

Superintendent's News & Events Report to the Board

Regular Board Meeting of April 15, 2025

Learning for a Lifetime

Serving the communities of Anmore, Belcarra, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody



1. Congratulations to the 12 SD43 students who recently completed the Junior Firefighter Program in partnership with Coquitlam Fire/Rescue. This intensive, hands-on training provided students with a condensed version of the standard eight-week firefighter curriculum. Participants developed skills such as how to use a fire extinguisher, basic first aid, CPR, auto extrication, emergency scene assessment, and more. Beyond the technical training, the program offered students a valuable opportunity to explore potential career paths in firefighting and emergency services.

Christa, a Riverside Secondary School student and participant of the program shares, "My favourite part of participating in the academy was the people I was surrounded by—the students, instructors, and every member of the department were so welcoming and gave me a sense of belonging. I learned just how much is truly involved in firefighting and how challenging but rewarding it is. The experience inspired and motivated me to pursue firefighting. I now have no doubts that it's the career I will dedicate my life to in the future."

2. Congratulations to the Harbour View Elementary School community for raising \$863.02 for the Crossroads Hospice Society through their annual Paper Airplane Fundraiser.



Retired teacher Aaron Rahn began the tradition over 15 years ago, but for the past four years, Ms. Ireland has continued the tradition along with her students.

During lunch, students donated \$1 to launch paper airplanes across the school gym, all in support of a meaningful cause. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make a difference in our community!



3. On April 4th, Coast Salish Elementary School celebrated Nowruz, a significant holiday for many in our community. Nowruz, meaning "New Day" in Farsi, marks the first day of spring and the start of the new year for nearly 300 million people in Iran, Afghanistan, and several other countries. It symbolizes renewal, hope, and prosperity.

To honour the occasion, students led a school-wide assembly showcasing the Haft-Seen table—a traditional arrangement of seven symbolic items, each beginning with the letter “S” in Farsi. Local musicians performed live music, and students joined in with singing and dancing as well.

Following the assembly, students rotated through a variety of hands-on cultural stations where they practiced Farsi calligraphy, decorated eggs, crafted playdough goldfish, explored henna art, and played traditional games.

Special thanks to Farsi Dar B.C. and to all the parent volunteers whose support helped make this celebration both meaningful and memorable.

4. On April 7, students and staff from Central Elementary School and Pitt River Middle School participated in a free skate event hosted by the City of Port Coquitlam and the Canadian Transplant Association in honour of Green Shirt Day.

The event brought awareness of organ donation and honoured the legacy of Logan Boulet, a Humboldt Broncos hockey player whose parents gave his organs after he died in a bus crash with teammates in 2018. Logan’s selfless gift saved six lives and sparked a nationwide movement of awareness and action known as the Logan Boulet Effect.



5. On April 4, Gleneagle Secondary students proudly showcased their innovative STEAM projects during the school’s STEAM Showcase. Students presented their work to peers and staff, with several preparing to represent the school at the upcoming Greater Vancouver Regional Science Fair.

6. From March 24 to 28, members of SD43’s Art Council collaborated with the City of Coquitlam Council to create a beautiful salmon-themed mural at Pinetree Community Centre. The goal of the project was to bring students together through art, encourage creativity and cultural expression, and help strengthen community connections through the arts.

The mural features a large Coho Salmon—native to the Coquitlam River—surrounded by smaller salmon, each painted in a unique style by students from across the district. The fish swimming together symbolize unity and a shared journey. Behind them, flowers gradually bloom from buds to full blossom, representing growth and reconciliation among youth.



"We were thrilled to bring students from across SD43 together to create this mural," said Laraine Wong, President of the Student Art Council. "It was inspiring to see everyone share their cultural art styles, and we hope to continue collaborating with the City of Coquitlam on more creative projects."



7. Gleneagle Secondary School's Fly Fishing Class was featured in the latest edition of the BC Federation of Fly Fishers Fly Lines Magazine. The article describes how students are actively diving into the art and science of fly fishing—learning fly casting, fly tying, outdoor safety, and conservation awareness.

What began as a middle school club in 2003 evolved into a full-credit course in 2018, thanks to the passion and vision of teacher Lorenzo Cirillo and Vice Principal Michelle Ciolfitto. The program aligns with B.C. curriculum guidelines and offers students a deeper appreciation for nature and conservation. It also incorporates Indigenous perspectives, B.C. fishing regulations, and even literature—introducing students to famous literary figures who shared a love for fishing.

Mr. Cirillo proudly organizes four fishing outings for the students each year. Students have explored the Fraser Valley Trout Hatchery, Stave River in Mission, and Whonnock Lake in Maple Ridge. Their final outing this month will be to the Harrison River on April 24. Former students often return to help with trips, and some current students have even teamed up with alumni to continue enjoying the sport beyond the classroom.



8. April 4 to 6, Pinetree Secondary School students attended the Canadian High Schools Model United Nations (CAHSMUN) Conference, one of the largest high school-run Model UN conferences in the world. This three-day event welcomed over 850 high school students from across the globe at the Sheraton Wall Centre in Vancouver.

CAHSMUN offers students a unique opportunity to engage in pressing political, social, and economic issues through thoughtful debate and discussion. Throughout the weekend, delegates tackled a wide range of global topics — from electoral conflicts and post-colonial cultural reconstruction to the internal dynamics of Greenpeace and the marketing strategies of Haidilao. The experience encourages students to sharpen their public speaking, diplomacy, and critical thinking skills while exploring complex real-world challenges. Congratulations to Horace Ng for winning the Outstanding Delegate Award!



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9. On April 23, the SD43 Student Leadership Council (SLC) will host its 8th annual SLC Leadership Summit, *Empowerment Forum*. This dynamic event aims to inspire, engage, and empower student leaders from across the district. This year, SLC has invited a board panel featuring Mr. Pettyfer, District Principal of Sustainability; Ms. Yu, District Principal of Anti-Racism; and Mr. Clarke, Assistant Superintendent. The event will also feature two keynote speakers. Dave Jonsson, a professional skateboarder, will share his powerful story of resilience after surviving a plane crash in British Columbia. Mason Mattu, founder of Youth Justice Link, will speak about his journey in creating a platform that helps youth explore pathways in law, advocacy, and social justice. The summit is open to all SD43 middle and secondary students and will run from 3:15 to 6:30 p.m.
10. Congratulations to Laraine Wong for being named one of only 37 students in the world to receive the prestigious Lester B. Pearson International Scholarship at the University of Toronto. This scholarship is awarded to students who demonstrate exceptional academic achievement and creativity, are recognized as leaders within their schools, and show strong potential to make meaningful contributions to their communities. It covers tuition, books, incidental fees, and full residence support for four years.



Upcoming Events

- April 15 – 17 – Indigenous Students Trades Sampler
- April 16 & 17 – District Como Lake Relays
- April 18 – Good Friday
- April 21 – Easter Monday
- April 25 – District Professional Development Day
- April 29 – May 1 – District Steam Days (Elementary & Middle School at Winslow Gym)
- April 30, May 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 – Mean Girls at Gleneagle Secondary School