

Chair Lee-Ann Tiede's Report to the Board – October 30, 2024

As I prepared my thoughts for today, I came across my speech from two years ago, marking my first term as Chairman of the Board of Education in Central Okanagan Public Schools.

I spoke then of education's foundational components - knowledge, confidence, and courage and how these elements empower students to reach their full potential. The importance of prioritizing academics remains paramount to this Board's mission, and I am as committed as ever to governing responsibly and ensuring quality education for all of our students.

Reflecting on my vision from 2022, I had hoped we could emerge from the competitive atmosphere of elections and form a united team, focused on meeting the complex challenges before us and in the words of past Trustee Rolli Caccioni, I hoped that we would "get to the business". Trustees, I leave it to each of you to consider how far we've come in fostering a collaborative approach for the benefit of our students.

Back in 2022, I wanted this Board to embody approachability, integrity, and professionalism. At this halfway mark in our term, my hope is that we continue to model the respect, decorum, and growth we wish to see in our schools. Together, I hope we can encourage each other's strengths and build each other up as we continue our work.

My opinion is that we have made substantial progress together. I'd like to thank Lise Bradshaw and Mona Essler for helping navigate our first year and establishing a clear transition process for future Boards. This has enabled us to handle responsibilities smoothly, as reflected in our second year's achievements.

In the 2023-2024 school year, we can look back on a year of impactful accomplishments and steady progress for Central Okanagan Public Schools. The Board proudly reported a Six-Year BC Resident Completion Rate of 96%, surpassing the provincial average of 92%. Not surprisingly, our Indigenous Completion Rate also stood higher than the provincial average at 81%.

Policy amendments reflected the Board's commitment to clear communication and public engagement. An update to Policy 135 moved the Public Question and Comment period to the start of Board meetings to provide an opportunity to members of the gallery to ask a question or comment on any action, information or advocacy item on the Agenda.

Policy 125 was revised to align with the Provincial School Trustees Code of Conduct, reinforcing ethical standards for trustees.

Additionally, an amendment to Policy 650 introduced a new category for community rentals of school facilities, improving access to shared spaces.

The Board tackled significant financial responsibilities, adopting two major budget bylaws: the amended Annual Budget for 2023-2024 of \$356 million and the proposed budget for 2024-2025, set at \$374 million. Alongside fiscal management, the Board approved several plans for district growth, including the approval of the Annual Facility Grant (AFG) Plan for 2024/2025 through 2026/2027.

This year emphasized community participation, with trustees engaging in 10 School Community Student Learning Conversations to deepen their understanding of student experiences and aspirations. We also approved a new Board/Authority Authorized Course and an Enhancement Agreement, reinforcing our commitment to a forward-thinking approach that includes every student.

The District received great news from MLA Ravi Parmar, who announced \$10.5 million for an addition to Chief Tomat Elementary School. The Honourable Grace Lore, Minister of State for Child Care, celebrated the opening of new childcare spaces in the Central Okanagan with a special ceremony at the BGCO Childcare Facility at Anne McClymont Elementary School.

The Capital projects over the past year alone included:

- o George Pringle Secondary new construction
- o École Dr. Knox Middle School addition
- o North Glenmore Elementary addition
- o École Hudson Road Elementary addition
- o Chief Tomat Elementary addition
- o Purchase of a school site at Academy Way by Ministry of Education and Child Care
- o 7 new Childcare builds
- o Demolition and renovation at Hollywood Road Education Centre

With the District's enrolment reaching 25,405 students, the Board reviewed and advocated for resources to support this growth, including a motion to the BC School Trustees Association Legislative Committee for consideration at the 2024 BCSTA AGM to advocate to the Ministry of Finance/Treasury Board to increase the Ministry of Education and Child

Care's Annual Facilities Grant so that school districts can address billions in deferred maintenance to: improve accessibility, ensure student safety, enhance learning environments, extend facility lifespan and ensure long-term fiscal responsibility.

Looking ahead, the Board set a new transportation fee of \$450 per year to help manage rising operational costs.

Trustees attended the BCSTA Trustee Academy, BCSTA AGM and BCSTA Thompson-Okanagan Branch meetings in Vernon and Revelstoke.

Trustees also discussed and agreed:

- to a Board Evaluation to occur every two months (4 times per year)
- Approved the name change of Public Education Awareness Committee to Public Education Appreciation Committee.

and

- Approved a new schedule for future Board and Committee meetings that will place greater focus on committee work and the larger discussions that happen at the committee level. The change in schedule includes moving to one Board Meeting per month, with the exception of September and June, which will have two meetings, and continue with no meetings in July and August.

To advocate and build awareness of needs for the health, wellness, and growth of our District, the Board hosted Kevin Falcon, the Official Leader of the Opposition, for a tour of Rutland Middle School. The tour also included former MLAs Ben Stewart, Norm Letnick, and Renee Merrifield, spotlighting the district's ongoing commitment to engaging provincial leaders in the evolving needs of the community's schools.

New Syilx artwork was installed in the Board Room, created by Jim Elwood, Coralee Miller, and the Indigenous Visual Arts 12 students from Mount Boucherie Secondary School. This addition highlights the Board's appreciation for local art and heritage.

Finally, the Board approved the Annual Enhancing Student Learning Report for 2024 and approved the 2023/2024 Accumulated Operating Surplus.

All in all, the 2023-2024 year underscored the Board's deep-rooted commitment to public education, community involvement, and the prosperity of the Central Okanagan School District.

In closing, I want to express my sincere gratitude to staff and each trustee for your dedication to our students and your commitment to strengthening our schools and community. Your hard work truly makes a difference. Thank you.

That is the end of my Board Chair's report for 2023-2024.