
Acting Board Chair Ciel Patenaude acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional and unceded territory of the Northern Secwepemc People.

BUS ACCIDENT

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our staff, first responders and passers-by who provided assistance on Friday at the scene of the bus crash. While we are relieved as a school community to know the injuries sustained by our students and staff were not in the magnitude we feared, we are also aware there is a family who was not fortunate, and for them, we are heartbroken.

On Sunday, the schools got together at 100 Mile Elementary to allow students, staff, and parents to gather as needed with appropriate supports. The Operations department has also spent time debriefing with transportation and facilities personnel. I cannot commend enough the SD27 team who has been working on this around the clock to ensure their students, families and staff are cared for. Yesterday, additional supports were deployed to schools to be of assistance as needed.

SD27 is grateful for the ongoing support from partners, especially The Ministry of Education and Child Care and Safer Schools teams who have been providing guidance, assistance, and support throughout this unprecedented situation.

An incident such as this may affect people in different ways, and at different times, even if one was not directly connected to the incident. Please pay attention to your well-being and those around you to ensure you are supported and supporting as needed.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DAY

Thank you to all of our staff and community partners for their engagement in and recognition of National Indigenous Day! It was a beautiful day in the park with a fantastic parade. I especially loved hearing from local Chiefs and elders who have visibly seen the ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation across our school and community.

THANK YOU!!

Five years ago, I was invited to take on this role in a District that was seen to be in considerable turmoil. Over the past 5 years, SD27 staff (at all levels) have worked relentlessly to establish a direction and momentum that was previously difficult under challenging circumstances. It has been a team effort. From the the transportation department modernizing busing to maintenance across sites, to technology and finance, the work in the district has been transformational.

Understanding roles and responsibilities while establishing proper processes has been an essential component in our transformation. We have worked hard to focus on issues, not who yells loudest about the issue or who is best connected. There are a multitude of processes available for people to solve issues and people with legitimate concerns have no difficulties utilizing legitimate processes.

Across schools, a renewed focus on learning, indigenous ways of knowing and doing and inclusion has revitalized school environments where learning is at the heart of what schools do. Students, across the district, report being safer, a greater sense of belonging, and a belief that more adults care about them. This is only possible because of the focus on support staff, teachers and administration working together with a common goal... student success.

5 years ago we struggled to attract staff, especially teaching staff and leaders, to come to our school district. Now, through partnerships with the CCTA and the best professional development in the province, we are consistently amongst the most successful with recruitment. Moreover, we increasingly see our teacher leaders wanting to become school administrators while fully understanding the complex expectations of these roles.

On virtually every metric, SD 27 is performing better than ever, especially with some of our best reading and numeracy results at grade 4 and graduation completion. This is only possible through the commitment our educators have shown in engaging in learning opportunities and improved common assessment practices.

In my 5 years here, I have seen some practices that concerned me, and I have been fortunate to see a leadership team grow that wants to do better, lean into the work, and improve life chances for students. It's hard work, and I am proud of the leadership commitment we have seen by growing local leaders while also recruiting exceptional leaders from other places. Having leaders willing to, and committed to, doing the actual work is non-negotiable. It would be hard not to point out that we have accomplished this work despite having to endure a pandemic, which by all accounts, we navigated as well as (if not better than) any other district in the province.



Amongst the hard work, highlights (and low lights), one highlight will stand out to me. On June 3, at our year-end FNEC table meeting, I had the honor of being blanketed by our communities that represent the FNEC table across SD27. This remains the most humbling event of my educational career and I do not have words to capture my gratitude. The work and progress of that table from where we started 5 years ago is profound and an indication of the work staff are engaged in across schools. Without the work being visible in schools, this would not be possible.



We have come far, but the work is far from done. I fully expect SD27 to continue to improve with the team around Superintendent Lenardon, and in 5 years time, it will be better than it is today. That is the work. Get better every day, even in the face of those who would drag you down. Be better. I hope for great things in your future.

As Monique Gray Smith reminds us, be grateful and have hope.

“I hope you are kind.”

“I hope you have belly laughs.”

“I hope you love to learn.”

I hope...

Next Board of Education Meeting – September 24, 2024

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“Learning, Growing and Belonging Together”

SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION CHANGES

Welcome, and congratulations to those stepping into new leadership roles in the Fall!

Acting Director of Operations- Marcus Loewen
Chilcotin Road Elementary - Mr. Doug Brown, Principal
Nesika Elementary- Mrs. Heather McKinnon, Vice Principal
Columneetza Junior Secondary- Ms. Alina Cameron, Vice Principal
Lake City Secondary- Ms. Nara Riplinger, Vice Principal
Peter Skene Ogden Secondary- Mr. Robert MacDonald
Likely AND Big Lake Elementary- Ms. Sari Small

RETIREMENT RECOGNITION DINNER

Thank you to all who attended the recognition dinner last week. Congratulations to all those who are looking forward to a new exciting chapter. Thank you all for your work and your part in the ongoing efforts of SD27 to be better every day. It truly does take a village.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

At a recent meeting, it was disturbing to hear a past practice of our alternate school heralded as an exemplar, including by some former staff. There is no world in which our former practices could be celebrated.

