

NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING**

INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: January 4, 2023
TO: Education Committee
FROM: Laura Tait, Deputy Superintendent
SUBJECT: Promote Safety for Opportunities within Outdoor Education and Programming

Board Goal:

To be a leader in Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

District Operational Plan Objectives:

Increase opportunities for outdoor education and programming in the district.

Strategies:

Promote safety for opportunities within outdoor education and programming within the district.

Overview

Within the board's goal to be a leader in Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability, the Department of Learning Services explored the topic of Outdoor Education and how students and staff can learn on and from the land in a safe and sustainable way. Strategies within the Operational Plan were developed to meet the objective of increasing opportunities for outdoor education and programming in the district.

One issue that surfaced early in our inquiry into outdoor education opportunities was safety in planning for and participating in outdoor activities. Many teachers expressed interest in providing more outdoor learning opportunities but were not confident that they had the training or experience to do so safely.

Teachers within the system who have some training and experience in outdoor education assisted the district in developing a plan to provide training and certification.

The Outdoor Council of Canada (OCC) is the umbrella organization for the outdoor sector. We identified certification options through OCC that would allow us to build our capacity to offer safe opportunities in outdoor education across the district.

During the **2021-2022 school year**, the following training was completed:

- Four teachers received their instructor certification so that they could certify additional teachers in the OCC Field Leader Level One course.
- One teacher was certified in Ocean and Marine Training
- Seven teachers completed 40-hour Wilderness First Aid
- Two teachers completed 20-hour Remote First Aid
- Thirty-One teachers and one principal completed a 16-hour OCC Hiking Field Leader course

During the **2022-2023 school year**, additional training provided includes:

Fall of 2022

- Two teachers completed 20-hour Remote First Aid
- Two teachers completed a 5-day Lake Water Advanced Instructor Certification through the Recreational Canoeing Association of BC)

Spring of 2023

- One teacher to complete 40-hour Wilderness First Aid
- One teacher to complete 20-hour Remote First Aid
- Forty teachers to complete a 16-hour OCC Hiking Field Leader course
- Eight teachers to complete Lake Water Leaders Certificate (they will be taught by the two teachers who completed the instructor's course in the Fall)

The above training opportunities are building capacity in each of our elementary schools to ensure there is one or more teacher who has the OCC Hiking Field Leader course. This will ensure that there is at minimum one teacher in each school who has the knowledge to safely plan for outdoor learning opportunities, allowing more and more classes to participate in outdoor learning opportunities. Each secondary school, in addition to the OCC Hiking Field Leader course, is being supported to build capacity to offer Outdoor Education opportunities for students in grades 8 through 12. Our locally developed West Coast Wilderness Board Authority/Authorized course (BAA) for grades 10-12 and Outdoor Education 11 and 12 offer students a more intensive outdoor education experience. This will provide students who have a passion for the outdoors to go deeper into this curricular area during the graduation program and in preparation for post-secondary programs in the field.

Next Steps

In addition to providing training and certification to staff to ensure safe outdoor education learning opportunities, strategies that link this work to other objectives within the Board's goals are being developed. Connecting outdoor education opportunities to Truth and Reconciliation, as well as exploring opportunities to develop Indigenous-focused BAA courses alongside our local First Nation partners align with the district Syeyutsus Framework.

This month, the Education Committee will have presentations from two schools on Outdoor Education.

Frank J. Ney Elementary School – principal Gregg Halfyard and vice principal Quinn Olson presenting.
Wellington Secondary School – principal Andrea Davidson and teacher Mike Dang presenting.