



PACIFIC RIM SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

— The Fall Issue 2025 —



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YOUR WINDOW INTO OUR SCHOOLS

Welcome to our district newsletter, created to keep families connected with the stories, updates, and celebrations that shape our schools. In this edition, you'll find details about events, district updates, and profiles of the dedicated staff who support our students.

Thank you for being a vital part of our school community. Together, we are creating safe, welcoming, and engaging schools where every student has the opportunity to grow and succeed.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Pacific Rim School District is located on the ḥaḥuuli of the Ċišaaʔath (Tseshaht) and Huupačasʔath (Hupacasath) First Nations. We also acknowledge that we have schools located on the ḥaḥuuli of the Huu-ay-aht (Huu-ay-aht), and ʔaʔuukʷiʔath (Tla-o-qui-aht), First Nations and the Yuuʔiʔath (Yuu-cluth-aht) Government.



INSIDE THE DISTRICT



TSUMA-AS DEBUTS PLAYGROUND

This September, Tsuma-as Elementary welcomed families for its annual Open House and the Grand Opening of its new accessible playground. The event brought together students, staff, and community members to celebrate the start of the school year and the completion of a vibrant, inclusive play space for all children.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was led by Principal Girard, Board Chair Pam Craig, Miss Jean Thomas, Karlene McMahon, and Trustee Helen Zanette—key supporters of the project.

Families enjoyed a BBQ hosted by the Tsuma-as PAC, while students brought the new playground to life with laughter and play. It was a joyful evening of connection and celebration.



ORANGE HEARTS OF CARE

For The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Ucluelet Elementary School students wrote or drew messages of care, consideration and acknowledgement on an orange heart. These hearts were then installed on the fence on both sides of the school walkway.



NEW BUSES FOR THE WEST COAST

On August 25, West Coast schools officially unveiled a new fleet of school buses, an exciting milestone for students, families and staff. The event began with a prayer from Nuuchah-nulth language keeper Jeneva Touchie (Čakʷaasiqḥwítim), setting a meaningful tone for the day.

A number of West Coast administrators, directors, trustees, and senior leaders were in attendance, coming together to show their support and appreciation for the efforts that keep students connected to education.

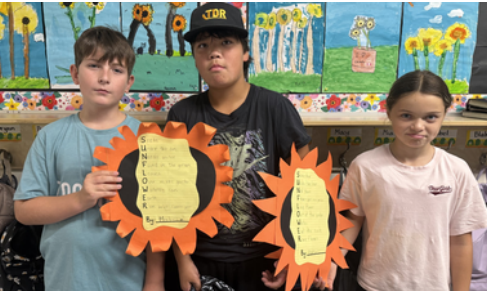
The event was also an opportunity to recognize the dedicated bus drivers—staff who play a vital role in the daily lives of students and contribute to the success of each school day.

This new chapter in student transportation reflects a continued commitment to safe, high-quality education throughout the West Coast.



MONDAYS FOR RECONCILIATION

Staff and students at Wickaninnish Community School continue to show their commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by wearing orange every Monday. Marcus and Ms. Thompson proudly wore their Wickaninnish Truth and Reconciliation shirts, sharing bright smiles to match.



GRADE 6 CREATIVE BEGINNINGS

Grade 6 French Immersion students at École Alberni Elementary began the school year by writing poems inspired by Les Tournesols (sunflowers). They then brought their creativity to life by painting vibrant sunflower-themed artwork.

BAMFIELD RUNS FOR HOPE

Bamfield Community School showed incredible spirit during this year's Terry Fox Run. Students and staff ran a combined total of 45 kilometres, with some Kindergarten students proudly completing up to 8 km on their own. The day began with a special school-wide circle, where everyone shared who they were running for, honoring loved ones and members of the community. It was a powerful reminder that even a small school can make a big impact.



NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

While all Pacific Rim schools took part in National Day of Truth and Reconciliation activities, the following highlights showcase just a few meaningful ways students and staff engaged in learning, reflection, and remembrance.



