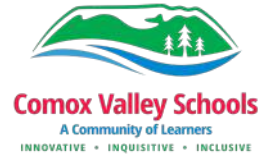




**K'ómoks First Nation &
School District 71 (Comox Valley)
Local Education Agreement (LEA)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 21, 2025**



Attendance In Person:

Members:

Dr. Jeremy Morrow, Superintendent of Schools
Joe Heslip, Associate Superintendent
Erin Higginbottom, Education & Capacity Development Coordinator - K'ómoks First Nation
Candace Newman, Councillor - K'ómoks First Nation

Guests: N/A

Regrets:

Susan Savoie, Councillor, K'ómoks First Nation
Lelaina Jules, Acting District Principal – Indigenous Ed
Jay Dixon, Associate Superintendent

Recording Secretary: Marlene Leach, Sr. Executive Assistant

1. **Welcome and Traditional Territory Acknowledgement** by Joe Heslip

2. **Call to Order** by Erin Higginbottom, called meeting to order 1:34 pm

2.1 **Approval of Agenda – May 21, 2025** – Approved as presented

2.2 **Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 26, 2025** – Approved as presented

3. **New Business**

3.1 **LEA Priorities 25-26**

COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

• **Student Health & Well-being**

- Erin - the process started over March break and was presented to the Indigenous Education Committee, then Chief and Councilors, then connected with Natasha Rainkie, and feedback was received. There was a working meeting in the last week or two. Now the list has been brought to this table for discussion, then will be presented to Chief and Councilors.
- Erin - shared a handout with a breakdown of priorities.
- Erin - will keep building off of the relationship with Natasha.
- Erin - getting out in schools – map out calendar in September for the school year; when to visit, strategic check-ins, staying informed, coming to meetings with action plans, and more events such as youth days.
- Erin - along with data – what is happening in the classroom, how are the kids feeling? We would like to have Boys and Girls Club programming 2025-26.
- Joe – Student Health well-being – is there any data to share, how were you received in the schools and are visits done at specific times of year?
- Erin – we were there a few times during the year. Check in randomly, see them in their classroom setting, we brought them treats. When Natasha is

talking to a teacher, there is a list; how can she support them, are they thriving and more? The quantitative data does not always show this.

- Joe – B&G Club – partnership 50/50, budget brought forward. This would mostly be Andrea’s budget as a youth coordinator.
- Erin - afterschool program at the moment, later an extracurricular activity, busing will be involved. Would like to bring in community members and mentors to work with the children. A continuum of learning where youth can see this type of learning vs. school learning is just as important. This has to be moved outside of school hours due to transportation.

- **Community Engagement and Events and Information Sharing Systems**

- Joe – parent engagement with parents and IEPs, how we can get the information from parents and how can Joe be helpful? Joe, shared data, “Individual – potential KFN Student Data Sharing” from MyED BC, asking Erin, how granular does the data need to be? If we are sharing IEP data, how far is it being shared? This might be hard to share in KFN community.
- Erin – we will have this discussion with parents regarding data sharing and information, so that we can make informed decisions in LEA. It is good to know if a student is on track earlier, then we can catch something and put services in place. Parents can give insight to provide an integrated approach to data sharing. We want to find the information that is not on paper.
- Joe – This could be a partnership; we can work together. What do parents care about and provide suggestions. Co-create relationship with community. Currently, we are limited with the information we can share with the Chief and Council. How do we share what we can share and must be up to each parent.
- Erin - some information that KFN receives is masked anyway. There is an argument for unmasking, so that we can target supports. Need a systematic solution. The conversation needs to start with the community.
- Jeremy – DPAC has requested to present to parents, what an IEP. What is available and what are they comfortable sharing, signed consent.
- Joe – create ideas to share. In June meeting we will share global trends, attendance, supports, but not naming students. We would like to get to root of the essence, the why behind things, there may be some obvious answers. We believe in individual approach, each parent, personalized information if family is open to it.
- Jeremy – MyEd BC will tell a component of story, outside of this, what is the narrative, their experiences? Capturing in a meaningful way, the parent, and child’s experiences. What are new ways together to get those stories. Not just report card or FSA results.
- Erin – we are not sure where we will get to this year, but tomorrow night’s meeting is a great start.
- **ACTION:** Joe / Erin – figure out the next steps and next meeting. Look for dates in the fall for a parent meeting.
- Erin - majority of supports to KFN students are social / emotional by ISW, not academic. Can we go deeper somehow? What kind of social emotional support, what do children feel safe with? Look at current data and how do we go further with it.

