

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Connecting Our Priorities



April 2026 Highlights

WELCOME TO THE APRIL STRATEGIC FOCUS

Welcome to the April edition of *Strategic Focus – Connecting Our Priorities*. This month’s publication highlights the meaningful learning, collaboration, and community engagement taking place across the District as we continue to advance the goals of our Strategic Plan.

Inside this edition, you will find highlights connected to the [District Strategic Plan](#) priority areas:

- Intellectual Development – Trees for Hope and the Environmental Expo, showcasing student learning through environmental stewardship, inquiry, and experiential opportunities.
- Human & Social Development – Mindful Moments, April Music Department highlights, Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment training, and recognition of School Bus Driver Appreciation Day.
- Career Development – Career Programs and expanded pathways supporting student transitions to post-secondary education, training, and the workplace.
- Community Partnership Development – M.V. Beattie, Shihya, and RCMP participate in a Bike Rodeo.
- Organizational Development – School-based Professional Development Day, International Student homestay opportunities, and 2026–2027 school registration.
- Effective Governance and Leadership – Highlights from the April Regular Board Meeting and Committee of the Whole governance policy review.

Stay connected and informed by visiting our District website (www.sd83.bc.ca) for important dates, news, and resources.

REMINDERS

- May 18 Victoria Day (no school)
- May 19 Regular Board Meeting
- June 16 Regular Board Meeting
- June 25 Last Day of School Before Summer Break
- June 26 Administration Day (no school for students)

Check out the 2026-27 School Year Calendar on the District’s website: [2026-27 School Year Calendar](#).



2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

July							August							September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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							30	31												

October							November							December							
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31			

January							February							March										
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31																								

April							May							June										
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							30	31																

Statutory Holiday (or in lieu day)	Early Dismissal Day (K-12)
School Vacation Periods	Conferencing Day (Elementary/Middle Only)
Professional Development Day (K-12)	Semester Transition Day (Secondary Only)
Non-Instructional Day (K-12)	

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Each student will develop their literacy skills, numeracy skills, and competencies to become their most capable self.

TREES FOR HOPE 2026

Schools across the District are once again preparing to celebrate Earth Day by taking part in the annual *Trees for Hope* initiative, a hands-on environmental learning opportunity that connects students with nature and stewardship.

Approximately 1,800 seedlings are being distributed to participating schools, ensuring classrooms received their trees ahead of Earth Day on Wednesday, April 22, 2026. Each seedling represents an opportunity for students to learn about ecosystems, climate action, and the importance of caring for the environment, while actively contributing to a greener future.



The Trees for Hope initiative continues to grow thanks to the commitment of school staff, champions, and classroom teachers who make environmental education meaningful and hands-on for students of all ages. Classroom planting activities often extend learning beyond science, supporting cross-curricular connections in Indigenous learning, numeracy, literacy, and social responsibility.

Thank you to all the schools and staff leads who supported this important annual initiative. A special thank you to Kim Fulton (pictured left) for assisting with the coordination of Trees for Hope. Everyone's participation helps foster environmental awareness, responsibility, and hope—one tree at a time.

This initiative supports the [District's Strategic Plan](#) by fostering environmental stewardship, experiential learning, and meaningful connections to the world beyond the classroom.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPO BRINGS COMMUNITY, MUSIC, AND LEARNING TOGETHER



The Environmental Advisory Working Group hosted the second annual Environmental Expo at Salmon Arm Secondary School (SAS) on April 30, 2026. The expo brought together students, educators, community organizations, and local musicians for a day of learning focused on watersheds, climate responsibility, and environmental stewardship.

SAS leadership students played a key role in setting up tables and acting as ambassadors throughout the event, helping orient younger students and community members. Despite disruptions to regular routines, staff and students adapted smoothly to accommodate the large gathering. Vice-Principal Kris Hryniw was instrumental in coordinating the event within the school.

