

**Indigenous Education Council  
Minutes**

February 18, 2026

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm PST

2:00 pm – 5:00 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  
Nerissa Joseph, Vice Chair, Splatsin  
Leona Prince, Lake Babine Nation, Burns Lake, Director of Instruction  
Kat Coleman, Principal, Yaqan Nukiy School  
Brenna Joseph, Splatsin  
Julie Bremner, SD8 Board of Education Vice-Chair  
Trish Smillie, SD8 Superintendent  
Laury Carriere, SD8 Director of Aboriginal Education  
Nona Lynn, SD8 Learning Innovator

Regrets: Nicole Courson, West Kootenay Metis Society  
Marion Louie, Lower Similkameen Indian Band  
Janet Terbasket, Lower Similkameen Indian Band

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:09 pm PST.

A round table of introductions took place.

**2. Acknowledgement of Aboriginal Territory**

A territorial acknowledgement was shared by Director Carriere.

**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 February 18, 2026 meeting **BE ADOPTED**, as circulated.

The motion carried unanimously.

**5. New Business**

**a. Aboriginal Education Program Review- Leona Prince**

Leona Prince provided an overview of the SD8 Aboriginal Education External Program Review.

Why this review was done:

- Assess effectiveness of SD8's Aboriginal Education model
- Examine alignment with IEC priorities and Nation-defined student success
- Identify system adjustments needed to strengthen culture and relational outcomes



#### Overall Summary

- SD8 demonstrates strong academic success outcomes and staffing stability.
- Cultural safety and local First Nation cultural learning is uneven across schools.
- Language revitalization and local cultural learning remain priority gaps.
- Geography is a primary system design constraint.
- Next phase requires bridging academic and Aboriginal-defined success.

#### Recommended Next Steps

- Validate findings together (IEC and district leadership).
- Confirm priorities

#### **1:47 p.m. PST – Jared Basil joined the meeting**

It was noted that it is important to get a sense of what is going on in the Nations regarding a language authority. How can there be a partnership that helps support and build capacity in the district?

The importance of building a student voice campaign was noted. Ask students: What is working? What are challenges? How do we define student success?

#### Closing Statements:

- SD8 is demonstrating success within the system it has built.
- The next phase is ensuring the system is built to deliver the full definition of Aboriginal student success.
- This requires bridging academic accountability with Nation-defined outcomes.

Director Carriere shared that the full Aboriginal Education External Program Review report would be shared with the IEC today.

The IEC thanked Leona Prince for her work on the report, and appreciation was given for her perspective.

Leona Prince shared that she feels that SD8 has great building blocks in place to help to create movement forward with the IEC vision.

#### **1:56 p.m. PST – Leona Prince left the meeting.**

Vice-Chair Joseph suggested a special meeting take place to discuss the report once everyone has had a chance to read it.

The IEC set a date of Monday, March 9, 2026 at 9:00 am PST for the IEC to meet.

#### b. IEC Aboriginal Education report data for 2024-2025

Director Carriere provided an IEC Aboriginal Education Report presentation containing data that will be part of the SD8 Enhancing Student Learning report. The report was shared with the IEC.

K. Coleman shared that she appreciates Director Carriere work in listening to the IEC with respect to reporting.

Chari Basil shared that increasing student and staff local land learning is important.

Discussion took place around the importance of local cultural learning at the upcoming Indigenous Day of Learning – ProD.

Discussion took place around the importance of Aboriginal student leadership opportunities and how to ensure this takes place without it being tokenism.

Director Carriere outlined various student leadership opportunities that are available to all students in SD8. Eg. Anti-racism working group, Climate Action and Sustainability working group, Student Leadership conference, Student Trustee opportunities.

Discussion took place around ensuring student cultural safety with leadership opportunities.

After discussion it was agreed that going forward all IEC agenda and related items would be provided one week prior to meetings.

Chair Basil asked that a letter be written to the Ministry outlining the importance of receiving the *How Are We Doing* report promptly so the data may be used for district reporting.

**Action Item:** Letter to the Ministry regarding the delayed HAWD. (Superintendent and Director of Indigenous Education & Learning Services)

**ACTION ITEM:** Bring forward the IEC Aboriginal Education report data for 2024-2025 to March 9, 2026 special meeting.

- c. Aboriginal Education - 2026-2027 preliminary budget process  
Director Carriere outlined the IEC Budget Process going forward.

