



The Board of Education of
School District No.5 (Southeast Kootenay)
AGENDA - STUDENT SERVICES MEETING

January 25, 2021, 10:30 a.m.

Meeting via Zoom

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**The Board of Education of
School District No.5 (Southeast Kootenay)
MINUTES - STUDENT SERVICES MEETING**

**November 23, 2020, 10:30 a.m.
Cranbrook Board Office**

Committee Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Trustee Damstrom

Co-Chair McPhee via Zoom
Trustee Johns via Zoom
Trustee Kitt

Board/District Staff in Attendance:

Chairperson Lento
Trustee Ayling via Zoom
Trustee Bellina via Zoom
Trustee Turner
Trustee Whalen via Zoom
Superintendent, S. Yardley via Zoom
Secretary Treasurer, A. Rice
Director of Student Learning/Innovation, D. Casault via Zoom
District Principal/Student Services, D. Verbeurgt via Zoom
District Principal/Transformative Learning, J. Roberts via Zoom
Executive Assistant, L. Giesbrecht (Recorder)

1. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

1.1 Call to Order

The Special Education Student Services meeting of Nov. 23, 2020 was called to order at 10:43 by Co-Chair McPhee.

1.2 Approval of the Agenda

M/S that the agenda for the Special Education Student Services Meeting of Nov. 23, 2020 be approved as circulated

1.3 Approval of the Minutes

M/S that the minutes of the Special Education Student Services meeting of Oct. 26, 2020 be approved as circulated.

2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 Full Audit Report

Secretary Treasurer, Alan Rice can confirm that the full audit report still has not been posted. He anticipates that due to the new government that the link will be available shortly. This will stay on the agenda for follow up at the January Student Services Committee meeting.

2.2 Inclusive Education Working Group

Superintendent, Silke Yardley deferred to Director of Student Learning and Innovation, Diane Casault and District Principal of Student Services, Darcy Verbeurgt. Director Casault & District Principal Verbeurgt will take the lead, as Superintendent Yardley's attention needs to shift to the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. Review of previous meetings minutes will occur over the next few weeks and further meetings will be planned. A slight decrease in representation may be considered as replacement TTOCs are still a concern. We will talk with representation from the various groups to ensure we are not taxing groups. Discussions of allocation of resources begins as early as February. Mr. Verbeurgt will continue to work with Mr. Rice and school teams in late February and early March for budgeting purposes. Co-Chair McPhee asked if we would be continuing to review the Student Services Teacher role. Mr. Verbeurgt replied that terms were considered vague so were updated in hopes to make clear their roles and responsibilities. We have extended the same conditions to Student Services Teachers as we have to Counsellors where the can begin school planning prior to the school year and in compensation release days will be granted during the school year. Shelly Balfour verified that the student services job description was updated and has been signed off. Work load issues of Student Services Teachers is still a concern and review on how we can support them will be ongoing.

2.3 Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) Data

Data was collected for the period of Sept – Oct.2020. The full dataset collected was provided in the In-Camera meeting agenda. Mr. Verbeurgt will speak to it if requested. Mr. Verbeurgt provided a summary of what the SLP's work.

Section 1) Demographics

- Data was submitted by the 7 SLP's and 5 Speech Language Assistant's (SLA). Laurel Giesbrecht pulled the data into one sheet.
- Data had to be cleansed to be consistent. This allows us to view the data in a more meaningful way.
- all aboriginal ancestry data and special needs designations were added or corrected.
- Future data collected will include a glossary so that data is tighter than in first data catch.

Over 1,600 individual student data references were submitted, as well as, 170 class or group data references and 114 anecdotal notes. We were able to pull together trends.

- Most students served were in Kindergarten and Grades 1 & 2. Early intervention is important, as is support when they need it. In the upper grades communication is more of a focus than anything else.
- 15% of students working with an SLP are of aboriginal ancestry
- almost 30% of students have a special needs designations (definition of designation letter is attached as Appendix A).

Section 2) Working with Individual Students

This includes direct and indirect service time. Some schools show more direct hours of service than others. A total of 1,086 hours were invested in directly working with students.

Co-Chair McPhee asked how that would inform practice and what changes we could anticipate with this better look? Mr. Verbeurgt hasn't analyzed it yet from that perspective as we were asked to provide data on where they were spending their time. He was not sure this data will inform us in how to change practice.

Mr. Verbeurgt reviewed first of year priorities of assessing students and planning for the school year. He also shared the wide variety of skillsets the SLP's - speech, language, fluency, etc. One of the requirements of the SLP profession is that they remain current in their training. They take professional development courses, provide services to other staff, attend meetings and research strategies. They regularly share their learning with other SLPs and support staff.

Trustee Bellina commented that it is good to reflect on the data and learn from each other.

Mrs. Casault spoke to SLPs having conversation around when they did their screening and their report writing. We also found through the data that our SLPs are sometimes in 2-3 different schools. The different practices in different schools are a result of the schools needs. So much depends on the School Based Team (SBT) and their consultation. If the Student Services Teacher is new, there is lots of initial training.

Trustee Johns wondered how when working with individual student, in some cases, there are hours of support with few to no hours spent report writing. Mr. Verbeurgt reminded that the data was for the months of September and October. December is often reserved for report writing when students are not available due to other school activities.

