

**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PUBLIC MEETING  
INFORMATION SHEET**

DATE: January 29, 2025  
TO: Board of Education  
FROM: Shawn Johnston, Ex. Director of HR and Zoe Mikelic-Strazza, Manager Health & Wellness  
SUBJECT: Employee Wellness Strategy Update

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### **Background**

The NLPS Strategic Plan is committed to Student and Employee Wellness. The Board is committed to “increase the number of employees who feel valued and/or engaged”.

To meet this goal, the District has initiated a process to create an overarching Employee Wellness Strategy that contains short, medium and long term strategies to address the Board’s commitment to its employees. For instance, recent shifts in surplus allocations approved by the Board provided additional hours to employees to engage with their colleagues, feel valued and ultimately serve employee wellness which will ultimately lead to student success.

This information sheet is intended to provide an update on the next action that will be part of the overall strategy for the District.

### **Discussion**

As the Board is aware, the District’s recently conducted Employee Engagement Survey identified the need for the District to provide employees with greater access to resources to support their wellness. The District has a robust Employee and Family Assistance Plan that provides a variety of services. However, District staff identified a gap in service. Specifically, the gap was associated with proactive tools for employees with respect to employee health and wellness.

In trying to address this gap, in the context of the overall Employee Wellness Strategy, District staff have sourced and obtained a suite of products to advance our support of employees driving their wellness forward.

For the current year, the District will reallocate appropriate budgets to fund the program. In subsequent years, the District is examining the manner to appropriately resource the program but have targeted a number of budgets that we anticipate will be positively impacted by improved access including our employee benefits balance and possibly our staff replacement budget – one of the fastest growing areas of expenditure in the District over the last few years.

In addition, the District is going to be providing basic mental health training for District management to ensure that management have the tools to recognize mental health issues in the workforce. It is also intended to align with the District’s commitment to a culture of caring and compassion throughout our District.

The supports the District is engaging are as follows:

### **LifeSpeak**

LifeSpeak is a suite of accessible mental health, resilience, and life skills education designed to empower employees in advancing their wellness. It includes access to expert videos, video series, and written content on topics related to:

- Mental Health
- Resilience and Mindfulness
- Physical Health
- Relationships
- Parenting and Eldercare
- Financial Health
- Personal and Professional Development
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Parents and children

This product will provide all employees and their families with 24/7/365 access to over 315 series and 1900 individual training sessions across the eight main topic areas, identified above. The content is produced by world renowned experts, in English and French, with subtitles available in Spanish, and over 500 subtitled into 11 other languages. Additionally, LifeSpeak includes an interactive ask the expert feature, and regular blog entries.

Our subscription provides unlimited usage to employees and their family members.

We note that the District has received positive feedback with respect to the services and results from other districts.

### **Wellbeats Wellness**

Wellbeats Wellness is the physical health side of LifeSpeak, providing expert content on exercise, nutrition, and mindfulness for all ages, interests, and ability levels. This includes a robust library of on demand video classes and goal-based programs. It includes access to points-based challenges as well.

Both products are user friendly, and interface with Outlook so that users can schedule custom wellness breaks or time into their busy lives.

The package includes supports for implementation, account management, and member support, as well as marketing and communications tools, which will help maximize employee uptake and utilization.

We will receive ongoing reporting and analytics to assist us in gauging the value of this suite of products in supporting our employees to maximize their personal wellness.

## **Mental Health Training**

The District will lead training and learning with all managers on managing Mental Health. The training series is available through Homewood Health in their Leadership Training Course library, and includes four modules:

1. Mental health concerns among Canadians
2. Managing mental health concerns in the workplace
3. Supporting employee success
4. Organizational strategies for supporting mental health

This learning will also include group debrief and discussion, and is intended to assist all District managers to have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to understand and effectively help manage the mental health concerns affecting employees.

## **Conclusion**

The District is currently in the process of engaging with out employee partners with respect to the process of implementation but felt it was important to bring the strategy before the Board for an update in a timely manner to illustrate the proactive measures being taken to support employee wellness.

Staff will begin implementing LifeSpeak and Wellbeats Wellness in February, at which time they will become fully available for use by all employees and their family members. Further, staff are collaborating with management groups to determine the best timing for mental health training.

Finally, as noted an overarching Employee Wellness Strategy is currently being produced that will include LifeSpeak and Wellbeats Wellness as one aspect of a strategy intended to be responsive to the Board's goals as well as the clear need as provided by feedback from employees.

