



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL (IEC)

IEC Meeting

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 – 1:30 pm
School Board Office – Board Room 1
 (1040 Hollywood Road South, Kelowna, BC)

MINUTES

Council Members:	Elder Wilfred Barnes (<i>Via Zoom</i>) Westbank First Nation Elder Brad Dahl Kelowna Métis Association Lisa Guderyan Board of Education Deanna Necan Indigenous Parent & Family Education Council Nicole Werstuik Westbank First Nation	Ann Bell Lake Country Native Association Cheryl Dodman Kelowna Métis Association Candace Jack Indigenous Parent & Family Education Council Bill McKenna (Alternate) Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society	Denise Clough Westbank First Nation Chantelle Desrosiers Board of Education Allan Louis (<i>Via Zoom</i>) Okanagan Indian Band Aaron St Pierre Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
School District Staff:	Kevin Kaardal Superintendent of Schools Jesse Bruce Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity	Raquel Steen Assistant Superintendent Kevin Kaiser District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education	Yvonne Hildebrandt Secretariat
Absent:	Jordan Coble Westbank First Nation	Rachel Marchand Okanagan Indian Band	Christie Russell District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education

1. Welcome

Chair Jordan Coble sent his regrets. In the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair Nicole Werstuik assumed the role of the Chair and welcomed all attendees to the IEC meeting. The Council proceeded with round-table introductions. A special welcome was given to Kevin Kaiser, District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education, and the new Indigenous parent representatives, Candace Jack and Deanna Necan.

2. Opening Prayer

There was no opening prayer at the beginning of the meeting. Elder Barnes led the Council in a prayer when he arrived.

3. FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

3.1 Adoption of the January 21, 2025 Agenda

MOVED by Deanna Necan, SECONDED by Bill McKenna
 THAT: The agenda for January 21, 2025 be adopted as presented. CARRIED

3.2 Review and Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Ann Bell, SECONDED by Bill McKenna
 THAT: The Minutes for November 5, 2024 be adopted as presented. CARRIED

4. INDIGENOUS STUDENT VOICE

Grade 11/12 Indigenous Leadership Teacher Assistant Course

In attendance from Kelowna Secondary School (KSS):

Pam Horton, Teacher

Steve Kelly, Indigenous Student Advocate

Esmée Rothfus, Indigenous Student Advocate

Students: Ava Cudmore, Kaylie Gross, Libby Reis, Dilynn Scott

Unable to attend: Christey Hughes, Vice-Principal

Ava Cudmore, Kaylie Gross, Libby Reis, and Dilynn Scott spoke about their experience attending the Okanagan Mainline Regional Indigenous Education (OMRIE) Council's 2nd Annual Student Summit in Kamloops, BC in May 2024, and how the idea developed for an Indigenous Leadership Teacher Assistant (TA) Course at KSS. Alongside several staff members, the students developed the course with learning offerings such as Cultural Beading, Ethnobotany Walks, Circle Protocol, Traditional Drumming, Land Acknowledgement Development, and Elder Support. Beginning in September 2024, the Indigenous Leadership Teacher Assistant Course has been offered at KSS and several classes have benefited from the TAs' presence and offerings in their classrooms. Staff mentors, advocates and teachers have provided support and guidance to the student TAs as they develop their leadership expertise, cultural skills, relationships with peers, and Indigenous student voice.

The Indigenous Leadership Teacher Assistants met with Dr. Brad Baker, Superintendent of Indigenous Education – Ministry of Education and Child Care, during his visit to the KSS Gathering Room on December 4, 2025, and shared a presentation of the development of this new course.

2:00 pm – Elder Barnes arrived at the meeting (via Zoom).

2:02 pm – KSS staff and students left the meeting.

5. STANDING ITEMS

5.1 District Updates

The Superintendent of Schools/CEO introduced Raquel Steen, Assistant Superintendent for the Westside Family of Schools, who will be the District senior administration representative on the IEC alongside the Superintendent of Schools/CEO, and will provide support to Jesse Bruce, Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity, in his role in Indigenous Education and on the IEC.

Jesse Bruce introduced Tyler Ernst, former Okanagan Language Teacher in the District, who has been rehired by the District to provide nsyilxcən language instruction. He will teach language at Mount Boucherie Secondary School (MBSS) and Kelowna Secondary School (KSS) in the Academy of Indigenous Studies classrooms and out of the Gathering Rooms at MBSS and KSS starting in January. In spring, Tyler will also teach language at Constable Neil Bruce Middle School in the Land Based Learning Program.

2:18 pm - Brad Dahl arrived at the meeting.