We have to be careful not to compare middle/secondary to elementary schools as this is the first year where we have dedicated SLP time to the middle/secondary schools, rather than work off of individual referrals.

Section 3) SLP services hours per school by type of service

The time spent on the types of services varies at each school building, but it is important to look at the overall numbers to see where they spend their time overall.

Trustee Turner appreciated getting the data and expressed thanks, but wanted clarification on the waiting list and the service timeframe.

Mr. Verbeurgt explained student come on to a caseload waitlist through referral - the waitlist is a referred list. Some schools produce referrals in first week of September – others complete the referrals at the IEP meetings in October or November. Students do not stay on wait list for any period of time. Service is always provided in a reasonable timeframe.

Trustee Johns asked how we could advocate for more resources. Mr. Verbeurgt stated we have more SLP's in relation to our number of students in our district that other districts. Yet, we're only approaching a mildly adequate level. We currently have 7 SLP's working 6.1 FTE. Not all SLP's work full time by their own choosing. We also have 5 SLA's whose purpose is to carry out the work assigned by SLP's.

Trustee Johns referenced the EDI material, wait list for services, adequacy of response and needs, indicating the Board needs to advocate for the training of SLPs to adequately meet the need. He also wishes that the provincial government provide more funding rather than paying for SLP and SLA support out of regular funding. Mr. Verbeurgt stated there are available SLPs as Alberta has recently laid off about 400. Trustee Johns will obtain data and needs from district staff for his presentation to the select standing committee.

Section 4) How are SLAs interacting? - Their interaction is different in each school, but consistently invest time working with kids or groups in an individual aspect. SLA's are 6.5 hour employees that work beyond the regular school day to include some preparation time occurs not while kids are in session. Screening does take place while in class sessions. In Kindergarten, there are a fair amount of whole class group time with Sound Connections programming that heavily introduces the sound-to-letter to the younger age students as a precursor to reading.

Trustee Johns thanked Mr. Verbeurgt and Mrs. Casault for the presentation of this data.

3. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

4. REPORTS

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Proposal for Post Social Emotional Learning Centre (SEL) Program Tracking

A question was brought forward in terms of how former SELC students are doing & the possibility of keeping track of their progress after leaving the program. The intention is to review the mid-term reports in January of last year's SELC program students. The review will focus primarily on the anecdotal comments provided on how they are currently engaging in their learning. We did find that in conversation with the SELC teacher, Tanya Meijer, both parents and students are still connecting with Mrs. Meijer or Mrs. Stasuik.

Megan Stasuik, Tanya Meijer and Julie Russchen participated in determining where the next SELC session should be held. They unanimously decided not only on the school, Steeples Elementary, but also the class and students that could benefit from the program. A survey is planned for the participating teachers at Highlands for this last session. We hope that the survey will highlight what was successful and what was challenging. Looking at effective strategies is important moving forward.

The Highlands Elementary school session will end this week on Nov. 26. There will be one week break in between programs for planning and then the SELC program will start at Steeples.

6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS - APPENDIX A

6.1 Updates on the Social Emotional Learning Centre

6.2 Prevalence Model Discussions

6.3 Inclusive Education Working Group Updates

6.4 Behaviour Resource Teacher update

7. CORRESPONDENCE

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.

Appendix A

Ministry Designations

Category Code	Name of Category	Level 1,2,3
A	Physically Dependent- Multiple Needs	1
B	Deafblind	1
C	Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities	2
D	Physical Disability/ Chronic Health	2
E	Visual Impairments	2
F	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	2
G	Autism Spectrum Disorder	2
H	Students requiring intensive behaviour intervention or students with serious mental illness	3
K	Mild Intellectual Disabilities	-
P	Gifted	-
Q	Learning Disabilities	-
R	Students requiring behaviour support or students with mental illness	-



**Ministry of Education
Resource Management Division**

2019/20 Special Education Enrolment Audit

AUDIT REPORT

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay)

2019/20 SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLMENT AUDIT REPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay)

Background

The Ministry of Education funds boards of education based on the boards' reported enrolment as of September 30th each year and supplemental Special Needs classifications in September and February. The boards report students with special needs to the Ministry on *Form 1701: Student Data Collection* (Form 1701).

In the 2019/20 school year, school boards reported 31,798 students enrolled in the low incidence supplemental special education funding categories at September 2019. School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) reported 490 students in the supplemental special education funding categories as of September 30, 2019. For the purpose of this compliance audit, School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) reported 18 student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), 29 student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 53 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), four student claims in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 19 student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 175 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 192 student claims in the Intensive Behavior Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H).

The Ministry of Education annually conducts Special Education enrolment audits, in selected school districts, to verify reported enrolment on Form 1701. School districts are selected for audit based on a variety of factors, including the length of time since their last audit, the district's incidence levels compared to the provincial incidence levels, and changes in enrolment.

Purpose

The purpose of the Special Education enrolment audit is to provide assurance to the Ministry of Education and boards of education that school districts are complying with the instructions contained in [*Form 1701: Student Data Collection, Completion Instructions for Public Schools*](#) and Ministry policies are being followed. The audit also provides assurance that the students reported are receiving the service and have been placed in the appropriate special education category, as per the [*Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines \(April 2016\)*](#).