January: Goals and values for the year are determined: staffing and program priorities.

February: Review preliminary IETF budget process: salaries and benefits and supplies and services. It was noted that projected enrolment is sent to the MoECC in mid-February.

March: It was noted that the funding announcements from the MoECC take place on March 15, and so the preliminary IETF budget proposal is brought to the IEC for approval process after that date and after Spring Break, and is built based on the stated program priorities of IEC voting members.

August/September: Previous year carryforward spending discussion.

October: Amended budget based on 1701.

Director Carriere shared that funding information will not be known until March 15.

Discussion took place around budget timelines between IEC budgets and SD8 budgets.

Superintendent shared that staffing processes begin after the funding announcement and that the SD8 budget will be reviewed by the Board of Education during the second week of May.

**Action Item:** Learning Innovator will send a poll to IEC proposing an April 1, 2026 IEC meeting date.

Director Carriere provided an overview of targeted funding for 2025-2026, and reiterated that preliminary targeted funding for 2026/2027 will not be known until March 15, 2026.

Director Carriere provided an overview of IEC governance versus day-to-day operations and a review of the SD8 IEC Terms of Reference.

IEC Terms of Reference – Governance and Day to Day Operations – reminder as we go through the budgeting process. It was noted that SD8 is required to follow collective agreement language and labour laws around employment, staffing, and confidentiality.



Discussion took place around hiring processes and how the IEC should be involved.

Director Carriere noted that IEC priorities for next year will be communicated further at a future meeting.

d. Indigenous Day of Learning- April 13th

Director Carriere provided an overview of available options to date for the SD8 Indigenous Day of Learning on April 13, 2026. The focus will be learning about the local area, local First Nations and Metis culture, and will mostly take place in person. IEC members have been invited to join in the SD8 Indigenous Day of Learning.

Vice-Chair Joseph shared that there should be more local area learning built into the workshop options of the Indigenous Day of Learning. This is an opportunity for teachers to learn specifically about local culture and to build relationships with local community.

K. Coleman shared that Yaqaan Nukiy would like to participate but would need to begin planning 6 months prior to the event.

Vice-Chair Joseph shared that it takes many years to make deep changes for the Indigenous Day of Learning, and that the day is very important and an opportunity for people to learn alongside of Indigenous people in the community.

K. Coleman shared that it would be positive to see SD8 teachers come to Yaqaan Nukiy on the April 13, 2026 SD8 Indigenous Day of Learning and that there is potential for a smaller workshop to take place at Yaqaan Nukiy on the April 13, 2026 SD8 Indigenous Day of Learning.

Vice-Chair Joseph asked that the number of staff attending and locations of SD8 Indigenous Day of Learning workshops be shared on a map with IEC members.

Director Carriere shared that IEC suggestions would be appreciated for the April 13, 2026 SD8 Indigenous Day of Learning.

Vice-Chair Joseph suggested a showing of a local Indigenous film and discussion for a workshop offering and suggested local Indigenous writers and discussion, as well as having Knowledge Keepers on site for some workshops. Having local Knowledge Keepers visible is beneficial.

**Action item: Bring forward to next special meeting – new ideas.**

e. SD8 Youth Pow Wow

Director Carriere provided an overview of the upcoming SD8 Annual Youth Pow Wow which will take place Friday, May 15, 2026 in Creston. Grand entry will take place at 9 am. IEC members have been invited.

**Action Item:** Learning Innovator will put the Pow Wow in all IEC member's calendars.

Vice-Chair Joseph suggested that the IEC be invited to district events, and would like to tour some schools and meet staff while visiting the district to enhance community engagement.

**Action Item:** Will plan for some school visits around ProD time. Ensure we invite whole IEC.

Chair Basil shared that the IEC is also invited to the Lower Kootenay Band pow wow – everyone is invited. 33<sup>rd</sup> Traditional Pow Wow – Saturday and Sunday.



f. FNEESC Regional Sessions- Sharing

Chair Basil shared that he attended the regional FNEESC session in Vancouver and gained a lot of great information, and that he is excited to see the renewal of the BCTEA agreement, and the incorporation of attendance in the HAWD report.

Vice-Chair Joseph shared that bringing FNEESC regional session information to families is very important.

**Action Item: Information Item standing agenda item on future agendas.**

6. **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m. PST.