

## SCHOOL DISTRICT 57

### Special Advisors Report

June 24, 2021



### School District 57 Land Acknowledgement

*We are grateful to be working and learning on the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band and Simpcw First Nation, each of whom have been part of these lands for at least 9 000 years. We honour and respect these beautiful ancestral lands, cultures and people through the work we do with our communities.*

*On Lheidli T'enneh's ancestral lands we honour them in their Dakelh dialect: Lheidli T'enneh hubeh keyoh whuts'odelhti. Nts'ezla hubeh yun ts'uwhut'i, ts'uzt'en ink'ez ts'unuwhulyeh. We respectfully acknowledge the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh, on whose land we live, work and play.*

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## Executive Summary

On February 11, 2021, the Minister of Education, Honourable Jennifer Whiteside issued a Ministerial Order to appoint Catherine McGregor and Kory Wilson as Special Advisors to the Board of Education for School District No. 57 (Prince George).

As Special Advisors we are to:

- 3 (a) Inspect and evaluate the Board's governance practices, including the following:
  - i. Capacity;
  - ii. Roles and responsibilities;
  - iii. Culture and practices, including approach to conflict of interest;
  - iv. The Board's ability to assess and respond to systemic racism in school communities and to establish and maintain safe, welcoming and inclusive school communities for all students, including Indigenous students;
  - v. Relationships with district management;
  - vi. Relationships with education partners and local Indigenous communities;
  - vii. Compliance with legal requirements;
  - viii. Adherence of the Board's Trustees to the Board's Policy "Trustee Code of Ethics";
  - ix. Accountability and evaluation mechanisms, including for senior Board staff; and
- (b) Assist the Board in:
  - i. Establishing best practices for culturally-appropriate and racially-sensitive Board governance;
  - ii. Developing and amending, as appropriate, Board policies, practices and planning documents that will assess and respond to systemic racism in District No. 57 school communities;
  - iii. Recruiting, hiring and evaluating senior Board Staff;
  - iv. Understanding and carrying out effective board governance practices to improve outcomes for all a students in District No. 57;
  - v. Any other matters arising from the evaluation described in subsection 3(a) as required by the Minister.

We carried out our review from February 22, 2021 to June 18, 2021. We had one visit to Prince George (March 14-16) and had intended to return but due to COVID travel restrictions we were unable to visit again. We completed 56 interviews and reviewed a significant number of documents.

We would like to acknowledge that the work we did in Prince George was done on the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band and Simpcw First Nation. The rest of the work was done in our homes. Catherine McGregor completed her work on the unceded territory of the Cowichan Tribes and Kory Wilson did her work on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish.

Our report focuses on several key topics: governance (including policy and accountability), board and senior leadership, student learning, systemic racism, and relations with First Peoples.

In this first part of the report, we summarize our key findings into general categories. More details can be found in the 'findings' section of the report.

## **Governance**

Good governance requires adherence - to important principles, including transparency, accountability, fairness and justice, equity, and inclusion. Management is a key component of good governance as is leadership. We comment on both in this report.

There is a strong core of leaders currently serving on the Board of Education. We commend them for their efforts at engaging fully and authentically with First Peoples of the region, particularly the Lheidli T'enneh and McLeod Lake Indian Band. They have shown considerable leadership in thinking about how to address the concerns of rightsholders, and have begun on a course of actions that should continue. We also want to acknowledge that the senior leadership in the district has been a bit of a revolving door, with many changes over the last five years. However, with steady, committed, authentic and diversity focused leadership, better governance and management practices can be implemented. We see the need for work in a variety of areas, including attention to equity, diversity and inclusion in board policies and practices, the need for more public accountability and performance measures, revisions to existing recruitment and retention strategies, and anti-racism policy development.

In the area of student learning, we believe that there is considerable work required. While there are some governance practices which support the public sharing of information about student's success, learning and graduation rates, we did not see the strong focus on student learning that we expected. The Ministry of Education's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning needs to be fully implemented, with regular accountability and performance reports as a part of the Board's mandate and strategic planning processes. We also believe that there needs to be a much more systematic focus on Indigenous student learning and reporting to parents and the community about efforts being taken to advance the gaps in learning that are evident from the annual *How are We Doing? Reports*.

## **Systemic racism**

Unfortunately, we heard many examples of behaviours and practises that are clearly discriminatory and systemically racist. Though some will argue it is not intentional the outcomes have disproportionate effects on Indigenous students and can only be explained as such. It is important that systems and structures are put in place to ensure there is no room for racism and discrimination, in any form, in the district.

SD 57 is behind in best practices not only identified by leading researchers but by the best practices in other school districts. Removing Indigenous children from their classrooms and/or assigning them to a "modified Dogwood" path is unacceptable. Further, Indigenous culture should be taught to all students. All students in the district have the right to attend school from Kindergarten to grade 12 with their same age cohort. If a student requires additional support, for whatever reason, this support must be provided in a way that allows the student to remain in regular classrooms. The additional support must be provided in an attentional and

compassionate way with the goal of the student graduating with a Dogwood diploma. All students must remain on the path to a Dogwood diploma and if not possible there must be an transparent, clear plan to track the students progress and their return to the Dogwood path. It is unacceptable that Indigenous students are disproportionately held back, placed in alternative programs or classes and that many students are not on the Dogwood path.

There must be immediate intentional actions taken to address this. There needs to be base metrics and an accountability framework that ensures Indigenous students are no longer ‘lost in the system’.

### **Relations with First Peoples**

One of the fundamental relationships that a Board and its school district should have is with the Indigenous people upon whose territory they all reside. Acknowledgement and gratitude should be demonstrated in an ongoing, authentic, and sustainable way. Good governance requires accountability, transparency, communication and collaboration, however, these principles of good governance are mostly absent in the relationship between the rights and title holders and SD 57. There are some in the District who are respected by and committed to working with the First Nations.

There is a clear and palpable lack of trust and hard feelings between many of the Indigenous stakeholders in Prince George, the First Nations and the District. One issue that must be addressed is the dismantling of the Aboriginal Education Board. With focused, equity informed leadership from both the board and senior leaders, we believe there can be a much stronger system of governance responsive to local communities and rightsholders.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

We went into the investigation with open minds and initial ideas of what areas we would need to focus on and further explore. However, what we found was much more complicated than we thought and so multi-layered that we do not feel we have gotten to the bottom of all the issues. SD57 is a complicated district with many players and multiple narratives which are contradictory, disturbing and must be addressed. As we expected we also found hard-working committed players that are student-centred in all that they do – this is admirable.

