



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL (IEC)

IEC Meeting

Tuesday, June 3, 2025 – 1:30 pm
School Board Office – Board Room 1
 (1040 Hollywood Road South, Kelowna, BC)

MINUTES

Council Members:	Carol Archie (alternate) Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society	Elder Wilfred Barnes (by Zoom) Westbank First Nation Elder	Ann Bell Lake Country Native Association
	Denise Clough Westbank First Nation	Jordan Coble Westbank First Nation	Brad Dahl Kelowna Métis Association
	Chantelle Desrosiers Board of Education	Cheryl Dodman Kelowna Métis Association	Lisa Guderyan (by Zoom) Board of Education
	Candace Jack Indigenous Parent & Family Education Council	Peggy Joe (by Zoom) Okanagan Indian Band	Bill McKenna Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
	Deanna Necan Indigenous Parent & Family Education Council	Danielle Saddleman (alternate) Okanagan Indian Band	Nicole Werstuik Westbank First Nation
School District Staff:	Jesse Bruce Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity	Kevin Kaardal Superintendent of Schools	Yvonne Hildebrandt Secretariat
	Kevin Kaiser District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education	Christie Russell District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education	
Guests:	Julia Fraser Board of Education	Moyra Baxter Former Trustee – Board of Education	
Absent:	Allan Louis Okanagan Indian Band	Raquel Steen Assistant Superintendent	Aaron St Pierre Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society

1. Welcome

Chair Jordan Coble welcomed everyone to the IEC meeting. The Council proceeded with round-table introductions.

2. Opening Prayer

The Chair led the Council in an opening prayer.

3. FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

3.1 Adoption of the June 3, 2025 Agenda

Move "New Business" Item 5.1 Refresh of the Equity in Action Agreement for Truth and Reconciliation (2025-2030) after Item 5.5

MOVED by Brad Dahl, SECONDED by Nicole Werstuik
 THAT: The agenda for June 3, 2025 be adopted as amended. CARRIED

3.2 Review and Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Brad Dahl, SECONDED by Deanna Necan
THAT: The Minutes for April 8, 2025 be adopted as presented. CARRIED

3.3 Review and Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Nicole Werstuik, SECONDED by Candace Jack
THAT: The Minutes for May 7, 2025 be adopted as presented. CARRIED

4. STANDING ITEMS

4.1 District and Community Updates

District Updates

The Superintendent of Schools/CEO shared that he is anticipating his retirement on June 30th and that the Board has hired Jon Rever, Acting Deputy Superintendent, as the new Superintendent starting July 1st. The Board of Education has approved its Preliminary Annual Budget for 2025-2026. Many year end activities are taking place at the elementary, middle and secondary schools during June, including the Indigenous Graduate Blanketing Ceremonies, Commencement Ceremonies, and proms. The District is also recruiting, hiring staff and placing teachers for the 2025-2026 school year.

1:45 pm – *Elder Barnes joined the meeting via Zoom.*

Board Chair Julia Fraser read a public statement on Indigenous Sovereignty from the Board of Education in response to the recent public discourse in the news made by an area MLA. The Board unequivocally supports the sovereignty, self-determination, and rights of the Indigenous Peoples, in accordance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and Canadian law. Trustee Fraser emphasized that the Board "supports you and honours your voices, stories and leadership", and thanked the IEC for their "strength, guidance, and continued partnership."

Chair Coble expressed gratitude to Trustee Fraser and the Board for the statement, recognized that the Board reaching out is a sign of true partnership. and thanked them for standing together with Indigenous peoples. The Chair acknowledged that it is an ongoing journey of Truth and Reconciliation and it is not everyday that everyone stands in solidarity.

