

Page 01 of 35 to/à Page 27 of 35

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.22



April 6, 2021

Ref: 246129

Willow Reichelt, Chair
Board of Education
School District No. 33 (Chilliwack)
Email: willow_reichelt@sd33.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Reichelt:

I am writing further to my letter of December 22, 2020, concerning the appointment of a special advisory committee to the Chilliwack School District.

As you know, the special advisory committee has recently completed its work in reviewing the progress of the Chilliwack Board of Education in respect of the improvement of student achievement, and inspecting and evaluating specific matters as set out in my previous correspondence.

After reviewing the findings of the special advisory committee, I have concerns about the Board's ability to establish and maintain a safe, welcoming and inclusive school community for all students and staff, regardless of characteristics including background, ability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. In addition, I have concerns about the Board's ability to meet its obligations in a cooperative manner and that the Board's Code of Ethics for Trustees is not being adhered to by all trustees resulting in negative impact on the Board's effectiveness in carrying out its governance role and in focusing on monitoring progress in student achievement and other core mandate areas. I am similarly concerned about the impact this has on senior staff's ability to focus on student achievement.

In order to establish and maintain a safe, welcoming and inclusive school community for all students and staff, it is my expectation that the Board will:

- Review and revise its policies and codes of conduct for students to ensure the policies and codes promote a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment; and
- Establish a plan for enhancing student achievement in the District, with a particular focus on inclusive education, children and youth in care and Indigenous students.

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In addition, to adhere to principles of good governance and ethical, civil and cooperative trustee behaviour, it is my expectation that the trustees of the Board will:

- Develop a policy regarding inclusive board practices, after the Board has obtained and considered input from the school community;
- Review and, if necessary, revise Board Policy 205 “Code of Ethics for Trustees”, after the Board has obtained and considered input from the school community;
- Arrange and participate in training provided or recommended by the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner so there is a common understanding and application of human rights obligations under the law; and
- Collaborate with Indigenous people and local First Nations to develop Board policies and procedures that allow for meaningful engagement and strong and positive relationships with Indigenous community members.

Under the authority of Section 81 of the *School Act*, I am requesting that the Board prepare and submit to me two reports, the first by June 30, 2021 and the second by October 31, 2021, on the status of the Board’s progress in addressing the concerns and expectations identified above.

I am also re-appointing Mr. Mike McKay as Special Advisor until November 12, 2021, to assist the Board and evaluate its progress in taking the steps outlined above. Mr. McKay will report to me in respect of progress made by the Board at least every two months and will provide a final report and recommendations by October 31, 2021. Further details of the appointment are set out in the attached Order. I will continue to look to you and your team to work collaboratively with Mr. McKay over the coming months.

Lastly, as you may be aware, SD 33 is currently participating in the accelerated Continuous Improvement Program Pilot. As such, the District is receiving comprehensive, tailored, ongoing support including a one-on-one data room and strategic planning session to improve educational outcomes. The Ministry of Education will continue to assist and support the District through coaching and coordinating professional learning communities. Attention to the work of continuous improvement will help the Board focus its energy and efforts on its core mandate.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Whiteside
Minister

Attachment: Ministerial Order

pc: Rohan Arul-Pragasam, Interim Superintendent
Mike McKay

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministerial Order No. **M147**

ORDER OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

I, Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education, make the order set out in the attached Schedule.

Apr 6, 2021

Date



Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education

(This part is for administrative purposes only and is not part of the Order.)

Authority under which Order is made:

Act and section: School Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 412, s. 171.1

SCHEDULE

- 1** Mike McKay of Victoria, BC is appointed as a special advisor to the Board of Education for School District No. 33 (Chilliwack) (the “Board”).
- 2** The term of the appointment ends on November 12, 2021.
- 3** The special advisor will assist the Board in the conduct of the affairs of the school district in respect of the following matters:
 - (a) In respect of the Minister’s expectation that the Board will establish and maintain a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school community for all students and staff, regardless of characteristics including background, ability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, the special advisor will assist the Board in
 - i. reviewing and revising the Board’s policies and codes of conduct for students to ensure the policies and codes promote a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment; and
 - ii. establishing a plan for enhancing student achievement in the district with a particular focus on inclusive education, children and youth in care, and Indigenous students; and
 - (b) In respect of the Minister’s expectation that the trustees of the Board will adhere to principles of good governance and ethical, civil and cooperative trustee behaviour, the special advisor will assist the trustees of the Board in
 - i. developing a policy regarding inclusive board practices, after the Board has obtained and considered input from the school community;

