



## NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### EDUCATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING

#### INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: May 4, 2022  
TO: Education Committee  
FROM: Zeyad Merchant, Director of Information Technology and  
Don Balcombe, Assistant Superintendent  
SUBJECT: ETAG: Educational Technology Advisory Group 2021-22

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#### Background

The District Educational Technology Advisory Group (ETAG) consists of representatives of educational stakeholder groups: Teachers, Principals, Librarians, Inclusive Education, Learning Coordinators, Parents (DPAC), Departments of Learning Services and Information Technology. ETAG is all about educational technology (edtech): the input can be specific to actual changes happening in the district on an operational level, as well as a broader type that helps inform and guide the district's investments and direction in technology. ETAG approaches its advisory role by identifying certain issues, investigating and discussing them, and proposing solutions and recommendations

#### Discussion

Examples of major NLPS edtech initiatives influenced by ETAG in the recent past include:

- Laptops for every teacher
- A strategic move to mobile device technology for students and cloud-based learning software platforms
- Targeted student-device ratios
- The district-wide IT Infrastructure Upgrade (aka Wi-Fi Project - began in 2020 and currently almost 50% complete)

#### ETAG 2021/22:

Our Board-supported IT Infrastructure Upgrade Project (aka "Wi-Fi project") kicked off in 2020. A significant amount of district's technology investment dollars has been directed to this initiative, as the means to addressing the most critical accumulated deficit in our physical infrastructure, upon which all current and future technology investments and capabilities at the school level depend. As a result, much of our remaining capital investments into technology since 2019/20 have been targeted towards

replacing and refreshing current technology assets as they age out, rather than infusing more of it before addressing the underlying infrastructure needed to support it. Nevertheless, the contribution from ETAG continues to be meaningful. ETAG meets monthly: six times since the start of this school year, with two more scheduled this year. These are the key ETAG discussions and contributions this school year, 2021/22:

- Feedback received from parents that awareness of supports available to vision and hearing-impaired students could be improved led directly to an awareness initiative by the Inclusive Ed team to schools and families
- ETAG member-led pilot to improve the safe use of Chromebooks by students (Internet Safety)
- Awareness of Internet content filtering and digital safety in the district
- Recommendations to improve response preparations for technology needed for Learn at Home
- Review and update of classroom technology bundle (underway)
- ETAG feedback on
  - Internet Safety, privacy, digital citizenship
  - Request and vetting process for instructional software and apps used in classrooms
  - Technology equity and removal of barriers to access
  - Awareness of EdTech kits available to teachers and schools
  - Success of Wi-Fi upgrades in schools

The landscape has changed since ETAG's roots in the 2000's: technology is no longer an afterthought and access is not an indulgence. As technology continues its ubiquity and increased reliance by learning, instruction and operations, and as digital literacy and proficiency is becoming more of a norm and an expectation, ETAG continues to play a valuable role in helping to ensure that the district's educational technology needs are being informed by educational stakeholder input.