



## Education Policy and Directions Committee Meeting

### MINUTES

November 2, 2020

Tolmie Boardroom, 556 Boleskine Road

Trustees Present: Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Diane McNally, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter, Ann Whiteaker

Administration: Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent, Andy Canty, Director of IT for Learning, Doug Smith, VPVPA Representative, Cindy Graf, GVTA Representative, Christine Payne, VCPAC Representative, Tammy Renyard, District Principal, Tammy Sherstobitoff, District Principal-Human Resources Services, Jon Hamlin, District Vice Principal, John Harris, Elders & Indigenous Knowledge Facilitator, Vicki Hanley/Kelly Gorman (recorders)

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#### A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

##### A.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories - Jon Hamlin and John Harris

Elders & Indigenous Knowledge Facilitator, Harris and District Vice Principal, Hamlin welcomed gave the acknowledgement of Territories and introduced a new "Welcome to the Lekwungen Territory" video.

Elders & Indigenous Knowledge Facilitator, Harris and District Vice Principal, Hamlin leave the meeting.

**A.2 Approval of the Agenda**

**Moved by** Trustee Ferris

That the November 2, 2020 agenda be approved.

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**A.3 Approval of the Minutes**

**Moved by** Trustee Painter

That the September 14, 2020 Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting minutes be approved.

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**A.4 Business arising from Minutes**

None

**B. PRESENTATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE**

**B.1 VCPAC Member Feedback - Kristil Hammer, VCPAC President**

The president announced the new VCPAC executive and informed the goals for 2020-21.

1. Increase connectivity and communications.
2. Support District Strategic plan.
3. Participate on newly formed Equity Scan and aim to have VCPAC representation on all committees.

President also outlined successes and challenges as expressed by families in a recent outreach to parents.

**C. NEW BUSINESS**

**C.1 Introduction of Student Representatives**

- a. Lassah Johnson, Esquimalt High School

## **C.2 District Team Update - Tammy Sherstobitoff & Tammy Renyard**

District Principal-Human Resources Services, Sherstobitoff provided an update on the Educational Assistant bridge program 34 out of 40 hires remain in the District. District Principal, Renyard provided an update on District Team supports and initiatives including the "Pulling Together: Equity in Education", PRO D Day on October 23 where 720 employees participated. Trustees provided thanks to the District Team for their ongoing work.

District Principal-Human Resources Services, Sherstobitoff and District. District Principal, Renyard leave the meeting.

## **C.3 District Team Operational Plan Update - Deputy Superintendent Whitten, Associate Superintendents Caldwell & Roberts**

Deputy Superintendent Whitten provided Trustees with an overview and directed them to the package information and highlighted the District Team Operational plan:

- One goal with three strategies
- Alignment to budget
- Data aligned with measurable outcomes.

Questions of clarification were asked. Trustees thanked the District Team for their on-going work.

## **C.4 MyEd Forms - Trustee Painter**

Trustee Painter presented the following motion and provided rationale.

**Moved by** Trustee Painter

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) write a letter to the Ministry of Education requesting that MyEd specific forms include "X" as an option for the "Gender" category

AND FURTHER

That the request of notification of gender for parents and siblings be removed.

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**C.5 Foundation Skills Assessment #1 - Trustee Whiteaker**

Trustee Whiteaker presented the following motion and provided a rationale:

**Moved by** Trustee Whiteaker

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) write the Ministry of Education requesting the cancellation of the Foundation Skills Assessment for the 2020-2021 school year during COVID-19.

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

**C.6 Foundation Skills Assessment #2 - Trustee Whiteaker**

Trustee Whiteaker presented the following motion and provided a rationale for motion:

**Moved by** Trustee Whiteaker

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) instruct the Superintendent to instruct principals to advise parents who opt their children out of Foundation Skills Assessment, not excluded from writing the FSA as described in the FSA Administration Manual, that optional learning opportunities and spaces cannot be accommodated, therefore they will be required to keep their student home if they choose to opt out.

**Motion Defeated Unanimously**

Discussions ensued among the Trustees with a recommendation to defeat the motion.

**C.7 Religious Accommodation - Trustee Paynter**

Trustee Paynter presented the following motion and provided rationale.

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to develop a policy addressing religious accommodation in schools in consultation with local religious and First Nations leadership, with specific attention to:

- Creation of a multi-faith calendar identifying key religious and spiritual days of observance developed;

- Guidance respecting how practices can be reasonably accommodated;
- Direction on how parents and/or students can request accommodation for their practices and/or days of observance; and
- Direction to staff regarding their obligations to recognize requests for religious accommodation in scheduling activities, tests and assignments.

Discussion ensued among the Trustees with a recommendation to amend the motion to the following:

**Moved by** Trustee Ferris

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to develop a policy addressing religious accommodation in schools in accordance with the British Columbia Human Rights Code, after consultation with the Victoria Multifaith Society and Indigenous leadership, with specific attention to ~~local religious and First Nations leadership, with specific attention to:~~

- Creation of a ~~multi-faith~~ calendar identifying key religious and spiritual, cultural and ceremonial days of observance, ~~developed;~~
- Providing guidance respecting how practices can be reasonably accommodated;
- Developing procedures for how parents ~~Direction on how parents~~ and/or students can request accommodation for their practices and/or days of observance; ~~and~~
- Providing direction to staff regarding their obligations to recognize requests for ~~religious~~ accommodation under the Human Rights Code in scheduling activities, tests and assignments.

For (3): Trustee Duncan, Trustee Ferris, and Trustee McNally

Against (1): Trustee Painter

**Motion Carried (3 to 1)**

### **C.8 Mental Health Grant - Associate Superintendent Caldwell**

Associate Superintendent Caldwell presented the spending plan for the \$48,000 mental health grant via the Ministry Of Education:

- Indigenous perspectives and culturally safe and inclusive environments
- Compassionate Systems Leadership
- Inquiry-based conversations around data
- Social and emotional learning, trauma-informed practice and mental health literacy

**D. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**E. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**F. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:24pm

**Moved by** Trustee McNally

That the meeting adjourn.

**Note:** This meeting is being audio and video recorded. The video can be viewed on the District website.

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

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Chair

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Secretary-Treasurer