



NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EDUCATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING

INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: March 3, 2021
TO: Education Committee
FROM: Deputy Superintendent, Tim Davie
SUBJECT: Community Schools Coordinator Update

Background

The Board has requested a report on the Community School Coordinator (“CSC”) positions in the District. This report addresses a brief history of CSCs in the District, including funding sources, and the present status of CSC positions.

History of CSCs

In reviewing our records, the CSC position was created in June 1995. From 1993-2002 the District received funding for “Inner City Schools” and “Lunch (Meals) Program”. Community Schools received approximately \$50,000 per school. Later the program was rolled into the newly created Community Link budget.

At the beginning of this program, the District had one Community School at Rutherford. While we are not aware of the reason, the Rutherford program ceased. The District then applied for three more sites which were combined into the Harewood Community Schools area. The Coordinators were located at NDSS, John Barsby, Fairview and Georgia Avenue and were each assigned 27 hours per week. A number of years later a smaller program was added to service the Cedar area schools. A Coordinator was hired for that area at 20 hours per week followed shortly by another one being added for a total of 40 hours per week. Most recently, the CSCs moved to a centralized model rather than serving individual schools.

As far as the use of the Community Link fund, at the beginning the emphasis was heavily on lunch programs. Over the years it has moved entirely in the opposite direction with the majority of the funding being used to support schools with mental wellness initiatives, now led by the Manager of Mental Health and Addictions, with support of 27 Child Youth Family Support Workers (CYSFWs). Additional resources are allocated to a small number of Educational Assistants, as well as vision and hearing supports.

Currently, none of our CSCs are being funded from Community Link (where the funds to support the positions originated), but rather the District now resources all 5 positions using operating funds. This shift has occurred as a result of cost pressures in Community Link limiting the resources available to support all of the programming. Rather than reduce or eliminate the CSC positions, these staffing costs were transferred to the operating budget.

Job Summary

Under the general direction of the Manager of Mental Health and Addictions, the expectation of the Community School Coordinator role was to administer community programs, services and special events, and to provide leadership and supervision for day-to-day activities with a focus on student learning and engagement. The coordinator is expected to use strong interpersonal and relationship skills to build capacity and community with students, families, staff and citizens to enhance student achievement through a variety of programming and community connections.

Changing role of Community School Coordinator

The CSC job has been one that is particularly impacted by process changes and requires updating. There have been significant shifts in the position which are listed below:

- A significant activity from previous years performed by CSCs was the collection of registration and program fees. The District now utilizes KEV and web-based registration which has streamlined these activities.
- School Administrators have become involved in meetings with community stakeholders, thus providing representative voices for district initiatives. These cross-community tables are key opportunities for dialogue and understanding between the District and the community. This change has assisted in furthering communication at representative tables on how the District makes decisions and why.
- Responsibility for placement of practicum students such as CYFSWs, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Dental Hygienists is now a district responsibility held by the Manager of Mental Health and Addictions. Placements across the district are coordinated through one Manager who has a district lens.
- CSCs continue to support schools in writing grant applications. Many grants are reapplied for annually and, as a result are no longer time consuming. Similarly, organizing and arranging for programs and certifications in our district is no longer a lengthy process of sourcing out vendors and trainers.
- Many events are coordinated and scheduled virtually, thus increasing streamed lined programming and reducing the need for face-to-face interaction.

Other Districts

We have reached out to a number of school districts with respect to these positions. In three circumstances, as Community Link has failed to keep up with inflation, these positions were eliminated. In other examples, the positions continue to serve their initial community school but receive limited funding. The following school districts no longer have Community School Coordinators: SD61 Victoria; SD75 Mission, SD33 Chilliwack. The positions continue in a number of Districts (including SD62 Sooke) but are funded solely from Community Link.

Funding

As noted, operating funds support the 5 CSC positions in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. The average cost of a CSC is \$63,126. The total operating cost of the positions, not including mileage and expenses is \$315,628.

CSCs and COVID-19

As has been previously reported to the Board, the impact of COVID-19 on CSCs has been significant. These positions played a significant role in assisting with food security in April through August of 2020. Through the Fall, with the subsequent return to full time classroom instruction, there was little opportunity for meaningful work.

During the 2020-2021 school year, these positions have been redeployed to focus on working with students four days a week and one day to perform their duties in their CSC position. Despite working in their traditional CSC roles only one day a week, finding sufficient meaningful work continues to be a challenge. However, the impact of reassigned duties (mainly EA support) has been incredibly valuable in supporting diverse learners.

Planning for 2021-22 and Beyond

While the District is pre-planning to return to a pre-COVID-19 environment, such a shift is not a guarantee. The historical contributions of the CSCs to the District is something to be very proud of, however, as noted, while COVID-19 has had a major impact on the ability of CSCs to perform their duties there have also been systemic changes that have resulted in a much reduced requirement for 5 CSC positions.

