	stqaʔtxʷɬn'iwt sqilxʷⁱ **WESTBANK FIRST NATION** #301 – 515 Highway 97 South Kelowna, B.C. V1Z 3J2 Phone: (250) 769-4999 Fax: (250) 769-4377 www.wfn.ca *Community. Leadership. Pride.*	**MINUTES** **sənsísyustən** **SCHOOL BOARD** **Monday September 21, 2026** **5:00 p.m.**

The Meeting took place at Sensisyusten School and via Zoom.

SCHOOL BOARD:

Emma Dovell
Hailey Causton
Eden Derickson
Jordan Coble
Rose Lube

STAFF:

Denise Clough	Director of Community Services
Joanne De Guevara	Principal

CALL TO ORDER	**Agenda is attached to these minutes as Exhibit "A."**
	Called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.
NEW BUSINESS	
	• Sara Tronson was absent as she is on leave following the birth of her baby. • Jordan Coble attended as Sara's alternate.
	Member Board Seat **No Supporting Documents**
	Discussion: • The Board discussed the vacant Member Parent School Board seat. • One application was received from **Kelly Hopkins**. • Kelly's son is currently in Grade 4 at sensisyusten School, and she indicated that she intends to keep him at the school through Grade 6. • Kelly currently serves as Chair of the PAC. • Members noted Kelly's involvement with the school community, including her work with the SEA event. • No other applications were received for the vacant seat. • The Board discussed proceeding with a recommendation to Chief and Council to appoint Kelly to the Member

	Parent seat.
MOTION	**THAT** the School Board recommend to Chief and Council the appointment of Kelly Hopkins to the Member Parent School Board seat **CARRIED**
	School Board report to Council **No Supporting Documents**
	Discussion: • The Board reviewed the semi-annual School Board Report to Chief and Council. • It was noted that the report is overdue. • The current reporting template has not yet been updated • The draft report was prepared using information from previous Principal's Reports. • Members agreed that the report should clearly reflect that the School Board's work and priorities are guided by the new strategic plan. • Members discussed connecting the School Board's work to the broader WFN Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP), where appropriate.
	Language, Culture and Land Stewardship **Discussion:** • Two School Board members participated in Indigenous language-related education through UBCO. • sensisyusten School hosted the Band School Conference as part of professional development and relationship building. • School staff continue to participate in weekly language learning. • The school receives FNESC funding to support its language and culture programming. • Discussed the vulnerability associated with relying on annual grant funding for core language and culture programming. • Explained that language and culture are considered foundational to the school and are incorporated throughout the curriculum. • The FNESC funding is shared among several areas/departments and is also used for cultural projects and initiatives. • Discussed the importance of distinguishing between

grant funding for special projects and secure funding for permanent/core language and culture positions.
- Jordan suggested connecting the work to CCP priorities, including cultural revitalization and environmental protection.
- Discussed identifying sustainable funding for language and culture rather than relying solely on annual grants.
- Previous attempts were made to access Four Pillars funding; however, that funding was understood to be directed toward projects rather than ongoing wages.

Community Building and School Connections
Discussion:
- The Board reviewed activities supporting community building and the use of school space.
- Activities and initiatives discussed included:
  - SIYA;
  - RCMP programming;
  - boys' and girls' after-school programming;
  - BC Lions presentations;
  - Friday Family Breakfast;
  - ribbon skirt and ribbon shirt making;
  - medallion making;
  - school open houses;
  - family barbecues;
  - winter concert; and
  - other family/community events.
- Friday Family Breakfast was identified as particularly successful in bringing families and the school community together.
- Discussed opportunities to involve Elders and Knowledge Keepers in land-based activities and field trips.
- Noted that portions of the existing semi-annual reporting form overlap and should eventually be revised to better align with the strategic plan and CCP.

SIYA
Discussion:
- The Board discussed the evolution of the SIYA event.
- In previous years, the event grew considerably and attracted large numbers of attendees.
- Discussed the importance of returning the focus of SIYA

to the students, school and families.

- The most recent SIYA was intentionally scaled back and was viewed positively as a more child-centred event.
- Communications will take a larger role in planning the upcoming SIYA
- The intention is to continue emphasizing and celebrating students and school staff rather than allowing the event to become primarily a large public event.
- Discussed distinguishing SIYA from other public-facing WFN events that are intended for broader community participation.

Student Success and Leadership
Discussion:

- The Board reviewed student leadership activities, including participation in:
  - Valentine's Day activities;
  - Pink Shirt Day;
  - weekly Circle responsibilities;
  - songs and other school responsibilities.
- Older students regularly support younger students, including assisting Kindergarten and Grade 1 students during lunch and classroom activities.
- Noted that student leadership occurs on a daily basis and is difficult to fully capture within the existing reporting template.
- School sports programming will include soccer, basketball, and track and field.

