



# School District No. 54 (BULKLEY VALLEY)

## AGENDA REGULAR BOARD MEETING OCTOBER 24, 2023 SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE, SMITHERS, B.C. 7:00PM

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Traditional Welcome / Opening Remarks
- 3) Adoption of Agenda
- 4) Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes – September 26, 2023  
Synopsis In-Camera Meeting – September 26, 2023
- 5) Learning Portion: Inter-Disciplinary Class at SSS
- 6) Administration Report M. McDiarmid Report Attached
- 7) Committee Reports:
  - a) Operations Committee L. Kearns Report Attached
  - b) Policy Committee F. Farrell Report Attached
  - c) Trustee Reports L. Kearns Report Attached  
F. Farrell Three Reports Attached  
J. Williams Report Attached
- 8) Unfinished Business
- 9) New Business
  - 9.1) Strategic Plan Renewal
  - 9.2) Surplus Management
- 10) Other Business
  - 10.1) Expenditure Summary
- 11) Reading File
- 12) Closing Remarks –Next regular Board Meeting will be held on November 28, 2023 at the School Board Office in Smithers, B.C., commencing at 7:00 p.m.
- 13) Adjournment
- 14) Public Remarks\*\*

### NOTES:

**\*\*Public Remarks:** Just a reminder to everyone that this portion of the meeting is intended to provide an opportunity for members of the public to make comments to the Board. Public remarks must be relevant to items on the approved board agenda. The Board will listen respectfully to comments but not respond to questions during this time.

**Delegations:** This item is intended to provide an opportunity to members of the public to make a presentation to the Board. Individuals wishing to be included on the agenda must submit a written request to the Secretary Treasurer at least one week prior to the meeting stating the subject of their presentation and including any background information to be considered by the Board. (Board Policy # 1.190)

<https://www.sd54.bc.ca/board-policy-handbook/>



**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.54 (*Bulkley Valley*)  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023  
SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE, SMITHERS B.C.**

**PRESENT:** Trustees: F. Farrell, L. Kearns, F. Krishan, J. Williams, P. Michell,  
Trustee Regrets: J. Krauskopf, K Graham  
Staff: M. McDiarmid – Superintendent  
M. Monkman – Assistant Superintendent  
D. Margerm – Secretary Treasurer  
B. Kingsmill – Recording Secretary

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

- The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.

**2. TRADITIONAL WELCOME / OPENING REMARKS**

- Chairperson Williams acknowledged that we are gathered on the home of the Wit'suwit'en Nation, traditional territory of the Gidmt'en – Bear Wolf Clan.
- Chairperson Williams welcomed everyone to present to the first official meeting of the year.

**3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MOTION: *It was moved by Trustee Michell and seconded by Trustee Farrell.***

*"That the agenda be accepted as presented."*

**CARRIED**

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- The Chairperson asked if there were any corrections to the regular meeting minutes of the June 27, 2023 or the synopsis of the in-camera meeting minutes of June 27, 2023. There being none, the regular meeting minutes of June 27, 2023 and the synopsis of the in-camera meeting minutes of June 27, 2023 were declared approved as presented.

**5) 2022 – 2023 Draft Audited Financial Statements.**

- **5.1) 2022-2023 Draft Financial Statements** – The Operations committee recommended the Board approve the audited Draft 2022-2023 Financial Statements as presented.
- Mr. Steve Kietzmann from Vohora LLP provided an unqualified opinion of the 2022 – 2023 Audited Financial Statements.
- Secretary Treasurer Margerm provided a financial recap of the 2022 – 2023 school year.

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**MOTION: *It was moved by Trustee Kearns and seconded by Trustee Michell.***

*"That the Board approve the 2022 – 2023 Audited Financial Statements as presented."*

CARRIED

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## **6 ) ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