Jesse Bruce introduced Christian Rogers, former Academy of Indigenous Studies teacher at MBSS, who will be the new Indigenous Education teacher in the Land Based Learning Program starting in the second semester. Christian is filling the vacancy created when Kevin Kaiser left the Land Based Learning (LBL) Program to become the new District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education. Alongside Christian Rogers and Tyler Ernst, many local knowledge keepers will regularly join LBL to facilitate the learning in the program.

2:25 pm - Tyler Ernst and Christian Rogers left the meeting.

5.2 Community Updates

Indigenous Education Council members did not provide community updates at the meeting.

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

Jesse Bruce, Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity, shared that Indigenous "Kids in Care" includes Children and Youth in Care under the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and those in Kinship care. Currently, there are 600+ students attending Central Okanagan Public Schools who are in care (or have been in care) and about 300 of those students self-identify as Indigenous. Approximately ten percent of students that self-identify are currently, or have been, in care.

The Superintendent of Schools/CEO shared that the District does not know who is in care unless the family or MCFD informs the District. When the District knows who is in care, the District is ready to provide support to those students.

5.4 Bursaries and Scholarships for Indigenous Grads

Jesse Bruce reminded the IEC about the Indigenous bursary and scholarship funding letter and recommended the IEC inquire with their organizations about considering making a bursary donation. This would be in addition to Westbank First Nation, Kelowna Sunrise Rotary Club, and private donor's contributions to the Medicine Wheel Awards.

5.5 Parent and Family Community Engagement

Jesse Bruce welcomed Candace Jack and Deanna Necan, the new Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council (IPFEC) representatives to the IEC. Jesse will arrange a meeting with Candace, Deanna and Ann Bell to provide support to the new parent representatives, discuss organizing Parent and Family evenings, and discuss representation at District Parent Advisory Council meetings.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Feeding Futures Program

Rhonda Ovelson, Director of Instruction – Feeding Futures, shared an overview of the Feeding Futures funding, the expanding local food programs in the District, and the Student and Family Affordability Funding (SFAF). The District's Health Promoting Schools Committee has been studying data to determine priority areas of focus that have the greatest impact on the health of students in the District. The voice of children and youth is taken into consideration and it is compelling what they say about their health. The data suggests that many students are not ready to learn when they arrive at school, that one in four children under 18 years old is living with food insecurity, and that the percentages are higher in Indigenous and minority households. In the middle years, many students report they do not eat breakfast, and youth in grade 8 are often worried about running out of food. In this District, the averages are above provincial averages, so it has become a priority for the District to make food accessible to students throughout the school day and to provide financial support to priority families using the SFAF.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care is providing \$2.8 million of Feeding Futures funding over three years (2023-2026) which is not enough to gain food security for District students throughout the day each year. Approximately \$550,000 of additional sources of revenue have been obtained through the President's Choice Children's Charity, Food for Thought backpack grants, Breakfast Clubs of Canada, and Parent Advisory Council and community donations. The additional funding has enabled the expansion of District school food programs into the following: Universal Programs that provides breakfast, snacks, and lunches to any hungry student; Targeted Programs, including the Daily Brown Bag Lunch program and weekly backpack groceries for families that live with severe food insecurity; and, District Programs accessed by StrongStart, the Welcome Centre and Indigenous Education. The Feeding Futures funding has also enabled the allocation of additional work hours for staff members coordinating food for students, and purchasing more small appliances and equipment to store, prepare, and transport food.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care also provided over \$820,000 of Student and Family Affordability Funding (SFAF) for the 2024/2025 school year. Every school in the District received base funding of \$15 per student which was placed into a restricted account at the school level. The Welcome Centre and Indigenous Education Department also received base funding to support families in financial need. Gift cards for groceries has been a successful strategy and the District is looking at additional ways to support families. The remaining funds were distributed to 22 schools with the

highest family affordability needs, based on census data using affordability measures and District enrolment data.

The Superintendent of Schools/CEO shared that the District's allocated funds for school food programs and assistance for priority families has risen from approximately \$1 million ten years ago to over \$4 million today. When schools restarted after the Covid-19 pandemic, the B.C. Government allocated extra funding to all school districts to help expand school meals programs, provide school supplies, and cover fees for students in need so they can take part in activities. The continued government funding programs, together with additional revenue from charities and community programs, enables the District to support the students that need it the most, in a dignified way, so they are ready to learn.

