

# School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

Board of Education—Regular Board Meeting – Open to the Public  
R3/March 23, 2010

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## Highlights

➤ **Student Travel:**

Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School Senior French Immersion 11/12 trip to Paris, France and London, England, April 23-30, 2011.

Approved in principle.

➤ **Band 7**

Approved the implementation of a district wide Band 7 program as presented in Option 1.

(attached)

➤ **Policy 7050, French Immersion**

Board directed senior management to prepare a report on the status and future of French Immersion – for the May 25, 2010 regular Board meeting.

## Preamble

At the Board's request a committee was formed to look at the options for the implementation of Band 7 in all our elementary schools. Committee members were Jen Riley (Fine Arts lead teacher), Wayne Kuhnert, Nancy Cox, Lindsey Duncan, Dale Hallier (secondary band teachers), Jen Turner, Paul Colthorpe, Randy Waddell (elementary music teachers), Jeannie Cameron (parent), Bill Green, Corrine Wester (elementary principals) and the chairperson was Allan Douglas. The committee met on February 10, 2010 and February 24, 2010. This report highlights three options for band 7.

The committee began its work by discussing the reasons and rationale for band 7.

### **\*\*Rationale for Band 7**

#### **Why is band important for the musical development of grade 7 students?**

- **Band involves students in a collaborative effort requiring great precision and teamwork.**
- Band is an ensemble activity in which the various instruments play in parts. Research shows that "part playing" in music is of key interest and importance to the development of musical minds during the intermediate years. Playing in parts is an intensely collaborative activity, making playing in a band a highly cooperative venture.
- Participation in "part playing" is as social as it is musical. The social benefits of a strong band program can be significant. This is the advantage that band has over a group in which all students learn the same instrument such as a keyboard class or guitar ensemble.
- **The traditional concert band introduces students to the adult world in a positive way through a performing ensemble which has a vast repertoire, a varied instrumentation and provides the students an opportunity to make choices in their educational environment.**
- Furthermore, with the development of personality and identity, one's choice of instrument also becomes important at this age. A band program offers grade 7 students an excellent opportunity to enter the adult world in a positive way, as a lifelong pursuit. *A band program* provides a positive opportunity that, for many students, becomes a major focus in their lives.

#### **What about "World Music" for grade 7 students?**

- Another reason that band may be considered for music in grade 7 is that, from a practical perspective, it is arguably the best available vehicle for the education of instrumental music in "Western-North American" musical traditions of practice. In opposition to this view, it is sometimes suggested that multicultural "World Music" instrumental programs may be suitable for grade 7s. The problem with such an approach is that World Music ensembles tend to be

limited to their respective musical traditions. For example, marimba bands play music in mostly one style and one key, drum ensembles play drum music, and samba bands play Sambas. Also, students do not generally continue playing these instruments once the unit of study is finished since they are ensemble and style specific. Band, similar to academics such as math, requires high standards that are attached to a long term goal. During the process of learning in a traditional ensemble of standard wind instruments, students learn to play a variety of repertoire representative of a wide range of musical styles found across our musical traditions. Throughout the course of the year the expectation is that they will continue to improve their skills and move on to the next level of learning. A sequential learning style that can take them all the way through to grade 12 instilling the skills of perseverance and creativity.

### **What is happening in the rest of the province?**

- Currently we are one of the only School Districts on Vancouver Island that does not offer a band 7 music option of some kind.
- **School District # 71 band students are up to three years behind their peers in other school districts in BC.** In many other districts that have middle schools, band is started as early as Grade 6 with some even beginning in grade 5. This means that in some instances our students will be as much as three years behind some of their peers. While this will certainly have an effect on their performances in festivals and at school concerts it will have the most significant effect on their chances of getting into music at university. How will our students compete against students with up to three more years of experience?

