

ANNUAL TRUSTEE ZONE REPORT

Trustee: Tom Rokeby

School Year: 2022/2023

School Names/Zone:

John Barsby Family of Schools: Chase River, Bayview, Park Ave., Georgia Ave. elementary schools and Learning Alternatives

Annual Highlights:

It has been a year of partnerships in the John Barsby family of schools, as we continued to emerge from the worst of the pandemic and work together to “build back better”.

The corner of Howard and Seventh is looking different as the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools partner on a project that will turn the previously underused fields into a focus of south end sports. The artificial turf fields will at last give Barsby football players a home field that reflects the pride and importance of youth football in the neighbourhood. SD68 was also honoured to partner with Snuneymuxw First Nation’s to bring the Junior All Native Tournament to basketball courts across the district. Spring break saw thousands of athletes and their families converge upon Nanaimo for one of the largest annual youth tournaments in the province. The energy around Barsby the final weekend was a special experience. Huy tseep qu’u to all the organizers, and the hundreds of volunteers that made the tournament a huge success.

It was moving day for Learning Alternatives this summer as the satellite classrooms at John Barsby Community School were relocated to the Woodlands site. I spent a wonderful afternoon recently with the Learning Alternative students, getting their input on our school district’s new strategic plan. The students provided valuable insight based on lived experience into our four goals: student success, safe and healthy schools for students and staff, environmental sustainability and truth and reconciliation. Never underestimate the power of pizza and honest dialogue with students.

Chase River elementary is seeing a new addition come to life with the opening of on-site daycare. Another partnership, this time with the Ministry of Education and Childcare, sees local daycare operators offering full-day care at several SD68 schools. These brand-new modular facilities are fabricated in-house by district tradesmen working alongside students. What a great example of staff innovation in the face of supply chain issues. The Chase

River Elementary School community bid a fond farewell in June to long-time teacher Rod Greenway. Rod is famous in the south end for putting guitars in kid's hands for the last twenty plus years. Thanks Rod, for giving so many kids three chords and an attitude. We'll miss the music.

My first ever school visit as a trustee was to Bayview elementary. A call had gone out to the community looking for gifts to fill up the annual gift gala at the school. This wonderful tradition at a few schools in our family really captures the best of the holiday season. PACs, parents and staff partner to ensure that every student has the opportunity to select and wrap a gift for someone they love. I was lucky to spend the morning as the young shoppers came through the "store", helping to restock shelves and wrap gifts to go home. Programs such as these bring the community together to brighten the holidays for everyone, but it also gave me the chance to reflect on my own consumer holiday habits and their environmental impact. Thanks for the lesson, Bayview!

Park Ave Elementary has seen more housing development in its catchment than any other school in the family. The addition of this much needed family-oriented housing will ensure that the school has solid enrollment numbers for years to come. Like many south-end Parent Advisory Councils, the team at Park Ave is always working hard to ensure both equity of opportunity and great community spirit. Make plans to be at the Santa Brunch and Market on Saturday, December 2nd to support their efforts. Principal Darren Dickie shared that the arrival this past year of the Student and Family Affordability Fund to help with inflation was a great addition to the constant efforts of PAC to make sure every child belongs at Park Avenue elementary.

Georgia Avenue elementary is the location of the next phase of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools ongoing partnership with the Ministry of Education and Childcare. Like the Chase River project now up and running, School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) is building a new facility at Georgia Avenue Elementary school that will create 52 new licensed childcare spaces, including 12 infant and toddler spaces, 16 spaces for children aged three to kindergarten and 24 school-age spaces. The school itself is in the process of selecting plans for a much-anticipated renewal of the front entryway, which is slated to include a mural by a local artist. I'm looking forward to attending their Holiday Concert, as the spirit of Georgia Elementary and its amazing staff shines through the surrounding construction.

Finally, just around the corner from Georgia Avenue elementary is perhaps the school district's most ambitious partnership to date. The

Te'tuxwtun Project, encompassing the former King Arthurs Court, the sports fields at Howard and Fifth, and the old Harewood elementary site, is a partnership between SD68, the City of Nanaimo and BC Housing. The site is being transformed into a multi-faceted project for the entire community. The site will include new affordable rental housing, a new location for the Learning Alternatives school district program, as well as culture, parks and recreation services. Snuneymuxw First Nation will guide the growth and development of the three properties, bringing a wealth of cultural knowledge to the project.

I want to thank the amazing staff and senior leadership working in the school district administration centre on Wakesiah Ave. It is through their diligence and relationship building that our students and families will benefit for years to come from these new facilities. Our amazing teachers and their hardworking students deserve the very best, and we can only do that by working together.

Huy tseep qu'u to Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo, Ministry of Education and Childcare, BC Housing, our Parent Advisory Councils and many others for partnering with us as we build back better for the Barsby family of school.