Description of the Audit Process

A Special Education enrolment audit was conducted in School District No. 5 (SE Kootenay) during the week of February 18, 2020.

An entry meeting was held on February 18, 2020 with the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, Director of Student Learning and Innovation, District Principal Student Services, Student Services Coordinator and two Executive Assistants. Daily meetings with the District Principal

Student Services were held to present preliminary findings and to seek clarification related to the contents of files.

The sample consisted of 18 student files reported in the Physically Dependent category (Code A), 15 student files in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability category (Code C), 53 student files in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment category (Code D), four student files in the Visually Impaired category (Code E), ten student files in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing category (Code F), 40 student files in Autism Spectrum Disorder category (Code G), and 100 student files in Intensive Behavior Interventions/Serious Mental Illness (Code H) special needs categories were reviewed and evaluated to determine if the students in these categories were accurately reported on Form 1701.

The file review process encountered an issue regarding several students claimed in Code A with diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder and Global Developmental Delay. Although these students required a great deal of support, the evidence in the files did not support that students were completely dependent on others for meeting all five daily living needs, nor that they required assistance at all times for mobility. It was determined a visit to the schools was not required as there was sufficient evidence in the student files to confirm the students did not meet the criteria for a Physically Dependent claim in Code A.

An exit meeting was held with the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, Director of Student Learning and Innovation, District Principal Student Services, Student Services Coordinator and two Executive Assistants on February 21, 2020. The auditors reviewed the purpose of the audit and the audit criteria, explained the audit reporting process, reported their findings, clarified any outstanding issues, discussed reclassifications for the 2019/20 school year, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

Observations

Of the 18 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code A

- five student claims were recommended for reclassification to Code G or C
- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to Code D

Of the 53 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code D:

- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to Code H
- one student claim was recommended for reclassification to the Learning Disabilities category (Code Q)

Of the 100 student files reviewed by the auditors in Code H:

- two student claims were recommended for reclassification to the Moderate Behaviour Support/Mental Illness category (Code R)

There were no recommended reclassifications for the student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C, Code E, Code F, or Code G.

The auditors found that:

- Six student claims did not have evidence to meet criteria for placement in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A). Evidence verified these students had been previously claimed in Code G or Code C. There was no evidence to indicate there had been any change to the initial diagnoses or the level of support required and provided. The evidence verified the students did not require assistance at all times for all major daily living needs in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
 - five students had multi-disciplinary assessments by Interior Health Children's Assessment Network (IHCAN) or BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) and met the criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder (Code G) or Global Developmental Delay (Code C).
 - one student was diagnosed with Down Syndrome and met the criteria for Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment (Code D).
- Two student claims in Code D did not have evidence to meet the criteria for the Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairment category.
 - One student claim had no evidence of a medical diagnosis to support placement in this category. There was a letter from a physician which did not verify a medical diagnosis. There was evidence in the student file to support a claim in Code H.
 - One student claim had a diagnosis of Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS). This diagnosis meets the criteria for Learning Disabilities (Code Q) in accordance with the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- Two student claims for Code H did not have evidence to meet the criteria for placement in the Intensive Behaviour Interventions/Serious Mental Illness Category. These two students did not have current evidence of antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour or serious mental illness. Both students were verified to meet criteria aligned with Requiring Behaviour Support or with Mental Illness (Code R).
- The diagnostic information was relative to each category claim and contained current, pertinent and dated evidence to support the criteria in each category.
- Instructional planning tools were a helpful support in the placement and planning for some students.
- The IEPs were current and comprehensive with the diagnostic information thoroughly summarized on the IEP.
- The IEP used consistently throughout the District contained competency based language with all the required components of an IEP met.
- There were Transition goals (where appropriate) evidenced throughout the IEPs in the sample.
- The IEPs for students in all categories were consistently written to reflect the needs of individual students. The goals and strategies often reflected recommendations from various assessments or medical reports.
- Code H student files contained a considerable amount of evidence to support the additional services provided to students. Outside agency support and collaboration was well documented.
- There was evidence in all the student files of on-going reviews as a measure to align the criteria for placement in the category students were claimed.
- There were a number of forms developed by the District that contained information assisting the verification process. These included: Designation Form, Supplemental Plans for

Category A, Continuum of Services and Programs–Behavior Interventions, Record of Communication and Year End Review of IEP. In most instances, many of the forms were found to be utilized consistently throughout the District.

- All the student claims reviewed in Code G contained evidence of well-defined services and programs.

Recommendations:

The auditors recommend that:

- The District’s support services staff ensure student claims in the Physically Dependent category (Code A) contain assessment documentation verifying the student is completely dependent on others for meeting all major daily living needs and that the student requires assistance at all times for feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility and personal hygiene, as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
- The District’s support services staff ensure student claims in Code D meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for that category.
 - There must be evidence of a medical diagnosis in one or more of the following areas: nervous system impairment that impacts movement/mobility, musculoskeletal condition; and/or, chronic health impairment that seriously impacts student’s education and achievement.
 - There must be evidence that functioning and education is significantly affected by the physical disability or chronic health impairment.
 - There must be evidence indicating the special education services the student is receiving to address the needs identified.
- The District’s support services staff ensure student claims in Code H have evidence that meets the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
 - For students with a serious mental illness, there must be evidence of a mental health assessment made by a mental health professional.
 - For students needing intensive behaviour support, there must be evidence of a behavioural assessment indicating antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour in most other environments and consistently over time.
 - There must be evidence that the planning is coordinated, across-agency and community using integrated case management.
- The District report only student claims in each category when there is evidence to verify the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines requirements have been met.
- The District support services staff ensure student files are updated and reviewed regularly to ensure appropriate service provision and alignment with the category criteria in which students are claimed for the reported school year.

