

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 63 (SAANICH)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Report to Board Meeting of March 11, 2026

Committee Members:	Trustee VanWell Trustee Elder Trustee McMurphy
Staff Support:	Dave Eberwein, Superintendent of Schools Jason Reid, Secretary Treasurer
Partner Representatives:	STA – regrets CUPE – regrets Sean Kenny, SAA COPACS – regrets
Other Attendees:	Chair Dunford, Trustee Vandall

Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2026

A. PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No Items.

B. ITEMS DISCUSSED

1. Policy 24 – Programs of Choice
2. Policy 25 – International Student Program
3. Policy 26 – Online Learning
4. Policy 11 (Indemnification Bylaw)
The proposed policy amendments to Policy 11 (Indemnification Bylaw) are referred for further consideration to the April 14, 2026 Policy Committee meeting.

C. ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. Policy 21 (Student Transportation)

Motion:

The Committee recommends and I, Trustee VanWell move,
That having provided the required Notice of Motion on January 14, 2026, the revisions to Policy 21 (Student Transportation) be approved.

D. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

No Items.

E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Policies 18 – Apr 2026

Policies 19 – May 2026

Policies 27, 29 – June 2026

POLICY 24 – PROGRAMS OF CHOICE

The Board recognizes the importance of the District continuing to be innovative in the delivery of educational programs and services. The Board supports the provision of various Programs of Choice which serve unique educational needs and which are accessible to students from beyond designated school catchment areas within the District.

Programs of Choice are educational offerings within our District that have limited enrollment and require a specific application process. Saanich School District currently offers French Immersion and a variety of Specialty Academies within its Programs of Choice.

New Programs of Choice may be considered by the Board following the completion of a process in which advice from partner groups is sought, received and considered.

Guiding Principles

A Program of Choice approved by the Board will:

1. Operate within the parameters of the School Act and any associated Regulations as well as within the authority of the Board;
2. Be consistent with all Board Policies and District Administrative Procedures;
3. Provide all interested and qualified students with an opportunity to be included as part of the selection process for registrations with limited enrollments;
4. Be housed in facilities where space permits and which are suitable to the program;
5. Be offered in one (or more) locations in the District but open to students throughout the District;
6. Be staffed at the same levels with respect to those established for elementary, middle and secondary schools;
7. Be maintained without transportation assistance from the District;
8. Incur no extraordinary costs for program maintenance; and,
9. Be subject to periodic reviews by the District.

French Immersion

French Immersion is a Program of Choice. Learning French, an official language of Canada, enriches students' lives, enhances their understanding of other cultures and celebrates diversity. The Board recognizes that there are cognitive, social and career benefits of learning French.

The Board commits to offering an Early French Immersion program (beginning in K-1) as a Program of Choice.

1. The Board supports and adheres to the Ministry of Education “French Immersion Program” policy which states, in part, that the Ministry of Education supports French Immersion programming in BC schools, consistent with the goal of providing the opportunity for non-francophone students to become bilingual in English and French.
2. Students who successfully complete a French Immersion program will attain functional bilingualism while also completing all required areas of curriculum, including English Language Arts.
3. The Board expects that students with unique learning needs, including students with Ministry designations, will be supported in French Immersion programs similar to other programs.

Specialty Academies

Boards are permitted to establish Specialty Academies under Section 82.1 of the School Act. A Specialty Academy is an educational program that emphasizes a particular sport, activity or subject area and meets the prescribed criteria set out in the regulations to the School Act.

1. The Board will receive requests for any new Specialty Academy by way of the Education Directions Committee and as outlined in the Administrative Procedure for Specialty Academies.
2. Prior to May 31 of each school year, the Board must approve each new Specialty Academy and approve a schedule of fees for each one offered and must make the schedule of fees available to the public. An approved schedule of fees for a Specialty Academy is required annually. Information on financial hardship can be found in [Administrative Procedure 506](#) (Financial Hardship).
3. Once the Board has granted approval for a Specialty Academy, subsequent Board approval is not required unless the Specialty Academy has not been offered for three consecutive school terms.

Reference:

- School Act Sections 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 8.4, 8.5, 20, 22, 23, 65, 74.1, 75, 75.1, 85
- Collective Agreements

Approved: November 2020

Revised: April 2021

POLICY 25 – INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

The Board supports the integration of international students into District schools as a means of increasing intercultural and international understanding. International Education enriches student development and connects the district to broader global knowledge and brings cultural benefits to schools and communities.

The Board recognizes that additional resources will be required to support the integration of international students.

