

Trustee Report

External Committee Assignment: Indigenous Education Council

February 8, 2021

Present: Janice Simcoe, Committee Chair, Director, Eyē? Sqâ'lewen: Indigenous Education and Community Connections, Camosun College / Shelly Niemi, District Administrator, Indigenous Education SD61 / Rachel Perkins, Métis Nation of Greater Victoria and First Peoples' Cultural Council / Robina Thomas, Executive Director, Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement, University of Victoria/ Caitlin Bird, President, Métis Nation of Greater Victoria/ Nadia Salmaniw, Director, Career, Employment and Education Resources, Victoria Native Friendship Centre / Paola Bell, SD61 Indigenous Education Department Administrative Assistant / Fern Perkins, MNGV member and Elder / Sarah Leggaet, Cultural Support Worker, Surrounded By Cedar Child and Family Services / Diane McNally, SD61 Board of Education Trustee / Monique Gray Smith, parent.

Agenda: Shelly Niemi suggested topics:

1. Develop a working group to finalize the INEC TOR
2. Report on SD61 Equity Scan Phase 1 (4th wave invitation from Ministry of Education)
3. SD61 Elders Advisory Council
4. Changes in SD61 funding allocations to support equity

Actions / Plans:

1. Shelly Niemi: Look at neighbouring districts for what they have done re TORs; develop smaller working group
2. Shelly Niemi: Equity Scan is response to Auditor General's report 2016 on lack of parity in education outcomes, and 11 recommendations for the Ministry of Education. In 2019 the recommendations were reviewed by Auditor General Bellringer. 6 phases to scan. 12 staff (not IED staff), 4 teams of 3. Phase 1 going out to partner groups including Indigenous parents February 9. Students Grades 5, 9 and 11 will have opportunity to be surveyed. Interviewing all Principals, VPs, teachers. Oversight team Shelly Niemi, Craig Schellenberg, Colin Roberts.
Committee Questions/Comments: Janice Simcoe: What role does this committee have in Equity Scan work? /Shelly: this committee will be involved.
Robina Thomas: This work needs to be meaningful and have impact. Indigenous

students have been experiencing the same issues for decades. We can go all the way back to the 1971 Indian Control of Indian Education paper. These issues keep getting talked about and studied and we still keep experiencing the same issues. How is this going to change things? General agreement from community members.

3. Shelly Niemi: Moving toward diversity of Elders on the council with support from agencies. 12 Elders, paid honoraria. One of the topics we've discussed is the George Jay name change. Meet once a month; have had 4 meetings. Chair: John Harris, SD61 Elders & Indigenous Knowledge Facilitator. District buying iPads and providing training for Elders; much support from SD61 IT. John is recording Elders' stories of land based being. Land-based education is not new. Working on podcast produced by Indigenous graduating students.
Committee Questions/Comments: Monique Gray Smith: need to diversify Elders list as currently not seeming representative of students in SD61. Are we understanding data or understanding the implicit biases in assessment? Robina Thomas: Need to be conscious of representation from the 3 Island Nations. Janice Simcoe: Does this committee have a role in suggesting additional members who could represent urban peoples as well?
4. Shelly Niemi: IEC is reviewing how schools access ANED funding: every school in SD61 has Indigenous students and we need to ensure that they are have the opportunity for IED services. The centralized IED team has grown to seven members. We are focussing on elementary schools, then high schools, then middle schools next year.

My apologies to committee participants if anything in this short report is incorrect. Paola Bell has official minutes. Grateful to be included at this table.

Personal reading: Indigenous Education: Theory and Practice (2019): Chapter 11: Confronting Indigenous Identities in Transcultural Contexts(pp 233-253; Frank Deer); Chapter 14: Exploring Teacher Candidate Resistance (pp 311-337; Jean-Paul Restoule, UVic Professor and Chair Indigenous Education, & Angela Nordozi);