Environmental Expo Brings Community, Music, and Learning Together continued



A highlight of the day was a visit from Luke Wallace, a world-recognized environmental singer-songwriter, who entertained students through music at local elementary schools (South Canoe pictured on the left) and led songwriting workshops with English classes at both J.L. Jackson Elementary and SAS. More than 350 attendees were also provided with nutritious snacks supplied by the Shuswap Food Action Society, coordinated by Melanie Bennett. The atmosphere in the atrium was further energized by live performances from local musicians Joan Southworth, Juanita Austin, Jim McConnell, and Norm Sargent, who shared

environmentally themed music that engaged audiences of all ages. During the lunch hour, SAS band teacher Brook Roberts led several student ensembles that drew large and enthusiastic crowds.

Educational highlights included interactive learning stations focused on Canada's watersheds and the role of salmon in local ecosystems. Brenda Melnychuk, working with the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and the Adams River Salmon Society, guided students through these concepts using a six-by-eight-metre walkable map of Canada provided by Canadian Geographic, with special attention given to the Shuswap watershed.

District staff, Directors of Instruction Reid Findlay and Jennifer Findlay, and Education Administrative Assistant Kyla Sherman, supported the event behind the scenes, assisting with logistics, budgeting, and programming. A mock trial organized by students from Danny Hughes' Law 11 class explored climate accountability, engaging students in real-world civic issues. Community mentors also contributed their expertise, including Secwepémc Elder Louis Thomas, who shared Indigenous perspectives on land and water stewardship.

SD83 teachers supported students through inquiry-based learning projects aligned with provincial curriculum goals. Students presented a wide range of environmental topics through colourful and informative displays, demonstrating strong depth of understanding and enthusiasm as they shared their learning with peers and adults.

The event was made possible through financial support from community sponsors, including the Shuswap Community Foundation, Rotary, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and the North Okanagan Teachers' Association. A special thank you to Wayne Spencer and Kim Fulton for organizing the Environmental Expo.

To access more information and photos, visit [Environmental Expo Brings Community, Music, and Learning Together](#).



HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Each student will feel welcome, safe, and connected to peers and adults in their school.

MINDFUL MOMENTS



April 2026

Mindful Moments

Brought to you by the Itinerant Counselling Team

Nature, Movement, and Connection

The nature movement, a concept encompassing various initiatives and beliefs, focuses on restoring and deepening human connections with the natural world. This movement emphasizes the importance of nature for both individual well-being and societal health, recognizing that our relationship with nature significantly impacts our mental and physical health, as well as our environmental stewardship.

Key Aspects of the Nature Movement

NATURE CONNECTION: The movement promotes the idea that humans have an inherent connection with nature, and that this connection is essential for our well-being and the planet's health.

INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING: Studies have shown that spending time in nature can reduce stress, improve mood, boost immunity, and enhance cognitive function.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP: The movement encourages individuals to become more aware of the natural world and to take action to protect it, recognizing that our well-being is intertwined with the health of the environment.

DIVERSE INITIATIVES: The movement encompasses various initiatives, from nature-based therapies and outdoor play programs to environmental education and advocacy.

Examples of Nature Movement Activities

FOREST BATHING: Engaging in slow, mindful walks in nature, often in forests, to experience the therapeutic benefits of nature.

NATURE WALKS AND HIKES: Exploring trails and enjoying the natural beauty of the outdoors, often while incorporating mindfulness practices.

GARDENING AND GREEN SPACES: Creating and maintaining gardens, parks, and other green spaces to bring nature into our lives and communities.

NATURE-BASED THERAPIES: Utilizing nature-based interventions, such as spending time in nature, to support mental and physical well-being.

NATURE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH: Educating people about the importance of nature and inspiring them to become more involved in environmental stewardship.



Benefits of the Nature Movement

IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH: Reduced stress, anxiety, depression, and improved mood and concentration.

ENHANCED PHYSICAL HEALTH: Increased physical activity, reduced blood pressure, and boosted immune function.

INCREASED AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION FOR NATURE: A deeper understanding and appreciation of the natural world and its interconnectedness.

GREATER ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP: A sense of responsibility and commitment to protecting the environment for future generations.



