

Indigenous Education Council Retreat Minutes

October 23, 2025

8:30 am - Breakfast

9:00 am – 4:00 pm PST

The Indigenous Education Council will advise the school board in providing comprehensive and equitable education and support service to all Indigenous students and improve all Indigenous student outcomes.

Present: Jared Basil, Chair
Nerissa Joseph, Vice Chair
Kat Coleman, Yaqa Nukiy
Brenna Joseph, Education Coordinator, Splatsin
Nicole Courson, President, West Kootenay Metis Society
Catrina Terbasket, Lower Similkameen Indian Band
Marion Louie, Lower Similkameen Indian Band
Julie Bremner, SD8 Board of Education Vice-Chair
Trish Smillie, SD8 Superintendent
Laury Carrier, SD8 Director of Aboriginal Education
Nona Lynn, SD8 Learning Innovator

Regrets: Janet Terbasket, Lower Similkameen Indian Band
Jennifer Lewis, Okanagan Nation Alliance

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. PST

2. Acknowledgement of Aboriginal Territory

We acknowledge, respect and honour the First Nations in whose traditional territory the Kootenay Lake School District operates, and all Aboriginal peoples residing within the boundaries of School District 8.

3. Welcome

Chair Basil thanked everyone for attending and welcomed new members to the table.

4. Introductions

A round table with introductions took place.

5. Icebreaker Activity

Group activity took place

6. Break

7. Consultation/Discussion- SD8 Aboriginal Education Program

It was shared that in the IEC we will not use the word consultation.

a. IEC priorities for SD8 Aboriginal Education Program



Discussion took place around the importance of individuals in the SD8 Aboriginal Education Program, teachers and SD8 staff having cultural safety training, and the potential to bring this forward as a professional development opportunity.

Discussion took place around the importance of continuing relationship building between Yaqan Nukiy School and SD8 schools. It would be beneficial for the district to understand what Chief and Council are responsible for as well as culture practices of Lower Kootenay Band. The importance of inclusion was discussed.

- b. IEC priorities for incorporating Indigenous knowledge, history, and culture into schools
Discussion took place around the importance of authentic knowledge and resources being provided in schools. Discussion took place around the importance of ensuring that student voice is heard.

Suggestions provided:

- Opportunities for Yaqan Nukiy School to visit district schools to develop this relationship.
- Education at SD8 about Yaqan Nukiy School
- Sports/Tournaments between Yaqan Nukiy School and SD8 schools.
- Administration/Teachers to visit Yaqan Nukiy school.
- SD attending Yaqan Nukiy feasts
- Partnership meeting with Band, Social workers, Police, Ministry of Children, Families and district.
- Days on the land
- Elders day for relationship building.

It was stated that if IEC members have any further suggestions – please send them to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Director Carriere.

Discussion took place around the importance of mental health for priority students and ensuring that a social emotional lens is being used at all times. Education around these complexities is important. Discussion took place around the importance of meeting families where they are at.

- c. Review of school Aboriginal Education Action Plans
Director Carriere provided an overview of ABED and school action items that align with SD8 strategic goals and ABED goals. Director Carriere provided an overview of school ABED actions plans. Director Carriere shared that Indigenizing the Curriculum teaching takes place in all classrooms by all teachers, not only by ABED staff.
Discussion took place around why some students may be opting out of the ABED program. Director Carriere provided an overview of ABED celebrations that take place at all schools.

Discussion took place around the fact that targeted funds provide supplemental supports to self-identified students who have parental/guardian permission to opt into the ABED program.

- d. Review of Aboriginal Education webpage, resources, blog posts
Director Carriere provided an overview of the ABED webpage. It was outlined that ABED staff share blog posts on the site on a weekly basis from each school.
ABED blog posts can be viewed at <https://aboriginal.sd8.bc.ca/blog>.

Director Carriere provided an overview of the IEC page on the SD8 website.



- e. Indigenizing the Curriculum District Professional Learning Day- April 13th, 2026
Director Carriere provided an overview of the SD8 Indigenous Day of Learning, which will take place on April 13, 2026.
Some of the suggestions that came forward for the upcoming ProD day are:
- Teach local culture. Local teachings.
 - Students in the district who can share their experience
 - Traditional food session/give attendees an overview of traditional foods in the area
 - Fish ceremonies that take place in the Kootenays
 - Each local First Nation, and the Metis Nation, should be represented on the ProD day.
 - Opportunity for district staff to go out to community to learn about the local bands and Metis.
 - LKB wetland restoration project.
 - Tour of new LKB Band office.
 - Share contemporary good work that is taking place now.
 - Overview of IEC and how it works.

Discussion took place around ensuring local bands have input in the ProD days and are celebrated. It was suggested that it may be beneficial to have an IEC member on the ProD committee to ensure authentic learning.

- f. Renaming of IEC
Chair Basil has begun the process to seek a new name, and it will be brought to the IEC in the future.

8. Photo

The IEC came together for a group photo.

9. Lunch – 12 pm

10. SOAR Activity

Director Carriere led the IEC through a group SOAR activity focusing on current strengths and visioning for the future.

11. Reports/Updates for Discussion

- a. Knowledge Keepers webpage/process
Vice-Chair Joseph shared an overview of the Knowledge Keeper program and process at School District No. 83.

SD8 ABED will continue to work on a Knowledge Keeper program.
- b. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
Director Carriere provided an overview of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation activities that have and continue to take place in SD8.

SD8 Board Vice-Chair Bremner shared that National Day for Truth and Reconciliation information that has been shared is well received. The Board of Education is eager to learn from the IEC and apply input that is learned to their work.
- c. Indigenous Graduation Events/Honouring
Director Carriere provided an overview of the SD8 Indigenous Graduation Honouring that takes place annually.



Additional Graduation Honoring suggestions provided are:

- Formal dinner
- Forum with past graduates.
- Work with community to ensure families know that Indigenous Graduation isn't the official ceremony. Ensure it is communicated to families that the graduation ceremony at school is inclusive of everyone.
- Blanket or sash provide to graduates.
- Each student provided with a gift from ABED teacher or support worker.
- Photo opportunities for families at Indigenous Graduation.
- LKB would like to participate in Graduation Ceremony. Include Elders.

Vice-Chair Joseph suggested that a survey be provided to ABED students asking what they would like to see happen for graduation.

d. External program review

Discussion took place around what the IEC would like to learn from a program review. The Council outlined the following:

- Specifics around the Indigenous learning taking place in schools
- If SD8 is in compliance with the IEC Ministry Order
- Staffing review
- Budget review
- Equitable distribution of resources

Director Carriere will outline specifics around ABED staffing at schools and outline what each role is responsible for. Director Carriere will provide some comparable information from other districts around ABED staffing at schools.

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. PST.