Our previous alternate model failed to comply, even remotely, with ministry guidelines. 5 years ago, that program resulted in an audit in which the report included the phrase, “decimation of funding.” The issues included:

- Claiming students who did not attend.
- Claiming students who did not meet the criteria.
- Claiming students without providing a learning plan or path to achieve graduation credits.
- Placing students as young as 16 on an Adult Dogwood path
- Significant concerns regarding the validity of exam scores

All of these practices disproportionately impacted Indigenous students as there were up to 177 students on the books, almost entirely of Indigenous background.

It has taken these past years to completely re-structure our service delivery while working with the high schools to ensure their services reasonably provide opportunities for the success of a wide range of students. It is disheartening that we would hear the public advocate for such a model, let alone former employees who should know better and claim to have the interests of students in mind. No part of our former model had the best interests of students at heart.

The current staff at Skyline are to be commended for their ongoing efforts to restructure an alternate model that meets ministry guidelines while providing an environment of care for their students.

Not only were practices like this leading to financial turmoil and uncertainty of the district, but the pattern of choosing inefficient and ineffective service providers further handicapped the district with regards to management of capital assets, security, and use of technology across the district, including the core financial management systems that had not been updated in 33 years.

Next Board of Education Meeting – September 24, 2024

To read full Board and Committee Reports, view the agenda on the [District Website](#).

Starting with a comprehensive audit by IBM highlighting significant problems across all facets of the district, Director Cameron began reshaping SD27. Under Director Cameron's leadership, SD27's modernization efforts have placed us as one of the top school districts in the province with regards to the quality of technology available and the integration of service. Following this work, IBM has since had SD27 present their work, commenting "through the leadership of Superintendent, Chris van der Mark, and his senior team, their recognition on the importance of leveraging key areas have been critical to their district and others who have been following throughout the province."

What some people fail to connect is how SD27 has gone from being in financial peril and struggling to meet core functions, to being a systems leader in a very short time. While other districts may have struggles to balance budgets, SD 27 is consistently running a balanced budget while injecting more money into core educational services and tackling long-neglected facilities issues. Mr. Wallin's work has been invaluable in this progress. The professional learning partnerships with the CCTA not only resulting in the best learning opportunities for our staff, but it also results in our teachers having significantly more disposable professional development funds than other teachers in the province. All of this work is connected under a District Plan for Learner Success, developed largely by the tireless efforts of Deputy Superintendent Lenardon. Look at the previous plan to understand just how profound the improvements have been in SD27.

SD27 has had the good fortune to have been led by a Board that understands its role as governors and focuses on improved student results without getting dragged into the fray of personal agendas and personal politics or connections where decisions are based on individual agendas. Only by creating and adhering to processes has the space been created for SD27 to move forward and possibly begin to thrive. Those conditions largely remain, though I would caution you to be aware of those who would harken back to SD27's most challenging years of dysfunction, mismanagement, and mistrust as a model to strive for. Who benefits from that? If it was so good, why was it so broken? The work, and the kids, are too important to be sidelined by selfish, unethical agendas. Facts and evidence matter. Those who do not learn from history....

IN GRATITUDE

Not wanting to sign off with the above, I'd like to end my report with gratitude.

There have been so many good people here to make progress possible. While the Board has set the way, the Board office team has become superb. Our partner unions have been engaged and critical as needed, but always focused on moving the district and their members forward to be better, resulting in some of the best opportunities possible for their members. The DPAC has grown from non-existent to a cooperative of active parents genuinely excited about their kids' schools and how we work to do even better. Our school-based administration has embraced the leadership challenges and responsibilities of the work and now has an active role in developing school culture and student success. We have worked hard to improve communication with local partners such as the City of Williams Lake, The CRD and the District of 100 Mile and through partnerships continue to work better together. As mentioned earlier though, I am most grateful to the many First Nations Communities the district serves and their ongoing grace and kindness in working with us to move forward in a good way. We will continue to learn with and from that example, and I cannot help but take this learning forward into whatever the future may hold.

I am grateful to the team that will carry on and ensure we are better tomorrow than we are today.

Next Board of Education Meeting – September 24, 2024

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

All motion recommendations from the committee meetings to be presented to the Board of Education were passed.

Finance & Facilities and Transportation Committee

THAT the Board of Education accepts the Transportation changes to be implemented for September 2024 and the ongoing optimization and alignment with Policy and AP 770.

THAT School District No. 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin) Annual Budget Bylaw for fiscal year 2024-2025 in the amount of \$77,558,144 be read the **third** time this 25th day of June 2024.

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin) approves the proposed Five-Year Major Capital Plan to be submitted for 2025/2026 to the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

THAT the Board approves the publication of all school fee schedules for the 2024- 2025 school year.

Education Committee

THAT the Board of Education approves the PSO French Immersion Europe field trip in principle with final approval in January 2025, pending confirmation of details prior to the trip.

THAT the Board of Education approves the PSO Costa Rica field trip in principle with final approval in January 2025, pending confirmation of details prior to the trip.

Policy Committee

THAT the Board of Education adopts Policy 390 and new AP 390.

Next Board of Education Meeting – September 24, 2024

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