How to Get Involved

VISIT LOCAL PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS: Explore trails, gardens, and other green spaces in your community.

ENGAGE IN NATURE-BASED ACTIVITIES: Try forest bathing, nature walks, gardening, or other nature-based activities.

SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: Donate to or volunteer with organizations that work to protect nature and promote environmental stewardship.

ADVOCATE FOR NATURE-BASED POLICIES: Support policies that promote access to nature and protect natural resources.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES AND CONNECT WITH OTHERS: Join a nature club, attend nature workshops, or share your experiences with others.

Art projects using found items in nature is a fun way for kids to get creative!

the artful parent: 22 Nature Art Ideas for Kids
(<https://artfulparent.com/nature-art-for-kids>)

Reading stories about nature can also be a fun way to inspire kids to explore the outdoors!

Explore the Outdoors: 32 Favorite Children's Books About Nature | Best Outdoor Picture Books — Doing Good Together™
(<https://www.doinggoodtogether.org/bhf-book-lists/picture-books-for-nature-love>)

The nature movement, a concept encompassing various initiatives and beliefs, focuses on restoring and deepening human connections with the natural world. This movement emphasizes the importance of nature for both individual well-being and societal health, recognizing that our relationship with nature significantly impacts our mental and physical health, as well as our environmental stewardship.

Discover more: Visit our [website](#) to read [April Mindful Moments – Nature, Movement, and Connection](#).

APRIL MUSIC DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The month of April has been an outstanding and memorable one for band programs across the District, featuring exceptional performances, meaningful travel opportunities, and well-deserved recognition at the regional, provincial, and national levels. From elementary classrooms to senior ensembles, students demonstrated dedication, musical growth, and pride in their accomplishments.



A major highlight was the **Shuswap Music Festival**, held from April 14-15, 2026, at A.L. Fortune Secondary. Nearly 300 student musicians from nine bands performed over two days. Adjudicated by one of Canada’s top music educators, Sean Irvine of Winnipeg, students benefited from expert feedback and engaging workshops that strengthened both technical skills and musical confidence.

Results include:

Concert Band B100:

LWMS Band 8 - Silver
ERS Band 7 - Bronze
ALF Band 7 - Gold

Concert Band B200:

ERS Band 8/9 - Gold
ALF Band 8 - Silver

Concert Band B300:

ALF Band 9-12 - Gold
Jackson Band 9 - Gold

Concert Band B400:

SAS Band 10-12 – Silver

Jazz (J100):

SMS Jazz 7/8 - Gold



Beyond local festivals, bands traveled throughout British Columbia to participate in events. The J.L. Jackson, A.L. Fortune, and Salmon Arm Secondary bands attended the **Windscares Music Festival** in Kelowna from April 20-23, 2026, where they participated in performances and adjudications. In addition, the J.L. Jackson Grades 9-11 Jazz Band took part in the **Interior Jazz Festival**, from April 16-18, 2026. These experiences led to outstanding results, including gold standings and an invitation for both the Salmon Arm Secondary Concert Band and Jazz Band to represent the District at MusicFest Canada Nationals in Calgary in 2027.

It has been a busy spring around the District for the elementary classes. They have been preparing **spring concerts, teas, and year-end performances** to showcase what they have learned and worked on throughout the school year.

Stay tuned for Music Department events that are occurring in May, such as:

- Pleasant Valley Secondary performances in Victoria
- A.L. Fortune's Drumline Provincials
- A.L. Fortune's performances in Squamish



BEHAVIOURAL AND DIGITAL THREAT ASSESSMENT TRAINING

School District No. 83 (Kw̓salktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw) brought together educators and community partners on Friday, April 10, 2026, for a full-day Basic Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment (BDTA™) training session, reinforcing a shared commitment to safe, caring, and inclusive school and community environments.

BDTA™ is a protocol that is frequently used in British Columbia as well as many other Canadian jurisdictions. Previously known as Violence/Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA™), the updated terminology reflects current best practice in the field.