WICKANINNISH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Wickaninnish Community School held its National Day of Truth and Reconciliation assembly on September 25. In one photo, Grade 4/5 students display an orange blanket they made to honour children who never returned from residential schools. In the other, a school-wide art project features feathers designed by students to reflect their learning.

EIGHTH AVENUE LEARNING CENTER

On September 25, Eighth Avenue Learning Center hosted a Truth and Reconciliation event, welcoming the broader community, including students and staff from EJ Dunn and Maquinna Elementary schools, in a shared commitment to learning and healing.

The day featured powerful presentations and cultural moments that honoured Indigenous voices and highlighted resilience.

A special thanks to Tseshaht First Nation's Cultural Support, Aaron Watts, whose moving performance united attendees through song, reminding us of the strength and healing in cultural expression.

Aaron Watts leading in song



USS HOSTS LEGACY OF HOPE EXHIBIT

This September, Ucluelet Secondary School partnered for the fifth year with the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the Legacy of Hope Foundation to bring a museum-quality exhibit into the school. The display served as a central piece for learning about the legacy of residential schools, and the impact their existence had on Indigenous families and their language and culture as a whole.

Student showcases and visits from Knowledge Keepers deepened engagement, while the USS Mental Health Team and external supports helped ensure student and staff well-being throughout the month.



WOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

On September 26th, Wood School held a powerful and reflective Truth and Reconciliation assembly, bringing students and staff together to honour the survivors of residential schools and remember those who never made it home.



MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

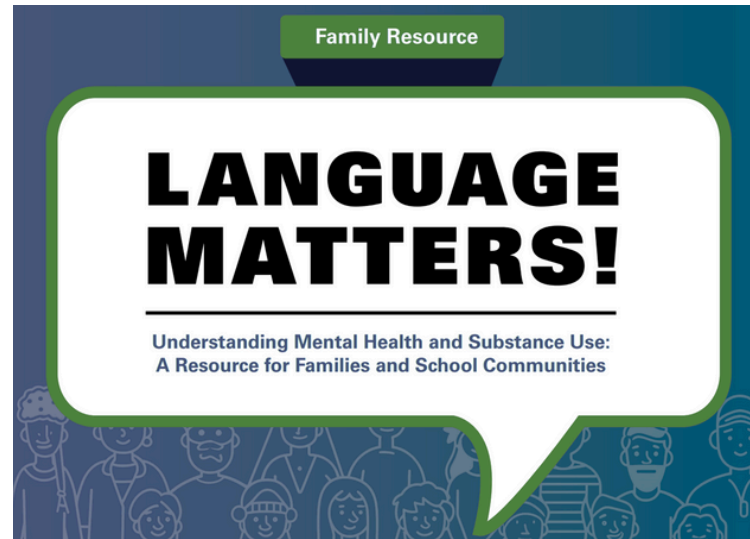
REACHING OUT FOR HELP

Knowing when you need to ask for help with your child can be challenging.

Sometimes it can help to have a resource that guides this process.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has released a new guide to assist in finding help.

CLICK THE IMAGE TO VIEW THIS RESOURCE ONLINE:



A CHECKUP WITH THE MANAGER OF MENTAL HEALTH

With school start-up complete and new routines in place, November is a great time to pause and ask yourself: How am I doing?

Understanding our emotions is key to feeling and functioning well. One way to do this is by tracking your moods and expanding your “feelings vocabulary.”

The [How We Feel App](#), developed at Yale University, is a free tool available on the App Store that can help.

This app lets you see what really shapes your day. Does exercise boost your mood? How do mornings set the tone? Do you take a moment for gratitude, or reach straight for your phone? Tracking these small habits can help you notice patterns and make positive changes.



CLICK ON THE ICON
TO GO TO THE
HOW WE FEEL APP

Shared meals are a powerful way to stay connected as a family. It doesn't always have to be dinner—breakfast together can be just as meaningful, helping kids start the day feeling supported and grounded.

With November around the corner, it's a great time to try new routines that strengthen family wellness and connection. If you'd like more support, explore the [Mental Health and Wellness Resources](#) on the school district website—help is always available.





SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM 2025–2026: EVERYONE BELONGS AT THE TABLE

Welcome back to another year of learning, growth, and connection. School food continues to be a key source of support for our students, and the 2024–2025 school year brought several meaningful milestones both locally and nationally.

2024–2025 HIGHLIGHTS:

- The National School Food Program launched, complementing B.C.'s Feeding Futures to reduce hunger and support learning.
- Feeding Futures funding continued, helping schools meet rising food costs with local solutions.
- We had a successful first year partnering with Nourish Cowichan, who provided daily meals to students in Port Alberni and Ucluelet with the support of local staff. Existing partnerships continued with our valued contractors at Bamfield Community School Association and Wickaninnish PAC.
- Student participation rose by 10%, with over 21% accessing school meals.
- Kitchen upgrades at EJ Dunn and Wickaninnish boosted food prep capacity and variety.
- Staff, volunteer, and donor support remains key to the program's success.

UPCOMING IN 2025-2026

- We're building on last years' success by expanding menu options, strengthening school-community connections, and ensuring every student can access meals when needed.
- Across the district we are continuing our partnership with our existing meal providers, and exploring additional community collaborations.
- With provincial Food Infrastructure Program funding, schools are replacing older fridges and freezers with energy-efficient commercial appliances. This provides more space, safer storage, fewer deliveries, and fewer appliances plugged in – making the program both sustainable and environmentally responsible.

CELEBRATING OUR FOOD STAFF

On Monday, September 29th, our entire school food team came together to reflect on the past year and share ideas for the future. This gathering highlighted not just the scale of the program, but the people who make it happen every day—from cooking and packing to delivering and serving.



Left to Right: Kirsten Nesbitt, Crystal Clement, Aleisha Dayley, Ryan Pike, Claire Boudreau, Ron Weeks. Not pictured: Tiffany Erickson, Renee Gaudet.



HOW CAN MY STUDENT ACCESS THE SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM?

Enrolling your student in the School Meal Program is easy! Simply contact your school secretary to learn more. Our program operates on the principle that everyone is welcome, and no student will be turned away. Enrollment helps us plan and order food effectively to meet student needs. While provincial funding provides crucial support, community donations – whether monetary or volunteer time – are essential to bridging the gap and keeping the program running sustainably.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT

- **Donate:** About \$5 per school day provides a student with nourishing meals. Every contribution helps us keep the program strong and sustainable.
- **Volunteer:** We always welcome extra hands for meal preparation and distribution. Ask us how you can help.
- **Spread the Word:** Share the message that every student deserves access to nourishing food.

Together, we are proving that when communities come together with love and compassion, incredible things can happen.



