



**The Board of Education of
School District No.5 (Southeast Kootenay)
MINUTES - STUDENT SERVICES MEETING**

**October 25, 2021, 10:30 a.m.
Kootenay Learning Campus - Fernie**

Committee Members in: Co-Chair Trustee Krista Damstrom
Attendance Co-Chair Trustee Doug McPhee
Trustee Chris Johns
Trustee Kathryn Kitt (remotely)

Board/District Staff in Attendance Chairperson Frank Lento
Trustee Trina Ayling (remotely)
Trustee Bev Bellina (remotely)
Trustee Wendy Turner
Trustee Patricia Whalen (remotely)
Superintendent Silke Yardley
Secretary Treasurer Nick Taylor
Director of Student Learning and Innovation Diane Casault
Director of Student Learning and Aboriginal Education Jason Tichauer
District Principal of Student Services Darcy Verbeurgt
District Principal of Transformative Learning Jennifer Roberts
(remotely)
Executive Assistant (recorder) Laurel Giesbrecht

1. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

1.1 Call to Order

The Special Education Student Services meeting of October 25, 2021 was called to order at 10:46 a.m. by Trustee Damstrom.

1.2 Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded by Johns/McPhee:

THAT the agenda for the Special Education Student Services Meeting of October 25, 2021 be approved as circulated.

1.3 Approval of the Minutes

Moved/Seconded by Johns/McPhee:

THAT the minutes of the Special Education Student Services meeting of October 25, 2021 be approved as circulated.

2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 Social Emotional Learning Centre (SELC) Update

Teacher, Jessica Bartraw, has been getting oriented as to the program before with the previous classroom teacher. She has been incorporating her own knowledge into the program. We gave her a 3-4 week period to acclimate and develop the program. We have moved the program from a start at TM Roberts Elementary School (TMRES) to starting at Highlands Elementary School (HES) as there are lots of materials stored there and being resident in a building would be a good during start up. TMRES will be the programs next stop and Steeples Elementary School (SES) following that, depending on what comes up. We are working on universal and targeted instruction and supports with Social Emotional Learning with a focus on capacity building within the school. The program has worked best with working collaboratively in the school with staff on site. We will be using some bussing back to the Highlands SELC classroom in the future - perhaps a couple times a week with Education Assistant (EA)/Youth Care Worker (YCW) support. We can get deeper into the program with the supplies housed at HES.

2.2 Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) Redistribution

The realignment of SLPs turned out to be complex and services will need to be reduced. We budgeted for 6.2 FTE and we currently have only 4.4 FTE, though we are actively recruiting. As of November 1, schools will receive between 50-85% of their 6.2 FTE allotment. We will see a net overall 3-5 hours in additional travel to provide services to other communities. This will be in effect until January 31, 2021. Hopefully we will need to look at a new redistribution at that time.

We will be supporting some schools more heavily over the next couple of months. Amy Woodland Elementary School (AWES) and SES will be more heavily serviced over the next 3 months as they haven't had support since May. With 70% less staffing, there will be fewer core responsibilities for the SLPs. They will also service the devices and systems for kids that are non-verbal. SLPs will stop supporting where there are other staff that have the skills to complete such as literacy and sound connections. Student Services Teacher's (SSTs) will take responsibility for simple picture symbol reproduction and common social stories.

We currently have 5 Speech Language Assistants (SLAs) that are specialized Education Assistants (EAs). We have talked about hiring CUPE staff to support SLPs. There are currently EAs/YCWs who have done the SLA role in the past. We understand that we have other qualified

people who are living in the East Kootenay's that we hope to attract to do the work. We're not at the best hiring time right now, but hopefully we can get there.

There is continued difficulty in recruiting qualified people. At one time we were quite competitive in attracting SLPs. We do provide them with a pretty good professional development allotment, but we may not be competitive enough overall. We need to continue to post those positions and scrap anything that says temporary even if it's a 0.5. The contracts must have continuity and we need to be competitive. We need to at least meet the beginning wages and benefits of other rural areas. Recruitment and retention is difficult in all workplaces including in the private sector. It really is all about salaries and the cost of living. The BC Public School Employers' Association have regional scales for Speech Language Pathologists – five steps ranging from \$83,950 to a max of \$104,000. Perhaps the pay scale is a factor. The teacher's union has offered ideas such as paying off student loans after 3 years of service, assistance with housing, buying houses in Elkford and renting them out, etc.

RECOMMENDATION A

Moved/Seconded by Johns/McPhee:

THAT the adequacy of our contract offers for Speech Language Pathology teachers be researched in a global setting.

3. PRESENTATIONS

4. REPORTS

4.1 School Psychology Assessment update

Purpose of School Psychologists has been laid out as well as the purpose of assessment. A full time School Psychologist can complete 50-70 assessments each year. The bottom line is that our worklist of assessments includes 19 assessments in progress with 125 referrals. There was a significant increase in referrals between January to mid-February 2021. If we are to use the completion ratio for the 10-month workload turnaround, we would need about 1.9 FTE School Psychologists to meet this requirement this academic year. Good news is that we've reviewed our budgets and can put an additional 0.3 FTE out to staff. This would bring us up to a 1.8 FTE. This can be done within our current budget.

In the long run, we need to determine where we need to be with School Psychologists FTE. The School Psychologists of BC Association recommend a ratio of 1.0 per 2500 students. Our programming depends on these assessments for educational programming. Of those assessments that are required, Student Services Teachers complete the

achievement assessments and psycho-cognitive assessments must be completed by a School Psychologist. Trustee Johns commented, we can't be the only school that is experiencing a shortfall in this area. We must determine how we advocate for what we need in the future.

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. ACTION ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

School Psychologist Staffing recommendation

Speech Language Pathologist contract adequacy report

7. CORRESPONDENCE

8. ADJOURNMENT

Have we effectively addressed the needs of our most vulnerable students and their families?

Moved/Seconded by Damstrom/McPhee:

THAT the Student Services Committee meeting adjourn at 11:11 a.m.