

FROM THE BOARD

Board Meeting Highlights

April 21, 2026



MEETING OPENING

The Board of Education of School District No. 83 (K'wsalkt'néws ne Secwepemcú'ecw) held its Regular Board meeting on April 21, 2026, with all five trustees in attendance, confirming quorum.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Indigenous Resource Helping Teachers Tina Lepine and Katie Taber acknowledged that the Board meeting took place on the unceded, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Secwepémc people, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to live, work, and play on this territory.

They highlighted the impact of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Allies, which has been active in the District since 2016. Participation in the group has increased educators' understanding, empathy, and willingness to make meaningful, positive changes in their schools. This "heart work" has grounded and guided the direction of the TRC program over the past decade.

In anticipation of upcoming changes to the program, Lepine and Taber initiated a legacy project with current TRC Allies. Inspired by the District's newly

gifted name and logo design, the project reflects the collective contributions of participating teachers. The artwork features hearts created by the TRC Allies, symbolizing the care and commitment involved in reconciliation work.

Lepine assembled the full installation, while Taber contributed several hearts and created elements of the artwork, including the eagle and turtle. The completed piece was gifted to the Quelmúcw Education Council and the Board of Education and will be proudly displayed at the District Education Support Centre as a lasting acknowledgment of the TRC Allies' work.



BUSINESS ARISING

Clarification Regarding Administrative Procedure 510 Public Use of School Facilities

Board Chair Corryn Grayston provided clarification regarding [Administrative Procedure \(AP\) 510 Public Use of School Facilities](#). It was noted that during the March 10, 2026, Board meeting, a misstatement was made indicating that Trustees had not seen AP 510 prior to its discussion in January. However, AP 510 was presented to the Board at the September 23, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. This clarification was shared for accuracy in the public record.

DELEGATION

Safety of Schools and Locked Doors

A delegation from community members addressed the Board to express concerns about school safety and advocated for a District-wide policy requiring all exterior school doors to be locked during instructional hours.

Superintendent Donna Kriger shared that the District continues to explore access control systems and long-term improvements, recognizing that any changes require careful planning, building considerations, and funding.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Donna Kriger provided an update aligned with the [District's Strategic Plan](#), highlighting ongoing work connected to the priority areas set by the Board.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



We Are All Connected

Kriger spoke to the significance of the presentation of artwork by Katie Taber and Tina Lepine to the Quelmúcw Education Council, noting the symbolism of the District logo and the collective responsibility for reconciliation. She expressed gratitude to the Rightsholders whose knowledge, generosity, and partnership have shaped the District's name, logo, and ongoing efforts to improve student outcomes. Kriger highlighted the importance of recognizing the foundational work of Knowledge Keepers who have guided reconciliation efforts long before current District leadership. She also acknowledged the Board's strong commitment to reconciliation and to deepening respectful relationships with the Rightsholders of this place.

Parent Advisory Council Roundtable Evenings

Kriger expressed appreciation to the District Parent Advisory Council for facilitating the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Roundtable Evenings. Parents who attended participated in learning and conversation on communication, problem-solving, advocacy, student supports, and the role of PACs.

Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment Training



On April 10, 2026, District leaders and a wide range of community partners participated in proactive training focused on identifying and responding to potential behavioural and digital safety concerns in schools. The session included theory, case-study analysis, and hands-on group work, with training focused on information gathering, behavioural assessment, trauma-informed interviewing, intervention planning, progress monitoring, and ongoing case management. Participants represented the Integrated Child and Youth Team, Child and Youth Mental Health clinicians, Interior Health Mental Health and Substance Use, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the RCMP, and Indigenous partner organizations including Splatsin

Education Department and Stsmémelt Children and Family Development. Kriger shared that this training was planned in advance and was not in response to recent events. The District is also planning an upcoming online parent presentation led by Safer Schools Together to help families better understand school safety practices and how concerns are identified and addressed, with registration details to follow. Read more: [Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment Training](#).

