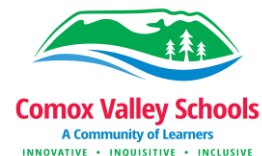




**K'ómoks First Nation &
School District 71 (Comox Valley)
Local Education Agreement (LEA)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 25, 2026**



Attendance In Meeting:

Members:

Dr. Jeremy Morrow, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Joe Heslip, Associate Superintendent
Lelaina Jules, District Principal, Indigenous Education
Erin Higginbottom, Education & Capacity Development Coordinator - K'ómoks First Nation
Natasha Rainkie, K-12 K'ómoks First Nation Student Success Teacher
Simone Compton, KFN Education Council

Guests: none

Regrets:

Keisha Everson, Indigenous Education Council Chair
Trish McPhail, Post Secondary and Advanced Skills Coordinator
Suzanne Savoie, Councillor
Candace Newman, Councillor

Recording Secretary: Candace Jesson, Manager Administrative Services & Projects

1. **Welcome and Traditional Territory Acknowledgement** by Erin Higginbottom
2. **Introductions & Call to Order** by Erin Higginbottom, called meeting to order 11:35 am
 - 2.1 **Approval of Agenda – February 25, 2026** – approved as presented
 - 2.2 **Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 5, 2025** – approved as presented
3. **3.1 Accountability Report**
 - 3.1.1 **Budget Engagement & Discussion**
 - Plateau of overall enrollment (increase in designations, increase in online, decline in brick-and-mortar)
 - Impacts of CFB Comox expansion on enrollment projections
 - Budget Impacts:
 - Inflationary pressures will impact operations
 - Teacher contract finalizations
 - Preliminary budget survey results shared
 - Decisions and priorities are aligned with District Design Principles
 - Feedback:
 - Noted that Land-based learning falls within experiential learning
 - Desire for reallocation of funds for supports in the classroom

Action: Erin Higginbottom to take budget information to Counsellors on March 10th.

3.1.2 Indigenous Student Success Team Meetings

- Reminder that school administrators are aware and are required to meet frequently to inform LEA meetings.
- Strong in the following areas:
 - Absenteeism
 - Grad and post grad planning
 - Independent study opportunities
- Working to advance:
 - Written output (classroom supports, technology, intervention, LST)
 - Building confidence (social/emotional learning)
 - Would like to build relationship between Principles and KFN representation
 - Support in providing TTOC coverage for teachers to engage in the meetings.

3.1.3 Attendance Report

- Looking at improving the data received with consideration for bell times, how we report absences,
- Shared the methodology behind the figures presented in the data.
- Reviewed the provincial averages:
 - Absenteeism is increasing overall
- District Averages:
 - Rates are higher than provincial average
 - On-Reserve rates are higher and in comparison, to other districts attendance is higher.
 - Common absent reasons followed the same trends between Non-Indigenous and Indigenous Students except for On Reserve Students where illness is the top reason versus parental excuse reported.

Action: Joe investigate whether elementary and secondary students can be isolated along with on and off reserve students.

3.1.4 Services Delivered to KFN Students

- Review of support distribution in December, January and February compared to the previous year and changes in supports accessed at semester start-up.
- Top support categories; 1. Social Emotional Support 2. Conversation with student 3. Academic support 4. Student gathering 5. Food 6. Academic support.

Action: Lelaina investigate whether elementary and secondary students can be isolated along with on and off reserve students.

Policy Framework (added)

- Continuing to connect with families to ensure all families are part of the policy framework.

3.1.5 Inclusive Education Funding

- Looking for numbers and associated funding use for KFN students with designations - understand how the funding works.
- Revised Consent Form drafted for parents.
- Incorporate parents' information needs into the LEA.

3.2 Community & Connection

3.2.1 'LEA Tea' Update

- Opportunity to gather parent voices for inclusion in the LEA.
- Planning to host one more gathering.
- Outline priorities for year ahead.

3.3 Languages and Culture

3.3.1 Language Feasibility EOI & Contract

- To address s.4 (a) of the LEA a draft contract has been drawn up.
- Targeted funds from IEC for the contract of a feasibility study.
- Feedback:
 - Culture Manager to review and bring to the Counsellors on March 10th.
 - Pentlach is included in the next LEA.
- To address teacher concerns around resources it was recommended an approved accessible repository be curated.

Action: Lelaina contact Pamela with the Culture Committee for contract review and feedback.

3.3.2 Early Languages Resources

- Conversations within the Parent Tot group included the early language framework.
- Desire for the work to align with the language feasibility study before proceeding with any robust development.

3.3.3 Aspen Park K-1 Program Update

- Discussed in the education committee meeting in January.
- Feedback was moving the program from Puntledge to Aspen
- There is a demand to expand the program to additional grades. Enrollment would be positively impacted by an ability to continue in the grades and then expand to another school offering.
- Confirmed that the discussion does not require an 'either/or' decision.

3.3.4 May 15 Pro D – KFN & SD71

- Indigenous Brilliance planning underway
- Ask for student volunteers to support the presenters.
- Looking for KFN presenters.

Action: Erin to consult with elders regarding building relationships for support on this day.

3.3.5 Cedar House Fronts – tabled

3.4 Governance

3.4.1 LEA Renewal Process

- Erin will be prioritizing this year as the group moves into the next phase.
- Create a working document for items.
- With a strong LEA we can focus on language and tighten requirements.

3.4.2 NIDES Indigenous Focused Course Offerings

- Need to assess feasibility and desire

Action: Joe will meet with Erin to discuss.

3.4.3 ENTER Program Criteria

- Linked to enrollment and equity requires a longer conversation that remaining meeting time permits.
- Recommend that changes being entertained are shared.

4. Old Business

4.1 Review of current LEA and Model LEA (see 3.4.1)

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

5. Next Meeting and Adjournment – 3:06 pm

- Next meeting: Wednesday June 15, 2026

For Action:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Erin | 1. Share budget information with Counsellors on March 10 th . |
| Joe | 2. Investigate whether elementary and secondary students' attendance can be isolated along with on and off reserve students. |
| Lelaina | 3. Investigate whether elementary and secondary student support services can be isolated along with on and off reserve students. |
| Lelaina | 4. Contact Pamela with the Culture Committee for contract review and feedback. |
| Erin | 5. Consult with elders regarding building relationships for support in preparing for the May 15 th Indigenous Brilliance district-wide Pro-D day. |
| Joe | 6. Schedule additional meeting with Erin to discuss Indigenous focused course offerings. |