Auditors' Comments

The auditors wish to express their appreciation to the District staff for their cooperation and hospitality during the audit.

**Funding and Financial Accountability Branch
Resource Management Division
Ministry of Education
February 24, 2020**

School District 5 (Southeast Kootenay) Post Audit 2019-20

Summary of Audit and Auditor Recommendations

School District 5 (Southeast Kootenay) reported 490 students in the supplemental special education funding categories (Levels 1, 2 and 3) as of September 30, 2019. For the purpose of the compliance audit, the School District reported 18 student claims in the Physically Dependent Category (Code A), 29 student claims in the Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability Category (Code C), 53 student claims in the Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment Category (Code D), 4 student claims in the Visual Impairment Category (Code E), 19 student claims in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Category (Code F), 175 student claims in the Autism Spectrum Disorder Category (Code G), and 192 student claims in the Intensive Behaviour Intervention/Serious Mental Illness Category (Code H).

Auditor Observations:

- Of the 18 student files reviewed by the auditors in level 1 (Code A), six (6) student claims were moved to level 2 codes.
- Of the 53 student files reviewed by the auditors in level 2 (Code D), one student claims were reclassified to level 3 and one was moved to basic funding
- Of the 100 student files reviewed by the auditors in level 3 (Code H), two student claims were recommended for reclassified to a code off of targeted funding.
- There were no recommended reclassifications for the student files reviewed by the auditors in Code C, Code E, Code F, or Code G.

Auditor Recommendations:

1. The District's support services staff ensure student claims in the Physically Dependent category (Code A) contain assessment documentation verifying the student is completely dependent on others for meeting all major daily living needs and that the student requires assistance at all times for feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility and personal hygiene, as outlined in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
2. The District's support services staff ensure student claims in Code D meet the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for that category.
 - There must be evidence of a medical diagnosis in one or more of the following areas: nervous system impairment that impacts movement/mobility, musculoskeletal condition; and/or, chronic health impairment that seriously impacts student's education and achievement.
 - There must be evidence that functioning and education is significantly affected by the physical disability or chronic health impairment.

- There must be evidence indicating the special education services the student is receiving to address the needs identified.
3. The District's support services staff ensure student claims in Code H have evidence that meets the criteria listed in the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
 - For students with a serious mental illness, there must be evidence of a mental health assessment made by a mental health professional.
 - For students needing intensive behaviour support, there must be evidence of a behavioural assessment indicating antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour in most other environments and consistently over time.
 - There must be evidence that the planning is coordinated, across-agency and community using integrated case management.
 4. The District report only student claims in each category when there is evidence to verify the Special Education Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines requirements have been met.
 5. The District support services staff ensure student files are updated and reviewed regularly to ensure appropriate service provision and alignment with the category criteria in which students are claimed for the reported school year

The Ministry of Education, on the recommendation of the audit team, adjusted the District's special education funding by reducing it \$182,650. The District Student Services budget took on this loss of 2.2% of the total school based Student Services Allocation.

School District 5 (Southeast Kootenay) Post Audit 2019-20

Next Steps for Student Services

These next steps have been developed with an understanding that all levels of the school system in the District will need to work collaboratively now and in the future to ensure student success:

- A. The District has been recognized in a number of areas of positive practice. District support staff and planned budgeting will continue to build our strength in these areas:
 - a. Inclusive Education Plans (IEP) will continue to remain current and comprehensive with the diagnostic information thoroughly summarized on the IEP.
 - b. IEP will continue to use competency based language with all the required components of the IEP Ministerial Order met.
 - c. Transition goals will continue to be in evidence in the IEPs, where appropriate.
 - d. IEPs for students in all categories will continue to be consistently written to reflect the needs of individual students. The goals and strategies reflecting recommendations from various assessments or medical reports.
 - e. Code H student files will continue to contain a considerable amount of evidence to support the additional services provided to students, with outside agency support and collaboration documented.
 - f. All student designation files will continue to be part of an on-going quality review as a measure to align the criteria for student placement in the categories claimed.
 - g. District that contained information assisting the verification process will continue to be utilized consistently throughout the District. These included: Designation Form, Supplemental Plans for Category A, Continuum of Services and Programs–Behaviour Interventions, Record of Communication and Year End Review of IEP.
 - h. Student claims reviewed in Code G will continue to include evidence of well-defined services and programs.
- B. As recommended in the 2011 post audit report and adopted as our standard practice since, all new Levels 1, 2 and 3 files will be continued to be reviewed and approved at the District level before placement on the Form 1701. These reviews will occur as needed throughout the year, but will be a focus of the month in September and February each year and will include new files and all files to be updated for the purpose of budget allocation updates.
- C. The consideration of claims in the Physically Dependent category (Code A) will be the sole discretion of the District Principal – Student Services upon supporting documentation presented by the Student Services Coordinators. The 2019/2020 increase in the number of students claimed in Code A as a result of misinterpretation of advice given in the April 2019 workshop by a past auditor. The distinction between level 1 eligible student claims and level 2 eligible student claims funding has clarified to our prior 2018/2019 understanding and practice.