- Superintendent McDiarmid presented the district update to the Board. Mr. McDiarmid spoke about this year's school start up and commented that the District is still in a very difficult staffing situation. Assistant Deputy Minister Jennifer McCrae and Superintendent of Indigenous Education Swee alt (Denise Augustine) will visit the district on September 28/29.
- Superintendent McDiarmid presented the student achievement report to the Board. The FSA's will begin in October. Once again, the FSA's are just one snapshot of our students ongoing assessments.
- Superintendent McDiarmid presented the district-based initiatives to the Board. The District is very excited to have the new Totem Pole raising at Walnut Park Elementary on September 29. It's going to be a spectacular event for the District and the Witsuwit'en and community as a whole. This District took delivery of its first electrified vehicle in September. This vehicle will be assigned to the IT department for travel between schools in the district. MME will be taking part in a composting pilot program to determine if school organic waste can be cleanly and efficiently diverted from the regional landfill. Ms. Cindy Miller – District Principal of Learner Support, is once again organizing the professional earning program this school year, in addition will be directing the teacher mentorship program. Innovation funds will be handed out again this year. Teachers submit proposals for their innovative approaches to learning. Successful applications are inquired based, support school and district goals.
- Superintendent McDiarmid presented the school-based initiatives report to the Board. Secondary School athletics are already in full swing. District Elementary Soccer will be scheduled differently this year with a number of individual games between schools being played over the next few weeks rather than one single game day. Schools in the District will be participating in a variety of activities for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Students will learn and help raise awareness of the history of residential Schools in Canada. SSS drama program travelled to Vancouver in early September to attend the annual Bard on the Beach festival. Parent / teacher meetings are scheduled for October 25 and 26 this year.

### **Field Trip Proposals**

- The following field trips have been approved by the Assistant Superintendent:
  - **TSE** – 40 +/- Grade 4 students from TSE to travel to the Fulton River in Granisle, BC on September 20, 2023. The purpose of this trip is to study the migration patterns of salmon. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.
  - **TSE** – 170 +/- Grade 4-7 students from TSE to travel to Owen Lake on October 13, 2023. The purpose of this trip is to support the TEK Curriculum and learn about traditional methods of harvesting food. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.
  - **TES** – 130 +/- Kindergarten – Grade 7 students from Telkwa Elementary to travel up to Crater Lake on Hudson Bay Mountain on September 19, 2023. The purpose of this trip is to take part in the annual Terry Fox Run. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.

- **SSS** – 20 +/- Grade 10-12 students from Smithers Secondary to take part in a rafting excursion between Riverside Park in Telkwa, BC and Lunan Road in Smithers, BC on September 15, 2023. The purpose of this trip is to take part in class community building and participate in the final "We are the Yintak" workshops. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.
- **WPS** – 54 +/- Grade 7 students from Walnut Park Elementary to travel up to Hudson Bay Mountain on September 22, 2023 . The purpose for this trip is to support the Physical Health Education Curriculum. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.

#### **7.a) OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

- Operations Committee Chairperson Kearns presented the Operations Committee's Report from the September 12, 2023 committee meeting. Two items were moved to the New Business portion of the meeting.
- Next meeting date Tuesday, October 10, 2023 @ 5:00pm

#### **7.b) POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT**

- There was no Policy Committee meeting during the month of September.
- Next meeting date Tuesday, October 10, 2023 @ 4:00pm

#### **7.c) TRUSTEE REPORTS**

- There were no trustee reports this month.

#### **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- There was no unfinished business this month.

#### **9. NEW BUSINESS**

- **9.1) Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) Report** - Mr. McDiarmid presented the FESL report to the board. This report synthesizes, assesses and compares data sources against educational or achievement outcomes.

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**MOTION: *It was moved by Trustee Krishan and seconded by Trustee Farrell.***

*"The Board approved Framework for Enhancing Student Learning report as presented."*

CARRIED

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- **9.2) Summer Capital Project Update** - Secretary Treasurer Margerm provided an update to the Board on all of the summer projects that took place over the summer.

#### **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

- No other business this month.

#### **11. READING FILE**

**MOTION: *It was moved by Trustee Kearns and seconded by Trustee Michell.***

*"That the information contained in the Trustee Reading File be received and filed."*

CARRIED

**12. CLOSING REMARKS**

- Chairperson welcomed and acknowledged Tanya Davidson BVTU's new president.
- The next regular Board Meeting will be held on October 24, 2023, commencing at 7:00 p.m. at The School Board Office in Smithers, BC.

**13. ADJOURNED**

- The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm.

**Approved by:**

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Ms. Jennifer Williams, Chairperson  
of the Board of Education

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Mr. Dave Margerm  
Secretary Treasurer

DRAFT



**SYNOPSIS OF THE  
IN - CAMERA MEETING MINUTES  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.54 (*Bulkley Valley*)  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023  
SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE, SMITHERS, BC**

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The regular meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm and the Board resolved to go in-camera.

- The Chair asked if there were any corrections to the in-camera meeting minutes of June 27, 2023. There being none, the in-camera meeting minutes of June 27, 2023 was declared approved as presented by the Chairperson.
- Senior Administration reported on routine staffing items, suspensions update and a legal matter.

