

# School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

Board of Education of School District No. 71

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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## **Background**

In June 2016 School District #71 engaged Cascade Facilities Management Consultant Ltd to prepare a Long Range Facilities plan (LRFP).

The purpose of the LRFP is to provide a mechanism for School Districts to manage their facilities in an efficient, effective and economic way to support the educational goals as outlined in the strategic plan. The LRFP prioritizes the Districts capital project needs and serves as a vehicle for capital project submissions. The plan also serves as a guide for all future facilities directions. It should be noted that the LRFP is not an educational study but rather a facilities inventory and plan. The objective of the Long Range Facilities plan are outlined on pg. 5 of the 2018-2027 LRFP.

It should be noted that this particular plan was developed under the previous strategic plan (2015-2018). As the Board of Education completed the new strategic plan (2019-2023) arrangements are in place to have the current LRFP updated to accurately reflect the direction of the current strategic plan.

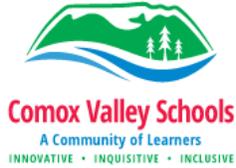
The 2018-2027 LRFP identified 6 priorities (See pg. 72). The first four priorities deal with seismic upgrades (Lake Trail and Courtenay Elementary), additions to Mark R. Isfeld (to replace the modular) and a school replacement (Ecole Puntledge Park).

The next priority referred to a decision on District Organization. In the broader sense this refers to all things including, boundaries and grade configuration as they effect the District operations. What has further exasperated the need to address this point is the continued growth in our District during the past 3 years.

The District began to examine its structure in 2017 when grade changes were made to the “West side” schools. Arden, Courtenay Elementary and Ecole Puntledge Park (English) programs were re-designed to become K-5 schools and all grade 6 students were moved to Lake Trail. These changes were made to accommodate the population growth at Arden and Ecole Puntledge Park. Lake Trail became a grade 6-9 school.

The District began to monitor its growth in particular areas; specifically, Cumberland, Royston, Miracle Beach, and Huband.

In Cumberland a major shift had occurred in 2013-2014 when Cumberland Junior and Cumberland Elementary amalgamated to become Cumberland Community School K-9. At that point the old “medical building” was purchased and renovated to become a viable educational space (known as the Perseverance building). At that point, Cumberland had not grown as it has, and the space was adequate for the educational needs of the school. From 2016–2019 as the population grew, more instructional spaces were created in the school. These were formally



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spaces that served specific purposes and were not frequently used. To date the population of the community continues to grow and the District finds itself in a situation where there are few spaces left at the school that can be repurposed.

Royston, which is a K-6 school (the grade sevens attend Cumberland Junior and have done so for decades) began to grow because of new developments. In response to this growth the District installed two modular classrooms on site; however, enrollment projections continued to climb and as a result the school will be short of educational spaces.

In the North end of the District, Miracle Beach continued to grow at a slow and steady pace. In 2019 the District installed a modular classroom to address the growth of the community; however, the steady growth is scheduled to continue for a few more years.

The population of Huband Park has grown and although the growth is at a slower pace than Royston and Cumberland the school accepted many cross boundary transfers which has impacted the school. Many of the cross boundary students are from Miracle Beach and Airport. These transfers, as well as the population growth of the area, are placing a strain on the infrastructure of the school. Again, the overall projection is for continued growth at the school.

## **Current Problems**

As was mentioned earlier in the report the problems the District faces are in two areas, the North end and the South end of the District.

In examining the problem, it should be noted that staff also looked at solutions to the population growth as an opportunity to balance the population of our secondary schools. While the secondary school issue was not a driver it was given some consideration throughout the process.

The current population pressures will be described in each specific area of the District.

### **Royston Elementary**

The operating compacity of the school is 205; however, the adjusted compacity including modulars is 255.

#### **Projected Student Enrolment**

OPERATING COMPACITY	ADJUSTED COMPACITY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
205	255	289	325	338	362	368

The enrolment projections show that the school population continues to grow. The school is on a septic system so that is a consideration regarding future growth.

**Cumberland Community School**

The operating capacity of Cumberland Community school is 545; however, the adjusted capacity, which includes modulars is 595.

**Projected Student Enrolment**

OPERATING COMPACITY	ADJUSTED COMPACITY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
545	595	571	628	675	714	746

Repurposing space alone will not deal with the growth.

**Huband Park Elementary**

The operating capacity of Huband is 364; however, the adjusted capacity, which includes modulars is 389.

**Projected Student Enrolment**

OPERATING COMPACITY	ADJUSTED COMPACITY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
364	389	400	415	434	431	439

Huband is also on a sewage treatment plant so that must be a consideration for future growth.

**Miracle Beach Elementary**

The operating capacity of Miracle Beach is 229; however, the adjusted capacity, which includes modulars is 254.

**Projected Student Enrolment**

OPERATING COMPACITY	ADJUSTED COMPACITY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
229	254	260	259	261	270	280

Growth is steady, but not unmanageable.

## Process

In the Spring of 2019, the Board of Education began the process of engaging the community in consultations around our current population growth, specifically in the areas which were noted earlier.

The timing of these consultations lines up directly with the LRFP timeline noted on pg. 71 of that report. The consultations, which began in the Spring of 2019 and continued into the early part of 2020 were conducted in accordance with Board Policy 20, Communications and Community Engagement.

The initial Round of Consultations also referred to as the pre-consultation rounds occurred in the first 2 weeks of May 2019. (*See Appendix A – PowerPoint Presentation*) These meetings were held at Miracle Beach, Huband, Cumberland and Lake Trail. The purpose of these meetings was to share some information with the community in terms of the numbers as well as to seek input regarding what kind of information the community would need in order to provide valuable and meaningful feedback. (*See Appendix B – Notes from those Meetings*) The feedback that was provided helped shape the Round 1 consultations, which occurred in November 2019.

