



**K'ómoks First Nation &
School District 71 (Comox Valley)
Local Education Agreement (LEA)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 26, 2024**



Attendance In Person:

Members:

Dr. Jeremy Morrow, Superintendent of Schools
Joe Heslip, Associate Superintendent
Lelaina Jules, Acting District Principal – Indigenous Ed
Erin Higginbottom, Ed & Capacity Dev Coordinator -
K'ómoks First Nation

Guests:

Pamela Mitchell, Culture & Language Manager -
K'ómoks First Nation
Joann Restoule, Ni'Noxola – Indigenous Ed

Regrets:

Susan Savoie, Councillor, K'ómoks First Nation
Jay Dixon, Associate Superintendent

Recording Secretary: Candace Jesson, Executive Assistant

1. Welcome and Traditional Territory Acknowledgement by Pamela

2. Call to Order by Erin Higginbottom

2.1 Approval of Agenda – February 26th, 2025

2.2 Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 27th, 2024

3. New Business

3.1 Presentation/Proposal: Language/Culture Inclusion @ Isfeld

- Joe opened the presentation, initiating discussion on language and culture, emphasizing the mandatory approval by KFN.
- Slides shared provide more detail.
- Integrating local Indigenous languages into schools should appear in the following order: Pentlatch, Ayajuthem, and Kwakwaka.
- Rectify and acknowledgment the need to properly credit artists.
- Bring in the teachings of Blackbear into the school to foster understanding within the school environment.
- Desire to prominently feature the Blackbear artwork at the front entrance of Isfeld as a welcoming display.
- Example shared of similar displays at the Courtenay and Cumberland Museums.
- Consideration of adding representation from additional Indigenous language groups from across Turtle Island in the space.
- Confirmed that Isfeld will be the model for the other schools.
- Recognition of the need for and importance of consulting with native speakers of the languages.
- Acknowledgment that a few schools have received local names through formal naming ceremonies. For example, Highland Secondary was gifted Ik'atsi, but

there is little representation of its meaning inside the school. There is a desire to reinforce awareness of the name, its origins, and the teachings associated with it.

- Recognition that both the current and future processes will be guided by KFN, and this direction is welcomed. Discussions included establishing protocols for formalizing the procurement and approval of Indigenous artwork.

Action: Joe Heslip to communicate process to staff.

Action: Erin Higgenbottom to share this information with Chief and Council.

3.2 Policy Framework

- Erin provided an additional draft of the policy framework to members. This was timely, as local groups recently discussed their Education Policy during a retreat. The draft combines notes from the retreat and the SBO draft.
- Joe presented work conducted by Ted Cadwallader and inquired about the mention of Sa'se peoples in the document. It was concluded that there are members of the tribe within KFN, and they should be included.
- Jessie Everson has been actively reaching out to ensure all families are included in this process. An invitation was extended to coordinate and host groups to share their stories and provide guidance based on identified needs. This work is ongoing.
- Certain elements in the additional draft are valuable for consideration in shaping the policy framework.
- There is a desire to provide a local name to the policy in a reciprocal and meaningful way. This work will include KFN's guidance and direction.

3.3 Grade 11 BAA Course – Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- A course was shared that had been put forward for consideration. Discussion centered on whether KFN and families have the appetite and capacity to engage in the course creation process.
- A perspective was shared that the course reflects indigenization rather than being built from an Indigenous perspective and ways of knowing. There is a strong desire for courses to be developed with an Indigenous lens from the outset, incorporating holistic assessments.
- A question was raised about whether this course should be the starting point for curriculum design and development or if another course would be more transformative.
- Proposed having the community define its needs and priorities, determining the best ways to engage.
- Suggested starting point would be to ask; if the community had 120 hours with each grade 11 student would that look like?
- Key areas identified include history and archaeology, with opportunities to build upon students' individual interests.
- Mention of NIC's Core Competencies course as a possible reference.
- It was noted that there are no restrictions in the current curriculum preventing teachers from incorporating Indigenous perspectives into their teaching.
- **Action: Ask KFN if they are prepared lead discussions on the design of a mandatory course.**

3.4 Updates:

3.4.1 MOU SD71

- Mentioned the distinction-based approach to system change regarding remuneration and expressing gratitude to contributors. Recognized that this is a living document, and language can be adjusted as needed.
- Acknowledged the discomfort in asking individuals if they are registered, raising the question of how this information can be shared or provided.
- Emphasized the importance of working with the Nation, requiring a staff member to be part of the working group.
- Suggested using the term K'ómoks descendant as a possible approach.
- Recognized the need to keep the Nation informed when working with individuals.

3.4.2 Indigenous Knowledge Specialist position

- A new hire has been made since the last meeting, reporting to the District Principal, Indigenous Education.
- The role involves working with staff to navigate the school system while providing gentle corrections in a supportive manner.
- Efforts are focused on reaching out to local families and consciously walking in multiple worlds to build capacity.

3.4.3 Equity Scan – tabled to next meeting.

3.4.4 Student Attendance and Supports

- Joe shared and summarized student use of supports as of February 4th.
- Noted an observed shift toward increased academic conversations.
- As previously requested, provided a month-over-month view with the ability to drill down into the data.
- Addressed the request for more detailed attendance information. Compared to provincial numbers, attendance rates for on-reserve students are significantly higher.
- Reviewed the action plan to meet and assess progress two to three times per year.

3.4.5 Pathways to Post-Secondary Event

- Attended the most recent evening event hosted by KFN, highlighting the strong level of support for parents and students.

3.4.5 KFN Youth Day

- Thanks, and gratitude were expressed on behalf of KFN for the work and support in making Youth Day in the Big House a success.
- Acknowledged that while there is still much work to be done, it is encouraging to see the LEA active and making an impact.

4. Old Business

4.1 Review of current LEA and Model LEA – tabled to next meeting.

4.2 KFN sponsored Pro D for SD71 Leadership

- Topics that have emerged include cultural humility, reconciliation, cultivating safe spaces, and the desire for KFN to support professional development initiatives.

5. Next Meeting – May 21, 2025

6. Meeting Adjourned – 3:15 pm