The Board returned to regular session at 6:56pm.

# SCHOOL DISTRICT 54

(Bulkley Valley)

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## REPORT FROM ADMINISTRATION

to the  
Board of Education  
October 24, 2023

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### Innovation / Initiatives

#### District Based Initiatives

- **Class Size-** Now that enrollment numbers are finalized, the District is now able to review class size and composition data. Class sizes have remained relatively the same, and contractual remedy situations also remained about the same.
- **Professional Learning Program – Once** again, SD54 has engaged with experts in education to support professional growth. Thanks to Cindy Miller for once again arranging these activities.
  - **Numeracy** – Completed 2 sessions with Carole Fullerton and approximately 20 intermediate teachers. In between sessions, they gave one of the assessment questions to their class. Many realized that they needed to provide much more support to students and backed up the instruction before moving forward. This is a very keen and reflective group. Next step is hopefully to develop a numeracy committee/group.
  - **Mentorship** – We have some teachers connected up with mentors to higher degree than normal – we also have several LOPs. There will be a Learning Summary Writing workshop offered at the beginning of November.
  - **Compassionate Leadership Systems** – Three (3) administrators and our school psychologist participated in a 4-day session (funded in part by the Ministry) earlier this month.
  - **Non-Violent Crisis Intervention** was offered on October 20 to 16 teachers and EAs.
  - **SAFETEEN** - We are training several staff members on October 23-25 to be able to offer the SAFETEEN program. This is being done in collaboration with the Indigenous Ed department. SAFETEEN provides a unique assertiveness model and violence prevention "language" that can be integrated into school and family culture. The process is designed to provide youth with tools to manage fear and anger and to identify their own voice of wisdom. With the SAFETEEN skills, teens can connect with the power and wisdom within and speak from an authentic place of strength. They can hold their power and speak their truth.
- **School Improvement Plans**—Schools have been working on and will be submitting their annual plan of improvement. Schools have considerable flexibility in developing their plans providing they support the overarching District Strategic plan goals. The plans are required to be displayed on school websites.
- **Premiers Awards-** The Superintendent will be attending this year's Premiers Awards for Excellence in Education ceremony as we have three staff members selected for awards. Perry Rath in the category of Social Equity and Diversity, Heather Lee in the category of Extracurricular Leadership and Inderjit Grewal in the category of Outstanding Support-School Community. All are long standing employees who have been exceptional supports for students for many years- congratulations!

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## (Bulkley Valley)

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- **Professional Development Day** – On Friday, October 20, school staff participated in the Provincial professional development day. There was a wide variety of professional learning that took place.
  - **Muheim** - Staff will be involved in a variety of self-directed ProD sessions.
    - developed lessons and units drawing on ideas from their recent ProD with Carole Fullerton
    - attended locally provided Non-Violent Crisis Intervention or Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) session
    - worked on farming grant project with Rob Zoller from Living Root Farm
    - other activities: zoomed the 2023 Digital Learning Conference, attended a learning about Mining session, attended a virtual conference put on by the Primary Teachers Association PSA, a session by Carole Fullerton on Primary Math and one focused on Indigenous relationships with animals and core competencies.
  - **Twain Sullivan** - Both CUPE and BVTU staff will participate in a variety of professional learning: POPARD, core competency collaboration, assessment collaboration.
  - **Telkwa** - On the Oct. 20 Pro-D day, staff at Telkwa participated in a variety of learning opportunities: the Non-Crisis Intervention Workshop, Technology (AI, Prodigy, Freeform, TigTag, Mystery Science) and our kindergarten teacher will be traveling to Vancouver for an Early Learning conference.
  - **Houston Secondary**- The majority of teachers are here collaborating on the core competencies and student goal setting. A group of teachers in the afternoon are getting together to look at the AI platform Magic School which shows a lot of promise, and some are already starting to integrate it to adapt material.
  - **Walnut Park** - They had a variety of things staff were working on the pro-d day. Many collaborated in small groups while others were in conferences either online or in person. i.e. Building thinking classrooms, looking over literacy resources, My story workshop, Pita Conference, Joyful literacy zoom conference, NVCI
  - **Smithers Secondary**- 10 teachers out at conferences and a workshop on the new interim reports.
- **Parent Teacher Interviews**- This week students are dismissed early to accommodate parent teacher interviews. We encourage parents to take advantage of the opportunity to hear directly from their child's teacher about their progress.
- **Early Learning Update**-
  - Early Childhood Dual Credit has had a successful startup - 17 students between SSS and HSS. We were also able to offer CUPE staff 5 seats. Upon successful completion, students can apply for their ECE Assistant certificate and can then work in a licensed daycare or pre-school
  - Most schools have started to implement the use of the Early literacy Portfolio to support student learning and target specific lagging skills.
  - Strong Start facilitators and Preschool teaching staff spent the first 3 weeks supporting children entering kindergarten - this was a great success and helped kindergarten teachers, children and their families.