- D. Generally, the review of student claims in Level 2 (Codes C, D, E, F and G) will be reviewed every three years.
 - a. The exception will those students with a medical conditions (Code D) that changes in severity, the level of ability for student self-management and the impact of the medical condition (i.e., Type 1 Diabetes, or some forms of Epilepsy). These particular student claims will be completed annually.
- E. The District will continue to call in files from a particular Code designations to examine and appreciate the work that has been undertaken in schools and the district, share those successes with all schools to continually raise the quality of the practice we have maintained.
- F. A portion of District Management/School Administrators business management meetings and professional development opportunities will focus on moving inclusion forward and support of vulnerable students.
- G. The Partner's Handbook started to take shape as an Inclusive Education Manual. Public aspects of our services, access to services and important inclusive practices are located on the District website under the Learning top tab. Internal documents and processes are located in the staff portal. These documents are, and will continue to be updated, to reflect changes in Ministry of Education policies, procedures and guidelines.
- H. The District will continue to facilitate mentorships for new Student Services Teachers. The Student Services Coordinators will continue to be an instrumental component of this work.
- I. Provide consultative support to schools as they review student files in preparation for the completion of the Form 1701 and the Red Binder reviews. The Coordinators of Student Services for the Elk Valley and Cranbrook are available to meet with Student Services teachers to assist with developing I.E.Ps and to collect data and complete required documentation.
- J. This report will be reviewed by District Senior Management staff in May 2021 to determine the status of the ten recommendations and further actions necessary to ensure their successful implementation.

The implementation of the above strategies is intended to address the recommendations of the Ministry of Education Special Education Compliance Audit Report released in December 2020 and to enhance the Student Services being provided to students with special needs in School District 5 (Southeast Kootenay).

Respectively Submitted by

Darcy Verbeurgt, B.Ed., M.Ed.

**School District No 5 (East Kootenay)
Inclusive Education Working Group**

**MINUTES
December 10, 2020**

Attendees: Darcy Verbeurgt, Diane Casault, Kim Sparks, Lois Ehman, Chris Kielpinski, Shelley Balfour, Adrienne Demers, Julie Russchen, Kim McKweon, Scott Holt, Connie White, Donna Cameron, Irene Bischler, Laurel Giesbrecht (recorder)

Diane welcomed everyone back and acknowledged the Homelands of the Ktunaxa people

Darcy welcomed everyone back. Lois Ehman is new to the group since Nicole Neufeld left and will be joining us as an Elk Valley principal. Committee members all have a role and should communicate with the group you are representing. It's ideal to have those who were part of the group last year to remain on the committee, but if you're unable to commit, please let us know.

Currently working to create a shared report for our vulnerable learners. The hope is to have some solid directions around where we want to go by end of May or June. Over the next three years the plan will be fleshed out and implemented. We will continue to be accountable and transparent.

Terms of Reference were reviewed and changes made were discussed.

Following our meetings, minutes will be shared. Diane Casault will take the information to the Superintendent, Silke Yardley at Student Services Committee meetings.

Working Group Deliverables

We will have two shared plans.

- 1.) Where do we want to be in supporting our vulnerable learners in three years?
- 2.) What training and support pieces need to be in place?

We shared the existing funding model with the committee last year. We reviewed a combination of targeting funding as well as the general budget side of it. 92-93% of budget is staffing costs. The Ministry has not updated or changed student services practices in government policy to date. We may see changes now with our new government and the new Minister of Education. We will be looking at the model that we use currently. For example, counting number of kids and their complexities vs. availability of Youth Care Workers (YCW) and Education Assistant (EA). We will share and get approval from the Board as we go. As a member of this committee, please keep your PVP, teachers, CUPE members, etc. up to date on what we're doing. We will share out notes and agenda's to all committee members by housing all documents in our TEAMS group.

Discussions, planning and idea sharing

Darcy spoke to what has changed to the Student Services Teacher (SST) job description. Their job is to support classroom teachers and students. Recommendations were taken back to the Board and HR. The particular phrase, "the SST works with ALL students at ALL times" was put in with honesty and good intention, but could be taken out of context so

**School District No 5 (East Kootenay)
Inclusive Education Working Group**

this was removed. Shelley Balfour also commented that “the SST lead the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process for all students” was removed to allow a broader group of teachers to lead in this manner.

Some committee members would still like to reduce the scope of what the SST’s are responsible for. The work load is still a concern. It must be manageable. We need to build the scope of the job better from a work management perspective to ensure clarity of responsibility. Shelley commented that SST’s naturally tend to take on extra work as people tend to expect it of them. SST’s are just of that nature and will just get it done. Diane agreed that we need to support teachers in their roles and responsibilities, but have them take these things on rather than putting it on the SSTs. How can we enable and build capacity? There are a number of different things that we can help classroom teachers do more of.

Adrienne commented that she was really happy to see these changes. These changes will have a big impact. As a classroom teacher, she’s often looking for capacity in administration. Where there has been capacity, her job was made easier. Scott and Lois also have a good idea from their experience in what is needed here. We need to support the school community in understanding the roles and responsibilities of all its members.