6.2 Indigenous Education Budget Updates

Delta Carmichael, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO, reviewed the 2024-2025 Indigenous Education Budget reported spending to December 31, 2024, and the projected costs to June 30, 2025. The 2024-2025 Indigenous Education Budget is based on the actual FTE of 3,110 students, a number derived from the September 30th 1701 process, which is about 100 students lower than projected last spring. The surplus of \$561,055 is the money left unspent from the previous year and forms part of this year's budget, for a total Targeted Funding budget of over \$6 million for the 2024-2025 school year. The decrease in Indigenous student FTE numbers has contributed to a decrease in targeted funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The District will continue to monitor Indigenous Education spending and it is projected that the \$561,055 surplus will be almost fully spent down by June 30th. This will be taken into consideration as the District builds the 2025-2026 Preliminary Indigenous Education Budget.

The 2025-2026 Preliminary Indigenous Education Budget will be presented at the February 4th IEC Budget Meeting and will be based on the current FTE of 3,110 students and per pupil funding of \$1,770. The per pupil funding will be adjusted in the preliminary budget after the Ministry of Education and Child Care announces per pupil funding for 2025-2026 at spring break.

6.3 How Are We Doing? Report

Jesse Bruce recommended that the Indigenous Education Council read the Aboriginal How Are We Doing? 2023/2024 Report for School District 23 (Central Okanagan) and formulate their questions for discussion at future IEC meetings.

Future Agenda Topic: The topic "How Are We Doing? Report" will be added to the agenda for the remainder of the year.

6.4 Indigenous Education Department Updates

Jesse Bruce, Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity, provided the following Indigenous Education Department updates:

a. Staffing Updates

- Kevin Kaiser is the new District Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education and is providing support to priority students in meaningful ways. Kevin is one of two District Vice-Principals in the Indigenous Education Department.
- Tyler Ernst, former Okanagan Language Teacher in the District, has been rehired by the District to provide nsyilxcən language instruction. He will teach language at Mount Boucherie Secondary School (MBSS) and Kelowna Secondary School (KSS) starting this January. Christian Rogers, former Academy of Indigenous Studies teacher at MBSS, will be the new Indigenous Education teacher leading the Land Based Learning Program starting in January.
- Indigenous Student Advocate vacancies, created by staff away on leaves, have been filled by temporary employees.

b. Attendance

- Local attendance data sources, the Local Education Agreement Bi-Annual report, and the Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation (2020-2025) 4th Annual report show the patterns of attendance of Indigenous students in District schools and that attendance has been trending down over the past few years. Supporting attendance of Indigenous students is an Indigenous Education priority.

c. Land Based Learning

- The District's Land Based Learning Program is continuing in spring with a strong program going forward.
- Kevin Kaiser is organizing the second Indigenous grad retreat which will be moved to springtime to enable the students to be out on the land for a more authentic gathering. Some Land Based Learning students are now in their graduation year and have made connections to places on the land.

d. Nsyilxcən Language Instruction

- Tyler Ernst will provide nsyilxcən language instruction at Mount Boucherie Secondary School (MBSS) and Kelowna Secondary School (KSS) starting this January in the Academy of Indigenous Studies classrooms and out of the Gathering Rooms at MBSS and KSS. Starting in spring, Tyler will also teach language at Constable Neil Bruce Middle School in the Land Based Learning Program.
- Christie Russell, District Vice-Principal – Indigenous Education, together with an Early Year's Partnership Committee member from Westbank First Nation, will be introducing nsyilxcən language to students at Chief Tomat Elementary so that students can start to build their language skills in the early years.

The Lake Country Native Association representative recommended that the District consider offering Land Based Learning (LBL) or a nsyilxcən language program in schools in Lake Country or in the Rutland area.

e. Invitation to the IEC to Attend School/District Events

Jesse Bruce queried the IEC if they would like to participate in a tour of Land Based Learning or an academy during the morning of the day of an IEC meeting, or if they would rather receive IEC group email invitations to events and opportunities as they arise. The IEC decided they would like both options so that available Council members could select to participate in a morning tour in addition to the Council being invited to future events and opportunities.

Action Item: Jesse will organize a LBL or academy tour for the morning of the April 8th IEC meeting.

Jesse Bruce shared that Christie Russell, District Vice-Principal – Indigenous Education, is at the Primary Winter Gathering all week. Guest schools, Sensisysten and Revelstoke, will join the gathering on Thursday, January 23rd. IEC members were invited to drop by the Primary Winter Gathering at the Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club on Thursday, January 23rd to enjoy the drumming, singing, dancing, captik^{wł}, and lunch.

The Yukon First Nations Education Directorate (YFNED) will once again be hosting Central Okanagan Public Schools staff members that will be attending the 6th Annual First Nation Education Conference in February 2025 in Whitehorse, Yukon. YFNED is generously paying for the expenses of six staff members and the group will engage in reciprocal learning.