The training, held at the District Education Support Centre, was facilitated by Scott Rothermell, a certified Safer Schools trainer. Participants included a broad cross-section of professionals whose collective expertise plays a critical role in prevention and early intervention. From SD83, attendees included members of the district leadership team (principals and vice-principals), itinerant elementary counsellors, school-based middle and secondary counsellors, and Indigenous education staff, including Success Teachers, Indigenous Outreach Worker, and an Indigenous Clinical Counsellor.

Representatives from School District No. 19 (Revelstoke) also took part, including the District Vice Principal of Inclusive Education and school-based principals.



The session highlighted the importance of collaboration beyond school walls, with participation from community agencies and partner organizations. These included the Integrated Child and Youth Team, Child and Youth Mental Health clinicians and a nurse clinician, Interior Health's Mental Health and Substance Use team, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the RCMP, and representatives from the Splatšin Education Department, and Stsmémelt Children and Family Development.

Throughout the day, participants engaged in a blend of theory, case study analysis, and hands-on, group-based activities. Training focused on structured data collection, behavioural assessment, trauma-informed interviewing techniques, intervention planning, progress monitoring, and ongoing case management. The goal was to build a shared understanding and consistent approach to identifying and responding to concerning behaviours before situations escalate.

Behavioural and Digital Threat Risk Assessment Training continued

Assistant Superintendent Chelsea Prince has invited community agencies and partners to collaborate in the development of a Threat Assessment Community Protocol for the region. This protocol will be a comprehensive, multi-agency framework designed to ensure school and community safety by collaboratively assessing and intervening when individuals, often students, exhibit threatening or potentially violent behaviour. It is a proactive, trauma-informed approach that brings together school districts, police services, mental health professionals, and other community partners to intervene before a violent act occurs.

This collective effort reflects a growing recognition that maintaining safe schools is a shared community responsibility that depends on strong relationships, clear processes, and a commitment to working together in the best interest of children, youth, and families across the region.

This initiative aligns with the [Human & Social Development](#) priority in our [Strategic Plan](#), which is focused on ensuring every student feels welcome, safe, and connected to peers and adults at school through proactive, trauma-informed, and collaborative approaches to well-being and safety. It also supports the [Community Partnerships](#) priority by progressing toward the signing of the Threat Assessment Community Protocol, strengthening shared responsibility for student safety across schools and community partners.



Digital Threat Assessment

CELEBRATING THE DEDICATION OF OUR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS



On April 15, 2026, School Bus Driver Appreciation Day in British Columbia, staff and students across the District celebrated the dedicated school bus drivers who ensure safe, reliable transportation for students every day.

Our school bus drivers play an essential role in the school experience. They are often the first school staff members students see in the morning and the last they see at the end of the day, helping set the tone for a positive school day by greeting students with kindness, consistency and care.

Potted plants as a token of appreciation for bus drivers across the District.

Handwritten notes and drawings left by students to thank their school bus driver for a safe ride every day.

To show their appreciation, staff and students found meaningful and creative ways to say thank you. Students shared heartfelt appreciation through hand-drawn cards, handwritten notes, and special gifts.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Each student will develop the skills and competencies necessary to be successful in a career or community pathway of their choice.

CAREER PROGRAMS

The Career Programs Department's annual work plan is always aligned with our [District Strategic Plan](#). While the mission, vision, and values contained in the plan are equally important to us, preparing students to become educated citizens who contribute to a dynamic sustainable, and diverse world - our vision - is central to our work.

We often hear that there are three pillars for an educated citizen. These pillars are intellectual development, human and social development, and career development. Over the years, many have noted that career development doesn't always get "pillar treatment" when compared to intellectual development and human and social development. The Ministry of Education and Child Care has been very intentional in trying to correct that in recent years through such things as declaring "Provincial Careers Week" in late November and investing in Dual Credit and Work Experience expansion to provide more pathways for students to graduate with purpose and dignity.

The [Career Programs](#) have been spending much of their time this year focusing on four specific strategic priorities:

- Engage students in goal-setting and self-assessment related to core competencies, career pathways, and programming;
- Continue to explore partnerships with post-secondary institutions and community organizations;
- Utilize [myBlueprint](#) and SpacesEDU to collect and curate student's learning journeys; and,
- Develop more career pathway opportunities for students transitioning directly into the workplace and for workplace micro-credentials.

