

CHAIR REPORT

Charlene McKay

October 2022

District Visit Premier Horgan, MLAs:

On September 26, 2022, Premier Horgan and several MLAs visited the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District. This included Minister of Education and Child Care Jennifer Whiteside.

During the visit, MLAs toured the district on an electric school bus and visited Ecole Hammond Bay. This visit included an outdoor walk around tour of the school where significant construction progress was noted. Premier Horgan was able to chat with students about their interests while enjoying the outdoors. I was able to chat with Premier Horgan about mental health in schools and its connection to wellness in the community related to the work of Minister Sheila Malcolmson as the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

The second stop on the tour was at Dover Bay Secondary. MLAs were invited into the school to see the interior progress of the expansion construction. With most MLAs leaving to attend other meetings, the visit continued with Minister Whiteside, myself, and a few NLPS staff members. Minister Whiteside was able to chat with a few students and a couple of teachers at Dover Bay as well.

Following the tour at Dover Bay Secondary, Minister Whiteside, myself, Superintendent Saywell and Secretary-Treasurer Walsh held a meeting to discuss the Board's letter of July 2022 regarding funding concerns. Also in attendance virtually were several Ministry staff members.

Our discussion focussed on 3 key areas of Board advocacy:

1. NDSS replacement funding
2. Equitable pay supplement
3. Equitable pay for Hul'qumi'num teachers

A thorough discussion was had regarding the need to replace NDSS. I was able to share stories I have heard from students and staff in the building, and I shared that the City of Nanaimo Mayor and Council also endorsed this project as a significant infrastructure need for our region. We discussed the broad needs of all school districts following an unprecedented year of floods and fires, and these impacts on large financial expenditure approvals.

Regarding the equitable pay supplement, I highlighted that our district moved to equitable pay years earlier than many of our school district counterparts in the province. As a result, those districts that held off on adjustments to pay scales are now currently receiving a much higher percentage of financial supplement than ours. This has resulted in millions in lost revenue for SD68, and we put forth another ask to consider the funding model review recommendations related to this supplemental funding.

Further, we discussed the pay inequity that language teachers face when teaching traditional languages. These teachers are held in high esteem for their lived experience and willingness to teach and revitalize the Hul'qumi'num language. We highlighted for the Minister and her staff that this pay inequity is viewed by our board and our partner Snuneymuxw First Nation as systemic barrier to true reconciliation where we value the lived experience of these teachers equally to those who may have a traditional Masters degree in other specialities. The Minister is working closely with the Teacher Qualification Branch, and is deeply committed to this work.

Finally, I share that the time we spent with Minister Whiteside solidified our Board's relationship

with the Ministry of Education, and she spoke highly of the collaborative approach our staff take in working with Ministry staff.

Snuneymuxw/NLPS Joint Education Committee – Qwam Qwum Stuwixwulh

Over the course of the past two months, I have attended meetings with representatives from Snuneymuxw First Nation Council and staff as well as members of our staff to co-create a draft terms of reference for the Joint Education Committee for QQS. This joint committee is directly connected to the Memorandum of Agreement between Snuneymuxw First Nation and NLPS that was signed in June 2022.

The work of the joint committee is set to begin shortly after the inauguration of the newly elected NLPS Board. This committee will meet monthly to discuss all educational matters related to the school, and the committee will report back to both Chief and Council and the Board of Education at regular intervals to be determined by each partner. Further, we believe that it will be important to have joint meetings of the full Council and Board to share the success of the work we are doing together as partners.

The committee also recognizes that it will occasionally discuss other matters related to the two partners, such as, the Longhouse Learning Framework, Tetuxtun and the Snuneymuxw Learning Academy.

This committee takes a deeply caring approach to its work, and the relationship between NLPS and Snuneymuxw continues to grow through this time spent focusing on the wellbeing of students.

Relevant Meeting Dates:

Calendar Committee: October 5
Snuneymuxw MoA Joint Meeting: October 11
Syeyutsus Executive Meeting: October 12
Agenda Setting: October 13
CUPE Professional Development Day: October 20
Board Annual Work Plan Meeting: October 20
Long Range Facilities Plan Committee: Postponed until after election
Policy Committee: Postponed until after election
Safe Schools Committee: Postponed until after election
Superintendent: As required

Upcoming:

Syeyutsus Family Meeting: October 27