



SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

March 17th, 2016

SD5 Thrilled With Return of the Long Form Census

May 2016 will see the return of the mandatory, long form census and the School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay Board of Education couldn't be happier.

The mandatory, long form census was first enacted by Parliament in 1870 to provide accurate data about Canadians, enabling the Federal Government to plan public services such as health care, education, transportation etc., inform federal transfer payments and determine the equitable number of Members of Parliament (MPs) for each province and territory.

In 2011, the Conservative Government eliminated the mandatory, long form census in favour of the Voluntary National Household Survey (V-NHS) despite an outcry from historians, business and not-for-profit organizations, economists and statisticians –including Statistics Canada and then-chief-statistician Munir Sheikh, prompting his resignation.

According to Board Chair, Frank Lento, census information is vital for planning services at all government levels from provincial education funding and skills training to local day care, police and fire protection services.

“The V-NHS removed the ability to make sound decisions based on accurate information, forcing the provincial government into the untenable position of having to guess where to spend public tax dollars and allocate needed resources.”

The Board first became aware of the inaccuracies of the V-NHS when they inquired into the formula used by the Ministry of Education (MoE) for allocation of CommunityLINK funding, a program that supports vulnerable students in communities across BC, prompting their January, 2015 letter to former Prime Minister Steven Harper urging his government to consider a return to the mandatory long form census.

Lento says the Board was informed by the MoE that CommunityLINK funding was based on vulnerability factors such as economic and social conditions and educational attainment.

“When we asked why the Statistics Canada information they used in their funding formula was from 2006 rather than 2011 we were told that Stats Can themselves cautioned against using the 2011 V-NHS data –especially data collected in communities like those in our District whose populations are less than 25,000. Our Board became concerned that other education funding decisions might also be based on ‘best-guess economics’. It was this concern that prompted the Board’s advocacy.”

The Board is pleased to share information about the upcoming census with all of its schools as per a request by the BC Public School Employers’ Association (BCPSEA) who has agreed to provide Statistics Canada with support generating awareness about the census among school districts across the province.

For more information on the census, please visit the Statistics Canada website at www.census.gc.ca. To read a copy of the SD5 Board of Education’s advocacy letter on the census, visit www.sd5.bc.ca/Board/advocacy/Pages/default.aspx

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