



**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOR VANCOUVER ISLAND WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT 84
HELD ON MONDAY FEBRUARY 9, 2026
SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE, GOLD RIVER, BC**

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Arlaine Fehr, Chairperson (Gold River)
Allison Stiglitz (Tahsis)
Jenniffer Hanson, Vice-Chairperson (Kyuquot)
Katie Unger (Gold River)
Cyndy Rodgers (Zeballos)

ALSO PRESENT: Stephen Larre, Superintendent
Gillian Leask, Secretary Treasurer
Ellena Gjesdal, Executive Assistant

PUBLIC PRESENT: 1

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Fehr called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chairperson Fehr acknowledged and gave thanks that we work, play and live on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples, Ehattesaht Chinehkint, Nuchatlaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h First Nations.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2026:R-006 MOVED: Trustee Unger, SECONDED: Trustee Stiglitz
AND RESOLVED:
"TO approve the agenda"

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2026:R-007 MOVED: Trustee Stiglitz, SECONDED: Trustee Unger
AND RESOLVED:
"TO adopt the amended minutes of the Regular Board meeting of January 12, 2026."

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Nil.



PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

a. Natasha Toth – Principal, Ray Watkins Elementary School

Ms. Toth reported on the current staff at RWES: Principal & Vice-principal, 5 classroom teachers, 1 full-time LART, 1 first-call TTOC, 1 indigenous support worker (Mowachaht-Muchalaht), and 6 EAs. There is 1 vacant Library position. RWES is the only K-7 school in the district, with current enrollment of 110. The school population has fluctuated throughout the school year. 50% of school population is First Nations and a large percentage of students have behavioural needs.

RWES has a very strong sense of family with a high percentage of students reporting that they feel safe at school and have adults they can talk to. RWES currently has five house teams who can earn points by doing different things, with a year end pizza party for winning team. We host monthly assemblies and recognize students with perfect attendance. Each class does a performance and there are house team games afterwards. The intermediate students participate in field trips with Mr. Parkes, attending hikes, canoeing, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, and tubing. At RWES students read morning announcements out to school on the PA system. The students are working on an art show titled Under the Sea for the spring. RWES has Fun Fridays. Students pick from a variety of activities such as spirit days, crazy hair day, fancy Friday, and pyjama day. The school newsletter has been updated to include “meet the staff” and “meet our Grade 7s”. The hallways have a math board with questions for a prize draw, and we have a strong Nu-chah-nulth culture in school, learning language and traditions, integrating language into daily teaching, dancing, and drumming.

We support Literacy with monthly consultations with Heather Goodall, Teachers are applying district literacy strategies in classroom. FSAs: Grade 4: 64% on track, Grade 7: 81% on track. Most students from grade 3 and up reading at grade level and writing steadily improving.

For Numeracy, intermediate teachers are continuing professional development on “Building, Thinking Classrooms”. Students have responded well to this type of numeracy instruction. Numeracy levels are still behind. Students do well up to grade 4 and then start to lag behind. FSAs: Grade 4 79% on track, grade 7: 45% on track.

RWES is focused on bringing more Nu-chah-nulth culture and language into school and will be offering the CORE program to grades 6-7 students. We are working on building relationships with students with initiatives such as “secret friend”, Leadership Club (w/ Del-Rae), and Girls group (w/ Brenda). Attendance is a high priority and we acknowledge that illness, extra-curriculars based outside of Gold River, and parent-excused absences result in lower attendance rates. Our next steps are working on new goals for literacy and numeracy based on new Strategic Plan, and integrating more outdoor education into daily routines. We are working on a deep dive on what it means ‘to belong.’ Students enjoy school but don’t feel that they belong. Students are taking part in the District Reaching Challenge and are developing student advocacy

CORRESPONDENCE

2026:R-008 MOVED: Trustee Unger, SECONDED: Trustee Stiglitz
AND RESOLVED:
“TO accept the correspondence as received.”



REPORT OF THE CLOSED MEETING

Chairperson Fehr reported that there was one labour, one land, and no legal items.

TRUSTEE REPORTS

a. School Reports:

i. CMESS:

January was a great month for connection at CMESS. Our school focus learning for January was "Belonging". Our Secondary class engaged our Intermediate class in STEM Challenges (The Great Spaghetti Bridge Competition!). Grade 7-12 students adventured to Mount Washington for 3 days of Ski and Snowboarding, Cross Country Skiing and Tubing with Phil Parks. We welcomed Kyuquot and Zeballos Basketball Players for a Zone Playoff Game and travelled to Gold River to challenge GRSS for a space in North Island Zones. Though unsuccessful, we are more determined than ever to keep practicing in preparation for next year. CMESS has officially launched its new team name and uniform design - the Tahsis Talons! We thank the Tahsis Literary Society for helping support the purchase of the first official uniforms in a very long time! CMESS rounded off January with the "Great Big Buddy Read" during Family Literacy week, where all students partnered up to read and celebrate Literacy together. With such a great start to the year - we can't wait for the rest of what 2026 has to offer! Adult basketball game was very well received.