We also want to acknowledge that a number of our recommendations suggest actions that are necessary beyond SD 57; as a system, the educational community can do much to better develop the competencies, practices, and approaches to make schools and school communities inclusive, accepting of differences, and better places for all learners. We believe that the Ministry and exemplary leaders from across BC school districts have a role to play in supporting this and other districts in this essential, critical work.

#### **Key Findings:**

- A Board that is eager and committed to ensure SD57 becomes a successful, inclusive district
- Lack of consistent and effective governance at all levels.

- A need for a model of leadership, across the district, that is consistently based on respect, trust, shared purpose and transparency.
- A substantial culture of fear.
- A need for a clear strategy for moving the district forward with a focus on student learning in an inclusive, respectful way with all voices able to contribute to the future of SD57, including development of base metrics and an accountability framework that ensures Indigenous students are no longer ‘lost in the system’.
- A relationships of mistrust leading to ineffective working relationships.
- Clear discriminatory, racist systemic practices that have led to very poor outcomes for Indigenous students.
- Outdated and systemically biased educational policies and administrative procedures.
- Practices in assignment/re-assignment that appear arbitrary; no transparent application of operational principles or need.
- More robust formal reporting processes on key strategic initiatives is needed with accountability reporting on District initiatives and progress towards goals/outcomes.
- A need for an open, non-siloed approach, to sharing information in order to fully achieve the Board and District priorities.
- Inadequate systems for strategic and ongoing professional development and training.
- A need for effective mechanisms for the rights and title holders to contribute and voice their concerns about SD57.
- A lack of transparency around decision-making and how things are done in the District.
- Real need for restorative dialogue to ensure healing and a way forward that includes all.
- No real mechanism for resolving disputes or addressing discrimination and systemic racism.
- A need to ensure that all District employees work in an open and free manner without fear of retribution, in an environment that values and supports professional learning, innovation and risk taking,
- Poor tracking of Indigenous students, their needs and how to get them back on the “Dogwood path”.

***NOTE: Throughout the report our use the word Superintendent is inclusive of the current Acting Superintendent.***

## **Recommendations**

### **Provincial Government Recommendations:**

1. That the Ministry of Education develop a policy framework that requires all school boards to create mechanisms that give First Peoples voice and authentic engagement in decision making processes for Indigenous learners, i.e. Indigenous Trustees.
2. That the Ministry of Education develop an implementation plan for enacting the principles of DRIPA in school districts, co-developed with First Peoples and other educational stakeholders.
3. That the Ministry of Education authorize an “*In Plain Sight*” report on education, led by an external advisor that acknowledges the nature of systemic racism and considers solutions and ways forward.

4. That the Ministry of Education consider ways in which districts can be required to report on their progress in implementing DRIPA as a part of annual reporting.
5. That the Ministry of Education consider convening a meeting with educational stakeholders and rights holders focused on best practices in communication and relationship building with First Peoples.
6. That the Ministry of Education create a senior mentor 'team' that can mobilized across BC to assist and advise SD 57 around best practices in team building, professional learning, Indigenous education, equity scanning, relationship building etc.
7. That the Ministry of Education work with Boards to ensure that reporting on graduation rates more clearly identify 5 and 6 year completion rates in all categories (Dogwood, Adult Dogwood & Evergreen).
8. That the Ministry and the District maximise and effectively use existing tools to ensure ongoing and regular tracking of Indigenous students throughout the year.
9. That the Ministry of Education pilot its new Reconciliation Training program in SD 57.

#### Governance Recommendations:

1. That the Board of Education review and implement an equity lens that will be used to review all policy and procedure practices.
2. That the Board of Education create a series of policies that considers:
  - a) mandatory participation in anti-oppressive, cultural safety & Indigenous competency training
  - b) revises the policy for parental appeals
  - c) amends its policy on policy development (8310) to ensure that: diversity, equity, justice and inclusion are principles which guide trustee and staff roles, and ensures *DRIPA* principles are met
  - d) district wide professional learning plans for all teachers and staff, and mandatory professional learning plans for senior leaders and school principals
  - e) more frequent evaluation and accountability mechanisms for annual assessment/or performance reviews for excluded staff, including the Superintendent.
  - f) a policy requiring regular reporting on student success, including an annual report on Indigenous student learning and Indigenous education that will be made publicly available
  - g) consider how the use of technology can provide enhanced support services to rural parts of the district
  - h) review and make transparent polices for how school principals and vice principals are assigned and transferred
  - i) provide a policy framework for schools as to how Indigenous students are accommodated to participate in cultural, seasonal and community activity
3. That an Indigenous Assistant Superintendent position be created in the district.

#### District Leadership and Culture:

1. That an ombudsperson be hired to receive confidential reports from members of the educational community or staff who have concerns they wish to report.

2. That student centered learning, assessment practices and data analysis be considered as components of district's professional learning plan (as outlined in recommendation above).
3. All decisions around the movement of principals, vice-principals, directors and teachers be fully documented, transparent following a consistent, transparent, and clear procedure and process.
4. That the District graduation reports are specific on those students with regular Dogwoods and those without.

#### Governance/Shared Relationships with First Peoples

1. That there is a clear process for consistent consultation with First Peoples and process for authentic input and influence.
2. That all Indigenous students are monitored and tracked to ensure timely and effective support.
3. That the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee be empowered as a decision-making partner with SD57. This means they move beyond just being advisors – perhaps called *Indigenous Education Partners Committee*. Members would include, though not limited to the Rights holders, MCFD, Northern Health, Métis, Takla First Nations, Carrier Sekani Family Services, Native Friendship Centre, appointed parents, UNBC and CNC

#### Relationships with Indigenous People

1. That there is restorative dialogue that leads to a healing ceremony. This must meaningful and authentic with a clear path forward.
2. That there are ongoing, consistent traditional land and territory acknowledgement, culture days, storytelling with elders, traditional food choices in schools.
3. That the Board, Board staff and First Nations work together develop stronger relationships and identify opportunities where they can meet in person, attend events and work together on initiatives that will benefit the District and ultimately all students.
4. That an annual independent survey of First Nations and Indigenous Education Partners be initiated to assess their satisfaction with the relationship; results can be used to improve processes and procedures.