- Candace – Student may not be receiving academic support, but do they need it, or do they need it but are not getting it?
- Joe – the hope is to ensure that administration, Natasha, and teachers have a discussion around what the student’s actual needs are.
- Erin – how do we build on the information that Natasha is receiving? Does it stay in school district or how can we bring it forward to KFN to bring good decisions and protect privacy?
- Erin – there is quite a bit to do around information sharing systems.
- Erin – for the meeting calendar, include informal check-ins. Joe mentioned that he may not need to be included to all meetings if they prefer.
- Erin – align data sharing with report outs, have a timeline that makes sense. I.e., receive the information on time to be able to report quarterly to Chief and Council.
- **ACTION:** Joe / Erin – create timeline at next informal meeting to propose in June.
- **School Support**
 - Erin – Jesse Everson has been well received and has a tremendous capacity for knowledge sharing. From KFN’s perspective, having someone else, like Jesse, as a role model and mentor, working in that capacity would be beneficial. Are there funds to bring on someone else, a second knowledge holder position? Where can we find the funds?
 - Joe –Jesse’s position is a new position, and we do not want to burn him out. I want to think creatively around appreciating the gifts that are around the community in a good way. Is KFN interested in looking at specific contracts, appropriate in a way that only people in KFN could do, i.e., language? How do you share the knowledge from the land in a good way? Would want to be methodical about what Chief and Council wants. Would like to build on it. There is a lot to learn from Jesse and he will likely be doing this for a long time.
 - Candace - not opposed to lots of smaller contracts, as it is impossible to think that one person holds all of the knowledge. When I was in school, the Elders would come in and speak; it was amazing. There needs to be an understanding of who the knowledge keepers are and what are they willing to share.
 - Erin - can we leave this on as further discussion and how these opportunities can be discovered.
 - Joe – we are reestablishing trust with KFN and open to it.
- **Professional Development**
 - Erin – a discussion has already started. A proposal has been put forward for some cultural humility training. This topic did not get discussed at the second IEC meeting this month and we are looking for IED support. Hopefully, this will be on the June agenda. KFN is interested in supporting ongoing PD with the district - also about restorative justice, language, and culture. Ask that the district, for the 6th Pro-D event of the year, that whatever is planned, is presented to KFN first for feedback.
 - Jeremy – partnering together will help shape the day rather than reshape.

- Joe – cultural humility circle – KFN members are a part of the circle and invited Erin and Candace, asking them if they would they like to be a part of it.

LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

• Program Development

- Joe - Aspen Park Elementary is expanding and is also the KFN catchment school. Would like to have an exploratory conversation of opening Indigenous Education at Aspen.
- **ACTION:** Joe – bring this topic and Nala'tsi to IEC meeting to have conversation. Joe has discussed this at Puntledge. Great ideas, would like to go through IEC, propose should be on table for IED to create plan by September.
- Erin - what does this process look like to move a program, have a timeline for the IEC, budgets, etc.
- Joe – it is mostly HR staffing, but a lot else. It can be done.
- Erin – June LEA meeting step by step, we have something outlined for IEC.
- Erin - elementary language course framework – curriculum has the framework, look at this and develop. Opportunity to have a person hired on contract to develop resources for earlier grades.
- **ACTION:** Joe – will meet with Lelaina and some teachers in an exploratory meeting around elementary language course framework.

• Resources

- Erin - maybe find a way to build that in.

• Protocols and Procedures

- Erin - potential to create land-based core samplers and more. Other BAA courses and what procedure is in developing them. Could we develop policy /procedure so that KFN has insight in development, especially if it is land based?
- Joe – for Indigenous related courses, the Ministry has online information, but if a new BAA course, there should be a process by which KFN has input, yes, no, or maybe, especially on land.
- Erin – First Peoples Principles, the local nation is consulted on new content.
- **ACTION:** Joe - will get back to Erin on this.
- Erin – Standardized and Socialized Protocols, this was carried over from last time.
- Joe – will every principal and school do land acknowledgements the same? This topic is very deep and knows what it brings out in people. It is difficult to get it right as an outsider; context specific, nuance.
- Candace – website just K'omoks, but when she speaks, she acknowledges all families. This is a larger discussion that Council should have. It is complicated. Erin – leave as ongoing discussion.
- Jeremy – authentic meaningful way as well, not just standard. Some authenticity to it, where it is not from the heart.
- Erin – create guidelines instead of standardized. Or maybe a guideline or conversation.

