

SCHOOL DISTRICT 63 (SAANICH)

EDUCATION DIRECTIONS COMMITTEE

**Report to the Board of May 13, 2026**

Committee Members:	Trustee Silzer, Chair Trustee Vandall Trustee VanWell
Staff Support:	Helena Takhar, Director of Instruction, Learning & Innovation Melanie Paas, Assistant Superintendent
Partner Representatives:	Leila Sinclair-Wise, SAA STA – regrets CUPE – regrets COPACS – regrets
Other Attendees:	Chair Dunford, Trustee Elder, Susan Hickman, Peter Westhaver, Cat Jensen, Adrian White, Roger Young & Amanda Hoffman

**Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

**A. PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

Building Capacity through Connection: Mental Health, Wellness & Student Advocacy by Peter Westhaver, Cat Jensen, Adrian White, Roger Young & Amanda Hoffman

The district panel highlighted the following:

- Enhancing social-emotional supports through programs like Second Step, microlearning for Healthy Schools Champions, and K–7 EASE resource kits.
- Expanding training and responsive practices, including suicide prevention, anti-racism, trauma-informed approaches, and updates to the CIRM process.
- Strengthening partnerships with families, community agencies, and improving threat response and parent engagement.

The Indicators Toolkit shows strong performance in supportive discipline, physical environments, and planning, with growth areas identified in professional learning, staff well-being, and family/community partnerships.

Student Advocates continue to support at-risk students, noting increased needs in attendance, mental health (CIRM), substance use, and online activity. Positive impacts are emerging through early intervention (ILC), expanded career programming, and stronger community partnerships.

**B. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

No Items.

**C. ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

1. 2028/29 Local Calendar Public Consultation Feedback

**Motion:**

The Committee recommends and I, Trustee Silzer move,  
That the Board approve the 2028/29 School Calendar.

2. 2026/27 School Activity and Supply Fees Schedule

**Motion:**

The Committee recommends and I, Trustee Silzer move,  
That the Board approve the 2026/27 School Activity and Supply Fees Schedule.

**D. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

2026/27 Non-Instructional, Early Dismissal and Assessment Schedule

**E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Data Sharing around Strategic Plan Goals – ongoing
- Student Voice Feedback – ongoing
- Benefits of International Student Program

# Education Directions Committee

June 9, 2026



# Building Capacity Through Connection

Mental Health & Wellness and Student  
Advocacy in Saanich





## Mental Health & Wellness

- Introductions - Roles
- Strategic Plan
- District-wide support
- Indicators of SEL and Well-Being

# 2025/26 School Year Priorities



1. Teaching social emotional skills through effective use of curricular resources at school.



2. Increasing capacity and professional learning for mental health literacy and evidence-based, trauma-informed practices.



3. Reducing stigma and barriers to mental health and wellness through increased staff and community awareness and engagement.

# Areas of Strength

- Clear vision to support Social Emotional Learning and Mental Wellness
- Creative and responsive staff roles
- Honouring student voice
- Opportunities to build teacher capacity
- Relationships with local W̱SÁNEĆ nation
- Dependable community partners

# Areas for Improvement

- Targeted professional development opportunities for all Saanich staff
- Development of district proactive strategies to support students (including critical incident response and management)
- Increasing BIPOC voice and attention to anti-discrimination focus
- Advocacy and support across all levels

Kelty  
Mental  
Health  
Resource Centre

BC  
Children's  
Hospital  
Provincial Health Services Authority



# Accomplishments

## Priority One

- Successful pilot of the SEL Second Step Program in three schools
- Healthy School Champions microlearning
- Resource library including book kits for K-7
- Indicators of School-Wide Wellbeing and SEL

## Priority Two

- New Suicide Risk Assessment and Life Promotion training
- Anti-Racism AP and resources
- Trauma-informed behaviour management training (CUPE)
- New CIRM process

## Priority Three

- Working alongside COPACs to build a Parent Navigation evening
- Revision of the Community Protocol for Responding to Threats
- Increased collaboration between agencies and Student Advocates