Programs, Curriculum and Land-Based Learning
Discussion:

- The Board reviewed programming supporting Indigenous curriculum and increased time on the land.
- Activities discussed included:
  - survival camp programming;
  - RCMP-supported programming;
  - land-based learning;
  - harvesting activities;
  - the new outdoor cultural space; and
  - tea picking.
- Advised that previous Principal's Reports contain

	additional information that can be incorporated into the semi-annual report. **School Promotion and Financial Stability** **Discussion:** • Discussed the school's growing profile and relationships with outside organizations. • Organizations and groups visiting or engaging with the school have included UBCO, the Salvation Army, TD Bank and others. • These relationships have resulted in additional awareness of the school and, in some cases, financial or other forms of support. • Noted that sensisyusten School has developed a strong profile within the broader community. **Policy, Governance and Strategic Planning** **Discussion:** • The Board previously met with Laurie Bowen to review the School Board Terms of Reference and other governance matters. • A further meeting is planned for October. • The new School Strategic Plan has been completed and signed off. • Advised that the school policies have been updated, with approximately two policies still requiring Board review. • Confirm with Laurie whether any additional policy updates remain outstanding. • Identified the current semi-annual reporting form as an example of a governance document that should be updated. • Jordan suggested that future reports could include photographs to provide Chief and Council with additional context regarding School Board and school activities. **Board Training and Development** **Discussion:** • Discussed the Board orientation/training previously provided by Julia. • Discussed inviting Iain McCreath (WFN Legal Counsel) to provide an updated orientation for the Board.

- It was suggested that this could be incorporated into the October governance meeting, particularly with a new Board member joining.

Staffing and Student Supports
Discussion:

- Staffing and student supports have increased.
- Additional supports have been made possible through funding sources including Jordan's Principle and GAAP funding.
- Has applied again for Jordan's Principle funding.
- Discussed including staff-to-student ratios in the semi-annual report to demonstrate the level of support being provided.
- The average classroom was discussed as approximately 12 students, resulting in approximately six students per adult in some classrooms.
- Members suggested comparing sensisyusten's ratios with typical school district classroom ratios to provide context.
- Jordan suggested that the report could also identify the school's desired/full staffing model and any areas where additional staffing is needed.
- Discussed the school's significant reliance on grants to fund support positions.
- Acknowledged that reliance on grant funding for core staffing creates sustainability concerns.

Priorities for the Next Reporting Period
Discussion:

- Sustainability of the school without excessive reliance on grant funding was identified as an important priority.
- Discussed protecting the school budget and identifying what long-term financial sustainability should look like.
- Language and culture funding was identified as a matter to raise with Chief and Council.
- Emphasized that language and culture programming is foundational to the school and that annual grant funding is not guaranteed.
- Indicated that the school otherwise feels supported by the Board and Chief and Council, with funding sustainability being the primary concern.

	Principals Report **Supporting Documents attached to these minutes as EXHIBIT "B."**

	Discussion:
	• Joanne provided an enrollment update for the 2026/27 school year.
	• Current enrollment is 73 students. The enrollment chart included with the agenda package confirms the six classroom groupings and total enrollment of 73 students.
	• Current classroom composition was reported as:
	  ○ Kindergarten – 11 students;
	  ○ Grade 1 – 12 students;
	  ○ Grade 1/2 – 13 students;
	  ○ Grade 2/3 – 11 students;
	  ○ Grade 3/4 – 14 students; and
	  ○ Grade 5/6 – 12 students.
	• Joanne advised that approximately 10–12 prospective students had to be declined admission this year.
	• There continues to be significant interest from families wishing to enroll their children at sensisyusten.
	• Joanne explained that enrollment decisions must take into consideration the school's ability to adequately support students and maintain a positive learning environment.
	• Particular consideration is given to the number of students with Individual Education Plans and higher support needs within each classroom.
	• Joanne indicated that she tries not to exceed approximately three to four students with IEPs in a classroom because of the level of support required.
	• WFN/Nation students continue to be prioritized for enrollment.
	• The students who were declined were non-member students.
	• Acknowledged that these are difficult conversations with families but supported protecting the school's ability to meet the needs of existing students.
	• The Board discussed the importance of maintaining small class sizes, adequate supports and a positive learning environment for students and staff.
	• The enrollment breakdown also includes WFN students,

	WFN-affiliated students, students from other First Nations and a smaller number of non-First Nations students who have attended the school since Kindergarten.
	October Governance / Terms of Reference Meeting **No Supporting Documents**
	Discussion: • Discussed scheduling an October meeting dedicated to governance work rather than holding a regular School Board business meeting. • The meeting will focus primarily on completing the School Board Terms of Reference and reviewing policies with Laurie Bowen. • Indicated that substantial progress has already been made on the Terms of Reference and that only the remaining portions need to be completed. • The regular School Board meeting date of October 19 was suggested for this work. • Laurie Bowen had previously indicated that she could accommodate an evening meeting. • Also discussed incorporating Board orientation into the same meeting. • Iain may be invited to provide orientation similar to the orientation previously provided by Julia Buck. • Jordan suggested inviting Julia to participate with Iain to support the transition, given that Julia originally developed the orientation presentation. • Jordan agreed to contact Julia.
	Family Breakfast **No Supporting Documents**
	Discussion: • Board members were encouraged to attend the school's Friday Family Breakfast. • Family Breakfast takes place each Friday morning in the multipurpose room, followed by Circle, prayer and song. • Spoke positively about the event and its role in bringing together students, families, staff and community members. • Attendance has grown considerably, and members noted that the Circle may eventually require additional space. **School Board Photos**

	No Supporting Documents
	Discussion: • Discussed having photographs of School Board members displayed at the school. • The purpose would be to help school staff and families identify who sits on the School Board. • Suggested arranging this once the vacant Member Parent seat has been filled. • Communications could assist with taking individual photographs and preparing a display similar to those used for school trustees.
ADJOURNMENT	The meeting adjourned.