#### Student Learning/Student Success

1. That the senior leadership team review models for assessing Indigenous student learning data and developing Indigenous student learning plans and make recommendations for implementation at the school and district level.
2. That any and all programming which systematically limits students from full day, regular classroom school placements be immediately identified & reviewed for systemic biases
3. That the senior leadership team develop an action plan and strategy that will focus on decolonization, indigenization, and anti-racism among leaders, teachers and students, with an annual report to the Board of trustees.
4. That the senior leadership teamwork with Indigenous communities and rightsholders to ensure there is successful social, emotional and academic transitioning for students leaving community

5. That the district build on its engagement with students and create more opportunities for student voice and participation in district and school decisions
6. That Indigenous education and Indigenous student learning be specifically indicated as strategic priorities within the district and public annual reports provided on implementation and performance.
7. That the senior leader team consistently and regularly advance the goals of Indigenous education, reconciliation and anti-racism as key personal and district learning outcomes.
8. That each school be required to complete an annual report on student learning, with a focus on Indigenous student learning. These reports will become part of the public district level report completed annually.
9. That each school principal be required to report on how Indigenous education, reconciliation, and anti-racism work is being advanced in their schools, with examples of progress towards measurable outcomes.
10. That senior leaders plan regular parent sessions to fully inform parents of graduation and course requirements in schools, rightsholder communities and at the Friendship Centre.

#### Indigenous Education as a Priority

1. That Indigenous education is a clear priority in the SD57 Strategic Plan and evident in all policies and procedures and its strategic plan.
2. Each administrative unit in the district must have an Indigenous Action Plan that establishes yearly objectives and measure their progress over time. Attention to Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action (62-65) and DRIPA need to be fully integrated. These then become part of the Board's annual accountability report.
3. The Indigenous Education Partners Committee be involved in the development of the district's overall Indigenous Education Plan, and include focus groups with parents, students and First Nations stakeholders.

#### Targeted Dollars

1. That the Indigenous Education Department be empowered to control and make decisions on all targeted funds. These funds cannot be diverted or 'taken' by other district or school administrators.
2. That the Indigenous Education Department make decisions in consultation with the Indigenous Education Partners Committee, ensuring its procedures enable an open and transparent process with ongoing reviews of planning, implementation and spending.
3. That targeted dollars always be spent based on needs of Indigenous students; in other words, if spending authority is delegated to another decision maker, the funds may only be expended on services/supports for Indigenous learners.
4. That specific teachers be assigned to track, monitor and support Indigenous students from reserve and regularly communicate with on-reserve education representatives and local families. On reserve supports for learners, as necessary, should be a part of this ongoing work.
5. That Indigenous Principal/ Assistant Superintendent's salary be funded through core dollars not taken from targeted funds.

### Outstanding Issues to Resolve

Due to travel restrictions, we were unable to fully complete our investigation and there are still some areas of concern that must be addressed for a more fulsome picture of the happenings in this district. These issues include:

1. Where exactly did all the COVID money go and who was responsible for it? Why wasn't it reported out properly and why was there a delay in the rights holders getting laptops?
2. There are clearly several ongoing harassment complaints and we have not been given access to these nor provided full disclosure on the nature at scope of the complaints, although it appears harassment investigations are used as threats/tools against people. We have not seen or been given knowledge of what constitutes harassment in SD57 but we think the bar is low.
3. All movement of teachers and administrators must be clearly documented and explained.
4. Complete reporting, while fully respecting the students' privacy, on the number of Indigenous students in 'alternative programs' and what is needed to get those students currently not on the 'Dogwood path' to be able to graduate with a Dogwood.

### Post-Report Implementation

The goal is to make SD57 a leading district in the province particularly considering their high percentage of Indigenous learners. There are significant challenges in this district but with intentional actions and accountability things can change. We understand that these recommendations will need to be discussed with the Ministry and considered in light of already planned initiatives and may be implemented in alternative ways. We offer them as general directions that would help the district move forward in a positive way.

1. That an 'oversight team' be appointed to monitor and support SD57 for the next three years. This team would develop goals with deliverables and provide action plans to address systemic issues in this district. As noted in other parts of this report, we have a variety of specific recommendations related to governance that could be addressed in this way.
2. That the Indigenous Education Partners Committee be supported and guided to find their voice in determining the future of education in Prince George. Setting the committee up during the summer months would enable the Board to be ready to move forward in the fall.
3. If appropriate, Special Advisors Catherine McGregor and Kory Wilson could be asked to host/assist in discussions as a means of supporting the Board and local First Nations develop a plan about how to implement the findings and recommendations, including those above.
4. That further investigation into the "Outstanding Issues to be resolved" be considered.

### Findings

In this next section of the report, we have designed sections that address the key issues included in the Ministerial Order. We begin with the section on governance; a variety of points from the Order are included in this section. We then review specific matters set out in the Ministerial Order including: Adherence to Code of Ethics; Board Capacity; Accountability and Evaluation mechanisms (which includes extensive discussions related to accountability tools,

policy development, reporting tools, and evaluation measures); and the Recruiting, Hiring and Evaluation of staff. Each section includes observations that come from the individual interviews we conducted, as well as the review of documents which illustrate best practices or existing practices/policies.

***NOTE: Throughout the report our use the word Superintendent is inclusive of the current Acting Superintendent.***

### **Section I: Governance**

The process of listening to the voices of District personnel and leaders from educational organizations across BC in the production of this report has made evident the importance of governance. Good governance requires adherence to important principles, including transparency, accountability, fairness and justice, equity, and inclusion.

Our report makes evident there are important gaps in how good governance is realized at the provincial and local level. We see many good intentions within the existing frameworks of the *School Act* and regulations, but also believe that if we are to live up to the expectations of diverse communities, and decolonize the educational systems as envisioned by *The Truth and Reconciliation Report* (2013), and realize the principles of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) that formally recognize Indigenous rights, including the meaningful and respectful engagement of First Peoples in educational governance and decision making, significant action is required. Boards must take actions that will advance the principles of inclusion and equity, while maintaining the values of accountability, transparency, fairness, and democracy. If this is done, all students will succeed.

We listened carefully to the words and experiences shared with us by Board members as well as members of the senior leadership team. There appears to be some tension and need a to clearly articulate the difference between leadership and management of the district. The willingness is there but the 'lanes' are not clear.

