



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson)

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November 21, 2024

via email: CC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Minister of State for Child Care and Children and Youth with Support Needs
Honourable Jodie Wickens
PO Box 9045, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2

Dear Honourable Minister Jodie Wickens:

On behalf of the Kamloops-Thompson Board of Education, I am honoured to congratulate you on your new role as the Minister of State for Child Care and Children and Youth with Support Needs.

To provide you with a sense of who we are – the Kamloops-Thompson School District is the size of Vancouver Island (27,000 km), the 13th largest rural-urban district located in the unceded territory of Secwépemc people, and serves over 16,000 students in 12 urban and rural communities.

Our Board is focused on increasing equitable life chances for all students, especially for Indigenous students. This past year, we reached the highest six-year graduation rates in the history of our district and exceeded the province for increasing Indigenous student graduate rates (+5%).

Kamloops is the fifth fastest growing municipality provincially. We recently reopened two schools, reconfigured 20% of our district, and we are building a new school, Sníne Elementary, in the southwest of Kamloops. We have been growing at a medium-sized elementary school annually.

In our district, the southwest sector of Kamloops is especially overly full (116% to 158% capacity utilization) and our secondary school for that area, Sa-Hali Secondary School, has eight portables and is at 128% capacity utilization currently, projected to be at 170% by 2030. Our Board is committed to securing a new secondary school in Aberdeen to help address current and projected enrollment pressures. We co-presented with the City of Kamloops at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) conference in September 2024 to share that we greatly need support for a new secondary school in Aberdeen.

Our Board has also advocated strenuously for a new elementary school in the growing Kamloops neighbourhood of Batchelor Heights, where we recently engaged in a catchment change within three elementary schools because one had reached 181% capacity utilization. Even after reconfiguration, the closest elementary school, Westmount Elementary, is at a capacity utilization of 122%.

Our 2022-2027 District Strategic Plan prioritizes supporting students with diverse needs by providing diverse learning opportunities in Literacy and Numeracy strategies as part of our Intellectual Development Priority, ensuring students feel welcome, safe, and connected as part

of our Human and Social Development Priority, celebrating diversity and inclusive practices as part of our Cultural and Identity Development Priority, and supporting diverse and under-represented learners to participate in career exploration as part of our Career Development Priority. In the 2023-2024 school year we saw these priorities directly benefit student learning. Grade 10 students with diverse needs outperformed provincial peers in Graduation Numeracy Assessments over three years. We also saw great gains in learners with diverse needs in the Literacy Primary Reading Assessment and Numeracy Foundational Skills Assessment. Students in our District also improved in feeling safe, welcome, a sense of belonging, and connected in 2023-2024.

We know that you have been a strong advocate for supporting families and quality accessible education through your work SHARE Society and other non-profit organizations. We are eager to work together to advocate for the needs of all families and students, including students with diverse needs, in our district.

We look forward to meeting you and connecting with you about your priorities and Mandate letter as you gain momentum in your new role.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather Grieve". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "H" and a long, sweeping tail.

Heather Grieve, Board Chair
School District No.73 (Kamloops-Thompson) Board of Education

cc: Board of Trustees; Superintendent; Acting Secretary-Treasurer; Communications Director and Board Administrator