

**Indigenous Education Council
Minutes**

December 16, 2025

8:30 am – 12:00 pm PST

9:30 am – 1:00 pm MST

via: Teams

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
Kat Coleman, Principal, Yaqan Nukiy School
Nicole Courson, West Kootenay Metis Society
Janet Terbasket, Lower Similkameen Indian Band
Marion Louie, LSIB
Brenna Joseph, Splatsin
Leona Prince, Lake Babine Nation, Burns Lake, Director of Instruction
Julie Bremner, SD8 Board of Education Vice-Chair
Trish Smillie, SD8 Superintendent
Laury Carriere, SD8 Director of Aboriginal Education & Learning Services
Nona Lynn, SD8 Learning Innovator

Regrets: Nerissa Joseph, Vice Chair, Splatsin
Catrina Terbasket, LSIB

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:42 p.m. PST
The meeting was called to order at 9:42 a.m. MST

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 people residing within the boundaries of School District 8.

Discussion took place around adding a more robust land acknowledgement to future IEC meeting agendas.

3. Changes to Proposed Agenda

Nil.

4. Adoption of Agenda

UPON a motion duly made and seconded it was **RESOLVED:**

THAT the Agenda for the December 16, 2025 meeting **BE ADOPTED**, as circulated.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. SD8 Aboriginal Education Programing Update

a. External program review

Leona Prince, Lake Babine Nation, Burns Lake, Director of Instruction provided an overview of experience with Indigenous Education and program reviews.

Leona Prince is an Indigenous scholar-practitioner, Director of Instruction for Indigenous Education and former Assistant Superintendent of Indigenous Education for the Province of BC, and a consultant with extensive experience in:

- Indigenous Education leadership and governance
- Program evaluation and external reviews
- Community-engaged and culturally grounded research
- Provincial Indigenous Education policy and practice
- I bring a balanced, relational, and evidence-informed approach to the review, with a strong commitment to cultural safety and respectful enhancement.

Leona Prince provided an overview of the External Program Review – Indigenous Education, SD8.

Purpose:

Support – Support IEC decision-making with independent, evidence-informed guidance.

Provide – Provide clarity on strengths, gaps, and future opportunities.

Examine – Examine effectiveness of the current Indigenous Education staffing structure.

Honour – Honour student success while planning for sustainability.

Leona Prince provided an overview of why the review is being requested. Outlining that the SD8 IEC was newly formed as of August 2025. Strong Indigenous learner achievement and graduation gains over the past 6 year. The IEC has questions regarding the balance of Aboriginal Academic Success Teachers and Indigenous Support Workers, and the IEC has a desire for an external, neutral perspective.

Leona Prince outlined that the central questions to be examined in the external review will be:

- Is the current staffing structure the best model for SD8 Indigenous learners?
- How does it support academic success, belonging and cultural safety?
- What alternatives exist, and what are their implications?

Leona Prince outlined what the external review will examine:

- Student outcome data (achievement, graduation, trends)
- Staffing structure and roles across schools
- IEC and staff perspectives
- Comparisons with other BC districts

Leona Prince outlined the external review approach:

- Mixed-methods: quantitative data and qualitative engagement
- Interviews, conversations and surveys
- Document and policy review
- Culturally grounded and relationship-based process

Leona Prince outlined that IEC members, staff and district leadership will be engaged during the external review.

Leona Prince outlined that the IEC will be provided with the following results from the external review:

- Clear understanding of current model strengths and challenges
- Evidence-informed staffing model options
- Educational, cultural, and financial implications of each option
- Decision-support for next steps



The external timeline will be as follows:

December 2025 – Project start-up and document review

January 1-15, 2026 – Engagement and data collection

January 16-23, 2026 – Analysis and drafting

January 24-31, 2026 – Final report and presentations

February 2026 – The review will be completed prior to February 2026.

Leona Prince shared that the review will honor the progress already achieved in SD8, provide clarity where perspectives differ, support informed, transparent and student-centered decisions.

9:03 a.m. PST – Chair Basil left the meeting.