### **Why start band at grade 7....why not wait until the students are in grade 8?**

- By starting earlier, they will gain valuable skill and experience which they can transfer to other disciplines (jazz, vocal, rhythm & blues, musical theatre, pit musicians). This is only possible when they have a solid grounding in technique and the mental maturity that comes with age and experience.
- Grade 7 students are keen, eager and excited to try new things. By providing them with an opportunity to try Band at the Grade 7 level we are creating a school culture that appreciates and rewards these attributes. If we wait until Grade 8 to have beginner band then we miss this window of opportunity. Once students are in Grade 8 all of the pressures of starting high school play into how students think, behave, and how they make choices. We will have missed the opportunity to cater to their unique qualities and strengths.
- Band would give grade 7 students a unique opportunity that the grades K-6 would not have thus giving them more independence and a larger leadership role in the elementary schools. This would also give the younger grades something to look forward to when they came to be the eldest grade in the school.

### **What about employment opportunities for our students?**

- The Fine Arts are quickly becoming one of the leading employment sectors in North America and the world. As a district we want to provide students with the best Fine Arts education possible

so they can be successful and competent in an ever growing sector of the work force. Fine Arts are crucial to the vibrant community of the Comox Valley.

\*\* (the committee would like to thank and acknowledge the work of the band 7 proposal committee for its research on the rationale section of this report)

### **What are the assumptions around the options for band 7?**

1. The committee made the assumption that band 7 would be offered at Cumberland Jr and Lake Trail therefore we did not consider the following schools when discussing the options for band 7 Royston, Cumberland Elementary, Courtenay Elementary, Arden Elementary and Ecole Puntledge Park Elementary (English 7 students). **Lake Trail does not have the staffing or a teacher to offer band and they would need additional staffing to be able to do this at their school.**
2. The committee made the assumption that band 7 would not be offered at either Denman or Hornby due to the size of the schools and number of grade 7 students attending the schools.
3. The committee discussed optimal numbers of contact times for band 7 to be effective and landed on 2-45 minute sessions per week.

### **Option 1....Band – a choice for grade 7 students in the school**

- The committee realizes the financial challenges facing the Board and great consideration was given in the development of the options around these challenges. All of the options can be delivered within the regular music classroom or in the multi-purpose room at the school (no additional new spaces are needed at the school sites)
- This would be a “pull out model” and be offered to students in grade 7 that wanted to take band ....they would go to band every week for two 45 minute sessions (this would in addition to their regular music time). Where would the time come from the curriculum? The 90 minutes would come from the 10% locally developed programs.
- As this is an optional band program parents would have to provide the instruments for their children.
- An itinerant band teacher would have to be hired to teach band (approximately \$80 000 a year)

**The committee had lots of questions about option 1 and they discussed the following ....**

1. **What about the grade 7 students that do not want to take band?** As band 7 is optional and in addition to the regular music program, any students that do not take band can remain in the classroom with the regular teacher (this is not prep time). **This may present some challenges for the classroom teachers as they will have some students in the classroom while they are trying to teach and some students out of the classroom.**
2. **What about combined 6/7 classes?** The grade 6 students would remain in the classroom with the regular teacher as well as any grade 7 student who did not want to take band.

3. **What about space?** Space may be an issue in our larger elementary schools where the music rooms are used full time. There will have to be school based discussions on schedules and space and creative solutions like using the library or multi-purpose room will have to be explored.
4. **What about storage? Where are all of these instruments going to go?** The committee recognized that storage will be an issue. The instruments will have to be carried to and from school on the days of band (students need the instruments at home to practice in between band classes). There will have to be school based discussions on storage of instruments during the day (as this is “mini band” there will not be any large instruments like baritones or baritone saxophones)
5. **What about other equipment needs for the school?** The district will have to purchase music stands, chairs and some basic instruments (snare drum and auxiliary percussion/approximate cost \$250 per school) for each school.
6. **What are some of the challenges of option 1?**
  - **Instrument storage may be a problem as many schools do not have lockers and the classroom space is limited.**
  - **Staffing considerations – we will need to recruit a qualified itinerant band teacher for the district**
  - **Teaching space may be a challenge in some schools**
  - **The music time will be inequitable in that band students will receive 90 minutes a week as well as regular music which is generally 60 minutes a week**

**Option 2....Band 7 is offered as the prep for the grade 7 students in the school**

- **This would be tied to prep time and the grade 7 students would receive two – 45 minute sessions a week (option 2 differs from option 1 in that students would not receive more than 90 minutes of instruction in band/ general music a week)**

