

Board Chair's Annual Report to the Board – October 29, 2025

Presented by Julia Fraser, Chair, Board of Education

Good evening everyone and thank you for being here.

Board Policy states that the Chair of the Board shall provide an Annual Report at the Board's AGM.

It's an honor to share the **Board Chair's Annual Report for 2025**. This past year has been one of both transition and accomplishment, and I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved together as a Board, as a district, and as a community.

Leadership and Transitions

This year, we said farewell to two outstanding leaders — **Superintendent of Schools/CEO Kevin Kaardal**, and **Deputy Superintendent Terry Beaudry** — as they entered retirement. Their dedication and leadership have left a lasting legacy in our district.

Also, after an exhaustive, nation-wide CEO search, we welcomed **Superintendent of Schools, Jon Rever**, whose experience, collaborative spirit, and commitment to **Truth and Reconciliation** will guide us forward.

Our sincere thanks as well to **Secretary-Treasurer/CFO Delta Carmichael**, for her steady financial leadership, and to our **Executive Assistants, Mona Essler and Lisa Bradshaw**, whose professionalism and support keep the work of the Board running smoothly. Thank you to the Leadership of **Assistant Superintendents**. **We sincerely appreciate the dedication of our Administrators, Teachers, CEAs, and Advocates, who work closely with students and make a meaningful impact on their lives every day.**

Student Achievement

Our **student enrolment** this fall stands at **24,345 full-time equivalent students**, a slight decline of 0.8%.

Our students continue to excel. The **six-year BC resident graduation rate** is **96%**, well above the provincial average of 91%, and the **Indigenous graduation rate** is **86%**, compared to 76% provincially. These results are a testament to the dedication of our staff, families, and community partners who support student learning every day. Trustees brought greetings on behalf of the Board to all our Graduations which were celebrated across the District. Trustees also attended Blanketing Ceremonies for our Indigenous Students organized by our Indigenous Education Department.

The Board of Education once again expresses its sincere gratitude to all donors of the many bursaries and scholarships. Through the Central Okanagan Bursary and Scholarship Society (COBSS), our graduates received **588 awards totaling \$587,275**. We deeply

appreciate the many community partnerships that continue to grow and enrich the lives of our students. Community members contribute their time, volunteer their services, provide funding for school projects, and show steadfast support for our schools and learners. These efforts, whether from non-profit organizations, service clubs, or individual volunteers, make a tremendous and lasting difference in the lives of our students.

Governance and Advocacy

This year, the Board engaged in strong advocacy on behalf of our district. We met with **Minister of Education and Child Care, Lisa Beare**, and I met with the **President of the BC School Trustees Association** to discuss shared priorities.

We also submitted motions to BCSTA on **adequate childcare funding** and **teaching critical thinking in K-12 which were unanimously carried by the membership**, and I was honoured to present to the **Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services** on behalf of our district.

To enhance efficiency and oversight, the Board combined the **Finance and Audit** and **Planning and Facilities Committees** into the new **Finance and Planning Committee**, aligning fiscal and capital planning under one umbrella.

Community and Celebration

Trustees and staff participated in numerous community events, including **eight School Community Student Learning Conversations**, where we heard directly from students and staff about their learning experiences.

Through the IEC, we also celebrated the **blanketing of former Trustee Moyra Baxter**, honouring her decades of service and leadership.

Through “*Inside 23*”, Trustees continued learning about the innovative programs and inspiring work happening in our schools. We thank the **students and staff** who shared their learning with us.

Thank you to **Justin Schneider** for leading the digital “*Together We Learn*” publication, which continues to showcase excellence across our district, and to the **Kelowna Art Gallery** for hosting the **39th Annual Art in Action Student Exhibition, Interwoven** — a celebration of student creativity and togetherness.

Finance and Facilities

Financially, the Board approved a **\$384 million Amended Budget** for 2024/25 and a **\$381 million Annual Budget** for 2025/26, along with our **Audited Financial Statements** for the past fiscal year. Balancing the budget remains a cornerstone of trustee stewardship, ensuring that every dollar supports students.

Significant facility work was completed or advanced this year, including:

- The **Ecole Hudson Road Elementary Child Care**, opened this summer;

- **North Glenmore Elementary** and **Chief Tomat Elementary** expansions, adding 175 seats;
- Additions at **Ecole Dr. Knox Middle** and **Webber Road Elementary**, creating 500 new seats combined;
- Construction of the **new George Pringle Secondary**, opening in 2027 with 1,200 seats; and
- The **Ecole Hudson Road Elementary addition**, adding 265 seats by 2028.