As we enter the time of year where students in our high schools are engaging in the course planning and course selection process for next year, it is a very appropriate time for us to highlight the pathways available for students to successfully transition to post-secondary programs, employment opportunities, or community living. To that end, we have refreshed our [Career Programs website](#) to provide parents with a clear view of the many pathways available to students.

WHAT WE OFFER

There are many ways for students to get valuable life experiences and a head start on post-secondary level programs, most tuition-free, while still in secondary school.

- [Dual Credit Programs](#) – Earn both high school and college credits at no cost to families ([Academic](#) and [Trades](#)).
- [Sampler Programs](#) - A chance to explore multiple post-secondary options while receiving graduation credits.
- [Work Experience & Job Shadows](#) – Explore careers through hands-on opportunities.
- [Career Spotlights & Info Sessions](#) – Learn about diverse industries and career options.

For concrete dates and application forms visit the Career Centre at your school.

**Note: all programs are subject to approved funding, student enrollment, and program availability.*

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We will strengthen existing and develop new strategic partnerships in gap areas.

BIKE RODEO BRINGS SAFETY, SKILLS, AND SMILES AT M.V. BEATTIE

The recent Bike Rodeo at M.V. Beattie was a success, offering students an engaging and active way to build essential bike safety and riding skills. Over two days, primary and intermediate students took part in hands-on activities focused on helmet safety, bike awareness, and confident riding, all in a fun and encouraging environment.



The event truly highlighted the strength of their school community partnerships.

"We are thankful for the support of Constable Seanan and Constable Mike, whose involvement helped reinforce important safety messages. We also appreciated the participation of Shihya students and staff, who joined us, shared bikes, and contributed to the positive, inclusive atmosphere. A big thank-you goes to our PAC for providing a delicious hot dog lunch that students and staff thoroughly enjoyed," shared Acting Principal Laura Tomlinson.

The Bike Rodeo was a wonderful blend of learning, movement, and fun—and a great example of our community coming together to support student well-being and safety. We look forward to making this an annual event and building on its success next year!



ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We will develop and enhance procedures and practices that will assist in meeting the Strategic Priorities.

SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

On April 20, 2026, educators from across the District came together for a collaborative, school-based Professional Development Day focused on strengthening teaching practice, supporting student success, and learning together. From District-wide sessions to meaningful school-based learning, the day highlighted the power of collaboration.

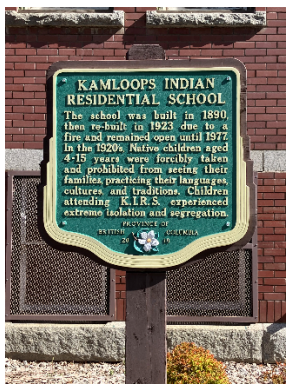


More than 140 educators gathered at South Broadview Elementary School for Powerful Thinking sessions led by literacy expert and author Adrienne Gear. Educators worked alongside colleagues to explore practical strategies, examine student exemplars, and deepen their understanding of how to make student thinking visible through reading and writing across subject areas.

Some educators also participated in an interactive session on artificial intelligence in education, led by District Principal Steve Drapala and Ed Tech Helping Teacher Kelly Dosen. Through open discussion, participants explored ethical considerations, academic integrity, and digital literacy, building a shared understanding of how AI works and how it can be used responsibly to support learning.



Across the District, many school staffs engaged in collaborative, site-based learning as teams. Educators explored topics such as assessment practices, outdoor literacy and nature, ADHD supports, Universal Design for Learning, executive functioning, math, literacy, Physical and Health Education, and Truth and Reconciliation. These sessions emphasized collaboration, reflection, and practical strategies to support both educators and learners.



School-based Pro-D days provide valuable time and space for educators to learn together, align their practices, and respond directly to the needs of their students. When educators collaborate, they build shared language, strengthen relationships, and develop collective responsibility for student success.

