



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

**September 28, 2020, 10:30 a.m.
Cranbrook Board Office**

Committee Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Trustee McPhee
Co-Chair Damstrom
Trustee Johns
Trustee Kitt

Board/District Staff in Attendance: Chairperson Lento
Trustee Ayling
Trustee Bellina (by Zoom)
Trustee Turner
Trustee Whalen
Superintendent, S. Yardley (in at 10:46)
Secretary Treasurer, A. Rice
Director of Student Learning/Aboriginal Education, J. Tichauer
Director of Student Learning/Innovation, D. Casault
District Principal/Student Services, D. Verbeurgt
District Principal/Transformative Learning, J. Roberts (by Zoom)
Executive Assistant, J. Nixon (Recorder)

1. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

1.1 Call to Order

The Special Education Student Services meeting of September 28, 2020 was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Co-Chair McPhee.

1.2 Approval of the Agenda

M/S that the agenda for the Special Education Student Services Meeting of September 28, 2020 be approved as amended

Additions:

2.3 Special Education Audit Results

1.3 Approval of the Minutes

M/S that the minutes of the Special Education Student Services meeting of February 24, 2020 be approved as circulated.

2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 Social Emotional Learning Centre (“SELC”) in COVID

District Principal Darcy Verbeurgt gave a brief update of the operations of the Social Emotional Learning Centre (“SELC”) during the COVID pandemic.

Due to COVID protocols, the transportation of elementary students from the schools in Cranbrook to the SELC is not possible. The teacher of the SELC has therefore been assigned to one Learning Group at Highlands Elementary where she is working with the group on Social Emotional Learning. This is expected to be a nine-week program and upon completion the teacher will move to another elementary school in Cranbrook to work with a new Learning Group.

Criteria for evaluation of the program was discussed at the meeting. Mr. Verbeurgt explained that only one of the intended three cohorts completed the program at the SELC due to the pandemic. He also explained that he will provide anecdotal notes for the Board of Education to assist in the evaluation of the program in 2019-2020. Mr. Verbeurgt also explained that he is researching a variety of tools for rating the program.

He also gave an update of staffing for the SELC. The Youth Care Worker and Educational Assistant positions have been reposted.

Trustee Kitt asked how Mr. Verbeurgt was assessing where the SELC teacher would go after the nine-week session at Highlands. Mr. Verbeurgt explained that he will monitor Cranbrook elementary schools to see where the program is needed and will also discuss this with the Principals and Vice Principals.

Trustee Johns suggested it was necessary for Director of Student Learning, Diane Casault and Mr. Verbeurgt to come back to the Student Services Committee with a new proposal as the previous proposal did not account for the COVID pandemic. He felt it was necessary to have a new proposal for the Board of Education to review for resources to be adequately allocated and to make sure the program is monitored. The Board of Education understands that quantitative results are not available, but they need to see the qualitative results.

Mrs. Casault and Mr. Verbeurgt will bring forth a formal proposal for the SELC to the next Student Services Committee meeting. They will also provide the qualitative data that has been gathered on the SELC.

Co-chair McPhee expressed that the Trustees were unable to visit the SELC as scheduled earlier in the year due to the pandemic. He also stated that they will not be able to visit soon, however they will look forward to scheduling a visit when it is safe to do so.

2.2 Inclusive Education Working Group

Superintendent Yardley explained that the Inclusive Education Working Group (“Working Group”) had not met since February due to COVID.

The Student Services Teacher role was examined by the Working Group in February and proposed changes were discussed. There is a preliminary meeting with Mrs. Yardley, Human Resources and the CFTA to review the Student Teacher role in School District 5. This meeting is scheduled for October and Mrs. Yardley will report back to the Student Services Committee on the outcome of this meeting.

There are continued challenges for the Working Group to meet due to lack of coverage for staff. The membership of the Working Group includes a broad selection of staff from School District 5. School District 5 is extremely short on TTOC’s and meeting during instructional time requires TTOC coverage. The timeline for the continuation of meetings of the Working Group is uncertain at this point.

