



SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

School District 5 Superintendent “Changing of the Guard”

April 26th, 2022

At the School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay public Board Meeting of April 12th, Trustees accepted “with regret” the retirement of Superintendent Silke Yardley, who served the District from 2019 to present.

“Silke was a driving force for SD5, providing stability while maintaining the Board’s vision throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.”, says Board Chair, Frank Lento.
“Incredibly proactive and focused, Silke remained dedicated to our purpose, which is to provide quality education for all students in a safe, caring environment.”

“Despite the pandemic, Silke was able maintain or improve on many SD5 initiatives, implement an impressive Framework for Enhanced Student Learning (FESL), maintain staff morale and ensure the safety of our students and staff. She will be greatly missed by the entire SD5 learning community.”

Silke will be leaving the District at the end of July to begin a new phase of her career –as a full-time grandma! During the District’s transition to a new superintendent, Silke has been contracted to provide guidance and mentorship to SD5’s newly hired superintendent, virtually –and in-person if required--for the next several months.

For the selection of a new superintendent, the Board retained the services of Dr. Leroy Sloan, PhD, president of Sloan Consultants, who assisted in the hiring of Yardley and most recently in the selection of Nick Taylor as Secretary-Treasurer. Sloan is a former educator, BC school superintendent and Alberta Deputy Minister and Senior Education Advisor to the Alberta School Boards’ Association.

Last week, with Sloan’s assistance, the Board conducted interviews for superintendent and is pleased to announce the hiring of Viveka Johnson, who will begin her superintendentship in August, 2022.

Johnson was principal to SD5’s largest school, Mount Baker Secondary School (MBSS) from 2012 to 2020 before accepting a position with School District 6 (SD6), Rocky Mountain.

“We were sorry to see her leave our District, but she went with our blessing, because we knew she was ready to take on new challenges and we just weren’t able to provide any to her at that time.”, says Lento. “We’re very excited to welcome Viveka back home, to our District.”

Born and raised in Kimberley, Johnson spent one year following high school in Argentina on a Rotary exchange before graduating, with distinction, from the University of Alberta in 1998, receiving her Master of Counselling Psychology from the University of Calgary in 2006, and returning to Cranbrook in 2010, where she currently resides with her husband and two children, both recent graduates of MBSS.

Johnson continues to feed her passion for “lifelong learning”, having earned her certificate in Human Resource Management from Simon Fraser University in 2020 and certificate in Diversity and Inclusion from Cornell University in 2021. In 2022, Johnson completed the First Nations University of Canada’s Four Seasons of Truth and Reconciliation course.

According to Johnson, she applied for the position of SD5 superintendent because of the people, and the direction the District is headed.

“I’m really excited to be back working in SD5,” says Johnson. “SD5 has amazing people supporting the development of our children at all levels. Their current Framework for Enhanced Student Learning [FESL] aligns with my own educational philosophies and the dual-authority structure of superintendent and secretary-treasurer working side-by-side rather than top-down models the collaboration and teamwork SD5 is known for.”

“We already know that Viveka is an asset to our District,” says Lento. “We’ve already experienced, first-hand, her philosophy on education at work, her team-centered approach to leadership and her strong work ethic. And, she has the knowledge, passion and experience needed to further the valuable work begun by Silke and to take our District to the next level.”

When not working, Johnson enjoys travelling, reading and spending time outdoors with family and friends.

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