



SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

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

June 10th, 2015

MLA Meets with School District 5 Trustees

MLA Bill Bennett met with Trustees of School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay last Friday, June 5th as part of the Board's initiative to both keep the MLA up to date on some of the positive things taking place in the District, like trades-based Project Heavy Duty, as well as to discuss some of the challenges faced by the Board.

Project Heavy Duty is a partnership between SD5, College of the Rockies, WorkSafe BC and the local heavy equipment industry that provides grade 12 students hands on experience with various types of heavy equipment under the supervision of qualified operators. This project has been offered for a number of years in SD5 and complements the province's focus on trades training.

According to Board Chair Frank Lento, the meeting was just under two hours in length and was very productive, saying the MLA was up to speed on the agenda items, which allowed for a very frank discussion on priority issues for the Board.

"It's not about always agreeing with one another. It's about listening to one another and building upon the common ground we share and that's what this meeting was about."

Trustee Chris Johns, chair of the SD5 MBSS Replacement Committee, agrees.

"I believe we have a good working relationship with our MLA that goes back to my early days on the Board when the replacement of Mount Baker Secondary School (MBSS) first became our District's top replacement priority."

According to Johns, Bennett has had an active role in pushing for replacement of MBSS since the Board first approached him in early 2009. Since that time, MLA Bennett has been responsible for bringing a number of Education Ministers to the District to tour the ageing facility.

Also on the agenda was the ongoing issue of education funding and the newly legislated Bill 11.

Bill 11 was carried into legislation on May 14th, 2015 and contains several amendments to the School Act, Teachers Act and Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act. This legislation has been an issue of concern for School Boards, the BC Teacher's Federation (BCTF) and the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) since it was first introduced to legislature on March 16th.

Lento says the Board and the MLA plan to meet again in the near future. "We believe it would be beneficial to keep in more regular contact, especially as we work to move forward with Mount Baker replacement."

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