- ii. reviewing and, if necessary, revising Board Policy 205 “Code of Ethics for Trustees” after the Board has obtained and considered input from the school community;
 - iii. arranging and participating in training provided or recommended by the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner;
 - iv. collaborating with Indigenous people and local First Nations to develop Board policies and procedures that allow for meaningful engagement with Indigenous community members.
- (c) In respect of any other matter where the trustees of the Board request the special advisor's assistance and the special advisor believes his assistance is appropriate.
- 4** The special advisor will inspect and evaluate the Board's progress in respect of
- (a) the matters set out in section 4 of Ministerial Order No. M481 - 2020
 - (b) the matters referenced in section 3, and
 - (c) relationships with senior Board staff.
- 5** The special advisor must submit reports to the Minister in respect of progress made in carrying out the duties set out in section 3 as follows:
- (a) at least every two months, and
 - (b) a final report on or before October 31, 2021.
- 6** The special advisor's final report will include any recommendations of the special advisor in respect of the matters referenced in sections 3 and 4 as well as any other recommendations of the special advisor with respect to the conduct of the Board.
- 7** Remuneration for the special advisor will be paid by the Board.



Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

June 25, 2021

Dear Minister Whiteside:

In accordance with the expectation outlined in your letter of April 6, 2021, I am providing you with an interim report concerning the progress related to the six items listed below. Included, please find a summary of comments about each item. Please be assured that the Board of Education is committed to continuing to work on each issue articulated and will provide a status update on October 31, 2021.

1. *Reviewing and revising the Board's policies and codes of conduct for students to ensure the policies and codes promote a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment.*
 - a. Board Policy 514 - Safe Schools clearly articulates the Board's commitment to providing safe schools and a positive climate for all members of the school community in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, the British Columbia Human Rights Code and the district's collective agreements.
 - b. Administrative Regulation 514.1 - Safe Schools requires all schools to review their codes of conduct and submit updated codes of conduct to the Board Office by the end of October each year. Given the requirement in the letter dated April 6, schools will now be expected to submit their codes of conduct by October 1, to be reviewed by senior staff, and a report will be submitted to the Board of Education.
2. *Establishing a plan for enhancing student achievement in the district with a particular focus on inclusive education, children and youth in care, and Indigenous students.*
 - a. The Board of Education approved its revised Strategic Plan 2021-2025 at its June 15, 2021 Board Meeting.
 - b. The revised Strategic Plan is laser-focused and the following elements are evident in the plan:
 - i. Coherence and Alignment – District Strategic Plan goals are:
 1. Aligned with the Ministry Service Plan and FESL Policy requirements.
 2. Reflective of Local Education Agreements and Aboriginal Educational Enhancement Agreements.
 - ii. Strategic Engagement – District Strategic Plan goals were:
 1. Developed in consultation with Indigenous peoples and key stakeholders.
 2. Responsive to unique local contexts.
 - iii. Focus – District Strategic Plan goals and strategies:
 1. Emphasize student success and educational outcomes for all students.

2. Address inequities for Indigenous students, children and youth in care, and students with disabilities and diverse abilities.
 3. Address provincial educational outcomes.
 4. Create momentum and a future planning mindset.
 5. Include high-yield research-based strategies.
 6. Reflect the SMART GOALS criteria.
 - iv. Evidence Informed – Our District Strategic Plan is:
 1. Based on provincial education measures.
 2. Based on multiple sources of evidence including locally developed measures.
 3. Created through analysis of data trends over time.
 - v. Cycle of Improvement – Our District Strategic Plan includes:
 1. A district annual review process for adjusting the plan.
 2. A process to identify emerging areas of focus and adapted strategies.
 3. Addressing findings resulting from a continuous improvement review (we were one of the six pilot school districts).
3. *Developing a policy regarding inclusive board practices, after the Board has obtained and considered input from the school community.*
 - a. **This work is in progress and will be reported at the end of October.**
 4. *Reviewing and, if necessary, revising Board Policy 205 “Code of Ethics for Trustees” after the Board has obtained and considered input from the school community.*
 - a. **This work is in progress and will be reported at the end of October.**
 5. *Arranging and participating in training provided or recommended by the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner.*
 - a. Training has been scheduled for Tuesday, June 29, 2021 and will include members of the Chilliwack Board of Education and senior staff members.
 - b. The workshop will define discrimination under the Code with a particular focus on the characteristics that are protected from discrimination. In British Columbia, these characteristics are protected in certain aspects of everyday life and the workshop will spend some time reviewing those areas. Finally, the workshop will use examples of real human rights complaints to highlight important ways that the Code is applied.
 6. *Collaborating with Indigenous people and local First Nations to develop Board policies and procedures that allow for meaningful engagement with Indigenous community members.*
 - a. **This work is in progress and will be reported at the end of October.**

The Board has engaged in substantial policy work since September 2020 and will continue to refine its policies in consultation with Rights Holders and partner groups in the new school year. Trustee conduct continues to be a high profile issue for our board, staff and local community, and we are endeavouring to address the relevant issues.



**Chilliwack
School District**

PARTNERS IN LEARNING

Sincerely,

Willow Reichelt
Chair – Chilliwack Board of Education

C. Chilliwack Trustees
Superintendent Rohan Arul-pragasam
Secretary-Treasurer Gerry Slykhuis
Special Advisor Mike McKay