We want to acknowledge the significant leadership we see from some trustees. Several have demonstrated a consistent and persistent desire to see changes for learners, Indigenous learners, and believe profoundly in the work of the TRC, UNDRIP, DRIPA and the need for the District's practices and processes to fully embrace these principles of equity and inclusion into their processes of governance. We also want to commend them for the ways in which, despite obstacles, they have consistently sought to engage First Nations communities in their decision making and consultation practices.

Board members are leaders and governors who are tasked with serving the diversity of communities the educational system serves. As such, while they should not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the school district, they need to ask deep and probing questions that go beyond the surface. These questions also need accurate, timely responses and comprehensive reporting that provides in-depth and detailed summaries of actions being taken

by District leaders and staff in addressing district priorities and goals. Reports from standing committees provide an opportunity to more thoroughly discuss and debate policies, practices, or approaches to programming, but beyond this, we see a need for more regular reporting by the senior leadership team to the Board. We know that the Auditor General (2013) in a review of governance among boards of education made similar findings.

### Leadership and Management

As the primary employee of the Board, the Superintendent is the lead manager of the system. Their leadership is critical to advancing the goals of the Board and the educational community it serves. The Superintendent is required to report to the Board on a regular and ongoing basis. The District's existing policy sets out the responsibilities of the Superintendent quite clearly and in a variety of categories. One such area of duty/responsibility is: "Respects and honours the Board's role and responsibilities and facilitates the implementation of that role as defined in Board policy."

### Board Leadership

- Must acknowledge the significant leadership provided by certain trustees who should be commended for, despite obstacles, consistently seeking to engage First Nations.
- Must be noted that the discussions we observed in the Board meetings were often very superficial and did not examine outcomes or intentions as fully as they could have - essentially Board receives information rather than being actively engaged in its consideration.
- Must have policies and procedures in place to ensure authentic dialogue and conflict resolution between Board and District Leadership.

### District leadership:

- There have been many changes in senior leadership in this school district; it is a combination of events and circumstances, but there have been 5 Superintendents (some acting) since December 2015.
- Mechanisms need to be put in place for the 'experts' within the District to contribute and ensure more knowledgeable, informed and appropriate decision-making.

### Trust and collaboration

- Lack of trust and authentic engagement in decision making were frequently cited.
- Of course, change happens but it must be done mindfully and respectfully for those involved as it will continue to erode and destroy trust and credibility particularly with Elders and families and of course staff.
- An example would be when there are enrollment changes then everyone works collaboratively to address these changes in an open transparent way following a process.

### A Culture of Fear

- Many report that this district operates using a culture of fear to command and control decisions.

- Due to the culture of fear, we think there may be more examples of individuals who feel they cannot identify their concerns for fear of retribution.
- An ombudsperson must be hired to ensure people can share their experiences without fear of retribution to make systemic change.

### Superintendent Leadership

- The Superintendent is the primary employee of the Board and their leadership is critical to advancing the goals of the Board and the educational community it serves. According to the *School Act* the Superintendent, “Respects and honours the Board’s role and responsibilities and facilitates the implementation of that role as defined in Board policy.”
- Ensure all governance policies and procedures support making the most informed, transparent decisions, maximizing the strengths in the district, and operationalizing best practices.
- Ensure respectful collaboration with the Board and its leadership, with a clear understanding of who is ultimately responsible, while maintaining a team approach.
- Regular training and evaluation processes should be formalized.

### Leadership for Learning

- We heard from many about the need to “put learners at the centre of decision making”. This priority should be more evident in their publications, approaches to strategic planning, and discussions about policy and practice. This framework could provide common grounds for team building and reduce conflict over role differentiation.

### Command and Control: Hierarchical Decision Making

- Within the District there is concern about the hierarchical nature of decision-making which must be addressed. People can disagree agreeably; when a student-centred approach frames all decisions and there are well articulated governance practices, there can be transparent, accountable, collaborative decision-making.
- Good governance allows for all members in the District to express their observations and make suggestions for improvement in an openly authentic and collaborative way; not just to their line supervisor or “one up”.
- Persistent questions about educational performance can feel uncomfortable, but growth and effective change will only result when all matters related to student success are openly and fully discussed by district leaders, staff and community.
- Moving the district towards the creation of an authentic collaborative learning community that engages openly in difficult and transparent conversations will be the path to creating equity for all learners.

### Indigenous Education Governance

- Significant numbers of Indigenous children are served by programs and schools throughout the district.
- There are deep concerns about the progress of Indigenous learners, and graduation rates.

- There is a need for more consistent, informative communications with the rights and title holders.
- There needs to be regular updates and conversations with the rights and title holders, the Board and senior leadership.
- Data is very informative and it should consistently be used to make decisions. All should be made public and discussed openly at all levels.
- The strategic plan must prioritize Indigenous student success.
- Actions to address Indigenous education must be consistent and ongoing, and regularly reported as a part of public Board processes.
- Any discussions and initiatives regarding Indigenous Education must include Indigenous people, the community and other stakeholders.
- With an Indigenous Assistant Superintendent more Indigenous voices will consistently be heard and empowered.

## SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINISTERIAL ORDER

### Adherence to Trustee Code of Ethics

- All trustees adhere to these principles as outlined in the Code of Ethics. We saw no evidence that any trustee violated these principles as a part of their duties. Instead, we heard trustees speak openly about their efforts to engage in governance in productive and effective ways.
- The Code of Conduct currently mandated by Board policy could be amended to make clear other areas of trustee engagement i.e. “advocating for public education”. Additionally, this Code of Conduct fails to include the principles of diversity, inclusion, justice or equity as principles which must be adhered to in decision making. This should be added.
- A more explicit reference to conflict of interest would be of value, as our conversations illustrated that only fiduciary conflicts were understood to fall into the category of conflict of interest.

### Board Capacity

- Ongoing Board training is suggested for all future Boards. Their ability to fulfill the role as thoughtful and engaged governors of the system depends on being provided with supports and tools needed for ongoing professional performance.
- An annual program of capacity building, with regular check-ins to ensure depth of knowledge across the board, empowering all trustees to confidently approach any task, duty or responsibility would be valuable.
- All Board of Trustees must be supported to enhance their relationship building with the local First Nations and Indigenous people and to ensure they can be active learners in reconciliation and decolonization work.
- We also encourage the Board to work with the British Columbia School Trustees Association and the First Nations Education Steering Committee, who indicated their interest in also developing stronger knowledge among trustees across BC about Indigenous education,

knowledges, cultures and worldviews. This should be extended to training in cultural safety, anti-racism and structural racism.