Guiding Principles

1. The International Program will be designed in a way that supports sustainability and long-term viability of the program. As such, the program is to have representation from multiple countries and regions of the world.
2. International students will be admitted into District schools in one of two categories:
 1. International Exchange students
 2. Saanich International Student Program (SISP) students
3. SISP student recruitment will be designed to reflect the following:
 1. Prioritizing the diversity of countries;
 2. Sustainable and reliable international recruitment agencies;
 3. Student grade placement which provides an appropriate fit with the District's available spaces in its schools;
 4. Consideration of the District's ability to provide adequate supports (e.g. ELL and other school resources, homestay availability);
 5. Ensuring adequate student numbers to run key programs or courses;
 6. Overall school capacities;
 7. Students will be placed into secondary grades with placements in the District's neighbourhood secondary schools.
4. SISP will be required to generate sufficient revenue to support the SISP infrastructure, provide any necessary staffing and resources to schools to support these additional students and provide positive revenue for the district to enhance program and services for all students.

5. Tuition fees and any other applicable fees (e.g. Homestay fees, Insurance fees) will be charged to all SISP students. These fees will be approved annually by the Board. Tuition fees will not be charged to International Exchange students as these are funded by the Ministry of Education as equivalent to a non-fee paying student.
6. The Superintendent will provide a bi-annual report in November and April to the Board on the International Student Program including the current student enrollment and any recommendations for future enrollment levels. The full-time equivalent number of SISP students in any given school year will not exceed 5% of the full-time equivalent number of students resident in the District as of the February student count of the previous school year, exclusive of SIDES enrolment.
7. The SISP will be administered by a Principal appointed by the Board.

Reference:

- School Act Sections 2, 3, 4, 7, 8.2, 20, 22, 23, 65, 74.1, 75, 75.1, 82, 85
- Child, Family and Community Service Act
- Divorce Act
- Family Relations Act
- Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
- Infants Act
- Visiting Forces Act
- School Regulation 265/89
- Ministry of Education Policy Document: International Students

Approved: November 2020
Revised: May 2021

POLICY 26 – ONLINE LEARNING

The Board of Education is committed to providing a quality online learning experience for school-aged and adult students within the Saanich School District and beyond district borders, pursuant to Ministry of Education and Child Care permission to offer online learning. The Board is committed to offering and supporting courses and programs within the online learning program so that students can achieve their educational goals.

Online learning provides an opportunity for students and families to exercise choice with respect to the environment, methods and structures through which students are able to achieve their educational goals. Online learning provides a different access to an educational program for those students desiring flexibility beyond the traditional classroom environment.

The Board believes that it is also important to provide an option for adult learners who are in pursuit of their graduation requirements and acknowledges the importance of online learning as one such option.

- Reference:
- School Act Sections 2, 3, 3.1, 4, 6, 7, 17, 20, 22, 23, 65, 74.1, 75, 82, 85, 106.3
 - Collective Agreements
 - Graduation Program MO 302/02
 - BC Adult Graduation Requirements MO 320/04
 - Required Areas of Study in an Educational Program MO 295/95
 - Individual Education Plan MO 638/95
 - BC Ministry of Education - Distributed Learning Requirements & Guidelines for Students with Special Needs

Approved: November 2020

Revised: September 2021

BYLAW 11: INDEMNIFICATION

It is in the interest of a responsive and efficient public service that trustees, officers and employees be protected against a claim of damages arising out of the performance of their duties. None of these individuals should be placed in a position of personal liability for the performance of responsibilities vested in them by the School Act or assigned to them by the Board. The provisions below do not apply to employees who have an indemnification agreement in their Collective Agreement or Contract of Employment.

ByLaw:

1. The Board will indemnify a trustee, an officer or an employee of the Board, or a member of an Indigenous Education Council.
 - 1.1 Against a claim for damages against the trustee, officer, employee, or member of an Indigenous Education Council arising out of performance of their duties; or,
 - 1.2 Where an inquiry under the Public Inquiry Act or other proceeding involves the administration and conduct of the business of the School District and, in addition, the Board may pay legal costs incurred in proceedings arising out of the claim, inquiry or other proceeding.
2. The Board may, by affirmative vote of a majority of not less than 2/3 of all its members, pay:
 - 2.1 Any sum required to indemnify a trustee, an officer, an employee of the Board, or member of an Indigenous Education Council where a prosecution arises out of the performance of their duties with the Board; and,
 - 2.2 Costs necessarily incurred; but the Board shall not pay a fine imposed on a trustee, an officer, an employee or a member of an Indigenous Education Council, as a result of their conviction.
3. The Board's obligation to indemnify a trustee, an officer, an employee, or member of an Indigenous Education Council, in respect of matters occurring during their term of office, employment or membership on an Indigenous Education Council shall continue, notwithstanding that the term of office, employment or membership, as the case may be, has ended.
4. Where the Board decides to pay legal costs incurred in proceedings out of a claim, inquiry under the Public Inquiry Act or other proceedings, the Board has the right to conduct the defense of the matter and, in its discretion, to compromise and/or settle the claim.
5. The Board shall not indemnify a trustee, officer, employee, or member of an Indigenous Education Council against:
 - 5.1 Liability and legal fees incurred as a result of an action or other proceeding taken by the Board against the trustee, officer, employee, or member of an Indigenous Education Council, or as a result of an action or proceeding taken by the trustee, officer, employee or member or employee against the Board;
 - 5.2 Legal fees incurred in responding to a complaint under the Trustee Code of Conduct;