6.5 Ministry of Education and Child Care Funding for Indigenous Education Councils

a. Mileage Reimbursement

The IEC discussed the targeted funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care for Board's to establish and maintain IECs. This funding must be spent on expenses that launch, support and maintain the IEC, which includes mileage for IEC members who travel to attend IEC meetings.

The IEC decided that council members claiming mileage reimbursement will use the District's mileage form since the payment will be coming from the District. Mileage claims for September to December 2024 are to be submitted in January 2025 and mileage claims for January to June 2025 are to be submitted at the end of June or early July 2025.

Action Item: Add the Indigenous Education logo to the District mileage claim form and then distribute the form to IEC members. (*Yvonne Hildebrandt*)

3:50 pm – Allan Louis left the meeting.

6.6 Refresh of the Equity in Action for Truth & Reconciliation Agreement (2025-2030)

Jesse Bruce, Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity, shared that compiling the Equity in Action (EIA) Agreement for Truth and Reconciliation (2020-2025) was a multi-year process and involved numerous people. In spring 2025, the agreement will be refreshed using the original document. Jesse invited the IEC members to join the Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Refresh Committee. Principals and Vice-Principals in the District will also be invited to join the committee. Committee members will be asked to commit to attending several (4-6) evening meetings from February to April, including the first committee meeting on February 12 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at Westbank First Nation's Health and Wellness Building.

The following is a timeline of the refresh of the EIA Agreement:

- February 12, 2025: Dinner meeting for EIA Refresh Committee members to get to know each other, discuss context of the original agreement, and set intentions and timelines.
- February to April 2025: Meet with partner groups, reflect on what is going well with the current EIA agreement, reflect on areas that need improvement, identify commitment areas that need to be carried over, begin to focus on new priority areas for the refreshed agreement.
- April and May 2025: Engage in the writing process of the refreshed agreement.
- June 3, 2025: Review the Draft EIA agreement (2025-2030) with the IEC.
- July 2025: Finalize and publish the EIA Agreement (2025-2030).

The IEC queried if there would be an EIA Agreement signing celebration. Jesse shared that planning an event to celebrate the refresh has not been discussed.

Action Item: Send an invitation to the IEC to join the Equity in Action for Truth and Reconciliation Refresh Committee. (*Jesse Bruce/Yvonne Hildebrandt*)

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

7.1 The following Letter of Appointment was received by the IEC:

- Trustee Lee-Ann Tiede has been appointed as the alternate representative from the Board of Education on the IEC.

7.2 Information Item to the Board of Education – IEC Terms of Reference. The IEC Terms of Reference has been received by the Board of Education and sent to the Ministry of Education and Child Care, as requested by the Ministry.

The Kelowna Métis Association (KMA) and Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) would like to meet with the IEC to learn how to better function as an association in the community. The Chair requested that KMA forward this request in writing to Jesse Bruce, Director of Instruction – Indigenous Education and Equity.

8. REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

- **Action Item:** Spearhead the community Zoom meetings to discuss the restart of the Indigenous Parent and Family Education Council (IPFEC). (*Jesse Bruce/Ann Bell*) This action item can be moved to "Action Items Completed in 2024/2025".
- **Action Item:** Reach out to the language speakers in the territory to ensure the translation of the acknowledgement poster into the nsilxcən language is done correctly. (*Christie Russell/Elder Barnes*) This action item will be brought forward to the April 8th IEC Meeting.

4:13 pm - Brad Dahl left the meeting.

9. INCAMERA MEETINGS

(*The Incamera meetings, if required, will take place after the regular IEC meeting.*)

The IEC First Nation members and the IEC voting members did not require an Incamera meeting at this time.

In future agendas, this agenda item will be moved to the last item before 'Adjournment'.

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

2024-2025 IEC Meeting Schedule

February 4th, April 8th, June 3rd

11. **ITEMS FOR FUTURE IEC MEETINGS**

- September 30th National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Orange Shirt Day (June 2025)
- October 10, 2025 District Implementation Day (June 2025)
- The impact of the new personal student digital device restrictions at school (June 2025)
- "How Are We Doing? Report" - add to the agenda for the remainder of the year

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.

<u>ACTION ITEMS – In Progress:</u>	<u>Person(s) Responsible</u>
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
Set up school-based visits or a tour of the District for IEC members.	Jesse Bruce
Add the Indigenous Education logo to the District mileage claim form and distribute the form to IEC members.	Yvonne Hildebrandt

<u>ACTION ITEMS – Completed (2024/2025):</u>	<u>Person(s) Responsible</u>
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