### Promoting Accountability through the Strategic Plan

- The strategic planning process is a key responsibility of the Board, and we know that SD 57 is currently engaged in developing a new plan.
- The previous plan (2016-2021) lacks attention to Indigenous student success. This plan is too broad with a focus on “living well”, “seizing life’s opportunities” and “student capabilities”.
- The plan needs key metrics and measures of assessing success and focus fully on data and outcome measures, which could be developed for each priority area, including reviews of Ministry data that outlines student learning in a variety of categories.
- We heard from community members that the processes of engagement in the creation of the strategic plan were very controlled, designed to focus on documents or directions prepared by district staff, rather than providing open-ended opportunities for communities to identify their own areas of strategic priority. Ongoing significant engagement is required whether by zoom or in person, and where possible with special consideration for rural, Indigenous and student communities.
- The draft plan we reviewed draws attention to several important issues we’ve identified in this report: a focus on learning; a concern for wellness (including cultural safety); equity of access; and a focus on Truth and Reconciliation systemwide. This is encouraging but there must be considerable attention to: developing trusting relationships with First Peoples; focusing on Indigenous student learning and success; and decolonizing processes, structures, procedures, policies and practices.
- These goals must be openly identified and included in the report with accountability measures included.
- Strategic Plans must be actioned (Action plan or Annual workplan) to create an accountability timetable for monitoring and revising the strategic plan currently under development.
- The strategic plan also offers trustees a tool for exploring and examining reports and program presentations.

### Policy and Governance

We spent some time reviewing district policies, as these are primary tools for governance of the school district. We also note that policy is a primary means of ensuring accountability. The SD 57 Board has undertaken a substantial review of its policies and created a series of administrative procedures. Our review of these policies considered the scope of each policy and any gaps that exist. In conducting this review, we noted several things:

1. References to diversity, inclusion, justice and equity are absent in some cases. For example, there is no explicit anti-racism policy. In the current Canadian/BC context, and the work of governments and diversity organizations to ensure BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) and LGBTQII2+, and people of diverse abilities are more fully included within

society, this seems like a significant gap. Generic statements that offer “safe and healthy” environments fail to consider the unique needs of Indigenous students, or how the rights and needs of other racialized groups are being met, for students, staff, and leaders. We heard during our inquiry how acts of racism and microaggression remain unchallenged because of a lack of accountability measures.

2. Implementation mechanisms are left either unspoken or unclear. This is an important means of achieving accountability-- policies need to speak to how and when reporting will be provided, what measures will be taken when concerns or issues arise, or how remediation will be implemented. Without robust mechanisms that can curate safe and healthy environments, the policies are toothless and therefore completely ineffectual and unaccountable.
3. The policy creation process fails to set out conditions for full and comprehensive consultative processes that are principle-driven, and in keeping with recently adopted policy directions taken by the BC Government, including DRIPA.
4. Policies related to Parental Appeals are particularly problematic and require revision.

We do want to acknowledge the existing SD 57 Board of Education for their work in ensuring policies are being reviewed by their ad hoc committee on Truth and Reconciliation. We believe this is an exemplary approach and want to encourage them to continue this review, in light of the comments included here.

Yet we also note that these processes of consultation are very Eurocentric; communities are expected to respond to District structures, processes, timelines, and rules. Openness and receptiveness to different ways of engagement are not contemplated in any of the accountability measures we’ve seen described or practiced at the district level. Given the diversity and geographical spread within the Prince George School District and its significant First Nations population, it seems important that an Indigenous Equity and Inclusion lens be used in all its accountability tests. Questions such as the following can guide this work: which groups typically participate in our processes? Which voices are absent? How can we create new forms of engagement that will address these gaps? How have rights holders been included in decision making?

#### District Parent Advisory Policy

- We heard about parental appeal policies being problematic in the school district.
- We recommend that the Board of Trustees work with the District Parent Advisory Committee (DPAC) and provincial Parent Advisory Organization to design a model appeal policy that can be adopted at the district level.

#### Adherence to Policy: Accountability of District Personnel

- We heard during our inquiry about a disturbing practice where students were placed on part days or limited hours, despite the requirement for full day programming for all learners-- this is a learner’s right. This was, we were told, a practice enabled by school-based management systems. This was brought to the attention of senior leadership in the

district by the DPAC. After investigation, we know that the superintendent prohibited this practice unless it was specifically approved. Yet we also heard that this practice has continued, despite this prohibition.

- This example speaks to the importance of accountability as a value throughout the organization, and that the senior leadership for the District must ensure that policies are enforced and followed, and if they are not, that measures are taken to rectify such matters immediately.
- Consequences for violating student rights to education must be treated seriously. We also believe that Boards need to be informed when such violations occur, so they can address gaps in policy to avoid similar eventualities.

### Accountability through Professional Learning

- Upon reviewing policies, there is no framework for reporting on or requiring training for staff to be compliant with government legislation and policy. A policy is needed.
- We did not see evidence of a professional development strategic plan that set out priorities for senior staff and for schools to work on in networked communities of practice (such as grade level or subject specialists). This is an important complementary tool for senior leaders who are implementing the strategic plan and can also be a measure of evidence to illustrate growth in various strategic initiatives.
- The Acting Superintendent has begun a process of regularizing professional growth planning with senior staff and administrators. Ongoing evaluation and input will be needed to identify priorities.

### Recruiting, Hiring and Evaluation of Staff

The Ministerial Order specifically asked us to review and consider issues of recruitment, hiring and evaluation among staff in the district, including senior staff. Good governance is also predicated on consistent, fair and effective evaluation. Starting at the top, it is important that the Board follow and regularize a process of evaluation for the Superintendent.

We also heard from a variety of school leaders about placement and transfer decisions; this we believe is an important employee satisfaction and retention issue. While we know that the assignment of staff in schools is a management matter (other than those covered by a collective agreement) we also believe that building a team requires open, transparent and understood processes of decision making that recognize the value of consultation. We are not certain that the HR department is even involved in these processes, and we wondered about the efficacy of having transparent hiring and recruitment processes when an employee comes to the district, when subsequent placement decisions are considered arbitrary and subject to who you know rather than what skills or abilities you have. The consequences of these conflicting operational stances makes it difficult to retain good leaders who may otherwise have provided outstanding service to schools and learners.