In the Fall of 2019, the Board continued the consultation process. This next round of consultations were referred to as Round 1. These occurred November 4, 2019 at Royston; November 6, 2019 at Cumberland; November 12, 2019 at Miracle Beach and November 13, 2019 at Huband. The focus of these meetings were on the enrollment projections, enrollment trends, school capacity and survey results. (*See Appendix C – Information Presented and Agenda*). Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions, provide ideas to create space in schools and give suggestions on how to balance enrollment while maintaining neighborhood schools (*See Appendix D – Round 1 Notes*). During this round many questions were raised. The questions have been answered and those questions and answers were posted on the District website.

In addition to the Round 1 consultations an online “Survey” feedback form was created and well over 1700 participants responded.

Due to the incredible amount of feedback received it was decided to postpone the second round of consultations until January 2020, in order for District staff to go through all the feedback and create a variety of options which addressed the problems.

Round 2 of the consultations occurred in January of 2020. The focus of these sessions was to present the 5 options, each with at least 6 facets, cost projections and District implications. (*See Appendix E – PowerPoint notes and Agenda*) Participants at these sessions were asked two questions:

a) How does this help the District?

and

b) What challenges do you see?

In addition to the meetings there was an online survey for parents, a student survey for Cumberland students grade 7,8 &9 and a Place Speak feedback forum. (*See Appendix F – Feedback*)

### **Findings/Recommendation**

The consultation process involved approximately 40 hours of public face to face consultation, as well as many additional avenues for community to provide feedback, ideas and suggestions.

The clarity that this process provided is that under no circumstances will the District be able to handle the population growth at Royston and Cumberland with boundary changes. The current growth and expected growth are such that a capital expansion is required at both of these sites. District staff have begun the groundwork in this area and upon completion of this report along with direction from the Board of Education we will move to the next phase of the capital project preparation plan.

The following findings and recommendations are presented to the Board of Education after careful review and consideration of all feedback and ideas collected throughout the consultation process.

#### **Royston Elementary**

What did we hear? Parents said, “keep the school whole, make it K-6, make it K-7, apply for a capital expansion, bring in modulars if needed”.

Recommendation:

- Grade 6 students remain at Royston
- Add 1 modular for 2020 to address the enrolment projection of 289
- An additional modular will be needed in 2021 as the enrolment is projected to be 325.
- All cross boundary transfers to Royston will be closed
- Begin the capital expansion planning

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
POPULATION	289	325	338	362	368

**Cumberland Community School**

What did we hear? Parents said, “keep the grade 8 and 9 students at Cumberland...keep it K-9, keep students going to Vanier, keep Royston students at Royston, keep space for community school programs, bring in modular if needed and apply for a capital expansion”.

Recommendation:

- Grade 9 students move to Vanier (59 students)
- Renovate a classroom in the Strathcona building and create space for 25 students
- Leave the annex for community school space
- All cross boundary transfers to Cumberland will be closed
- A modular may be needed within 2-3 years to meet anticipated growth
- Begin the capital expansion plan

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
POPULATION	513	579	624	643	660

**Miracle Beach**

What did we hear? Parents said, “keep grade 8 students going to Vanier when they leave Miracle Beach, do not bus the students to Highland.”

Recommendation:

- The elementary school will continue to be a feeder school for Vanier
- Repurpose the computer lab
- Renovate the classroom and capture an additional classroom space
- All cross boundary transfers to Miracle Beach will be closed

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
POPULATION	260	259	261	270	280

**Huband Park Elementary**

What did we hear? Parents said, “the school is too crowded and the infrastructure cannot support the enrolment, have the cross boundary students return to their catchment schools, do not change any boundaries, open up Tsolum and move grade 6/7 students there and we also heard do not move anyone and leave the school the way it is.”

Recommendation:

- All new cross boundary transfers to Huband will be closed (including siblings)
- All current grade 6 and 7 students will be grandfathered at Huband and will be able to complete their elementary years at Huband before going to Vanier
- Effective Sept 2021 all other cross boundary transfers that are at Huband will be rescinded and those affected students will return to their catchment schools to finish their elementary years.
- If families of cross boundary transfers at Huband choose to move in 2020 to their catchment schools these arrangements will be facilitated by the district.
- No boundary/catchment area changes will be made
- Huband students continue to go to Vanier after grade 7

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
POPULATION	384	383	402	399	407

**Implementation Plan**

As was mentioned in the recommendations, the majority of the plan is effective immediately with changes/structures in place for September 2020. However, it is suggested that a Notice of Change be provided to Huband families affected by the decision and they be given a year to make the necessary shift to their catchment school. The District continues to be committed to making sure all families make a smooth transition to their neighborhood school.

Regarding the cost of modulars, it is recommended that, since the Hornby school is being rebuilt, some of their modulars be relocated to the sites (Royston and Cumberland), which will need modular classrooms to house students until the capital expansion is approved and completed.

## **Next Steps**

As was mentioned earlier in the report, District staff also looked at the ability to shift feeder schools to create a balance at our secondary schools. Given the feedback we received Senior staff felt the need to concentrate on the elementary growth problem and alleviate the secondary pressure using alternate methods.

Last year, G.P. Vanier and Mark R. Isfeld secondary were closed to cross boundary transfers except in exceptional cases. The result was an increase in population of Highland. We would recommend that this year both G.P. Vanier and Mark R. Isfeld be closed for cross boundary transfer and allow those students wishing to change high schools pursue their programming of choice at Highland.

The second area that will be addressed to help with balancing population, is to adjust international enrolment to help balance student numbers.

This report is respectfully submitted by the Superintendent of School.