



**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BUSINESS COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC MEETING  
ACTION SHEET**

DATE: October 11, 2023  
TO: Business Committee  
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer  
SUBJECT: Rutherford Elementary

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### **Recommendation**

***The Business Committee recommends that the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) direct that Rutherford Elementary School be reopened as of September 2025 and that staff are directed to create a School Transition Working Group to address issues associated with reopening the facility and provide the Board with recommendations with respect to appropriate catchments for Rutherford and the surrounding schools and potential programming, if applicable, to ensure the long-term viability of the school.***

### **Background**

On May 24, 2023, the Board of Education passed the following motion with respect to the opening of Rutherford:

The Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) directs that Rutherford Elementary School be reopened as of September 2025 subject to final approval following the September 2023 confirmation of student count and that staff are directed to create a School Transition Working Group to address issues associated with reopening the facility and programming options to ensure long term viability of the facility.

The Action Sheet associated with that decision is attached. This Action Sheet is intended to be responsive to the motion and recommends proceeding with the planning for the opening of Rutherford for the September 2024-25.

### **Discussion**

In May the Board approved the re-opening of Rutherford with a final check-in in fall 2023 to ensure that the demographic support for the school supported continued. The basis for the previous decision is attached as an appendix.

The enrolment Information Sheet presented to the committee at this meeting, and the information attached, indicate that the North End has continued to grow and our elementary programming has exceeded projections at a number of schools. We are also aware of continued development in the Randerson area that will likely see an increase in families in the next 4-5 years as projects complete. This reality, along with the current extensive use of portables, indicates that the reopening of Rutherford should proceed.

The next steps are to determine catchments for the impacted schools to create a boundary that supports a robust population upon opening and then in the long term. Further, discussion needs to occur with how the school will open e.g. whether all grades will start at the school or we will start with a primary cohort and grow over a number of years.

The role of the School Transition Working Group will address these issues, determine appropriate consultation and report back to the Board. The work must be complete by January of 2025 in time for kindergarten registration. However, the goal is to be complete by fall of 2024.

One other issue that may be considered is that of French immersion. During our earlier consultation the public was supportive of Rutherford opening rather than creating a dual track at Hammond Bay. However, ironically Hammond Bay is significantly under capacity as we organically grow the school with a third French Immersion cohort. Moreover, it appears that Hammond Bay's expansion of spots is impacting other French Immersion programming (e.g. a decline in enrolment at ENO). It may be worthwhile having further discussion about whether both Hammond Bay and Rutherford would be viable dual track schools. To be very clear, staff are not recommending such a move, however, depending on anticipated facilities utilization at Hammond Bay and Rutherford, considering such a shift could ensure the long-term viability of Rutherford in the event that our demographic projections don't bear out while at the same time alleviating overcrowding at Departure Bay and Rutherford.

**Appendix A:** Enrolment Information

**Appendix B:** Elementary and Secondary School Catchment Maps

**Appendix C:** May 17, 2023 Action Sheet