HOW TO BECOME A HOST FAMILY



ROCKY MOUNTAIN
International Student Program

BECOME A HOST FAMILY

Apply now to welcome an international student into your home in September 2026

Apply by May 15 for our \$250 sign-on bonus offer

New host families who complete their application by May 15 are eligible for a \$250 sign-on bonus after completing one month of hosting (September 2026).

Apply online at: rmisp.ca/homestay

Curious about hosting? Join an info session.

Register for a spring info session to learn more about:

- What it's like to host
- Benefits for your family
- Supports available
- How to get started

Scan QR code to sign up:



Questions? Contact our homestay team at: info@rminternational.ca or 250-427-2245

The Rocky Mountain International Student Program is seeking host families for September 2026. Hosting an international student is a unique opportunity to experience a new culture, share different perspectives and build lifelong global friendships - without leaving home!

Our families often say the experience also enriches their family life and allows them to show off the beauty and great lifestyle in their communities.

Families receive a monthly stipend to help cover hosting expenses, and 24/7 support from our team of Homestay Coordinators. All that's needed is a private bedroom, and a warm, welcoming home where a student can feel included in everyday life.

Please contact our homestay team at info@rminternational.ca / 250-427-2245 / www.rmisp.ca/homestay or join one of our upcoming virtual information sessions to learn more!

To learn more about our International Student Program and hosting opportunities, families are encouraged to visit the SD83 webpage: [International Student Program - SD6 - Kwskalktnews ne Secwepemcul'ecw](https://www.sd83.ca/International-Student-Program-SD6-Kwskalktnews-ne-Secwepemcul'ecw).

2026-2027 SCHOOL REGISTRATION

Registration for the 2026-2027 school year is open for students entering Kindergarten and for new students joining SD83 in Grades 1-12.

[Registration](#) must be completed at your child's catchment school, which is determined by your physical address, or at a Program of Choice school such as South Canoe for Outdoor Learning.

To access our catchment School Locator tool or learn more about our Program of Choice schools, visit the [District Registration webpage](#).

If you have a child starting Kindergarten in September 2026, watch our [Kindergarten Information Session video](#) to learn more.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Board of Education will work to represent the interests of all students by actively advocating for student learning and well-being through Strategic Planning Policy and responsible Stewardship.

APRIL REGULAR BOARD MEETING



The School District No. 83 (Kwátsktnéws ne Secwepemcúl'ecw) Board of Education held its Regular Board Meeting on Tuesday, April 21, 2026.

A highlight of the meeting was when Indigenous Resource Helping Teachers Tina Lepine and Katie Taber gifted a piece of artwork, created by the current Truth and Reconciliation Commission Allies, to the Board of Education. The artwork was also gifted to the Quelmúcw Education Council at a separate time. The artwork was inspired by the District's newly gifted name and logo design.

Read more about this project and a summary of the Board meeting in the [From The Board Report](http://www.sd83.bc.ca/news/From-the-Board-April-21-2026) (www.sd83.bc.ca/news/From-the-Board-April-21-2026).

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The Board of Education met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, April 27, 2026, to continue reviewing governance policies.

During the meeting, trustees proposed revisions to several policies, including:

- Policy 137 Roles and responsibilities of the Vice Chairperson
- Policy 138 Electronic meetings of the Board
- Policy 140 Board Delegation of Authority
- Policy 141 Role of the Superintendent
- Policy 160 Policy Development
- Policy 170 Monitoring Board Performance

These revised policies will be brought forward for further consideration at the May 19, 2026, Regular Board meeting.

Discussion on Policy 136 Trustee Remuneration and Expenses was tabled and will resume at a future meeting.

Trustees also reviewed the following policies and recommended no changes at this time:

- [Policy 150 Public Interest Disclosure](#)
- [Policy 180 Trustee Professional Learning](#)
- [Policy 190 Financial Planning and Reporting](#)

Board policies are available on our website: [Board Policies](http://www.sd83.bc.ca/board-policies) (www.sd83.bc.ca/board-policies).