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## School Based Initiatives

- **District Elementary Cross-Country Run-** Our elementary schools participated in this run on October 12 along with students from independent schools from across the Bulkley Valley. It was a great day of physical activity with participation from all of our elementary schools.
- **Secondary School Extra-Curricular Sports-** Soccer, volleyball, cross country running and swimming are all taking place with many students appreciating the opportunity to grow their skills and compete.
- **Remembrance Day Ceremonies—**Schools across the District will be arranging a wide variety of activities for November 9. (November 10 is a pro-d day)
  - **Elementary Choir** - Telkwa and Muheim **choirs** will be collaborating and presenting their song at both Telkwa Elementary as well as Muheim. Muheim will be inviting our friends from the Meadows.
  - **Walnut Park** - Grade 7's are organizing and running our remembrance day ceremony and it will be similar to last year. Grade 7's will emcee the event. There will be speeches or reading of poems including from the K's. We were looking at a powerpoint of pictures that students bring in of family members that served.
  - **Smithers Secondary and Houston Secondary—** A school assembly/ceremony run mostly by students- with community guests in attendance.
  - **Twain** - In the days leading up to Remembrance Day: Living Library; students interview community members, seniors and veterans about their lives. On November 9th the whole school at the cemetery for the No Stone Left Alone ceremony

## Field Trip Proposals

- The following field trips have been approved by the Assistant Superintendent:
  - **WPS** – 53 +/- Grade 5-6 students from Walnut Park Elementary to travel up to Crater Lake on Hudson Bay Mountain on October 6, 2023. The purpose for this trip is to support the Physical Health Education Curriculum. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.
  - **HSS** – 20 +/- Grade 11-12 students from HSS to travel to Prince George on October 17, 2023. The purpose of this trip is for the students to visit the CNC and UNBC campuses. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.
  - **HSS** – 18 +/- Grade 8-9 students from HSS to travel to Rock Nest Ranch / Irrigation Lake on October 27, 2023. The purpose of this trip is for the students to take part in an experimental education day including flat water canoeing instruction. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.

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*(Bulkley Valley)*

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- The following field trip requires approval **IN-PRINCIPAL** by the Board of Education:
  - **SSS** – 22 +/- Grade 11-12 Drama students from Smithers Secondary to travel to New York City on May 17 – May 25, 2025. The purpose of this trip is for the students to participate in Broadway Theatre tours and workshops. Board approval will be subject to the required travel documentation being supplied to the board office including the finalized list of students travelling.
  
- The following field trip requires **APPROVAL** by the Board of Education:
  - **SSS** – 75 +/- Grade 8-12 Jr/Sr Concert and Jazz Band students from Smithers Secondary to travel to Whistler, BC on April 24 to April 28, 2024. The purpose of this trip is for the students to participate in the Whistler Cantando Festival. All Board requirements have been met for this trip.

# SCHOOL DISTRICT 54

(Bulkley Valley)

## OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Regular

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

5:00 PM

School Board Office

Voting Members	Administration
P. Michell, Alternate F. Krishan  J. Williams (ex officio)	M. McDiarmid, Superintendent D. Margerm, Secretary Treasurer M. Monkman, Assistant Superintendent
<b>Regrets:</b> L. Kearns, Chair	

The meeting was conducted from 5:04 - 6:19 pm.

**Acknowledgement:** *“Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered here today on the home of the Wit’suwit’en Nation, traditional territory of the Gidmt’en - Bear Wolf Clan.”*

### REPORT

#### 1. Strategic Plan Review

Mr. McDiarmid updated the committee on the 2023-2024 Strategic Plan review process. Senior administration has met with school administration and will be meeting with the Board on Friday October 13<sup>th</sup> in Prince George. The District will also need to meet with Indigenous Council, PACs, students, and the public for consultation. The District proposes the Board also meet on November 7<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm after November committee meetings. The Strategic Plan is due by June 2024.