Earth Day 2026 – Trees for Hope



In recognition of Earth Day, students across the District participated in tree-planting activities that promote environmental stewardship. Kriger expressed appreciation to Kim Fulton and members of the Environmental Advisory Working Group for their ongoing leadership and coordination. This work reflects the District's vision of preparing students to become responsible citizens who contribute to a sustainable and diverse world. Read more: [Trees for Hope 2026](#).

Parents as Education & Career Coaches

Parents are welcome to register for the May 6, 2026, EducationPlannerBC online session. The session is designed to support students and families in exploring post-secondary programs, trades, career pathways, and in learning how to navigate education planning tools. Registration information, including a link and QR code, is available on the District website ([Parents as Education & Career Coaches](#)).

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Strategic Focus Report

Kriger reminded the Board that each month, celebrations from across the District are highlighted in the [Strategic Focus Report](#) (www.sd83.bc.ca > Our District > Strategic Focus Publications).

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development – April 20, 2026



Kruger acknowledged the District-wide Professional Development Day held on April 20, 2026, highlighting the broad range of learning opportunities offered to staff. These included collaborative work on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), sessions led by guest presenter Adrienne Gear, professional learning related to artificial intelligence, and site-based learning experiences such as a visit to the Kamloops Residential School. Strong staff engagement was evident, highlighting the District’s commitment to professional learning, staff professional growth, and support for student success. Read more: [School-based Professional Development Day](#).

School Bus Driver Appreciation – April 15, 2026



Kruger expressed appreciation for the important work of school bus drivers and the meaningful connections they build with the students they transport each day. Read more: [Celebrating the Dedication of Our School Bus Drivers](#).

Administrative Professionals Day – April 22, 2026



Kruger acknowledged Administrative Professionals Day by recognizing the essential role played by administrative support staff across the District. Their broad scope of work and daily contributions were recognized as vital to the smooth operation of schools and district offices.

Principal and Vice Principal Changes

Kruger recognized the retirements of two school principals, David Wellingham and Jody Garries. Mr. Wellingham retired in April from his role as Principal of North Canoe School, and Ms. Garries has announced her retirement at the end of the school year from Hillcrest Elementary. Both were honoured for their student-focused leadership, compassion, and commitment to school and system change, as well as their strong relationships within their school communities.

Supporting information: [2026 04 21 Superintendent Report](#) (PowerPoint), [District's Strategic Plan](#) (PDF), [Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment Training](#) (webpage news), [Trees for Hope 2026](#) (webpage news), [Parents as Education & Career Coaches](#) (webpage news), [Strategic Focus Report](#) (webpage), [School-based Professional Development Day](#) (webpage news), [Celebrating the Dedication of Our School Bus Drivers](#) (webpage news)

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT

Environmental Stewardship Action Plan Progress Report

Reid Findlay, Director of Instruction, and Travis Elwood, Director of Operations, presented the Environmental Stewardship Action Plan (ESAP) Progress Report. The presentation outlined how environmental stewardship is being advanced District-wide through integrated efforts in student learning, staff capacity building, community engagement, and operational practices.



Educational and community-based initiatives remain a strong focus of the ESAP. Highlights included the K–12 Environmental Expo, where students engage in mentoring conversations related to sustainability. As part of Earth Day activities, approximately 2,000 seedlings were distributed to 15 schools for student planting projects, reinforcing hands-on learning connected to environmental stewardship. Schools also participate in interactive learning experiences such as the use of a giant floor map that explores watershed systems and students' connections to water, supporting curriculum integration across grade levels.

From an operational perspective, the District continues to make measurable progress toward reducing energy use and environmental impact. Updates included HVAC upgrades at several schools, lighting retrofits, and other cost-effective energy efficiency initiatives supported by available incentives and rebates. School-based energy monitoring tools are now being used to share clear, accessible consumption data with schools, allowing staff and students to track progress, understand energy use per square metre, and contribute to conservation efforts at the local level.

