



Memorandum

Date: November 15, 2024
To: Finance and Planning Committee
From: Rob Drew, Director of Operations
Information Item: **Integrated Pest Management Report - Update**

1.0 ISSUE STATEMENT

School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) (the District) uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for managing pests (insects, rodents, and weeds) at all sites and facilities. Over the years, the Operations Department has experienced an increasing number of pests establishing homes on school sites which is negatively impacting safety, recreational enjoyment, public image, natural ecosystems and the integrity and functionality of District grounds. Per *Appendix A, Policy 620 – Integrated Pest Management (IPM)*, District staff would like to re-establish the use of chemical controls in coordination with physical, mechanical, and cultural controls to ensure the grounds meet the needs of the students, staff, and greater community.

2.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

Per *Appendix A, Policy 620 – Integrated Pest Management (IPM)* states: “Each year a report shall be provided to the Board on the effective use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), with appropriate recommendations for possible enhancements.”

3.0 BACKGROUND

The District's IPM uses a combination of techniques to suppress pest populations in effective, economical, and environmentally sound ways. It incorporates a variety of practical strategies based on an understanding of pest life cycles and their interactions with the environment to keep pests from causing significant challenges, while minimizing risk to humans and the environment. Operations has maximized the use of physical, mechanical, and cultural controls to make school buildings and grounds less hospitable to pests. At present, these alternative methods alone are proving to be ineffective.

The growth of invasive weeds has become a widespread issue across the District, causing damage to sports fields, creating safety hazards, and impacting public image. The established weeds make it difficult for grass to grow and maintain healthy, usable fields. This has resulted in substantial costs

for field repairs. Operations has also received negative feedback from the community regarding the current state of fields and play areas.

Staff reviewed pest management best practices and policies from other school districts, local governments, and institutions and found that these organizations have varying approaches to pest management. While most do not have a formal IPM, current practice is to follow the *Integrated Pest Management Act* and *Regulations* set out by the Province of British Columbia (linked [here](#)). In some cases, the nature of the pest problem has made it necessary for these entities to use chemical controls to address ongoing issues. Local governments within the District do not have specific policies; however, the organizations do mitigate invasive pests in alignment with provincial legislation by utilizing certified pesticide applicators.

Moving forward, Operations will follow Policy 620 - Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and best practices within the *Integrated Pest Management Act* to suppress pest populations to acceptable levels using physical, mechanical, cultural, and chemical controls.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

Where chemical controls are required and alternative methods have been ineffective, the following process will be followed:

- Conduct comprehensive research to identify the safest products compliant with provincial legislation.
- Ensure applications adhere to regulatory requirements and manufacturer instructions.
- Schedule applications during the following break periods:
 - Winter break,
 - Spring break, and
 - Summer break.
- Inform principal or building manager of the schedule. The principal or building manager will then notify families and the community using a pre-established communication plan.
- Display clear, visible signs in treated areas and at any nearby entrances indicating treatment and safety information. After the application and waiting period, ensure all relevant signage is removed.

5.0 DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS' COMMENTS

The District will continue supporting a proactive and preventative approach to managing noxious weeds, invasive plants and pests on all sites. IPM is a long-term program that reduces the reliance on pesticides. By adhering to these guidelines and promoting safe pesticide practices, the District can ensure the health and safety of the school environments. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of pesticide use will help the District make informed decisions that prioritize the well-being of students, staff and the community.

6.0 APPENDIX

- A. Policy #620 – Integrated Pest Management (IPM)