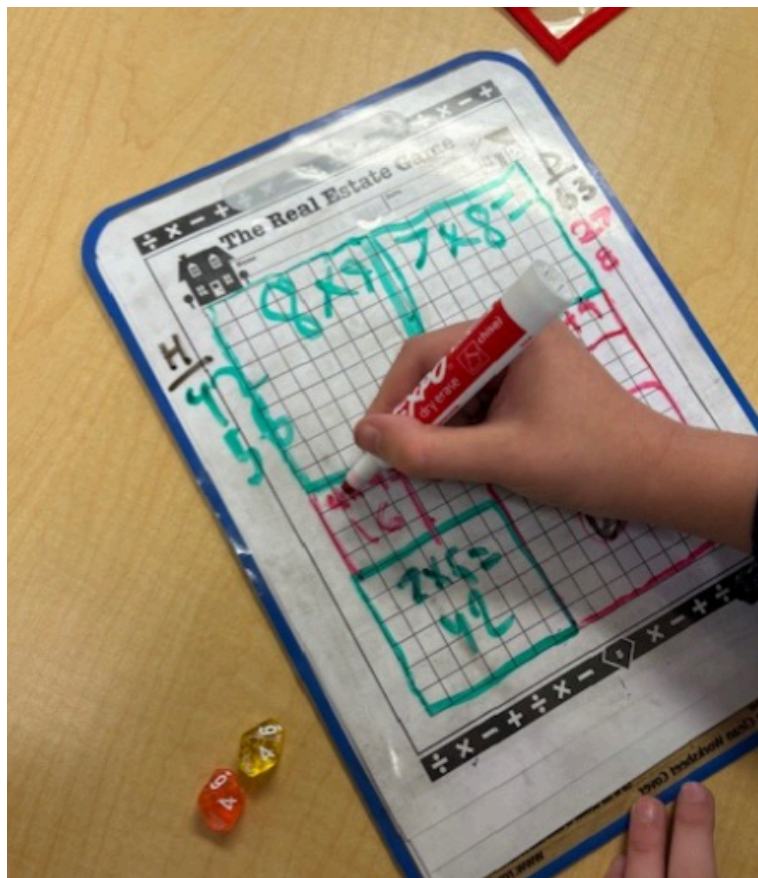
LITERACY & NUMERACY

SETTING YOUR LEARNER UP FOR LITERACY SUCCESS

Parents/guardians have an important role in helping their children become readers and writers. Engagement with literacy at home can help set children on the right path for success at school.

Children benefit from parents/guardians working in collaboration with schools to support the development of literacy skills. Reach out to your child's teacher to see what you can do at home to best support your child's literacy development. Help your child consistently complete any home reading or daily reading homework that may be sent home by their teacher.

Have your child read for a minimum of 20 minutes daily at home. This practice alone can lead to greater literacy and overall school success. You can have your child read aloud to a family member or you can read to them. Talk about what you are reading, share your thoughts and feelings and discuss the meaning of new or unfamiliar words.



NUMERACY AND MATH HIGHLIGHT

Many schools throughout our district are exploring different ways to engage students in numeracy and math concepts.

One successful approach that teachers are using involves the integration of games and workshop-style activities. Math workshops are inclusive practices that allow all students to learn at their individual levels. They also provide students with options for activities, ways to represent their learning, and materials they can use to showcase their knowledge. Math stations give children the chance to practice foundational skills, build fact fluency, and collaborate with their peers. Additionally, students have time to work in small groups with their teacher, focusing on strategies, computation, or concepts within their number range.

To be a better reader, read more!

STUDENT A READS	STUDENT B READS	STUDENT C READS
20 minutes per day	5 minutes each day	1 minute each day
3,600 minutes per school year	900 minutes per school year	180 minutes in a school year
1,800,000 words per year	282,000 words per year	8,000 words per year
Scores in the 90th percentile	Scores in the 50th percentile	Scores in the 10th percentile

Source: Nagy and Herman, 1987



2023/24 - 2027/28 STRATEGIC PLAN

always learning | takaas?aaq̓λin huuhtak̓siih | ka kishkaytaynaan | apprendre, toujours

FIVE FOCUS AREAS

Indigenous Learner
Success and
Relationships with
First Nations

Student
Achievement

Safe, Welcoming
and Modern
Learning
Environments

Mental Health
and
Social-Emotional
Well-being

Environmental
Stewardship
and Global
Citizenship



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



FALL FAIR 2025

Pacific Rim School District worked in collaboration with the Alberni Valley Heritage Commission to attend the 2025 Fall Fair in September.

In the photo is Trustee Pam Craig and Director of Instruction - Human Resources and Health & Safety, Jaslene Atwal.

During the Fall Fair, Pam and Jaslene took an active role in engaging with the community, connecting with over 116 individuals who expressed interest in potential future positions. Their outreach helped raise awareness about opportunities within the organization and encouraged participation in various programs. They also gathered applicants to volunteer for the School Meal Program, ensuring community members had a direct pathway to get involved. Beyond recruitment, they created meaningful conversations that highlighted the organization's values and welcomed fresh interest from both new and familiar faces.

In addition to speaking with potential applicants, Pam and Jaslene built bridges with alumni, rekindling old connections while also sharing information about the International Homestay program. Their table became a hub of interaction, where community members not only learned about programs but also enjoyed reminiscing through old yearbooks. This thoughtful touch sparked conversations, strengthened community ties, and celebrated shared history, making the experience both informative and nostalgic. Their efforts during the Fall Fair showcased the importance of blending outreach, recruitment, and relationship-building to strengthen community engagement.