Darcy was pleased to see that in the job description there was a section on Additional Supports. The PVP now have the ability to bring SST’s in prior to the start of the new year, then are able to support them with release time during the school year. This allows us to front end that work at the beginning of the school year. This is similar to the accommodations made for counselling staff.

**Proposed solutions - Think about the staffing and budget cycle. What do we want to see different?
What is our vision?**

Please think through this and bring back. Let’s start with this at our next meeting. How do we ensure consistency? We believe it comes back to support at all levels, counselling, PVP, etc. Each team works differently. How do we put this plan in place where people know what their roles are? Partners Handbook is now called Inclusive Education Handbook where people can go to look.

<p>Parking Lot Questions: Darcy will try to write a piece answering some parking lot questions. We don’t have all the answers, but we’ll do our best. We don’t want to throw all answers in the box and expect they’re right. We expect there will be questions, such as why some processes are the way they are. Some will require some work.</p> <p>How to move forward?</p>	<p>Date</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about the staffing and budget cycle. What do we want to see different? What is our vision? 	<p>12/10/2020/ to re visit Jan 2021</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do Education Assistants (EAs) have a good support network? Can they share their experiences and help one another? Is there an Education Assistant community? <p>No. This is getting better, but there is work that still needs to be done. Having three official pro-d days has come a long way. It would be good to share what some EAs are doing. The funding made available through a new pro-d allocation is being shared equally between CFTA and CUPE. 3 days may still not be enough when looking at improving service to kids. Julie Russchen would like to see this as a discussion item. Some EA's would benefit with a mentor as well. This would be a good conversation to have, possibly as part of the budgeting discussion.</p> <p>Mandt training does give us a good base. There is language that some EAs use all the time to explain the stuff they're facing every day. Sometimes we have to move EA's away from the behaviour issues and put the students with the right person, such as a YCW.</p> <p>We need to continue to put on specific EA Pro-D days that are focused on them. We have EA's with a range of experience; new, seasoned, good fits for schools. Our HR department has worked with our COTR partner to increase the available seats in the EA training program. Several are taking advantage of this certification. There is room for us to build an onboarding/training system for EA's to get them orientated to the school system and setting. As we move up the Elk Valley, there becomes less of a chance of attracting certified EA's in the schools. What are we going to do to build a better support system for EA's?</p> <p>Where do we want to be in 3 years?</p> <p>Diane said that we need to first look at systems that are in place already. We've added additional professional development days. A team approach to Student Services is something that helps make everything work a little more smoothly. Behaviour is related to communication. Focus on changing our lens to think more about which staff are best for certain behaviours. EA's know students really well and as first line, and do really well. Look at continuing with Mandt and keeping EA's in connection with the SBT's at their school.</p> <p>Julie is looking for anything and everything positive coming out of COVID-19. We asked for two mini workshops that we could run before the end of Jan. One was about behaviour & kids, (POPARD) strategies and things we do for kids with autism. No child has to have a diagnosis to benefit. The first was really well attended. It was held after school and schools paid their EAs to attend. Again, a budget item, but the POPARD ran the workshop then offered a follow up session with specific Q&A as a school rather than in a big group. EAs and classroom teachers attended and it was really positive. EA's gained more skills. This was personalized towards them and their schools. This was a new opportunity that they may not have had prior to COVID-19.</p>	<p>12/10/2020</p>

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Shelley Balfour reported that both unions had conversations with Silke. \$127k in 2 years has been set aside as money for additional development for further training. \$30k specifically to each union per year. What group of people does this include? Not sure yet how this will be administrated. Working on FTE for schools, hopefully Jan. Accessible to teachers from CFTA. EA's and YCW's. ABED not included as they have their own funding source.

A lot of positive conversation around EA's getting the opportunities, even those that are self directed. As we're planning, we need feedback from Student Services Co-ordinators and Student Services Teacher's. The PVP could put ideas forward. We need to make sure we're listening to the feedback perhaps using the 2 stars and a wish survey.

Are all EA's included in IEP meetings? How could this best be used? Touch base meetings? Some people utilizing the time in the mornings to plan. They also need time for professional growth. Darcy commented on the difficulty of this. The way to get more release for an EA, would be to hire fewer. This is not a good solution. We have difficulty in finding the people to bring in to cover EAs if we take them out for an in service. Not to mention if they're away sick. Only two in the Elk Valley and maybe 5 or 6 in Cranbrook. Lois tries to have EAs at IEP meetings if she can. This year, all the EA's were new and didn't know the kids yet. Valuable resources as they get to know the kids. Especially if they're worked with the child before.

We have some unqualified EA's in schools. COTR is allowing them to use their work hours toward their practicum requirements. There has been a change of work in an EA over the last 10 years. Currently it is felt by some, the pay is not equivalent to the work they're doing. It makes it hard to convince folks to do this difficult work. Supports need to be in place to keep people in this field.

**What do you envision 3 years down the road with a good support network?
What does the support network look like?**

Kim Sparks said that PMS needs more pro-d (including self directed). They should spend time with other EA's though as well. This would give them a chance to communicate with colleagues on a regular basis.

Kim McKeown echoed what Kim says. EA's have a difficult and challenging job. We need to treat them as professionals by allowing them to work on some projects. Some stay after school to initiate projects on their own time. Could we give them additional time to be professional in their area of training?