We also heard from teaching and support staff that hiring practices need modification. It is important that mechanisms are in place to ensure that Indigenous positions are filled by

Indigenous applicants and that the hiring process is not colonial and takes into account Indigenous ways of knowing and being during the recruiting, interviewing and hiring stages. Indigenous applications must be looked at in their entirety; for example, someone may not have a Masters degree but they have extensive community experience and a proven track record of excellence in “informal education” which would greatly enhance and contribute to the District. Incredibly large hiring panels is not an Indigenous way and can be very intimidating for applicants and fail to recognize cultural differences in knowledge and leadership styles. The idea of “fit” was referenced by many. The use of this term is problematic; for those who work in equity hiring, ‘fit’ is understood as a code word for fitting within existing cultural norms. The Equity Lens we proposed earlier in this report could be an important tool for conducting a review of HR hiring and recruitment practices.

### Mentoring Teams

We think mentoring could be an important component of how this district and its senior leaders can: initiate a review of their HR practices; review policies related to transfer and re-assignment of staff; review methods of engagement with First Peoples; and build a more open, collaborative and shared decision-making culture. We recommend that a mobile team of leaders from across BC with expertise in various aspects of district operations be brought together to provide an ongoing system of support over multiple years, with reports to the Ministry to ensure there is a genuine effort at shifting the existing culture towards one that welcomes collaboration, teamwork, and leadership across the system.

### Section III: Racism/Systemic Racism

Racism exists in Prince George and within SD 57. Our investigation indicates that whether overt or intentional many actions are racist and discriminatory in nature. Further, systemic racism exists and there are unacceptable effects and outcomes on Indigenous students, staff and teachers. Some general comments that we heard are:

*“I walk into a school my chest tightens”*

*You cannot use your Indigenous name because “this isn’t the place for politics”*

*A person heard saying, “now we have to hang up that stupid flag” in reference to flying the First Nations flag*

*In response to hearing drumming, “the natives are restless”*

*Often heard “lowest man on the totem pole” and “let’s go have a pow wow.”*

*Uncomfortable being Indigenous in this school/district*

*There is a lot of tokenism and talk*

*Told to remove the reference to “unceded territory” in the land acknowledgment and this was done*

*I have had to give my son a “safety plan” so he knows what to do when he doesn’t feel safe at school*

- There were only a few leaders that recognised racism as a problem in the District. All District members must be supported to understand their behaviour or lack thereof and

ensure that they are a part of the solution and not perpetuating racism or other types of discrimination and maintenance of the status quo.

- We asked all participants about how the District handles concerns around discrimination and racism but it was clear there are no real policies and procedures within the old polices or the proposed new ones.
- There must a culture of acceptance which values all voices in the school. This must be a District mandate.

It important that we share seven examples that illustrate many of the challenges in this District:

### The Renaming of Kelly Road: ShaṣTi

On February 25, 2020, the trustees voted unanimously to rename Kelly Road Secondary to ShaṣTi Secondary, a Dakelh word for grizzly crossing. The story was gifted and told to the school district for this purpose. However, on April 28, 2020 the Trustees, backtracked and voted to “dual name” the new school building in order to have both names. It is important to note the school in question was a new building built to replace the old Kelly Road School so it was not technically taking the name off of an existing building and replacing it with a new name. This is important because there was tremendous backlash about this name change.

The responses from some Prince George citizens and others were horribly racist. To quote some interviewees – people were up in arms, acting like you were changing the name of their kid, thousands of people wrote in against the name change, students walked out of school with the support of their parents, there was a binder of redacted comments which the First Nations were not allowed to see, blockades went up, kids were involved in fights, and it was traumatic for Indigenous people.

The title page of this report is an image of the school’s name sign. It appears as though there are two entrances – one for Indigenous people and one for the rest. This was questioned by the trustees and First Nations as to how this could happen and how no one saw this as a problem. Some trustees indicated that they repeatedly asked to see the proposed drawings as did the First Nations but after May 1<sup>st</sup> consultation ended, according to accounts we heard.

The signs for many are a reminder of segregation and disrespect. Not only is the name that was gifted disrespected but as one person stated, “They didn’t even put our name on the nice door”. This is painful for people and confusing as there does not seem to be a clear explanation for how this happened.

### Polar Den

The Polar Den began in the 2006/2007 at Prince George Secondary School. The program still exists and has a website on the PGSS website. We understand the intent of the Polar Den was to provide a more supportive space for Indigenous students in high school. Some are reported as saying the Polar Den was a way to “save these kids as they will not succeed in regular

classrooms”. Though there may have been some kids for which the Polar Den permitted a way to graduate and made them feel supported, this is rare. The Polar Den, wrongly misnamed as there are no Polar bears in Prince George, is primarily a program for Indigenous students that takes them out of the mainstream classes and programming.



Only a few students [in the Polar Den program] have graduated with a regular Dogwood. Many of the Indigenous students, over the years, have come into this program behind grade level and structures must be in place that ensures that this does not continue.

This is another example of a program that has been operationalized to put learners with learning difficulties into a common program space, that runs parallel to, rather than as a part of their regular home school. In part, this programming is an example of streaming—where students who are classified as having a learning disorder or learning difficulty, or who have fallen significantly below grade level in terms of their overall achievement are placed into a modified program. We know that many of the students who are placed in this program in grade 8 end up spending all of their high school years in the program, and in the end, receive an Adult Dogwood or school leaving certificate, rather than a regular Dogwood at graduation.

Not only is this type of program “out of date” but many have received a clear message that this program is untouchable as it is favoured by some. There has been no clear evaluation of the need or effectiveness of this program that we know of. In contrast, we are aware of other districts with inclusive education policies where all students are placed in regular classrooms and support workers provide necessary assistance.

It has been reported that many of these students are more than intellectually capable but they are not given the supports needed and the encouragement to reach their potential. There are no clear pathways back into mainstream programming and courses or targets for the teachers to achieve with the students. Teachers must teach to potential.

### Transition to Kindergarten

Early Childhood Education (ECE) and the primary years set a student up for success if done in a compassionate student-centred way. In these years there is such tremendous growth and learning potential for all children. This is evidenced by the move to having all day Kindergarten and ‘pre-k’ all day programs often called “Headstart” or “Strongstart”. In Prince George there are several ‘pre-k’ options and many Indigenous kids attend Strongstart. The goal, of course, of these programs is to ensure the child is comfortable, secure and to ready them for Kindergarten.