**The committee had lots of questions about option 2 and they discussed the following ....**

1. **What about the grade 7 students that do not want to take band?** In this option, band 7 is still optional and the students that did not want to take band would have to be offered an elective opposite band (possibly offered by the music teachers that do not have the qualifications to teach band or someone else in the school but not the classroom teacher as this is their prep time).\_ There would be some staffing costs to deliver this option.
2. **Consideration needs to be made around job restructuring ....what will this look like for our current music teachers who would not be teaching band?** In this option, band 7 may or may not be taught by the current music teacher. If the music teacher is not qualified to teach band there may be some reductions in their FTE time or restructuring of their job description.
3. **How will the school timetable the grade 7 elective choices?\_**There will have to be school based discussions on elective offerings and timetabling to facilitate this choice.

4. **What about combined 6/7 classes?** The grade 6 students would continue to take general music or another school based elective as well as any grade 7 student who did not want to take band. **This may present some challenges for the classroom teachers as they will have some students in the classroom while they are trying to teach and some students out of the classroom**
5. **What about space?** Space may be an issue in our larger elementary schools where the music rooms are used full time. There will have to be school based discussions on schedules and space and creative solutions like using the library or multi-purpose room will have to be explored.
6. **What about storage? Where are all of these instruments going to go?** The committee recognized that storage will be an issue. The instruments will have to be carried to and from school on the days of band (students need the instruments at home to practice in between band classes). There will have to be school based discussions on storage of instruments during the day (as this is “mini band” there will not be any large instruments like baritones or baritone saxophones)
7. **What about other equipment needs for the school?** The district will have to purchase music stands, chairs and some basic instruments (snare drum and auxiliary percussion/approximate cost \$250 per school) for each school.
8. **What are some of the challenges of option 2?**
  - **Instrument storage may be a problem as many schools do not have lockers and the classroom space is limited.**
  - **Staffing considerations – we may need to recruit a qualified itinerant band teacher for the district , schools will have to make some decisions around offering electives and there may be an effect on current music teachers FTE**
  - **Teaching space may be a challenge in some schools**
  - **The music time will be inequitable in that band students will receive 90 minutes a week whereas all other students receive 60 minutes a week**

### **Option 3....Band 7 is the program for all grade 7 students**

1. **How will this program be delivered in our schools? All grade 7 students will receive 2-45 minute band sessions per week taught by a qualified band teacher.**
2. **What are the costs of this program? The district will have to provide all of the instruments for the students (approximate cost with a “mini band” is \$10 000 per school)**
3. **What about the staffing implications? There may be reductions or restructuring of the general music teachers FTE as we recruit qualified band teachers to deliver the program.**
4. **What about combined 6/7 classes?** The grade 6 students would continue to take general music while the grade 7 students took band. (There will have to be school based discussions around numbers of students in a band 7 class – for example if there are two classes with grade 7 students in them – a grade 7 of 28 and a 6/7 with 20 – 6s and 9 – 7s – the band teacher would have to agree to have a band 7 class of 35)

5. **What about space?** Space may be an issue in our larger elementary schools where the music rooms are used full time. There will have to be school based discussions on schedules and space and creative solutions like using the library or multi-purpose room will have to be explored.
6. **What about storage? Where are all of these instruments going to go?** The committee recognized that storage will be an issue. The instruments will have to be carried to and from school on the days of band (students need the instruments at home to practice in between band classes). There will have to be school based discussions on storage of instruments during the day (as this is “mini band” there will not be any large instruments like baritones or baritone saxophones)
7. **What are some of the challenges of option 3?**
  - **Instrument storage may be a problem as many schools do not have lockers and the classroom space is limited.**

**Staffing considerations – we may need to recruit a qualified itinerant band teacher for the district and there may be an effect on current music teachers FTE**

- **Teaching space may be a challenge in some schools**
- **The music time will be inequitable in that band students will receive 90 minutes a week whereas all other students receive 60 minutes a week**
- **The cost to the district is significant (equipment \$100 000 and staffing \$80 000)**

**In conclusion, the committee recognized the value of band 7 as well as the many challenges that implementing band 7 would have on our schools. After a lengthy discussion we believe the best option is option 1 as it is the least expensive and the least intrusive on all aspects of the school environment. Although the committee had the latitude to explore creative possibilities for band 7 we feel option 1 , “if” a band option is to be considered, is the only real viable option.**

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