Irene Bischler feels the need to offer a stronger community and mentorship program. They need to be treated more like professionals. Offer time for collaboration maybe through workshops, create a learning community to support enhancement and their practice. We need to bring this forward as a committee. It is important.

Diane agreed that it's important for EAs to be part of meetings when possible and to participate in pro-d with the rest of the staff at the school to collaborate. All have different areas of expertise. Think about some of the strategies that they could offer to the SST. Being part of the SBT teams is important.

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<p>Darcy commented on our geographical challenges when it comes to building and supporting a community of professional learning. We will look into building an EA email list, for EAs specifically. Perhaps we should start a team in TEAMS to use as a supporting digital network, where they can post questions, have a district staff monitor and respond to it. We can involve them in the digital world and get them regularly checking their emails as well. This would be another way to get info to them and help build community and a sense of belonging.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the year wait list for assessments affect funding? <p>School psychologists; .6 with Olivia Griffioen, .9 with Trina Anderson. Their major role is to identify intellectual abilities and learning disabilities. The only assessment they do to identify additional funding is category C. They find approx. 2 each year that weren't identified before. The additional funding to the district is \$42k for each.</p> <p>Assessments are done to understand why a child isn't learning, but a cognitive profile gets in the way of their learning. We need a consultation with those with learning disabilities, requires software or a human reader for them. They may need extra time, use of calculator, etc. School Psychologist's are getting more work added on to them. Ministry of Advanced Education needs to understand the validity of the assessments that we do. Cognitive processes don't change too much over time. These should be valid for 5 years.</p> <p>Julie and Kim are often involved with students that may assess as category C kids later. They don't generally wait a year to see someone. Some that come in with a category C are already in another category.</p>	12/10/2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Alternative Education fit into the Student Services budget? 	01/2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it take to get Alternative Education status? <p>Alternate Education is Jason Tichauer's area. We will invite him to the next meeting. To get alternate education status, it must be a separate school identified within the district. They are funded differently, with different conditions, paid on amount of coursework a student completes, etc. There are some small alternate programs at LMS, FSS and SSS, SELC, with funding coming out of the special education funding. Lots of room for conversation here.</p>	01/2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are we communicating to the system? • Why does there seem to be a breakdown of communication regarding release time? <p>This is about the release time that is set for the IEP, SBT, IEP writing, consultation time. We used to have \$50k in funding here. About 4 years ago we added IEP writing dates into the budget amount. We have a formula that generates the funding. This is done in conversation with PVP at school allocation meetings as the money is in their budget. Changes in amount rolls over from one year to next. This could be a positive or a negative adjustment. Darcy's communication to PVP in the future will be</p>	12/10/2020

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<p>55% of that will be IEP meeting time with 45% of funds going to IEP writing time.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Why do Speech Language Pathologist Services stop at elementary school level?</p> <p>We have changed this! We now have more service at Gr. 7 than at Gr. 6. We've moved some SLP time into the middle and sr. years. They're spending dedicated time there now. EA's very happy to get some targeted support from SLP's at the middle and secondary levels.</p> <p>SLP's spend more time at K – Grade 4 and less time as they get into the higher grades. There are still some room for improvement. We are in a much better place with SLP services across all grades. These SLP's are good at connecting with Darcy. We're not cutting back, just realigning. There's a demonstrated need for a bit more, which will be requested at budget time.</p> 	<p>12/10/2020</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>How can we get equitable access to services across School District (i.e. in the Elk Valley)?</p> <p>We've been trying to do this for a number of years. We've looked at services from SLP, Behaviour Resource Teacher & School Psychologist. Darcy reviewed the type of populations that we have in the Elk Valley and in the Cranbrook area. Then, pulled together comparison by zone, how much service we have in each area. Julie and Kim know the complexities of the schools in their areas. They will work with Darcy to compile this info to be able to share it.</p> <p>A half- time BRT for the EV has been posted for 6 months now with no qualified applicants. We know that filling those .5 positions is a difficult task. It's often a new person, usually a new teacher trying to get into the system. A 1.0 support person, to cover the whole district, is nearly impossible. Processes in education move slowly.</p> <p>Connie spoke of the amount of experience in many of our buildings. It feels like it's more the lack of time as the team that works with the students knows them best. We have the resources, just need to be able to release the right person. We just need more time for the team to come together. Bringing outside people is not always best solution.</p> <p>SST's have worked with Megan S - Donna and Connie have had training. They have the experience and could build capacity with teachers in their school community, but need to find the extra time and release to support this. This would be a huge boost. Darcy agreed that these are important things to take back to the board as a recommendation. It's difficult to hire for portions of jobs.</p> <p>BCCAISE is the council for inclusive education. Each district has a representative that attends those meetings. Special education educators & regional coordinators meet several times each year to work on Special Education policies and documents. BCCAISE attempts to capture recommendations from us to share with the Ministry. This is n hold right now due to recent election, new</p> 	<p>12/10/2020</p>

