



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

DATE: October 11, 2024  
TO: Business Committee  
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer  
Justin Taylor, Assistant Director Planning and Operations  
SUBJECT: Vandalism Report

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### **Background**

Vandalism or damage caused by willful behavior to Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) Facilities is currently guided by AP 527 – Anti-Vandalism (the AP). The AP indicates annual reporting to the Board or more often as circumstances require.

This report is intended to provide an update on facilities' activities related to the AP. This report discusses vandalism from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

The Business Committee was previously updated in October of 2024.

### **Overview**

The 2023/2024 school year saw a general reduction in the cost of vandalism to the district. This was due to a lack of major vandalism events. While there were 391 events, only one's cost exceeded \$1,000, a marked change from last year. The vast majority were minor graffiti or one broken window.

Total vandalism cost in 23/24 was \$53,503.81 (a decrease from \$79,614 in 22/23). Costs were quite evenly spread across the twelve months of the period with an average of \$4,459 and standard deviation of \$1,104.

The Operations team attributes the decline to increased use of surveillance cameras and excellent collaboration with Footprints on security patrols to monitor the most affected areas.

The district has changed reporting systems as of the start of the 2024/2025 school year. Ebase is a more fulsome reporting system that allows for more accurate reporting of costs, especially labour costs. Next year's data is likely to be non-comparable with the past twenty-five years and will serve as a new baseline.

### **Interior vs Exterior Vandalism:**

Interior vandalism was reported at \$1,809 or three percent of the total vandalism cost. Again, much internal vandalism is underreported as it is part of the standard janitorial work.

## Updates on Projects from Previous Report:

Security Cameras (exterior) are operating at the following locations:

- NDSS high vandalism areas
- Georgia Avenue Community School
- Fairview Community School
- Facilities Yard
- NDSS Artificial Turf Field – Jointly funded with City of Nanaimo
- John Barsby Secondary – including the new turf fields jointly funded with City of Nanaimo
- Brechin Elementary
- Ecole Quarterway
- Dover Bay Secondary
- Ecole Hammond Bay

Security Cameras (interior) are operating at the following locations:

- Dover Bay Secondary
- NDSS
- QQS, in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation.

In accordance with the school act section 74.01, the board is to review the efficacy of the cameras on an annual basis. This report constitutes the District's evaluation. NLPS staff and the RCMP agree that the cameras continue to increase safety of individuals, individuals' property, and school property. Examples include:

- Identifying vandals.
- Attributing fires to arson and identifying arsonists.
- Identifying thieves.
- Identifying drug users on school grounds.
- Identifying illegal dumping on school grounds.
- Reviewing physical assaults.

Each of the facilities with cameras indicated above has benefitted from at least one and often several of the points listed above.

While it is difficult to quantify exactly how much of the reduction in vandalism costs is directly attributable to the presence of security cameras, the preventative benefit is an important consideration. Vandalism costs have reduced by 50% since the first cameras were installed. Statistical variance, effective patrols, and other factors certainly contribute, but the preventative benefit of cameras is paramount.

The District continues to plan for and install security cameras.

## Community Safety Unit:

The District continues to work with the Community Safety Unit in the downtown core. The two organizations work together to clear and fence district property where consistently set up camps and damage property. The District has called upon the CSU on several occasions to evict intractable transients when district personnel were unable to do so. The District hopes to continue this strong partnership.

## Fire at Wellington:

Wellington's band room has been rebuilt and will soon feature an enclosure to protect the band room from transient activity after hours. If successful, this is a concept SD68 could expand to other vulnerable covered areas.

## Discussion

Vandalism takes many forms including (but not limited to) building damage, graffiti, window breakage, grounds destruction, theft, building systems damage, cleanup following overnight homeless occupation as well as 'interior' vandalism.

Initiatives in place to limit vandalism:

- Graffiti removal program - graffiti is removed immediately and a database of photos is maintained.
- Anti-vandalism coatings – on signage, murals, etc.
- Anti-climber protection - reduce access to roofs where identified.
- Seismic Film installed on inside of all windows – assists in vandalism clean up and seismic response.
- Participation/coordination with stakeholders (schools, Parks and Recreation, Bylaw, etc.)
- Video, pictures and data available to the RCMP and key stakeholders (as identified periodically).
- Consideration to CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles.
- Engage residents surrounding schools as required or requested.
- Restoration activity is tracked, costed and provided as requested.
- Coordination with City of Nanaimo's Community Safety Unit.
- Review of areas frequented by transients.
- Tracking internal vandalism.
- Increased reporting of internal vandalism.
- Fulsome use of video systems for both active and passive measures.

While not vandalism, other initiatives to reduce unwanted behaviors around schools include:

- Transients and after-hours groups asked to leave properties and confirmed to leave by Security/NLPS staff.
- RCMP or Community Safety Unit called as required to move individuals along.
- NLPS Emergency Caretaker responds daily to sites of concern prior to school start-up.
- Security patrols increased overnight at areas that have been targeted by vandals.

New initiatives include:

- Fencing off vulnerable covered areas.
- Pilot program to snap photographs of key vulnerable areas after hours.

It should be noted that there are no specific vandalism budgets, and all vandalism costs are covered by the affected department. Vandalism costs directly represent less funding spent in the classroom.

### Conclusion

Staff continue to be guided by the AP – “Develop, recommend and maintain anti-vandalism and communication strategies that are both preventative and reactive”. Reports will continue to be presented to the Business Committee annually targeting October.

### Appendix A: 2023/2024 Vandalism Data