From what we can gather there are many committed ECE educators that have done great work with the students, parents and programs to ensure as much success as possible for the children.

They have faced several challenges. The experts in ECE are rarely if at all involved in decisions around the ECE programs, services and budgeting for SD 57. These 'pre-k' programs are also managed by third parties and not by SD57. Not all of the partners and facilities are the same with a spectrum of quality and outcomes. There has also been tremendous turnover in this area which affects quality and consistency.

Perhaps the most concerning for us the failure for many Indigenous kids to be deemed eligible for kindergarten. It is our understanding a significant number of Indigenous kids, one person said 48, were deemed not ready to transition into full day Kindergarten. This is despite the fact that these children had been in full day 'pre-k'. Thus, these children do not enter kindergarten and often just go back to their community-based program.

When asked how the school-based team makes the decision that a child is not ready, we were told it was based on an assessment. These assessments take place in the December or 8 months before the child is to enter kindergarten. We asked if there were any other follow-up assessments, perhaps in June, and we were told no. The decision is based on the December assessment and thus there seems to be no acknowledgment of the significant growth and maturity that can happen in young kids over an 8 month period. This is very concerning. It would seem logical that if a child was able to attend full-day pre-k then they would be able to be successful in kindergarten.

Some reasons we were given as to why the school would say the child isn't ready was if they were not fully toilet-trained, they had trouble sitting still, was a poor communicator or unable to recognise letters and numbers. The first reason does require a bit more work and can be a challenge for a classroom teacher to manage but many children have 'accidents' at school and it is managed. The latter reasons appear to be excuses and simply a way to keep some kids out. Our understanding of kindergarten is that is where students begin to learn classroom etiquette and become emerging readers. Additionally, the fact that it is Indigenous kids being kept out of kindergarten is of great concern. A few stated that when they raise concerns it is not addressed and seems to be ignored.

As one interviewee stated, *"Schools need to be ready for the kids not kids ready for school"*.

### Alternative Programs

Many people we spoke to commented on the 'alternative' programs – for the purposes of this report we are referring to any program or period when a student is not in the regular, mainstream classroom. Though these programs are seen as the best way to support students and provide them with targeted support, they have in many cases evolved into a "holding tank" for Indigenous kids as indicated by a few people. SD 57 is paid to educate all kids from "bell to bell" and the kids have a right to be in school all day. However, we became aware that some Indigenous students were placed on modified programs where attendance at school could be reduced to as little as an hour a day, or only one day a week. We were unable to determine if students who were placed on these modified programs were able to return to regular

classrooms for full days/weeks, or if they were able to complete their schooling on the Dogwood path.

One example of the above is what could be called a “specialised intervention program” or the English Language Learner list (ELL). ELL provides reading, writing and oral language support. There is a disproportionate number of Indigenous children on these lists. Upon a recommendation by the student’s teacher a student will end up on this list even if they may just have lower scores in one area. The names are forwarded to the District and then the numbers on that list determine the amount of money the school will get-- in other words the number of ELL teachers or a portion thereof. The problems with this program are:

- Students can only be on the list for five years and if they are put on in kindergarten, they run out of support in Grade 4. The reality is many students would need the most ELL support in senior grades.
- Parents are rarely consulted about their child being placed on this list and if they are it is not clear if the consequences of “using up” this support is understood.
- The ELL teacher is only required to meet with the students on their ELL list once a month thus the student may only have contact with the teacher 9 times in a school year. We are unclear on the requirements to meet with the homeroom teacher or educational assistant throughout the year to discuss the student’s progress. As a result, we are not clear on how this approach advances student learning or literacy.
- We are also not clear how kindergarten students end up on this list.

There was no clear answer or articulated process that we heard that would lead a student to being placed in this form of alternate program. General comments were that a student would end up there based on their behaviour, teacher’s recommendation or assessments that indicated a need. What is still unclear is the process by which this happens and what is done beforehand to mitigate the movement out of regular classes. It appears that the alternative programs are not always a last resort or the option only after everything else has been tried. Nor were there clear explanations of why there is such a disproportionate number of Indigenous kids in these programs and there seems to be limited oversight and tracking of these kids. As one person stated, “this is not inclusive education as it is exclusive education”.

Several spoke of a time when the SD 57 worked with the Indigenous organizations and groups, such as the Friendship Centre, College of New Caledonia, and the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council within Prince George to ensure Indigenous student success. This was a time where “all were involved” to support the youth and those in community living and they had success. They created a “kind of circle of interdependence” where everyone contributed to the student success with the family/caregivers, community partners, and SD 57 working in collaboration. They created a community-based support and mentoring programs for Indigenous kids that were being suspended. It was very successful but then the SD 57 pulled back the targeted funding. This appears to have fallen apart to the point of some Indigenous partners indicating that they do not feel safe with some representatives of the school district.

## COVID

School District 57 received Federal COVID money and they reported out on how they spent the money. One thing they indicated was that money was spent on technology for the district, including First Nations. Yet the First Nations reported to us that while they had clearly indicated that their students needed laptops, they were not given any technology. They were never given an explanation as to why and only upon the appointment of the Special Advisors did laptops arrive about one year into COVID. Elders were supposed to get laptops but they never arrived. We also note that in the first report of COVID spending the district sent to government included the cost of Grad Coaches but these were paid out of the targeted dollars. We heard repeatedly from First Nations they want a clear and detailed and accurate account of how this money was spent.

## Bussing

Many students that are bussed into town for school, which includes Indigenous students from the Nations. They are the first to be picked up and the last to be dropped off each day. There is no opportunity for any of these students to remain after school to use the library, get academic support or play sports as they must be on the bus right after school. The Nations have been advocating for an option for a later bus so their students can take advantage of all the afterschool opportunities. At one point they were told that “not this year as you did not get your form in on time” but with the arrival of the Special Advisors, the District has now agreed to discuss having later busses. It was also noted that these students spend a lot of time on the busses but there is only the bus driver to look after and manage all the kids and drive the bus.

Also, there is a policy that none of these buses go to the French immersion schools or other choice schools thus the Indigenous kids cannot attend. The buses are not equipped with two-way radios and are often not in good shape particularly for winter roads.