ii. GRSS:

The Basketball Teams of boys and girls and the GRSS Wrestling team attended the North Islands. Provincial Assessments have taken place. Yuquot Camp out is scheduled for June 8-10th, 2026. GRSS Grad trip was re-routed to Vancouver on May 1-3rd. GRSS has a third camera in the hallway, cellphone plan now in place and Continuing Educations ongoing.

iii. KESS:

We have two brand new teachers: Emma Vallee and Emma Brennan. Emma Vallee is taking on the Juniors and Seniors humanities, and Emma Brennan is working with the intermediates. The teachers bring great energy to the school, and the students are enjoying their classes. We have had some excellent field trips in conjunction with Witwaak. VP Rix has been working hard putting the field trips together in partnership with Witwaak. Our First Nation Educational Assistant D. Hanson has attended all of the trips and the most recent trip was to Tashish studying signs of Elk and speaking about traditional harvesting. Every Wednesday afternoon the students participate in traditional drumming, singing, and dancing with our First Nation Educational Assistant D. Hanson. Teacher J. Kraul has taken on a special leadership and has led the cultural practices when First Nation Educational Assistant D. Hanson is unavailable. Our reading groups are really addressing the challenges of our primary and intermediate readers with instruction from Teachers and Support Staff. Teacher J. Kraul has been working hard with his basketball stars and as a result they are doing extremely well, and has taken them to basketball clinics and to Port Hardy for games and skill development. The primary group are becoming excellent singers and are working with ukuleles, stories and crafts. The juniors have been painting large pictures and graphics which we will be putting on display.



b. Working Relations Committee Report

At the January 26th meeting Assistant Superintendent Johnson provided detailed answers to technology questions that were raised. The committee also discussed concerns regarding increased housing costs in Kyuquot.

c. BCPSEA Annual General Meeting January 29, 2026

Trustee Unger reported on the meeting with 50 out of 60 representatives present. The budget was approved with 100% in favour, and all resolutions were passed but one. Local teacher bargaining is completed across the province, while support staff is on hold until the provincial framework is reached.

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL REPORT

Superintendent Larre reported on the IEC meeting on January 26. The meeting was well-attended and had a full agenda. The IEC made plans for ongoing capacity-building and plans for a proposed regional IEC meeting. The IEC discussed the human rights exemption for hiring, clarified understanding of the terms of reference and the importance of achieving quorum through the use of proxy or alternates, and reviewed budgets. The IEC decided to invite NI Metis and Joni Johnson as guests to future meetings, and discussed options for accessing masked data, a child care needs analysis, and the Feeding Futures meal program.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. 2025-26 Amended Annual Budget

2026:R-008 MOVED: Trustee Unger, SECONDED: Trustee Stiglitz
AND RESOLVED:
“TO have all three readings of the bylaw in one.”

2026:R-009 MOVED: Trustee Hanson, SECONDED: Trustee Stiglitz
AND RESOLVED:
“THAT the Board of Education approve the Amended Annual Budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year in the amount of \$ 14,608,572, as presented.”

b. Policy 1 – Foundations Statements Proposed Amendments

2026:R-010 MOVED: Trustee Stiglitz, SECONDED: Trustee Unger
AND RESOLVED:
“TO adopt amendments to Policy 1 as proposed.”

c. Community Consultations

Discussion on dates and times as follows:

Gold River: March 10, 2026, at GRSS

Tahsis: February 24, 2026, at 4:00 with dinner at CMESS

ZESS: February 25, 2026, at 4:30 and dinner to follow at 5:30 pm

KESS: March 3, 2026, at 4:30 at the Health Board Room



with a possible spring announcement and one year development cycle. All four nations within the district have sent support for the proposal in writing.

STAFF REPORTS

a. Superintendent's Report – as attached

Superintendent Larre reported that winter is the busiest for school sports. All four schools are participating in basketball this year for the first time. GRSS girls competed in the North Island championships. The GRSS boys finished 7th and KESS just missed qualifying. Two wrestling athletes from GRSS will be attending provincials.

b. Secretary Treasurer's Report – as attached

Secretary Treasurer Leask expressed appreciation for school-based Administrative Assistants and district administrative staff, who have been exceptional in supporting the implementation of new processes to help streamline daily operations, recognizing their flexibility and commitment.

TRUSTEE INQUIRIES

Trustee Rodgers spoke about her advocacy for neurodivergent adults and children. She submitted a resignation letter dated March 31, 2026.

PRESS AND PUBLIC INQUIRIES

Nil.

NOTICE OF MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on March 9, 2026 at 4:00 pm, at the School Board Office in Gold River. The public is invited to attend. Any requests for agenda additions should go to egjesdal@viw.sd84.bc.ca two weeks prior to the meeting. Board meeting minutes are posted on the District's website at sd84.bc.ca/about-sd84/board-meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 pm

Certified Correct:

*Chairperson
Arlaine Fehr*

*Secretary-Treasurer
Gillian Leask*