- 5.3 Legal fees incurred in responding to a complaint under AP 403 (Intimidation and Harassment) or a complaint under the bullying and harassment provisions of a collective agreement;
 - 5.4 Legal fees incurred in response to a complaint to the Teacher Regulation Branch or an investigation or hearing conducted by the Teacher Regulation Branch;
 - 5.5 Liability to pay a fine, penalty or order imposed as a result of the conviction for an offence;
 - 5.6 Legal fees incurred as a result of a prosecution where the trustee, officer, employee, or member of an Indigenous Education Council is convicted of an offence or obtains a conditional discharge;
 - 5.7 Legal fees incurred in an appeal of any conviction, sentence, judgment or order;
 - 5.8 Liability and legal fees incurred by a trustee where the Court determines that the trustee knowingly contravened the School Act;
 - 5.9 Liability incurred by a trustee, officer, employee, or member of an Indigenous Education Council, where the Court determined that the trustee, officer, or employee, or member of an Indigenous Education Council knowingly permitted or authorized an expenditure not authorized by an enactment;
 - 5.10 Liability incurred by a trustee as a result of any restitution ordered pursuant to Section 62 of the School Act; and,
 - 5.11 Those matters for which the Board may seek indemnity from an employee pursuant to its authority under Section 95 of the School Act, unless the Board at the request of a trustee, officer, employee or member of an Indigenous Education Council or at its own instance, by majority or other legally required majority established by the School Act expressly determines otherwise and any such indemnity is not otherwise precluded by law.
6. The Board shall not seek indemnity against a trustee, an officer, an employee of the Board, or member of an Indigenous Education Council in respect of any action by the trustee, officer or employee or **member of an Indigenous Education Council** that results in a claim for damages against the Board except:
 - 6.1 Where the claim for damages arises out of the gross negligence of the trustee, officer, employee, or member of an Indigenous Education Council; or
 - 6.2 Where, in relation to the action that gave rise to a claim for damages against an officer or employee, the officer or employee willfully acted contrary to:
 - 6.2.1 The terms of their employment, or
 - 6.2.2 An order of a superior
7. The Board may enter into individual indemnity agreements with its officers and employees not inconsistent with provisions of the School Act.

Reference: • Section 95, School Act

Approved: November 2020

Revised:

POLICY 21 – STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

The Superintendent shall establish an efficient and effective student transportation system to provide for the transportation of students to and from their nearest catchment school and for First Nations Students living on reserve. Support for active student travel is an important part of a comprehensive approach to student transportation. Student safety shall be the highest priority in the provision of student transportation by the district.

The transportation system shall be provided in accordance with the following Guiding Principles:

1. Routes, subject to being economically viable, will be established to ensure:
 - 1.1 Transportation to their regular program catchment school for those students living outside the following walk limits by traveled road or walkway from their regular program catchment school:
 - 1.1.1 Kindergarten – Grade 5 Students: 2.5 kilometres
 - 1.1.2 Students of Grades 6 – 12 inclusive: 4.8 kilometres
 - 1.2 Students entitled to transportation in paragraph 1.1 will not have to travel further than 2.5 kilometres by traveled road or walkway to the nearest bus stop.
 - 1.3 Travel times are optimized for students being transported to their regular program catchment school from outside the walk limits established in paragraph 1.1.
2. The district will **endeavour** to establish routes that serve as many students eligible for service under guiding principle 1 as possible. A minimum of 15 students eligible for transportation services under guiding principle 1 are required for a route to be considered economically viable.
3. Additional transportation may be considered if there are significant safety concerns, such as a major highway crossing, or in support of students with exceptional transportation needs.
4. The transportation routes shall be established to operate within the operating budget established by the Board. Bus routes shall be published in August of each school year.
5. Consideration shall be given to providing service when a student is directed to attend a school other than the nearest school in their catchment area.
6. Courtesy riders are district students not otherwise addressed in guiding principles 1 to 5 and may be transported if the legal seating capacity of the bus has not been reached. Seating priority is reserved for those students entitled to transportation by guiding principles 1 to 5. Courtesy riders attending District Programs (as defined in Administrative Procedure 560) will be prioritized over other courtesy riders.

