Jonker, Secretary Treasurer

Board of Education 2025-26

90 Day Work Plan

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2026

Font Colour Legend:
Blue – Education Policy
Green – Resources
Red – Ad Hoc/District Partners
Black – Board of Education

ACTION	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Approve			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Annual Reports (for approval):</i> – Enhancing Student Learning (ESL) – Audit Committee Report - Financial Statements – Annual BoE Work Plan & Board/Committee meetings calendar – 2025-26 Year-End District Operational Plan Report
Review		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Estimated Enrolment Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Annual Reports (for review):</i> – 2025-26 Operational Plan – Enrolment Update report – Minor & Major Capital Summer Work Update – Annual District Communications Plan – Superintendent Annual Growth Plan
Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CSBA Conference in Whistler July 5-8, 2026 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Audit Committee (TBD) – BoE Committee Assignments
Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trustee Elections Information Session, led & run by staff for prospective new trustee candidates - (July 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MLAs “Pre-School Start-Up” District Tour (TBD) – Trustee Elections Information Session, led & run by staff for prospective new trustee candidates - (Aug 31) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Welcome back Message to the system – Chair to families on behalf of the Board (1st day of school). – District-wide Indigenous Learning Day (Sep 22)