VIU CAREER FAIR

Director of Instruction - Human Resources and Health & Safety, Jaslene Atwal and Manager of Human Resources, Trisha Wilson attended the VIU Career Fair

On September 12th, Jaslene and Trisha attended the VIU Career Fair, where they connected with 50 potential applicants interested in a wide range of job classifications and future positions with the Pacific Rim School District. Their presence provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the district as an employer of choice, highlighting the variety of career paths available and the benefits of joining the team. By engaging directly with students and job seekers, they not only shared valuable information but also raised the district's visibility, making it an amazing way to get Pacific Rim noticed and attract fresh talent for the future.

Events like the VIU Career Fair are just one of the many ways Pacific Rim School District is investing in future talent and building strong connections with the wider community. Through continued outreach and engagement, the district remains committed to attracting passionate, skilled individuals who are ready to make a difference in education.





POP UP PLAY & MORE

POP UP PLAY – COME JOIN THE FUN!

Pop Up Play is all about bringing families with young children together to connect, explore, and play. These free events are designed for children birth to age five (siblings are welcome too!) and give families the chance to enjoy hands-on activities, meet other families, and discover local supports and resources in a relaxed and welcoming space.



Each Pop Up Play looks a little different—sometimes there's dress-up fun, outdoor play, or seasonal celebrations—but they all share the same purpose: offering playful spaces where children can explore while families discover resources and connections. Local partners are also on site to answer questions and share information about programs that can support your child's growth and your family's well-being.

We'd love to see you at an upcoming Pop Up Play—come for the play, stay for the connections

THE CALM CONNECTION PARENT GROUP

Parenting can feel overwhelming at times, especially when it comes to supporting children's social and emotional development. The CALM Connection is a free three-week parent group designed to strengthen parent-child relationships, reduce stress, and build practical strategies for everyday life. Join us for dinner, connection with other families, and supportive resources.



OCTOBER 29, NOVEMBER 5 & 12



5:00–7:30PM



THE FAMILY HUB, 3500 ARGYLE STREET



REGISTER BY OCTOBER 22

ONSITE CHILDCARE AVAILABLE BY REQUEST.

NANTES EXCHANGE SUMMER 2025

This past summer's Nantes Exchange was a huge success! Three students from the Pacific Rim School District spent four unforgettable weeks in France, immersed in the culture, language, and daily life of their host families. They took part in exciting excursions, built lasting friendships, and grew tremendously through the experience.

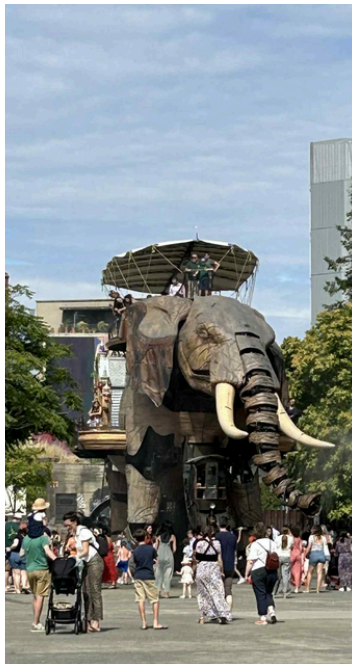
In August, our French partner students travelled to Port Alberni and Tofino for the second phase of the exchange. Local families welcomed them warmly, and together the students explored the best of the West Coast. Whether hiking local trails, enjoying beach days, or sharing Canadian traditions, the experience was both meaningful and fun for everyone involved.

This reciprocal exchange is not only a powerful cultural and personal growth opportunity, but also a tremendous value—with travel, cultural immersion, homestay, and activities all included for a fraction of the cost of a typical trip abroad.

We're proud to offer this kind of immersive global experience to our students, and we're already thinking ahead to next year's exchange. Stay tuned for updates on the Pacific Rim International Student Program website.

Merci beaucoup to all the families and students who helped make this summer so memorable!

FRANCE





INTROUCING...