Findlay also acknowledged the collaborative leadership of the Environmental Advisory Working Group, including student and community representation, and the cross-departmental efforts supporting implementation of the ESAP.

Next steps for the Environmental Advisory Working Group include recognizing the recent grant support from the Shuswap Community Foundation, reflect on the progress made during the year and update the ESAP, and incorporate ESAP success stories and adjustments in the Enhancing Student Learning Report.

Supporting information: Environmental Stewardship Action Plan Progress Report (PowerPoint), [Environmental Stewardship Action Plan 2025](#) (webpage), [Enhancing Student Learning Report](#) (webpage)

NEW BUSINESS

Board/Authority Authorized Courses

Reid Findlay, Director of Instruction, presented four Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) courses for Board consideration and approval, noting the intention to bring BAA course proposals forward annually each April to align with secondary school course selection, scheduling, and funding timelines.

BAA courses provide districts with the flexibility to offer locally developed programming that responds to student interests, community context, and emerging career pathways, while remaining aligned with provincial curriculum requirements.

The proposed courses included Behavioral Neuroscience 12, Agriculture and Poultry Production 10–12, Yoga and Wellness 11–12, and Health Services 12 – Emergency Medical Responder.

Behavioral Neuroscience 12, developed at J.L. Jackson Secondary, is designed as a stand-alone course but could fit into a Health Sciences Academy being considered at J.L. Jackson Secondary for 2027-28.

Agriculture and Poultry Production 10–12, developed at Eagle River Secondary, provides hands-on learning in agricultural literacy, sustainability, and local farm experience provides strong justification for a school-based agriculture course.

Yoga and Wellness 11–12, developed at Salmon Arm Secondary, is designed to foster a healthier mind-body connections, promoting a more positive and balanced relationship with oneself and with others.

Health Services 12 – Emergency Medical Responder, developed at Pleasant Valley Secondary, prepares students for Emergency Medical Responder certification through a partnership with Columbia Medical Training.

Trustees recognized the significant research, planning, and collaboration required to develop BAA courses and acknowledged their contribution to student engagement, well-being, and career pathway development.

Findlay clarified that once approved, BAA courses are available to be offered at other secondary schools across the District, subject to staffing and local context.

Following discussion, the Board approved all four Board/Authority Authorized courses as presented.

Supporting information: [Board/Authority Authorized Courses](#) (Briefing Note)

Letter to MLA

Vice Chair Amanda Krebs brought forward a motion directing the Board Chair to write a letter to the local MLA in response to recent public statements that inaccurately linked SOGI to declining academic performance. Trustees expressed concern that the statements were not evidence-based and agreed that addressing them through formal correspondence was an appropriate first step. The motion was approved, with direction for the Board Chair to work with District leadership to prepare the correspondence.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education Direction Committee

Trustee Marianne VanBuskirk reported that the next Education Direction Committee is scheduled for May 6, 2026.

Finance & Facilities / Audit Committee

Vice Chair Amanda Krebs reported that the Committee met on April 7, 2026, and discussed the items included in the Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

Preliminary Operating Grant Update – 2026/27 School Year

Acting Secretary-Treasurer Jeremy Hunt presented an overview of the Ministry of Education and Child Care's preliminary funding announcement, noting that enrolment projections indicate an estimated decline of 154 full-time equivalent (FTE) students for the upcoming year. This decline is consistent with provincial trends and reflects larger graduating cohorts and smaller incoming student populations.

As per-pupil funding rates remain unchanged from the current year, the projected enrolment decline results in an estimated net funding reduction of approximately \$1.4 million, partially mitigated by enrolment decline protection and supplemental funding. Trustees discussed the importance of funding protection as a bridge to allow for thoughtful budget adjustments as actual enrolment numbers are confirmed in September. Concerns were also raised regarding declining inclusive education funding linked to graduating students and challenges associated with timely designation for younger students requiring additional supports.

The update was received for information, with no action required at this time.