GOVERNANCE

• Policies & - Procedures

- Jeremy - November 2026 is next municipal election.
- Erin - keeping municipal election date in mind and discussing co-governance even further.
- Erin - Develop Procurement Policy – relationships within this district but be fair to offer opportunities to all.
- Joe - how would you like to see this develop? Do you have a template?
- Candace - in process of developing it and can share.
- Joe - would like KFN to develop and then take lead from you. We can have informal meetings.
- Joe – Elected KFN member – do we need to bring this forward to the Board?
- Erin – this was before my time.
- Candace - we would have to chat. LEA started before her time too.
- Erin - we can look into it further.
- Joe – co-governance is typically when a nation feels disenfranchised with school district. Ensure we have everything in the right way.
- Jeremy - in other districts, co-governance has lots of complexity, is a substantive shift. Could have KFN member run as Trustee. This is a major process – upper bureaucracy, BCSTA etc.
- Erin – will talk to current Chief and Council.
- Erin – policy development on student that sharing between KFN and SD71.

LEA Review and Oversight

- Erin - have KFN Education Committee Member and KFN Learning Success Teacher (Natasha) to join in process.
- **ACTION:** Joe - will get back to Erin about KFN Ed Committee Member.
- Erin - any conflicts or discrepancies?
- Joe – compensation by KFN?
- Erin - yes.
- **ACTION:** Joe - will work collaboratively with you.
- Erin - Policy Review, only skimmed through model LEA; language is strong. Erin will compare the two over the summer, chat with this table and KFN and see what they think of model LEA. The current LEA expires in 2027
- Joe - Empowering the IEC in Indigenizing – what can we suggest for the IEC timeline next year, so that they are empowered to make the decisions? A year has gone by.
- Erin - it takes longer than a year.
- Joe, I hope we can continually build the relationship and am working hard, can do better.
- Erin - Continuing to move the work forward.
- Jeremy- Jay, you have that fire, we are underperforming, that is why we have an LEA and still need it. It is moral. Feel urgency. Move from strength to stronger, a commitment that we can be better next year than this year. We are not satisfied where we are at with KFN and other Indigenous students. Progress is happening. Grateful for Joe's repair work and Erin's grace.

3.2 Cultural Humility Group

- Joe – work in progress and something to consider, with regards to joining that.
- Erin - proposals if you have more to include, Joe, please send by email.

- Joe – these are your priorities. I will need to get back to you as soon as I can.
- Jeremy – regarding language, conversation about LEA, shared obligation in schools, would love to see this in schools. Would love to see this move forward.

3.3 Aspen Art Proposal

- Joe – Aspen Park Elementary expansion project, consultation. Artwork over a walkway between buildings, would like to have artwork by KFN member on the front and back. Dimensions provided 10.6m x 1.1 m and back 8.2 x 1.1 m high. Could propose to any KFN member. There is a \$20,000 budget, with work completing in fall of 2025. Could complete the art prior to end of the school year, have a ceremony at that time to unveil the living artwork that would be there. This is not out of targeted dollars; it is a separate line item.
- Erin – maybe best approach, for example, NIC student housing, EOI's to invite Komox artists to apply, will put school district in touch with KFN communications team. Usually NIC gathers applications, discusses, votes, consensus, and notify successful applicant.
- Erin - will put in touch with KFN communications team. The committee should invite IEC KFN member to participate and reps from school district, Aspen (including a KFN student).
- Candace – families, avoid conflicts of interest. Maybe have students participate in some way (i.e., hand art).
- Joe - could modify the work to fit the budget, i.e., art on front only and not front and back. **ACTION:** follow up with KFN Communications team.

4. Old Business

4.1 Review of LEA and Model LEA

- Discussed above.

4.2 Seeking KFN Member to contribute/advise SD71 onboarding process and local signage in schools

- Discussed above.

5. Next Meeting and Adjournment – 3:00 pm

- Next meeting was not determined.