Community Updates

- June 21st is National Indigenous Peoples Day and Kelowna Métis Association will be holding an event in City Park to honour the day that includes food, music, and dancing. Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society will celebrate the day by hosting its annual Turtle Island Festival in downtown Kelowna.
- Kelowna Métis Association will hold monthly meetings throughout the summer.
- Jordan Coble spoke about attending the Indigenous Graduate Blanketing Ceremony at Central School on May 29th, enjoying the valedictorian speech, and recognizing the caring individuals at Central School that go above and beyond.
- Nicole thanked Indigenous Education for hosting a booth at WFN's 'You Are Enough' event on May 20th which was attended by 206 guests, including many youth and all the First Nation Bands. The event involved artists, performers, food, and prizes.
- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society kicked off Kelowna Pride Month with a drag brunch catered by Elders for all attendees.
- Deanna participated as a vendor at the Kelowna Pride Festival and will be travelling to Yucatan, Mexico in August as a UBCO representative to learn about Mayan language, their tradition and culture.
- Lake Country Native Association has a youth drumming group on Sunday's led by Elder Randy Swanson, offers themed creative activities for families, and the Komasket PowWow will be the last gathering until Fall. During the summer, LCNA is planning a one-day fishing derby for the boys and sage picking for the girls.
- Okanagan Indian Band has been enjoying events at the hall with Elders and graduating students, including dinner, singing, dancing, learning about potlatch, culture and ceremony.

4.2 Indigenous "Kids in Care" in the School District, Tutors, and Wrap-Around Services of Support

The IEC spoke about the absence of connection and information sharing between the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and District Schools. Due to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA), the District is reliant on families to provide information about students in care. Indigenous Student Advocates play a key role in wrapping support around students in care. The IEC expressed gratitude for Indigenous Student Advocates as many students identify the advocate as their "safe place" and the reason why some students stay in school. Westbank First Nation, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, and Kelowna Métis Association shared that they are supporting their own children and families and are working with services to help students through their traumas without involving MCFD.

Action: To write a letter to the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Education and Child Care about the need for a voice on behalf of children in care that are falling through the cracks, and the need to respond before it becomes a bigger issue.
(Jordan Coble and Nicole Werstuik)

2:30 pm – The Superintendent of Schools/CEO left the meeting.

4.3 Bursaries and Scholarships for Indigenous Grads

Jesse Bruce, Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity, shared that \$12,000 in bursaries, \$4,000 being from personal donors, will be distributed to twenty-two Indigenous graduates of 2025. Jesse thanked the members of the IEC that were on the Bursary Selection Committee. Recipients of the bursaries and scholarships will be celebrated during the five Indigenous Graduate Blanketing Ceremonies.

4.4 Parent and Family Community Engagement

An evening cultural event for Indigenous families is being planned for Thursday, June 5th, with input from over 700 families, and will be hosted at Springvalley Elementary School. The Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council (IPFEC) will open the event, Anona Kampe will sing the Okanagan song, and there will be storytelling, drumming, stick games, food and prizes.

IPFEC representative, Deanna Necan, suggested collaboration with schools and integration of cultural games, art, and events for Indigenous families into the festivities and fundraisers already being hosted by schools, in addition to events specifically organized for Indigenous parents and families.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Indigenous Education Department Update

The Indigenous Education Department spoke about the following:

- It is spring staffing season and staff are being assigned for September startup. The District is hoping to have a full complement of advocates for the first day of the 2025/2026 school year.
- The Indigenous Graduate Blanketing Ceremonies are scheduled as follows:
 - May 29th – Central School
 - June 4th – École George Elliot Secondary School
 - June 10th – Mount Boucherie Secondary School (at Royal Lepage)
 - June 12th – École Kelowna Secondary School & Okanagan Mission Secondary School (at KSS)
 - June 19th – Rutland Senior Secondary School
- There are 321 Indigenous graduates, up from 230 last year.
- KMA has provided sashes for each Métis graduating student who will be sashed at the Indigenous Graduate Blanketing Ceremonies.
- Indigenous Student Advocates are busy with school year end and Wellness Workers will be supporting students and families over the summer with "Summer Indigenous Wellness Check-ins".
- WFN is in the process of hiring a Wellness Worker to work together with the Wellness Workers in the District.