Supporting information: [Preliminary Operating Grant Update – 2026/27 School Year](#) (Briefing Note)

Ministry Response Regarding 2026-27 Capital Plan & Capital Plan Bylaw

The Board received an update on the Ministry of Infrastructure's response to the District's 2026–27 Annual Five-Year Capital Plan submission. Acting Secretary-Treasurer Jeremy Hunt and Director of Operations Travis Elwood outlined the minor capital projects approved for funding, which include energy upgrades at Armstrong Elementary, kitchen infrastructure improvements at J.L. Jackson Secondary, and approval for the acquisition of five new school buses. In addition, discussions with the Ministry's Capital Branch are ongoing regarding a revision to the South Canoe HVAC project to include HVAC upgrades at Sorrento and Salmon Arm West. If approved, an amended approval letter will be forthcoming. These approvals support facility renewal, energy efficiency, student nutrition services, and fleet reliability across the District.

Trustees discussed next steps related to capital planning processes, including the need to adopt a single Capital Plan Bylaw as required under the *School Act*. The Capital Plan Bylaw for 2026–27 was presented for consideration, with further updates to be brought forward as additional Ministry documentation and approvals are received.

Supporting information: [Ministry Response re: 2026-27 Capital Plan & Capital Plan Bylaw](#) (Briefing Note)

Labour Relations

Board Chair Corryn Grayston reported that there was no Labour Relations meeting in April.

Partner Group

Board Chair Corryn Grayston reported that there was no Partner Group meeting. The next meeting is May 21, 2026.

Policy Committee

Trustee Brent Gennings reported that at the Policy Committee Meeting held on April 1, 2026, Policy 310 Student Code of Conduct was discussed.

Policy 310 Student Code of Conduct

Superintendent Donna Kriger reported on the briefing note outlining proposed minor revisions to Policy 310 – Student Code of Conduct, brought forward in response to feedback from schools and District staff. The amendments clarify expectations related to the use of personal digital devices, particularly concerning unauthorized audio and video recording of staff, while maintaining the original intent of the policy. The revisions are intended to enhance staff protection and awareness in response to evolving technology.

Trustees discussed the wording of the policy, including consideration of emerging technologies such as smart glasses, and approved the minor revisions to Policy 310 as amended.

Supporting information: [Policy 310 - Student Code of Conduct](#) (Briefing Note), [Policy 310 Student Code of Conduct](#) (Board Policy)

Committee of the Whole

Board Chair Corryn Grayston reported that the next meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2026.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Aboriginal Report – How Are We Doing? 2024/2025

Assistant Superintendent Chelsea Prince presented the 2024–2025 *How Are We Doing* report, which is used extensively by the Indigenous Education Department to analyze student outcome data and inform improvement planning. She noted that while the Ministry continues to use the term “Aboriginal” in the report title, the District consistently uses the term “Indigenous.” Indigenous students represent 21.1% of the District’s student population, a figure that has remained relatively stable in recent years.

The report highlighted areas of both progress and concern. Participation rates for the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) among Indigenous students remain very strong and consistently above provincial averages; however, persistent achievement gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students continue, particularly in Grade 7 numeracy. Over-representation of Indigenous students in Behaviour and Mental Health designations remains a concern and was identified as a marker of systemic bias. In response, the District has implemented additional review processes for these designations, resulting in a modest reduction over the previous year.

Prince noted positive trends in completion rates. The five-year completion rate for Indigenous students returned to 80% in 2024–2025, following a decline in the previous year, and the six-year completion rate increased to 87%. Improvements were also attributed to changes in practice related to Adult Dogwood pathways, with fewer students being directed to this option and a District-wide reduction in Adult Dogwoods.

Trustees acknowledged the value of examining trends over time, particularly given smaller cohort sizes, and noted that while challenges remain, sustained improvement is evident in key outcome areas.