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<p>government, new minister, etc. Superintendents Association has link to Ministry of Education and right to ministry and minister proper. Julie and Kim have both been to the BCCAISE meetings as well as summer learning sessions in the past with Darcy. Sometimes the School Psychologist, our BRT, Megan S as well as PVP have attended as part of the district team.</p> <p>Lois will follow up with Connie and Donna, in regards to the BRT role in the Elk Valley. They talked about the time frame where Megan was available. The team used the time with her to talk about what she would do and essentially, she feels that training the SBT would be a good start. Perhaps if we were to redirect the funds and had someone do a Pro-D (Dr. Green?) so that these teams could learn and work with these students. Darcy tried to put the – BRT role in perspective – 65% of student population (kids with designations), if we split Megan into thirds, she'd be 2/3 in Cranbrook and 1/3 in the Elk Valley. Darcy likes the idea of looking internally in schools to gain expertise in those areas.</p> <p>Kim agreed on building internal capacity. Loves the idea of Ross Green, but they still need the time to use those skills once they're learned. It does take additional time to put new practices into play. Lois suggested that we designate in the budget that 10% of that salary time was spent doing that. We do value our experts, but we have to be careful how thin we're spreading them. Learning and mentoring is learned over time. We need a lot more people with a lot more time. Donna Cameron requested a timeline, and suggested that we make it a goal to set aside a small amount of time with a graduated approach. Lois commented that it's automatically assumed it's a SST, when maybe it's another teacher where this is their passion.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we ensure consistency in the delivery of Student Services between buildings? 	12/10/2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we create general roles and responsibilities for teachers, principals, vice principals, education assistants, etc.? Or do they need to be more specific to better serve our students? 	12/10/2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. will be budgeting for next year. Darcy will send out needed information. • In a 3 year time frame, with the SS budget, if we could shift or allocate differently 3-5% in what we do by the end of 2023, what would you suggest? Irene, where do you think we could shift. What could we be doing less of? Less paperwork, more capacity building. Less reactive management and more proactive. Less assessment and more time with kids. We can't shift 15% of the budget, but 1% could be done. • Darcy to put together the homework portion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision for the timeline, • Review the current parking lot questions, • Try to get the alternate education piece in for January meeting • The pro-d money/budgeting, encourage people to access these funds. • Share minutes with parent group and DPAC 	

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Terms of Reference

Purpose: To create a district shared plan around supporting our vulnerable learners

Mandate:

- Identify the immediate and intermediate service within 3 years
- Create a plan to implement
- Accountability and transparency

Membership: Membership of the group will consist of a broad selection of our district:

- DPAC reps: **Michelle Navratil and Kristy Nickerson**
- Two student services teachers: one high school/one elementary: **Kim Sparks and Donna Cameron**
- Two student services coordinators: **Julie Russchen and Kim McKeowen**
- Two teacher representatives: **Adrienne Demers and Connie White**
- PVP representative: **Lois Ehman and Scott Holt**
- District Principal of Student Services: **Darcy Verbeurgt**
- CUPE Representative: **Irene Bischler**
- CFTA co – chairs: **Chris Kielpinski and Shelley Balfour**
- Director of Student Learning and Innovation: **Diane Casault**
- Administrative Assistant (Committee Secretary): **Laurel Giesbrecht**

Meetings:

- There will be approximately 5 half day meetings with the goal of completion by June 24th, 2021
- The first meeting will be December 10th from 1:00 – 3:30pm via TEAMS
- Following each meeting, the Superintendent designate will update the board at the next student services committee meeting.

Deliverables:

- Create a shared plan around supporting and servicing our vulnerable learners
- Create a shared plan around supporting, training and servicing our staff who work with our vulnerable learners
- Share the existing funding model with committee
- Update committee with Ministry changes as available
- Recommendations
- Board approval of working group recommendations
- Share board approved plan with all stakeholders

Agenda and Minutes:

- Agendas will be provided in advance of meetings.
- Notes will be taken at the meeting and will be shared

School Age Students – Speech-Language Report

School: _____

Month: _____

SLP name: _____

SLA name: _____

Students Served on referral	Indigenous Students Served	New Students Served	Direct Hours – SLP Individual Students	Direct Hours – SLP Group	Direct Hours – SLA Individual Students	Direct Hours – SLA Group	Total Hours
Number of students actively receiving direct services this month that have been referred for SL services.	Number of students actively receiving direct services this month who are identified as Indigenous.	Number of students deemed eligible and actively receiving direct services for the first time this month. Includes students who have received services before but who have returned to address a new or changed situation.	Number of hours this month that the SLP provided direct individual services, reported to the nearest half hour interval. This includes time spend directly with a student, either in person or on the phone or technology. Report writing. Parent training.	Number of hours this month that staff have provided group services, reported to the nearest half hour interval. Providing Pro-D or in service to staff. This includes time spend directly with a student, group of students or, whole classroom either in person or on the phone or technology.	Number of hours this month that the SLA provided direct individual services, reported to the nearest half hour interval. This includes time spend directly with a student, either in person or on the phone or technology.	Number of hours this month that staff have provided group services, reported to the nearest half hour interval. This includes time spend directly with a student, group of students or classroom, either in person or on the phone or technology.	All ‘speech-language-related’ service delivery hours provided during the month including: Direct hours, plus telephone/e-mails, case consultation, supervision, or management meetings, material prep, and other such duties. Excludes: leaves, professional development activities, or agency related meetings not related to services delivery. (i.e., WIMMIS, BMO PCard training)