9:03 a.m. PST – Nicole Courson assumed the role of Chair.

Discussion took place around the logistics of external review interviews taking place over the first two weeks of January.

9:07 a.m. PST – Chair Basil joined the meeting and resumed the role of Chair.

Kat Coleman shared that the overview of the external reviews was extremely comprehensive. Leona Prince shared that she will send an executive summary to the IEC for review.

Chair Basil thanked Leona Prince for committing to this process and the quick timeline.

9:10 a.m. PST – Leona Prince left the meeting.

b. MoECC data letter (Spring 2025)

The MoECC data letter will be emailed to the IEC for review.

c. Local learning resources

Director Carriere shared that SD8 is currently working on organizing local learning resources.

Chair Basil suggested that when the resources are organized and complete, they be shared with the IEC. Director Carriere confirmed that the local learning resources will be shared with the IEC. Superintendent Smillie shared that local learning resources do not require board approval.

Chair Basil stated the IEC must highlight the importance of local learning resources that can be used.

9:30 a.m. PST - Chair Basil left the meeting.

9:30 a.m. PST - Nicole Courson assumed the role of Chair.

6. New Business

a. Sharing learning and highlights- IEC Regional Gatherings, FNEESC Regional Session, FNEESC Conference

A roundtable of discussion took place around the IEC's experience at the IEC Regional gathering, FNEESC Regional gathering and the provincial FNEESC conference.

Discussion took place that the IEC Regional gathering was enjoyable and that some of the table talk discussions were difficult due to the inexperience of the newly formed IECs. It was a positive learning experience for many.

Brenna Joseph shared that FNEESC will soon be releasing a resource guide for IECs.

Nicole Courson shared that learning about local culture would be beneficial.



SD8 Board of Education Vice-Chair Bremner shared that at the regional IEC gathering there were many districts with new IECs and some with well-established IECs in attendance. Vice-Chair Bremner shared that there is positive cross over of experience which brings strength to the newer district IECs. Vice-Chair Bremner shared that at the recent BC School Trustees meeting there was a shout out to the IEC regional gatherings and how this provides great learning for districts and school trustees. Chair Bremner specifically noted that attendance data was a topic that was discussed in-depth.

Director Carriere shared that an IEC regional gathering video is being made and will be shared with the SD8 IEC once completed.

b. Indigenous Day of Learning- April 13, 2026

Director Carriere shared that the SD8 Professional Development day in April will be an Indigenous Day of Learning. Director Carriere confirmed that the IEC will collaborate on the learning that will take place at the April 2026 SD8 Indigenous Day of Learning.

c. Attendance

Director Carriere shared that attendance data coming in the *How Are We Doing?* (HAWD) report in late December will be shared with the IEC at an upcoming meeting.

7. Old Business

a. Equity Funds

Director Carriere provided an overview of the SD8 ABED equity funds.

Discussion took place around the purpose and administration of the equity funds.

Director Carriere shared that historically in SD8 there has been approximately \$7000 budgeted to the equity fund which is used as hardship fund for families.

Marion Louie asked for clarity around the kinds of hardship the funds would be used for, and if students are currently accessing these funds.

Director Carriere provided an overview of how the equity funds historically has worked.

Discussion took place around the importance of equity funds being equitable to all ABED students. It was determined that the IEC will pause hardship funds for this year and will have further discussion at a future date.

Director Carriere shared that historically the equity/hardship funds have worked well as ABED staff have relationships with students and families. Students and families are aware of the fund and it is very much valued and missed.

Kat Coleman discussed the importance of hardship funds to ensure equity.

Director Carriere shared that after a review the amount budgeted for the equity/hardship fund was appropriate and that the funds have been spread equitably across the district.

Action Item: Marion Louie requested that equity/hardship fund data be brought forward to a future IEC meeting for review.

Discussion took place around the importance of making a decision soon regarding the equity/hardship funds to ensure the needs of students are being met.

Action Item: Bring Equity Fund forward to next meeting.



8.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m. PST