



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Pacific Rim School District & local Nuu-chah-nulth Nations Launch Co-Governance Model**

**Port Alberni, BC, January 8, 2026** - Pacific Rim School District is proud to announce the formal launch of a Co-Governance model with local Nuu-chah-nulth Nations, marking a significant milestone in strengthening relationships, advancing reconciliation, and fostering shared leadership in public education.

Beginning in December 2025, representatives selected by participating Nuu-chah-nulth Nations, joined the District's governing body at Public Board Meetings and Standing Committee meetings, participating in discussion, dialogue, and the development of recommendations that shape the future of education in the region.

This co-governance model is the result of more than two years of sustained, respectful dialogue between the Board of Education, senior staff, and Nuu-chah-nulth Nation's leadership. Together, parties have worked collaboratively to ensure that we move into a governance model that honours Nuu-chah-nulth voices, values Indigenous knowledge, and reflects a shared commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students, families, and communities.

"We are so excited to be joined by Nuu-chah-nulth Nations in our governance spaces in a meaningful and intentional way," said Cynthia Orr, Chair of the Board of Education. "Collaborative governance broadens insight, accelerates accountability and boosts learning for all students in our district. By coming together in this way, we are working toward a stronger future for all our children"

Under current provincial legislation, the *School Act* establishes the composition and voting authority of Boards of Education. Within that framework, the District and Nations have collaboratively chosen to move forward with a model that prioritizes participation, collaboration, and relationship-building, while collectively expressing hope that future legislative change may enable even more fulsome Indigenous representation, including voting roles.

"Having open communication, dialogue and understanding is incredibly important to Hupacasath," said Brandy Lauder, Elected Chief Councillor, Hupačasath First Nation. "Although we are hopeful that legislation changes to allow a position to vote, our participation at the Board level will allow understanding for everyone and every child in the district."

Selected Representatives are chosen by their respective Nations to participate in a consultative and advisory capacity, bringing their voices, lived experience, and community perspectives directly to the Board table. Their participation strengthens the District's governance by enriching discussion and helping ensure decisions being made are informed by the communities the school district serves.

The District views this model as a living framework—one that will continue to evolve through practice, reflection, and collaboration. As the Co-Governance model is implemented and refined, Pacific Rim School District hopes it may serve as an example for other school districts across British Columbia, contributing to broader conversations about inclusive governance and potential future changes to provincial legislation.

"Tseshah views this milestone as one of many important steps toward full joint decision-making. Pacific Rim School District's (SD 70) main office is situated in Tseshahatani (Chief's territory) along with district schools; and additional resources are provided to the district because of our children attending these schools.

By providing a voice at the table we will collaboratively ensure that our children are looked after now and into the future. We say Kleco, Kleco to the school district for leading by example.” – Wahmeesh (Ken Watts)  
Elected Chief Councillor, Tseshah First Nation

The December 16, 2025 Public Board Meeting marked the beginning of Co-Governance in practice - a new way of working together, with a shared belief in better educational outcomes for all students.

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### **About Pacific Rim School District**

The Pacific Rim School District is situated on the ɥaɥuuti of the c̓šaaʔath (Tseshah) and Hupačasath First Nations. With schools also located on the ɥaɥuuti of the Huu-ay-aht (Huu-ay-aht), and ʔaʔuukʷiʔath (Tla-o-qui-aht), First Nations and the Yuuʔuʔiʔath (Yuu-cluth-aht) Government, the district serves a regional population of approximately 31,000 people, including 4,000 students from across Port Alberni, Tofino, Ucluelet, Bamfield and other remote communities. [www.sd70.bc.ca](http://www.sd70.bc.ca)