#### 2. Surplus Management

Mr. Margerm outlined Surplus Management policy and briefing note. The committee discussed the contingency thresholds and plans for the use of surplus in conjunction with minor capital applications, appropriating surplus for future projects and restricted capital applications. The Committee provided guidance on surplus management and asked Mr. Margerm to come to board meeting with expenditure proposals and resulting outline of surplus framework for approval.

#### 3. Surplus: Transfer of Operating to Capital

Mr. Margerm discussed the need to requested that the Board transfer \$1.2 million from operating surplus to local capital reserve surplus.

***The Committee recommends the Board approve a transfer of \$1.2 million dollars from operating surplus to local capital reserve surplus.***

# SCHOOL DISTRICT 54

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## 4. 2023-2024 Capital Plan Amendment

Mr. Margerm updated the committee on that Capital department revised their 2023-2024 capital response letter to include new food infrastructure funding. The letter authorizes an additional \$107,250.

*The committee recommends three readings amending the Bylaw **CAPITAL BYLAW NO. 23/24-CP-SD54-01-R, CAPITAL PLAN 2023-2024-Revised** to include the new revised capital response letter.*

## 5. September Enrollment vs Projected Update

Mr. Margerm updated the committee on the September 30<sup>th</sup> funding snapshot for current district enrollment. The enrollment snapshot shows that enrollment is approximately equal to last year at 1,964 FTE. The enrollment snapshot will determine annual Ministry funding for the district which will be provided in December.

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**Date & Time of Next Meeting: November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 5:00 pm**

# SCHOOL DISTRICT 54

(Bulkley Valley)

## POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

4:00 PM

School Board Office

<b>Voting Members</b>	<b>Administration</b>
F. Farrell, Chair J. Krauskopf, Alternate K. Graham  J. Williams (ex officio)	M. McDiarmid, Superintendent D. Margerm, Secretary Treasurer M. Monkman, Assistant Superintendent
<b>Regrets</b>	

The meeting was conducted from 4:03 - 4:45 pm.

**Acknowledgement:**        *“Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered here today on the home of the Wit’suwit’en Nation, traditional territory of the Gidmt’en - Bear Wolf Clan.”*

### REPORT

PREVIOUS MEETING OF June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Policy	Description	Type	Status	Consultation
	No Agenda Items			

### NEW BUSINESS

Policy	Description	Type	Status	Consultation
9.960	Course Fees for Non-enrolling Students (approval)	Revision	In-committee	Yes
6.175	Selection of Learning Resources Policy (AP)	New	In-committee	Yes

#### 1. Policy 9.960 Course Fees for Non-enrolling Students

The public consultation period has ended and there was no public input to be considered by the Committee.

**Motion: Committee recommends the Board approve revisions to Policy 9.960 Course Fees for Non-enrolling Students as presented.**

Type:            New, Revision, Deletion  
 Status:         In-committee, on-going, approved  
 Consultation    Yes, Not required, Complete, Rejected

# SCHOOL DISTRICT 54

(Bulkley Valley)

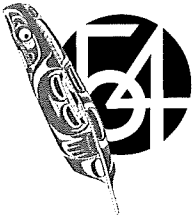
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## 2. Selection of Learning Resources Policy

Mr. Monkman led the committee through the draft document *Selection of Learning Resources Guidelines and Procedures*. This document was drafted from a School District 43 document and input from our district librarians. Several controversial types of learning resource topics were discussed and how to challenge them in a responsible and equitable process. This document was created to provide an update to Policy 6.175 Challenge of Learning Resources. The committee will continue to discuss the draft document at the next meeting.

**Date & Time of Next Meeting: November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 4:00 pm.**

Type: New, Revision, Deletion  
Status: In-committee, on-going, approved  
Consultation: Yes, Not required, Complete, Rejected



**TRUSTEE REPORT**  
**October 2023**

I have been fortunate to have been appointed to the BCSTA Board of Directors working group on Inclusive Education and Accessibility. The working group is made up of five trustees from across the province, with BCSTA Board of Director Jen Mezei along with former President Stephine Higginson acting as an outside consultant.

The Ad Hoc working group's goal is to guide the Board of Directors on BC Accessibility legislation and how to implement inclusive practices within the association and to boards wishing assistance. After our inaugural meeting we offered questions and ideas which can be explored, up and including creating a standing committee on inclusion.

The committee is scheduled to meet monthly via Zoom (except December) until June 2024. At which time it is expected that the findings be forwarded to the Board of Directors for potential implementation. It is important to have a better grasp of what inclusion means for the work of our association.