MICHELLE COLYN

ʔuktaamaḥ Michelle Colyn. histaqšilaḥ ćuumaſas. ʔuḥukʷaḥ ḥuʷiiqsu Boyd Gallic, ʔuḥukʷaḥ ʔumʔiiqsu Valerie Gallic. ćišaaṭḥaqsumaḥ. I also have ties to Hupacasath and Ditidaht. ʔuḥukʷaḥ nananiiqsu Marian Gallic. ʔuḥukʷitaḥ nananiiqsu Richard Gallic. ʔaḷanakaḥ ṭaatneʔis. hiṭhaaḥ mamuuk Pacific Rim School District 70.

My name is Michelle Colyn. I am from the Somass (Port Alberni) area. My father is Boyd Gallic, my mother is Valerie Gallic. I am a Tseshah woman and also have ties to Hupacasath and Ditidaht. My grandmother is Marian Gallic and my grandfather is Richard Gallic mit. I have two kids and work at Pacific Rim School District 70.

Born and raised in Port Alberni, I am grateful to be joining the school district as the Manager of Indigenous Language and Culture.

I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Media Studies (2012) and began my career with the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council in the Fisheries department, Uu-a-thluk, supporting capacity building with all 14 nuučaahṭ Nations. In 2019, I stepped back from work to focus on raising my family, and from 2021 to 2025 I worked part-time with my Nation, Tseshah, supporting Membership Administration. Now, with my two children in school, I'm excited to return to full-time work in this meaningful role.

The priorities I'll be focusing on in this role include:

- Conducting a feasibility study of implementing various levels of Indigenous Language Programming in the public schools.
- Establishing an Art Cataloging system to respectfully display, maintain, and track cultural art pieces across the District.
- Creating learning opportunities for staff and learners that strengthen language, cultural competency, and cultural safety.

This position offers an opportunity to help advance the District's goals while aligning with our Nation's Strategic Plans, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the BC First Peoples Principles of Learning, and BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. I am so honored to take on this role and commit to carrying it out with care and respect.



EMPLOYEE SHOWCASE

We caught up with 3 of our West Coast bus drivers to ask them three questions.

- What has been the highlight of your first week and a half?
- What do you like about starting to work with Pacific Rim School District?
- What do you like about being a Bus Driver?

Here's what they shared:

MARCO PROCOPIO:



This first week of school I learned that as adults we need to be responsible for others and mostly our precious kids however we need to be playful and take life lightly every day. I was listening to the kids playing games that were quite intelligent, and they just made them up spontaneously on the spot and they reminded me that we should use our coffee break, lunch time with colleagues and time with family to be spontaneous and creative as well.

I like the positive healthy energy of the school district. It's vibrant and progressive, it's well organized, great team work, great communication, growth possibilities and perks

What do I like about being a bus driver!! The connection with a part of me that was getting lost, the responsibility of taking kids to school to achieve goals in life, the opportunity to inspire them by being the best person I can during the 2 hours I'm with them, the time off in the middle to practice my sports and training.

TREVOR JONES:



What has been the highlight of my first week and a half? Driving a brand-new bus and welcoming the kids back to school in a sweet ride...

What do I like about starting to work with Pacific Rim School District? Great people with a commitment to excellence.

What do I like about being a Bus Driver? The kids they brighten each and every day.

JUSTIN STECKY



The highlights of the first couple weeks have most definitely been just becoming a part of the School District 70 team. I feel so welcomed. I have been doing this for many years on the West Coast, and it feels great to finally be a part of School District 70 and really work together for the community.

What I like about starting up with the Pacific Rim School District is the support and clear guidance that has been given. With little to no support over the years it feels awesome to have the School District to lean on.

There are lots of things I like about being a bus driver. You are not in an office all day and you have a flexible schedule. What I love about this career is that I am proud to say what I do. In a small way I do my part to help the community. And that feels really good at the end of the day.

NEW MÉTIS CHILDCARE FACILITY

A major milestone is underway at Maquinna Elementary with the near completion of a new 34-space childcare centre, created through a partnership between Métis Nation BC, Alberni-Clayoquot Métis Society, and the Pacific Rim School District. More than just a building, this project reflects a shared vision to honour Métis and Nuu-chah-nulth ways of being while supporting children, families, and community.