## Lack of Authority for Indigenous Education

We strongly support the decisions taken by this and other school districts to hire Indigenous peoples to lead their Indigenous education initiatives. With students from over 80 different nations in Prince George this was a very necessary step forward. However, these positions are only successful if they are truly supported to succeed. Some of the leading practises used by districts to ensure success is that there is a budget they can control beyond their salary, they are positioned as senior leaders within the district, they have direct access to decision makers, and they have a team of people to support their initiatives and plans.

In the case of SD 57 there are several concerns:

1. The Director’s authority is limited due to its position in the ranking hierarchy used by the district to differentiate roles.
2. Direct access to the Senior Team or the Trustees is limited.
3. Indigenous educators make up only 5% of the school district staff so the other 95% have to assist in promoting and advancing Indigenousization and Reconciliation.

4. There appear to be no clear mechanisms for reporting out and addressing challenges to increase Indigenous student success.
5. Assuring the success of Nusdeh Yoh students and if they are meeting grade level.

### Culture of Fear, Bullying, Harassment and Racism

This has been mentioned before in the report, but it cannot be emphasized enough that there is culture of fear in this district and ongoing bullying, harassment and racism. For some, just being asked if we could interview them caused great concern and fear. We spent time assuring and promising people that they will be protected, and their names not revealed. People have indicated to us that they are not permitted to ask questions about district finances, programs, practises, why they are moved to another position, nor can they talk about issues of concern or behaviours of fellow staff. It is a district that emphasizes command and control, rather than cooperative inquiry and shared approaches to problem solving.

Some examples of incidents of concern:

- It was reported that when asked difficult questions were asked, bullying and harassment would be alleged, even when the questions were about what should be public knowledge such as 5 year vs 6 year graduation rates.
- How the district is implementing the TRC Calls to Action and DRIPA.
- Evidence of people in the same positions being treated differently.
- There have been comments about the appearance of some Indigenous people and the length of their hair.
- School boundaries have been changed without input from Indigenous people and parents without cars – the change in boundaries meant that some kids now have to walk 6 extra blocks and in the winter this can be dangerous.
- There is no Parent Advisory Council at Nusdeh Yoh thus no place for parents to raise concerns.
- Inappropriate commenting about Indigenous leaders and leadership in the community
- Reports that some in the district are supported to be successful while others are not
- Evidence of reporting out on certain people being seen with others in the communities such as the grocery store, and then assumptions and allegations being made.
- When incidents of racism, harassment or bullying occur and someone tries to report it, it is often ignored or the “wrong” party is disciplined or forced to go on leave.
- There are policies but they are often not applied or consistently applied.
- Failure to use the Human Rights exemption to ensure Indigenous staff are hired into all positions.

### Section IV: Relationship with Indigenous Peoples

- The relationship between the District and Indigenous People has had highs and lows.
- Since the dismantling of the Aboriginal Education Board (AEB) the relationship has been on the decline.

- Very important that the relationship between the District and Indigenous people be made “right”.
- The Bat’lah (November 2019) was a good start but few have seen any changes and they are now more concerned.
- There is little if any trust between the School District and Board and local First Peoples now.
- The McLeod Lake First Nation provided us a list of detail communication between them and the District, from 2019 to present, and it there is a pattern of a lack of responses in a timely matter. In some incidents it seems as though their concerns are ignored all together or a reason is provided that often does not make sense.
- An issue to address is how to support the Indigenous students who are from nations outside the rights and titles holders. There is a need for a real intentional dialogue about this and how to ensure the rights and title holders are respected on their land and other Indigenous students and their cultures are also valued.
- Another event that has caused distress among the Board and Senior staff was the Board meeting, with union reps and with the Rights and Title holders. This is an issue about trust and respect. A meeting should take place as soon as possible to resolve this issue and develop an agreed upon protocol.

#### Appointment of Special Advisors

- It is very clear that our appointment has had an impact on the actions of the District.
- We consistently heard how things have changed since we were appointed, i.e. the First Nations are getting responses to their emails and request, computers have arrived, buses are being discussed and now elders will be able to be in the classrooms in September.
- Many are certain this would not have happened without our appointment, and they are very concerned about what this will mean when our appointment is over.

#### Indigenous Education a Priority

- School District 57 must make Indigenous education a priority.
- This must be open, consistent and in a true partnership with the rights and title holders and the Indigenous Education Partners Committee.
- Open and transparent discussions about targeted dollars is a must and the money go to Indigenous students and the programming and services that support them.

#### Indigenous Education Department

- This department has its own plan and strategy for implementing support for Indigenous learners across the district.
- Targeted funds are by and large allocated through this department, with some funds being allocated to schools (to pay for things like EA’s or IEW’s).
- We heard the Ministry report that there are good systems of accountability in this department, and it was easy for the Ministry team to see how funding was spent, for what purposes, and how it fit within their overall strategic plan.

- We saw many examples of great programming in this department; we saw how the staff were also devoted to building best practices in Indigenous education across the district.
- The progress in pockets around the district is quite remarkable; this despite the lack of district wide mandate for a focus on Indigenous education or the championing of Indigenous education by senior leaders.
- This is where the governance gap is large: while the department thrives internal to itself, it operates as a closed system and it would be much more successful if part of the district's team and coordinated, collaborative approach to supporting student learning.

A good example of how the district's culture gets in the way of good practice is the conduct of the equity audit. Indigenous staff are deeply engaged in this work, as they should be. We heard about information that is being collected that will help the district address gaps and focus on cultural safety and success. However, they should not be the only ones working with Indigenous issues. Of course, Indigenous peoples are best suited to work on Indigenous issues, apart from the work of the 'regular' or mainstream school programming and student learning systems, but all others must be invited to engage and observe. If people are kept siloed it creates harm, at a symbolic level, as well as within the district culture, and at the professional level, in creating educational teams with shared knowledge, with the potential to support each other to learn together. It also gets in the way of integrating Indigenous programming fully across the district. All related units and groups within the District should be involved in the audit. Senior staff should be highlighting regularly the importance and priority given to this work. School leaders, Indigenous education staff and teachers should be invited into conversations to build a shared plan so that all Indigenous learners can succeed.

#### Teacher Engagement in Indigenous Education and Student Learning

- We frequently heard concerns with the lack of significant engagement of teachers and administrators in Indigenous education issues.
- We infer from this information that staff across the district generally see Indigenous education as area of specialization and something that happens outside of the 'regular classroom' where most learning happens.