Supporting information: [Aboriginal Report – How Are We Doing? 2024-25](#) (PowerPoint), [Aboriginal How Are We Doing? 2024/25](#) (Report)

BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION (BCSTA)

Board Chair Corryn Grayston reported that she attended the BCSTA AGM along with Trustee VanBuskirk and Superintendent Kriger. She also advised Trustees of an upcoming Joint Sector Call scheduled for April 22, 2026, which will focus on the upcoming Trustee elections. The BCSTA is supporting trustee onboarding, including the development of a series of learning sessions and a new trustee onboarding handbook. In addition, Trustees were informed that Salmon Arm will host the Thompson-Okanagan BCSTA Branch Meeting in February 2027, providing an opportunity for regional collaboration, learning, and networking.

Trustee Marianne VanBuskirk provided a report on the BCSTA 2026 AGM, acknowledging the importance of accountability for professional development expenditures and the value of participating in province-wide trustee learning and governance work. She highlighted key elements of the AGM, including learning sessions on policy development and board communications, a keynote address by Clara Hughes focused on mental health, and opportunities to engage in rich discussion and networking. Trustee VanBuskirk also noted the extensive governance work completed at the AGM, with Trustees debating and voting on motions that guide BCSTA advocacy, and described the experience as both meaningful and professionally valuable.

BRITISH COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION (BCPSEA)

Trustee Marianne VanBuskirk attended the BCPSEA Call on April 15, 2026, as BCPSEA Alternate Trustee Representative. The meeting included Trustee representatives, Secretary-Treasurers, and Superintendents and served as a briefing ahead of public announcements related to CUPE ratification.

QUELMÚCW EDUCATION COUNCIL

Trustee Tennile Lachmuth provided an update on the recent Quelmúcw Education Council meeting, noting that discussions aligned closely with ongoing work previously reported to the Board. Topics of discussion included budget and staffing plans for the upcoming school year, as well as items the celebration of the TRC Ally program presentation and the *How Are We Doing? 2024/25* report. Preliminary conversations took place regarding hosting the BCSTA Thompson-Okanagan Branch meeting, with intentions to reconnect following the upcoming Trustee election to support continued collaboration.

TRUSTEE REPORTS

Trustee Marianne VanBuskirk provided an update on her participation in the City of Salmon Arm Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC). She highlighted agenda items from the April 13, 2026, meeting, including a student-initiated presentation on public transit, discussions on multi-use pathway etiquette and safety, the BC Kicks scooter pilot project, Go By Bike Week, and bike rack infrastructure within the city. Trustee VanBuskirk noted opportunities for ongoing collaboration between the City and the School District on active transportation initiatives and invited Trustees to share any feedback or priorities to bring back to the committee.

Trustee Marianne VanBuskirk also reported that she attended the French Advisory Committee meeting on March 12, 2026, and the Salmon Arm Secondary PAC meeting on April 14, 2026. As Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee, VanBuskirk expressed appreciation for the transparent and thorough work of staff and partner groups at the March 31, 2026, meeting. She also acknowledged positive feedback received from DPAC roundtable sessions and recognized Administrative Professionals Day.

Board Chair Corryn Grayston reported that she and Trustee Gennings attended the DPAC meeting on April 16, 2026, noting the quality of discussion and the thoughtful feedback received from participants. She expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage directly with DPAC members and indicated that several topics raised may warrant further discussion through Partner Group meetings. Chair Grayston also shared that she attended the North Shuswap PAC meeting on April 13, 2026, highlighting the strong engagement of the school community and upcoming activities, including preparations for the Carlin Elementary Middle School Country Market.

UPCOMING DATES / EVENTS

Earth Day – April 22, 2026

Committee of the Whole re: Part 2 of Section 100 Policy Review & BCSTA Board Policy Review – April 27, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

National Day of Mourning – April 28, 2026

Committee of the Whole re: 2026/27 Budget – May 5, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.

Indigenous Day of Learning – May 8, 2026

Victoria Day – May 18, 2026 (statutory holiday)

Regular Board Meeting – May 19, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

The April 21, 2026, Regular Board Meeting agenda and recording is available on the District website: [Board Meetings](#).

