

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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SOOKE SCHOOL DISTRICT EXCEEDS ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS FOR 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR, HIGHLIGHTING URGENT NEED FOR NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL

LANGFORD, BC – The Sooke School District has exceeded its projected growth for the 2024-25 school year, according to the district's annual enrollment submission to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. Initial projections estimated K-12 Standard Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment at 13,065 students. However, actual enrollment has exceeded expectations by 233 students, bringing the total K-12 Standard FTE to 13,298.

Growth was observed across all grade levels for K-12 Standard FTE, with the most significant increase at the secondary level:

- **Elementary:** 6,083 students, an increase of 124 (2.1%)
- **Middle:** 2,974 students, an increase of 146 (5.2%)
- **Secondary:** 4,241 students, an increase of 278 (7%)

The district-wide student population has increased from 13,767 last year to 14,315 this year, when factoring in full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment at Westshore Secondary, Continuing Education, and Online Learning programs. With an overall growth rate of 4.3%, the Sooke School District is the fastest growing school district in British Columbia.

The ongoing growth, especially at the secondary level, highlights the pressing need for the approval of North Langford Secondary School. There is an immediate capacity challenge for the Westshore region, where both Belmont and Royal Bay Secondary Schools are operating over capacity. “This significant increase in enrollment at the secondary level emphasizes the urgent need for an additional secondary school in our district,” said Paul Block, Superintendent of Schools. “With Belmont and Royal Bay Secondary schools both exceeding their capacity, it is crucial that the proposed 2,000 seat North Langford Secondary School is approved to relieve pressure on our existing facilities and to address the secondary school space pressures in the Westshore.”

“We are working closely with the Ministry of Education and Child Care to ensure the business case for North Langford Secondary School is thorough and addresses the long-term needs of the Westshore community,” said Block. “In the meantime, we are actively exploring creative interim solutions with the Ministry to expand our capacity without adding more portables to our existing inventory.” The district plans to submit the business case for the new secondary school to the Ministry in November and is optimistic about the potential approval of North Langford Secondary School shortly after government is formed. However, with the district continuing to experience rapid population growth, it



remains essential to plan for both immediate and long-term solutions to accommodate increasing student enrollment.

“We are committed to ensuring that every student in the Sooke School District has access to a high-quality education in a safe and supportive learning environment,” Block concluded. “We will continue to advocate for the resources and infrastructure needed to meet the demands of our growing community.”

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