

**K'ómoks First Nation &
School District 71 (Comox Valley)
Local Education Agreement (LEA)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 23, 2026**

Attendance In Meeting:

Members:

Dr. Jeremy Morrow, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Joe Heslip, Associate Superintendent
Lelaina Jules, District Principal - Indigenous Education
Keisha Everson, Indigenous Education Council Chair
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

Regrets:

Suzanne Savoie, Councillor

Recording Secretary: Kim Richards, Acting Manager, Administrative Services & Projects

1. Call Meeting to Order

- E. Higginbottom called the meeting to order at 10:43 a.m

Traditional Territory Acknowledgement by E. Higginbottom

- Welcome and Opening Circle
- E. Higginbottom provided a soft overview of the agenda.

2. Approval of Agenda & Meeting Minutes

2.1 Approval of Agenda – September 22, 2026 – approved as presented

2.2 Approval of Meeting Minutes – June 17, 2026 – approved as amended

- L. Jules noted that Item 3.1.1 should be 0.4 FTE not 1.4 FTE, re: ISW support at Aspen Park Elementary.
- It was also shared that a 0.4 Indigenous Early Literacy position will be starting at Aspen Park Elementary on September 23, 2026.
- J. Heslip commented that he is working with a company and another school district on a data dashboard to have the ability to provide real student level data (real response time).

3. LEA Priorities

3.1. LEA Priorities

- The committee continued discussion from the June 17, 2026, meeting; supporting documentation was provided.

COMMUNITY & CONNECTION:

- **Student Health & Well-Being**
 - KFN and SD71 work collaboratively to develop a calendar to enhance student learning, connection and support.
 - Therapeutic Riding and Culture Camp remain successful and will continue.

- KFN has purchased property in Sayward - potential for future Culture Camps.
- The collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club did not begin. KFN remains open to pursuing this further.
- Art therapy was introduced the latter part of the year. An art therapist was brought into the school to run small group sessions eliminating the need for off-site therapy. The goal is to continue this service subject to student need and operational capacity.
- Aspen has launched a universal hot lunch program. Early discussions were initiated last spring to explore incorporating traditional foods into the menu. KFN will continue working alongside the district to identify and remove any access barriers for families. J. Heslip recommended contacting Thea Cockerton, District Food Services Coordinator.
- **Community Engagement**
 - Develop new ways to engage early with families around information sharing and LEA priorities (ie. pre-kindergarten and kindergarten families). The district offered their full support.
- **School Support**
 - The three Indigenous Student Support Teacher positions have been asked to slow down and focus on relationships and success.
 - The Language Feasibility Study is in progress.
 - Is there a need for a Cultural Support Worker?
 - Should kindergarten classroom placement evolve throughout the district? N. Rainkie expressed a capacity concern implementing this.
- **Information Sharing**
 - Discussions remain ongoing and continue to evolve. Access to real-time data could be utilized to refine and guide this process moving forward.
 - The committee suggested adding an IEP sharing "checkbox" to the consent waiver to enhance student support, awareness, and communication.
 - Discussion focused on formalizing a standardized process and procedure for *early leavers* to align with practice to ensure early connection with families. This unified approach aims to proactively support KFN learners and prevent chronic absenteeism before it escalates and a student departs altogether.
- **Professional Development**
 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
 - Indigenous Brilliance Day.

LANGUAGES & CULTURES:

- **Program Development**
 - Expanding Indigenous early primary to Aspen Park El. did not happen.
 - The Indigenous Education department is actively pursuing the potential to include grade 7 and 8 students at Nala'atsi through conversations with families and an anonymous survey. This is part of the larger long-range facility plan and needs to align with the district's core strategic plan.
- **Resources**
 - Cultural and language brochures will remain a priority for KFN. A welcome package for new families to be developed by KFN/district staff. E. Higginbottom to seek a cultural committee member to participate and provide input. District contact > Early Learning teacher.
- **Protocols and Procedures**
 - Nation representation on the Board of Education would be ideal.
 - KFN is pleased with the current work being done (ie. Indigenous Policy Framework).

- Artist Pauline Rankin is currently painting the donated drum. J. Everson will perform the Awaken the Drum ceremony.

GOVERNANCE:

- **Policies and Procedures**
 - KFN is currently working on policy and will share with the district to ensure KFN/district align. KFN voice is important to the district.
- **LEA Review and Oversight**
 - It was recommended to meet separately to discuss the LEA renewal process. What is working, what is not? Focus on the parts that need to be worked on or improved. This process should not be rushed.
 - E. Higginbottom to engage in conversation with current Chief in Council. Important to keep the LEA localized to KFN.

4. Old Business

- None

5. Next Meeting and Adjournment

- TBD - Select dates to be rescheduled to resolve scheduling conflicts.
- The meeting adjourned at 12:01 pm