



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

DATE: March 5, 2025
TO: Board of Education
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer and Kelsey Bakewell, Maintenance Manager
SUBJECT: 2025 Snow Event

Background

Between February 3 and 4, 2025, approximately 30-40 cm of snow fell in the Nanaimo area, resulting in the implementation of the NLPS snow clearing plan, as reviewed in the November Business Committee meeting.

Discussion

In late fall, the Maintenance Department had started rolling out the plan for sub-zero temperatures and snowfall throughout the winter, by ensuring that road salt and saltshakers were stockpiled, snow removal equipment had been inspected and was ready for use, and revisiting the snow removal plan with stakeholders.

As the inclement weather appeared in the early February forecast, 3 sanders, 7 plows, the John Deere tractor, and 2 skid steers were prepared for snow removal and de-icing operation in advance of the storm. Plow and shoveling crews in the Maintenance department and capital funded employees were notified and on stand-by to respond.

The snow started on February 3, during a District pro-d event, and was expected to carry on through the pro-d event scheduled on February 4. This created a bit of an anomaly, as district staff were expected to be at the event, but students were on a scheduled day off.

While communicating with stakeholders through constant updates, the Maintenance Manager gave the direction for the plow and shoveling crews to begin plowing/shoveling/sanding on February 4, with the intention to have schools open on February 5. Throughout the day, Operations was able to coordinate school custodians to assist in the snow removal. The crews worked a full 8-hour shift, ending at 4:00.

At 12:00 am on February 5, the plow crew went out again to finish the District's first priority of creating a safe area for student drop-off and parking. Maintenance and Transportation coordinated having a mechanic on duty for 4:00 am in the event of equipment breakdown. The Transportation Manager and Maintenance Manager reviewed snow removal progress early in the morning and met at 5:00 am to discuss the conditions of the roads and school access, and the communication went to the Executive Director of Planning and Operations that enough snow removal had and would be done to open schools and have busses running. The shovel crews followed at 6am to continue work on clearing interior

sidewalks to create accessible pathways for students to access entryways. Schools were opened, and only minor concerns were communicated back to the Maintenance Department, all dealt within a short amount of time between the shovel crew and custodial assistance. This was considered a major success, especially considering the amount of snow that fell in such a small amount of time. No school days were missed.

Snow clearing continued throughout February 5, resulting in the majority of interior walks and accesses to schools having a clear path for accessibility.

Plowing, salting, and shoveling continued throughout the week with crews starting early shifts, targeting the remainder of the interior walks, maintaining parking lot safety, and then clearing the school frontages to adhere with the City of Nanaimo by-law indicating that all frontages would be clear within 48 hours of a snowfall event. Within 48 hours, most of the frontages had been cleared, with few exceptions that were missed.

Throughout the week of the event, roughly 800 hours of crew time, not including custodial assistance, was allocated to snow removal and salting, with roughly \$40,000 spent on salt and shovels.

As the snow event has wrapped up, the stakeholders will be meeting to discuss a “lessons learned” to analyze what we could improve in our plans for next year. There is potential for some efficiencies in communication and implementation, and some of the material costs are being reviewed.

The initial review of the District’s response was that it was the most timely response to date and the District should be very proud of its efforts.