We were also thrilled to announce a **new middle school on Burtch Road** — a **\$101 million project** that will create **800 new student seats** in the Glenmore neighbourhood.

The Board approved a **new transportation fee of \$525 per rider**, and adjusted **catchment boundaries** in the Smith Creek Road area to balance enrolment and better serve families. A heartfelt thank you to our **Operations Department, under the leadership of Rob Drew, Josh Currie and Stuart Kamstra**, for ensuring that our schools are **safe, accessible, and clean** for students and staff. Your tireless work, often behind the scenes, is deeply appreciated.

We are also thankful to the many **departments whose continuous and vital work supports students and their families** — including **Human Resources, Indigenous Education, Inclusive Education, Learning and Innovation, International Education, the Welcome Centre, Wheels Transitions, Career Life Programs, and Transportation**. Their dedication and expertise make a meaningful difference in the lives of our learners every day.

Indigenous Education and Equity

This year, the Board received the **Equity in Action 4th Annual Report** and reaffirmed our **Statement on Indigenous Sovereignty**.

We also issued a **Public Statement in support of Indigenous students, families, staff, and our local First Nations and Indigenous Partners in Education**. This statement reaffirmed our ongoing commitment to **safe and inclusive learning environments** and reflected our **strategic plan, policies, and dedication to truth and reconciliation**.

We were honoured to meet with **Westbank Chief and Council**, who expressed their deep appreciation for the Statement and shared that it meant a great deal to them.

Our role as a Board extends beyond governance — it also requires leadership. When public discourse challenges the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples or undermines reconciliation, we have a duty to speak up. The statement we issued was the result of thoughtful collaboration among all trustees, reaffirming that public education plays a vital role in fostering understanding, healing, and inclusion. Thank you, Trustees, for your compassionate leadership and collective support.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2025–2026, the Board will:

- **Review and update the Strategic Plan;**
- **Develop a Governance Framework and Annual Work Plan;** and
- **Review and revise the Board's Policy Manual** to ensure clarity and transparency in our governance practices.

As we move into the final year of this Board's term, with an election ahead in 2026, there is still much to do — and much to celebrate. I look forward to continuing to work alongside each of you to make decisions that are student-centered and to celebrating the many achievements of our learners.

Let us also recognize that everything we have accomplished — this past year, since 2022, and in the year ahead — represents a shared legacy. On the Board of Education, there are no individual legacies. Our successes belong to all of us. We are a team — and there is no “I” in team.

For personal reasons, I will not be putting my name forward again for the role of **Board Chair**. It has been an honor to serve in this capacity. As I prepare to pass the baton, I do so with the hope that the next Chair will continue to lead with courage and conviction — especially during times when our school communities are challenged or under attack. Strong leadership matters most when our students, staff, and families need our support the most. I look forward to hearing your speeches and wish each of you the very best in the AGM elections.

Closing Reflections

Before closing, I want to thank my **fellow trustees** for your dedication and commitment to the governance and oversight of our district. A special thank you to Vice-Chair, Lisa Guderyan, for her support and backup this year. You all should be proud of your perseverance and your continued efforts on behalf of the students, parents, staff, and community members of the Central Okanagan. Our Board is made up of seven different personalities and backgrounds. While we may not always agree, it's vital that we continue to **work together** and remember why we are here — **to serve students**.

I also want to express my deep appreciation to our partner groups. COTA, CUPE, COPVPA, COPAC and DSC - your collaboration, support, and engagement have strengthened our school community and enriched the educational opportunities available to our students. Your voices matter — and they are heard by this Board. Together, we have built partnerships that enhance learning and help prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

As we reflect upon this past year, let us celebrate the milestones we have achieved together. Our collective efforts have nurtured a culture of growth, inclusivity, and academic excellence. I am immensely proud of what we have accomplished this year and truly

grateful to each and every one of you for your unwavering commitment and passion. Together, we have created an environment where our students can flourish and reach for the skies.

Together, we will continue to move forward with purpose — strengthening learning, living our values, and building a bright future for every student in Central Okanagan Public Schools.

I Respectfully submit the 2025 Board Chair's Annual Report,

Julia Fraser

Chair, Board of Education