Before construction began, a groundbreaking ceremony was held in January to begin this work in a good way. Led with the guidance of Aaron Watts from Tseshaht First Nation and in partnership with Métis Nation BC and Alberni-Clayoquot Métis Society, the ceremony followed local cultural protocols – acknowledging Mother Earth, giving thanks to the land, and welcoming ancestors and future generations into the space.

The gathering was attended by Elected Chief Councillor waamiiš (Ken Watts) of Tseshaht First Nation, Elected Chief Councillor ʔu ma qak taktla (Brandy Lauder) of Huupačasʔaṭṭ First Nation, and several ḥawith (hereditary Chiefs), along with representatives from Métis Nation BC, Alberni-Clayoquot Métis Society, and the Pacific Rim School District. Their presence and shared words brought depth, respect, and cultural strength to the event. It was a moving and grounding moment for all present, marking not only the physical beginning of construction but the spiritual beginning of a place built on relationship, respect, and shared purpose. Deep gratitude is extended to Aaron for his cultural guidance and care in helping ensure the ceremony was carried out with meaning, intention, and respect.

Located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Tseshaht and Huupačasʔaṭṭ First Nations, the centre will provide culturally rooted early learning opportunities that celebrate identity and belonging. Through this partnership, families will benefit not only from accessible, affordable childcare, but also from connections to Elders, Knowledge Holders, and culturally grounded resources.

The modular building is expected to be fully complete by December. Métis Nation BC and the District are currently seeking a non-profit childcare operator to run the program. Once selected, the operator will move through the provincial licensing process before the centre officially opens.

Priority spaces will be available for self-identified Métis families, families from local land-based Nations, and urban Indigenous families, while remaining spaces will be available to the wider community. Families interested in childcare are encouraged to join the interest list, and updates will be shared as the process moves forward.

The collaborative naming process – led with guidance from Tseshaht First Nation, Métis Nation BC, and the School District – has now been finalized. The chosen name is:

Zhenn Sayd – Young Cedar Early Learning Centre.

Join the interest list:

[Click Here](#)

This name reflects the strength, resilience, and deep roots of children, families, and culture. The translation of Young Cedar in Nuu-chah-nulth will be confirmed shortly, ensuring the name honours both Nuu-chah-nulth and Michif languages and worldviews.

This childcare facility represents a shared commitment to walk together in respect, partnership, and unity – creating a space where culture, learning, and family well-being come together.



Left to right- waamiiš (Ken Watts) – Tseshaht Elected Chief Councillor; Patrick Harriott – Region One MNBC Director; June Graham – President, Alberni-Clayoquot Métis Society; ʔu ma qak taktla (Brandy Lauder) – Huupačasʔaṭṭ First Nation Elected Chief Councillor; and Pam Craig – Board Chair.

HELPFUL LINKS/ RESOURCES

Page 4 – Mental Health Minute

The How We Feel App

Search “The How We Feel” in your mobile device app store.

Mental Health and Wellness Guide

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/erase/documents/mental-health-wellness/mhsu-language-guide-for-families.pdf>

District Mental Health and Wellness Resources

<https://www.sd70.bc.ca/page/8664/mental-health-and-wellness-resources>

Ministry of Education and Child Care – Family Guide

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/school-food/feeding-future.html>

Page 5 – School Meal Program

National School Food Program

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/school-food/feeding-future.html>

Feeding Futures

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/feeding-futures/feeding-futures>

Nourish Cowichan – Pacific Rim SD70

<https://nourishcowichan.ca/pacific-rim-sd70/>

Bamfield Community School Association

<https://bamfieldcommunity.ca>

Wickanninish PAC

<https://www.sd70.bc.ca/wcs/page/586/pac>

School Meal Program

<https://www.sd70.bc.ca/page/9419/school-meal-program>

Page 13 - New Métis Childcare Facility

Métis Nation BC

<https://www.mnbc.ca>

Interest List

<https://forms.office.com/r/5DcMFjYHVn>