Co-Chair McPhee thanked Mrs. Yardley for the efforts put forth and acknowledged that the Working Group was facing challenges due to lack of replacement staff for all positions in the district.

2.3 Special Education Audit Results

Trustee Johns requested results and feedback from the Special Education audit that occurred in School District 5 (Southeast Kootenay) in February. He expressed the importance of being informed if there is a need to increase funding to offset the discrepancies because of the audit.

Co-Chair McPhee asked that a report back to the Student Services Committee be given at the October meeting by Secretary Treasurer Rice.

3. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

No delegations or presentations

4. REPORTS

No reports

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 What are our itinerants’ plans for service to students during the pandemic?

Mr. Verbeurgt reviewed and discussed the measures taken by itinerants to ensure all students receive the supports needed. He explained that they employed a variety of procedures and remote services that allowed itinerants to connect with students, parents and schools through Stages 3 and 4.

He suggested one area that needed improvement was the transitioning of students from Grade 6 to 7 (elementary to middle school). Many of the students that would have had pre-transitioning to the middle schools missed the meaningful connections gained by the pre-transition program.

Mr. Verbeurgt discussed the challenges of providing services from outside of the Learning Groups (all itinerant staff are considered out of the Learning Groups) therefore their procedures and safety measures must be followed as outlined in the School District 5 COVID Safety Protocol documents. Safety measures include social distancing, portable clear barriers for desktop work, masks, masks with clear windows and virtual meetings when possible. School Psychologists can perform their work with iPads and report virtually to parents. Speech Language Pathologists conduct therapy both virtually and in person using barriers. The Behaviour Resource Teacher is working with school teams instead of working with individual students.

Trustee Kitt asked how children were responding to this and Mr. Verbeurgt assured that the children are adapting to the changes. Children on the Autism Spectrum are facing the most challenges with the COVID protocols.

5.2 SLP update

Mr. Verbeurgt reviewed the status of Speech Language Pathologists in School District 5. He briefly discussed how the time for Speech Language Pathologists and Speech Language Assistants are allocated to each school. He explained that in May and June, the quantitative data collected in 2019-2020 was studied. The data included, but was not limited to, the number of pre-registered Kindergarten students, number of students on the Autism Spectrum, school referral rates and the current demand and load. This information was used to determine allocation of time for the 2020/2021 academic year.

Travelling with positions in more than one community have been reduced for this school year apart from Speech Language Assistants who are required to travel between communities. This travel has been compensated with an increase of 30 minutes daily.

Co-Chair McPhee asked that Mr. Verbeurgt and Mrs. Casault prepare a concise document to answer the public's general questions about how we are ensuring that all students' needs are being addressed during COVID. This document will be available to all Trustees at the next Student Services Committee meeting.

5.3 Staff updates (vacant positions)

There are currently two positions (Youth Care Worker and Educational Assistant) posted for the Social Emotional Learning Centre.

A Behaviour Support Teacher is posted for the Elk Valley (located in Fernie). While this position is in the posting process, Megan Stasuik continues to work outreach in the Elk Valley.

The School Psychologist position was filled with a term position after four rounds of posting. The difficulty with filling this position continues to be finding an individual with a teaching degree and a masters in School Psychology.

Trustee Johns asked which institutions offer the masters-level program and queried where most school psychologists are working. Mr. Verbeurgt advised that University of BC, University of Victoria, University of Calgary, University of Alberta and Simon Fraser University all have the masters-level program however private business tends to attract these graduates.

Trustee Turner asked if the postings for positions go out to the universities that offer the masters level programs. Mr. Verbeurgt assured the Trustees that all postings go out to universities through Make a Future.

6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS – APPENDIX A

Chairperson Lento explained the purpose of Recommended Actions on the Student Services Committee agenda. These actions remain as Recommended Actions until they become regular agenda items.

6.1 Prevalence Model Funding (letter)

The Prevalence Model Funding letter will be moved to Business Arising when ready for decision making.

6.2 Shelley Moore series

2019-2020 Elementary Evaluation Summary

2020-2021 Proposed Middle Secondary Format

6.3 Trauma Informed Practice/Counselling

7. CORRESPONDENCE

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m.