2:46 pm – Simone Gauthier, Lead Indigenous Student Advocate, joined the meeting.

5.2 2025-2026 Indigenous Education Budget Update

Jesse Bruce, Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity, and Simone Gauthier, Lead Indigenous Student Advocate, spoke about the Lead Indigenous Student Advocate role and the concern of supporting Advocate wellness. Indigenous Education has been progressing toward a "12 not 10" model to support students during school breaks. The Lead Advocate role is a 12-month position and provides support during the summer break. In past years, 10-month Advocates have also been invited to work during August; however, fewer Advocates choose to do so each year due to a variety of reasons. The cost to bring advocates back to work in August is about \$50,000.

At the May 7th IEC meeting, the Council supported adding a 10-month Lead Indigenous Student Advocate position to the Indigenous Education budget. Jesse proposed that the position be posted as a 12-month Advocate job, instead of 10-month, at an additional cost of approximately \$7,500. Savings are expected within the budget since many advocates choose not to work in August.

Simone shared that 55 Indigenous students and families have currently requested support with food, check-ins, and finances during the summer. This number may grow and would require the help of more than one Lead Advocate. In addition, there are currently 50 advocates that require mentorship and coaching. The addition of another Lead Advocate would be a positive step towards maintaining the wellness of the advocates.

The IEC made the following Motion:

MOVED by Cheryl Dodman, SECONDED by Brad Dahl

THAT: The additional 10-month Lead Indigenous Student Advocate position be posted as a 12-month job.

CARRIED

3:00 pm – Simone Gauthier left the meeting.

5.3 September 30th National Day for Truth & Reconciliation, Orange Shirt Day

Christie Russell, District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education, shared that schools are requesting resources as they plan school events for Orange Shirt Day. The Indigenous Education Department is providing resources for teachers that are age appropriate, provide a shift in thinking, and are grounded in the truth. Knowledge Keepers are also being booked and Indigenous Education will be out in the schools supporting the events.

5.4 October 10, 2025 District Implementation Day

Christie Russell explained that District Implementation Day is a day of learning for teachers in Central Okanagan Public Schools and is grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The Indigenous Education Department and the District Learning and Innovation Team have come together and created a package of resources that is shared with principals to support teacher learning. The Indigenous Education Cultural team assists with booking requests from the schools for Implementation Day, which may include a water ceremony, honouring local water, re-writing their priorities, museum and community tours, traditional ways of knowing, and creating activities around the 94 Calls to Action.

5.5 Refresh of the Equity in Action Agreement for Truth & Reconciliation 2025-2030

Jesse Bruce shared that the Equity in Action (EIA) for Truth and Reconciliation Stewardship Committee engaged community, students, families and staff in a scan and refresh of the Agreement during the Spring of 2025 through community gathering consultations with WFN, OKIB, KMA, KFS and LCNA, as well as staff and family surveys. Jesse reviewed the new Agreement with the IEC and shared the feedback of what he heard from the community consultations, including the following:

- the importance of relationships
- the critical role of the Advocate
- the connection between supporting learners in school and the Land Based Learning program, Indigenous academies and courses

- the need for continuous growth in professional development and learning
- the need for accessibility to resources, gathering room spaces, and strengthened community partnerships
- the need to go deeper into conversation about specific priorities
- the benefit of the EIA Agreement being a living document over the course of 5 years

There are four notable changes in the Commitment and Priorities within the Four Food Chiefs:

1. Equity for each Indigenous learner: include priorities that connect to reconciliation for all, in addition to equitable priorities for Indigenous learners;
2. Reconciliation: need to focus on families and how we support families;
3. Families are identified as a priority in addition to Indigenous learners;
4. Story has been added to most of the evidence.

The IEC expressed appreciation for the refreshed and improved EIA Agreement and that it includes the voice of learners and teachers in the system. The Council provided suggestions of photos, formatting, and acknowledgement of art for the Agreement.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS - None.

7. REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

- *Action Item: Reach out to the language speakers in the territory to ensure the translation of the acknowledgement poster into the nsyilxcən language is done correctly. (Christie Russell/Elder Barnes)*

8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE IEC MEETINGS

- The impact of the new personal student digital device restrictions at school

9. FUTURE IEC MEETINGS (Tuesdays 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm)

2025-2026 IEC Meeting Schedule: Next Meeting – September 2025

3:40 pm – Former School Board Trustee Moyra Baxter arrived at the meeting along with members of her family and friends.

10. BLANKETING CEREMONY

Westbank First Nation IEC members Jordan Coble, Nicole Werstuik, Denise Clough, and Candace Jack facilitated a blanketing ceremony for Former School Board Trustee Moyra Baxter.

4:06 pm – Former School Board Trustee Moyra Baxter and her family and friends left the meeting.

4:06 pm – Kevin Kaiser, Christie Russell, and Danielle Saddleman left the meeting.

4:07 pm – The IEC meeting resumed.

11. IN-CAMERA MEETING

An in-camera meeting took place after the regular IEC meeting. The IEC began a preliminary conversation about responding to and inviting visitors who are not appointed to the IEC membership, setting parameters for meetings when guests and leaders join a meeting, and the recruitment and appointment process of potential IEC members. The Council ideated about possible solutions that would provide clarity, create transparency, and uphold the values of the IEC, including the following:

- Provide new members with a welcome package of information about the IEC (Terms of Reference, the IEC's historical journey, definitions of terms, etc.).
- If a Council member steps down, there needs to be a conversation with the Chair, in tandem with District staff, so that the IEC has knowledge of the seat availability.
- If a Council member cannot attend an IEC meeting, it is important that someone else stands in.
- The IEC Terms of Reference needs to be followed.
- There should be limitations for guests to be observers only at the IEC table.
- "Observer" needs to be defined in the Terms of Reference.
- More protocol about "alternates" needs to be added to the Terms of Reference, Section 3. Roles and Responsibilities of Members (i.e., informed voting, voting proxy).

12. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 4:44 pm.

ACTION ITEMS – In Progress:	Person(s) Responsible
Reach out to the language speakers in the territory to ensure the translation of the acknowledgement poster into the nsyilxcən language is done correctly.	Christie Russell/ Elder Grouse Barnes
Write a letter to MCFD and the Ministry of Education and Child Care on behalf of children in care.	Jordan Coble/ Nicole Werstuik

ACTION ITEMS – Completed (2024/2025):	Person(s) Responsible
Support for posting the additional Lead Indigenous Student Advocate position as a 12-month job	All IEC members
Support the updated 2025/2026 Preliminary Indigenous Education Program Budget	All IEC members
Choose a focus area of interest in the How Are We Doing? 2023/2024 Aboriginal Report for School District 23 (Central Okanagan) and formulate questions for discussion at future IEC meetings.	All IEC members
Set up school-based visits or a tour of the District for IEC members.	Jesse Bruce
Support the Draft 2025/2026 Preliminary Indigenous Education Program Budget	All IEC members
Add the Indigenous Education logo to the District mileage claim form and distribute the form to IEC members.	Yvonne Hildebrandt
Email an invitation to the IEC to join the Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Refresh Committee.	Jesse Bruce/ Yvonne Hildebrandt
Spearhead the community Zoom meetings to discuss the restart of the Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council (IPFEC).	Jesse Bruce/ Ann Bell
Follow up with the IEC about the selection process of two parents to serve on the IEC and IPFEC.	Jesse Bruce
Provide a template letter that can be used to solicit donations to start a new bursary for Indigenous graduates.	Jesse Bruce
Forward the amended IEC Terms of Reference to the Board of Education after receiving the new Terms of Reference template for Indigenous Education Councils from the Ministry of Education and Childcare.	Terry Beaudry
Notify the ONA that their representative seat has been removed from the Indigenous Education Council.	Jordan Coble