7. In addition to the transportation service provided pursuant to guiding principles 1 to 6, transportation services will also be provided for First Nations students living on reserve.
8. As transportation routes are established to provide optimal service in accordance with paragraphs 1 to 5, transportation routes and bus stops will not be altered to enhance service for courtesy riders.
9. Active transportation will be promoted through a variety of means including, but not limited to:
 - 9.1 Working with local governments to address road safety concerns as well as identifying opportunities to create active transportation routes to school;
 - 9.2 Providing communication to students, parents/guardians and the community on road safety issues; and
 - 9.3 Building student awareness on various active transportation options for arriving to school.
10. Riders **may** be charged a registration fee and an additional fee for late registrations. Late fees are intended to encourage timely registration and improve the effectiveness of route planning prior to school start-up. Riders may also be charged a transportation fee. The establishment of fees and any required revisions will be approved by the Board.
11. The Superintendent will establish, and keep current, safety procedures for the district's transportation system and for the rental of commercial buses or vans for student transportation.
12. Passenger vans shall be limited to a maximum of 10 passengers.

Reference:

Approved: November 2020

Revised: February 2024

Policies Revised During Board Term

Motion: That during the last two years of the term, the Board conduct a review of policies not previously reviewed by this Board, pursuant to Policy 6 – Policy Making & Review

Policy	Board Review - 2022-Present	Action/Discussion	Previous Board 2018-2022	Recommendation
1 – Foundational Statements			New Policy approved Jun/19	
Recommendation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defer review to coincide with development of next Strategic Plan 				
2 – Role of the Board App A – Annual Work Plan App B – Advocacy Public Education	Sept 2023 / 2024	Spring/21 changes were made to align with legislative changes / ministerial order for childcare (3.9)		No changes recommended
3 – Role of the Trustee	Jan 2024	Reviewed Jan/24 – changes made to para16 to support for ProD	New Policy approved Jun/19	No changes recommended
4 – Role of the Board C			New Policy approved Jun/19	No changes recommended
5 – Role of the Vice-Chair			New Policy approved Jun/19	No changes recommended
6 – Policy Making & Review	Mar 2023	6.4 – Evaluation of Policies	New Policy approved Oct/19	No changes recommended
7 – Board Committees			New Policy approved Jun/19	
Recommendation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HR 1.5 – What is STA/CUPE Committee? ▪ FFT 2.5 – Student Safety? ▪ Ed Dir 4.5 Should early learning & childcare programs be included in the scope of the Ed Directions Committee? ▪ FFT 2.2.2 May want to review Audit Committee Responsibilities as there is a Future Agenda Item to review audit committee guidance 				
8 – Board Representatives			New Policy approved Jun/19	No changes recommended
9 – Board Operations	Nov 2023 Nov 2024	Nov/23 – revisions relating to Trustee Attendance at Bd Mtgs Nov/24 – revisions section 7 (public participation) and 'clean up' amendments		No changes recommended
10 – Delegation of Authority			New Policy approved Nov/20	No changes recommended
11 – Indemnification			New Policy approved Nov/20	Legal Review
12 – Trustee Elections App A – Elections			New Policy Sept/19	No changes recommended

13 – Trustee Code of Conduct App – Code of Conduct Sanctions			New Policy approved Jun/19	No changes recommended
14 – Role of the Superintendent			Reviewed May 2019	No changes recommended
15 – Parent/Guardian Involvement			New Policy approved Jan/20	No changes recommended
16 – Appeals Bylaw	Feb 2024	Policy re-write		No changes recommended
17 – Public Consult.			New Policy approved Jan/20	No changes recommended
18 – Recruitment of Personnel App A App B			New Policy approved Oct/19	No changes recommended
19 – Accumulated Operating Surplus		Revisions made in 2021/22 response to Ministry direction re approval of internal restrictions and fund transfers	New Policy approved Nov/20	No changes recommended
20 – Environmental Sustainability			Approved Jan/20	No changes recommended
21 – Student Transp.	Feb 2024	Revision following extensive community consultation		No changes recommended
22 – Disposal of Land & Improvements			New Policy approved Jan/20	No changes recommended
23 – School Closures			New Policy approved Oct/19	No changes recommended
24 – Programs of Choice			New Policy approved Apr/21	No changes recommended
25 – Int'l Student Program			New Policy approved May/21	No changes recommended
26 – Online Learning			New Policy approved Sep/21	No changes recommended
27 – Sexual Orient. Gender Identity			New Policy approved Dec/21	No changes recommended
28 – Core French	Jan 2024	Committee provided direction for future policy revisions		To be reviewed
29 – Diversity & Incl.	Dec 2022	New Policy		No changes recommended