



**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
INFORMATION SHEET**

DATE: February 11, 2026
TO: Strategic Directions Committee
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer
SUBJECT: Three-Year Enrolment Estimates (2026-27 to 2028-29)

Background

The Ministry of Education and Child Care requires districts to prepare three-year enrolment estimates in order to comply with section 106.3 (2) of the School Act, whereby: *A board must submit to the minister on or before February 15 of each year an estimate of the number of students who may be enrolled in educational programs provided by the board in the next school year.*

Discussion

The majority of the district's annual operating dollars are provided by the Ministry of Education and Child Care through a grant which is based on student enrolment. Each year enrolment estimates are submitted to Ministry in mid-February so they can calculate preliminary funding for districts by mid-March, in order to base their Annual Budgets on. Following that, districts are required to capture and submit actual enrolments at the end of September, February and May; funding is then adjusted according to any variances from original estimates.

The intervals and data collected within each is summarized below:

September Enrolment Count – includes School-Age, Adults, Alternate and Continuing Education, Online Learning, Inclusive Education Level 1-3, Indigenous Education and English Language Learning students.

February Enrolment Count – includes Continuing Education, Online Learning, Inclusive Education Level 1-3 enrolment growth and Newcomer Refugee Students.

May Enrolment Count - includes Continuing Education and Online Learning students

The September data collection is a fulsome reporting of all student categories and is the most significant comparator to the district's original estimates. All data and resulting variances are compiled into a recalculated operating grant by the Ministry of Education and Child Care in late December, and the total change in funding (+/-) must be incorporated into the district's Amended Annual Budget.

2026-27 Enrolment Estimate:

At the elementary level we anticipate increased growth for kindergarten due to a larger number of incoming school age students this year versus last, however, we will also see a large grade 7 cohort move to secondary. The overall estimated decrease is (83) student FTE in September 2026 versus September 2025.

At the Secondary level, the variance between the outgoing Grade 12 cohort and incoming Grade 7 cohort results in a growth of 52 students (Headcount). However, funding is based on 1:1 for kindergarten to Grade 9 but is calculated at .125FTE per course taken by each student in Grades 10-12. Based on the calculation of the anticipated number of students in Grades 10-12 in the coming school year along with the estimated course load conversion factor, and the Grade 8 and 9 cohorts, the total increase in Secondary FTE in September 2026 versus September 2025 is estimated at 19.463.

Within our district programs, we estimate no change at our Learning Alternatives Center, a very small increase at our Career Technical Center, and a small decrease in online learning at our Island Connect Education Center for an overall decrease (13.468) funded FTE, which converts into (63) less student headcount in this category.

The consolidated decrease in funded student enrolment for September 2026 vs September 2025 is (77.005) FTE. However, we have also made a very small increase to the February and May estimates which results in an additional 6FTE, for a total impact of (71.004) FTE in the coming school year. Overall decrease in estimated student headcount is (94).

In addition to basic student enrolment, estimates for unique student diversities are also required and have been calculated using the current student cohorts, moving them through the grade levels and then adding an incoming K-cohort based on historic trends; a final adjustment is made in collaboration with district leads in each of the associated categories to arrive at the amount that will be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. It is important to note that for the 2026-27 school year we are anticipating very little change to these categories.

2027-28 and 2028-29 Enrolment Estimate:

Future year enrolments utilize the same methodology as current year enrolments, whereby grade to grade transitions, incoming kindergarten, secondary headcount versus FTE conversions, district programming, and supplemental funding categories are analyzed and estimated. Baragar's future projections are also consulted, along with other internal knowledge of any coming changes of note. However, future estimates for the most part assume that current trends will continue without significant shifts in demographics.

It is important to note that the district's projection continue to show growth as the region continues to build. However, birthrates, out migration and most significantly the abrupt shift by the Federal government with respect to immigration will limit growth in the short term.

See Appendix B – 2026-27 to 2028-29 District enrolment estimate summary

2026-27 Operating Grant Impact:

Based on the estimated enrolment changes noted, the district's current 2025-26 Operating Grant will decrease by a total of (\$759k) for the 2026-27 school year. This is calculated using the per student rates currently in effect as we do not anticipate Ministry providing for inflationary cost pressures. We do anticipate a rate increase when bargaining concludes and future wage increases are finalized, however, supportive funds will likely flow after the preliminary operating grant has been announced, by way of a special grant. Note that the (\$759k) does not account to potential changes to the "Other Funding

Categories” as they are not included within the February enrolment estimates so will remain static until confirmed in mid-December by Ministry, pursuant to their calculations.

See Appendix C – 2026-27 Preliminary operating grant per enrolment estimates

Summary:

The district’s estimated enrolment for 2026-27 is based on the assumptions that we will welcome more kindergarten students in the coming year, that current cohorts will continue with little in/out migration, but we will see the continued flow of the higher historic elementary enrolment transitioning into secondary over the next few years, resulting in a decrease at elementary and an increase at secondary.

Appendix A: 2026-27 to 2028-29 Ministry enrolment estimates

Appendix B: 2026-27 to 2028-29 District enrolment estimate summary

Appendix C: 2026-27 Preliminary operating grant per enrolment estimates

