

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

DATE: September 1, 2021
TO: Board of Education
FROM: Superintendent Scott Saywell
SUBJECT: School Start Up

Background

This memo is intended to provide a brief outline of the District's plans for school start-up. The Learning Services Department will provide a more fulsome update at the Education Committee on September 8, 2021.

Information

School Opening

For the past couple of weeks school administrators have been in schools preparing to welcome back students and staff. Staff are finishing up the transfers of students to and from other school districts as well as the transfer to and from Island Connect Ed. Staff from the facilities department and Pleasant Valley and Cilaire elementary schools have been feverishly working all summer to transition to their new school sites at Rutherford Elementary and Woodlands respectively.

With respect to Island Connect Ed, to date we are seeing a small increase in enrolment. We continue to respond to interest in the program and at this point it is too early to predict final enrolment. The District has communicated to parents that "bricks and mortar" and Island Connect Education are the two options and we are not planning the creation of a transition program. We also anticipate that parents that choose ICE in the 2021-22 school year will be able to access their catchment school in 2022-23 if they desire.

Development of school organizations and class placements will continue as in years prior to COVID. This means that additional divisions or the collapsing of divisions may occur during the first two weeks of school. During COVID the creation of cohorts limited this flexibility. Staff continue to work with the NDTA to demonstrate "Best Efforts" as per Letter of Understanding #17.

With respect to general enrolment, while we are still processing registrations, we anticipate that we will meet or exceed our budgeted enrolment. Although we note that this information is as of August 27, 2021, the date this Information Sheet was prepared, and therefore subject to change.

Staff continue to work with school principals and vice principals for the rollout of the Compassionate Systems Leadership work and the promotion of principles and strategies for K-12 mental health. This is a major initiative for 2021-2022.

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Summer Outreach

The elementary Outreach Program provided social-emotional and support and service to approximately 100 students this summer. While the secondary Outreach Program provided academic support and community service to approximately 40 students, including students transitioning to our district from School District No. 84.

Farm to Schools

In support of the Board's goal on Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability, staff have been working on securing a Farm to Schools Grant as well as furthering partnerships with Nanaimo Food Share and growing opportunities as the operator of the NLPS Farm. In addition, staff have been in discussion with staff from Nanaimo Ladysmith Schools Foundation to determine how to advance the notion of locally grown produce going from farm to plate within our community. The farm is to be operating on the Woodlands School site and will eventually include an educational component accessible to classrooms within the district.

Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings

With the Ministry of Education announcement and receipt of the provincial guidelines on August 24, 2021, staff from Health and Safety, Learning Services, Facilities and Human Resources departments have been reviewing and discussing the guidelines and determining how to address these requirements within our schools. Meetings are scheduled with school-based administration, union executives, Leaders for Learning and the District PAC as per the criteria of these guidelines.

Communicable Disease Prevention Plan as per Ministry requirements have been posted on all district websites. Consultation will also occur with all site-based and District Safety Committees as to the implementation of these guidelines as outlined in the CDPP.

Operational Updates

The District is well equipped to meet continued increased ventilation requirements. Every school except Ladysmith Intermediate School is able to support increased ventilation and has MERV 13 air filters as recommended by the Ministry of Education. Further, Ladysmith Intermediate School has a mix of modern ventilation and HEPA filters where the ventilation has not been upgraded.

With respect to masks, the District has a supply of cloth and disposable masks to support the mask mandate. We note that the majority of staff and students bring their own masks to meet their comfort and reflect their personality. Therefore, we do not anticipate a requirement for a significant additional order. However, there are no supply chains issues associated with masks if we require additional masks.

The Board will note in the restricted surplus list a total of \$640,000 for enhanced measures including cleaning, filters, soap and paper towels and increased electricity use to meet the recently issued guidelines. In addition, the Ministry provided a grant that is in the 2021/22 budget of \$338,000 to support these measures. We note that we already purchased approximately \$122,000 in supplies at the end of the previous fiscal year to ensure we were ready for September.