Respectfully submitted by,

Frank Farrell  
Trustee



*School District No. 54 (BULKLEY VALLEY)*  
"To empower all learners to live the challenges of a diverse and changing world."

PO Box 758  
Smithers, BC \_\_\_\_\_  
V0J 2N0  
Ph (250) 877-6820

**TRUSTEE REPORT**

North West Branch Meeting - BCSTA  
Prince George, BC  
October 13-14, 2023

On Friday October 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup> I had an opportunity to attend the joint Northwest – Northern Interior Branch meetings, held at the John McInnis Centre in Prince George. In addition, I was able to attend a SD54 Strategic planning session held prior to the branch meetings on Friday.

The highlight of the Strategic Planning session was the feedback that fellow trustees and senior administration in attendance provided as we entered another consultation process. At our Friday morning session, we discussed and evaluated community and district trends and how they relate to Education at SD54. I was a robust conversation that will be continued both at the Board Level and amongst all stakeholders including the public.

Highlights of the joint branch meetings include

- Presentation on smudging and its traditions including objects including the drying of Juniper Bushes.
- Lee Brain –former Mayor of Prince Rupert who facilitated two sessions on mobilizing consensus on issues that are vital to the north including retaining and retention of teachers. Brain offered the possibility of working with municipal councils in mutually beneficial action. Included in the session was a couple of sessions that engaged guests in both understanding each other and their views on four questions, along with offering an exercise in which we all voted as to the importance of several issues facing Education in the North.
- Former SD54 Educator and Administrator Cathy Van der Mark offering insight in areas as Districts having an Education committee, an Accessibility plan, and a mechanism to receive feedback on what is needed.

The joint branch meetings happen once every two years and this time around offered an opportunity to discuss issues like retaining and retention of staff and teachers. Certainly, a number one concern within not only our district but the North in general. The meetings not only offered further communication with fellow Districts in the North but also with in our board as we enter Strategic planning process.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Farrell  
Trustee



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PO Box 758  
Smithers, BC \_\_\_\_\_  
VOJ 2N0  
Ph (250) 877-6820

**TRUSTEE REPORT**  
**Walnut Park Totem Pole Raising**  
**September 29, 2023**

On September 30th, 2023, I attended the feast that preceded the raising of the Walnut Park Totem Pole. The event was a reminder of the harsh reality that faced the Wet'suwet'en people living in the past along with the hope of a future that includes education to work together for the betterment of all.

To me it was another eye-opening event that included oral presentations from Elders who laid out the past of the area then known as "Indian Town". It was a time where some establishments refused to serve Indigenous people. Those realities cannot be forgotten, I am not originally from this region, however I recognize the past that was and the hope that is. The Walnut Park Pole raising and indeed the entire Walnut Park school is a testament to acknowledging the past by supporting a future for all and indeed our students, as we acknowledge we are on the home of the Wet'suwet'en nation. Thank you all involved, including the Indigenous elder I was fortunate to sit beside who informed me of his past experiences.

Respectfully submitted by,

Frank Farrell  
Trustee



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PO Box 758  
Smithers, BC  
V0J 2N0  
Ph (250) 877-6820

**TRUSTEE REPORT**

North West Branch Meeting - BCSTA  
Prince George, BC  
October 13-14, 2023

**Friday**

The Trustee's who attended this weekend met first on the Friday to begin the process of renewing SD54's Strategic plan. This initial meeting was to look at our current plan and start to review it page by page to find what is still relevant and what needs to be updated. This process will continue with public consultation through out the year.

In the evening Trustee's from both Branches meeting for the evening in an informal gathering to socialize. At the beginning of the evening we were given a lesson on smudging, we learnt the meaning of the actions and the spirituality that goes with it.

**Saturday**

This was set up as a day for both branches to engage in a process to help the North come together to find a common purpose.

We heard from speakers about the accessibility mandate in schools and what to think about when making changes to our facilities. Our speakers were Cathy van der Mark and Heather Lamb, both speakers had import points to make and gave us food for thought.

Lee Brain was the facilitator for the day. He was in charge of walking the group through the process to identify all the priorities and eventually narrowing it down to one.

The Branches all agree that recruitment and retention are everyone's top priority. Many points were made about this topic, there seems to be multiple issues with in the one. While talking to other Board Chairs it was clear that there was a level of frustration regarding unauthorized hiring compensation by some districts while other districts follow contract language. There were many ideas floating around about retention as well. Lee Brain is going to produce a summary of the day's activities and make it available to all of the Boards.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Jennifer Williams  
Trustee