# Well-Being BC: Indicators of Schoolwide Well-Being & Social Emotional Learning



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING (SEL)



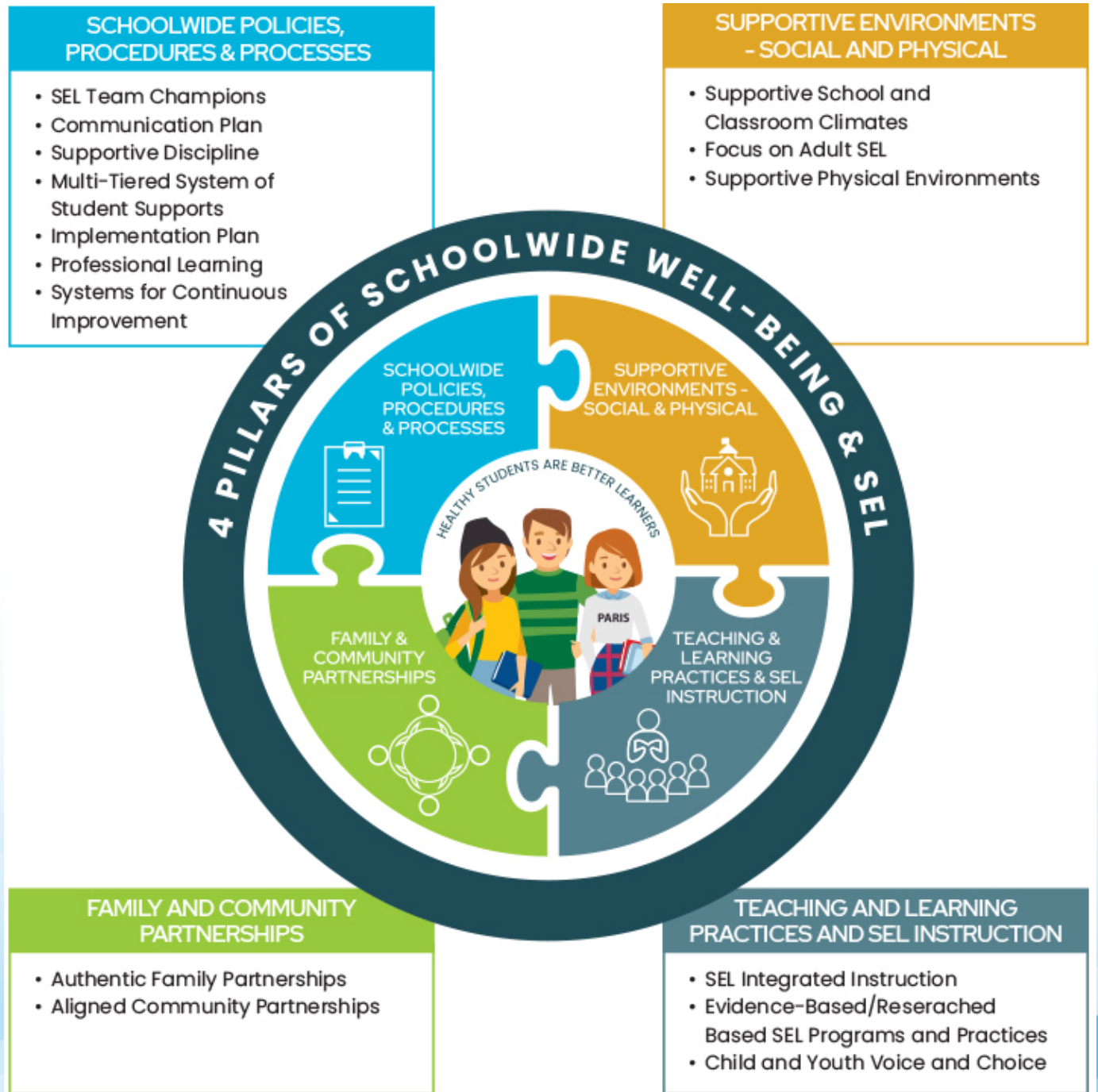
MENTAL HEALTH  
LITERACY



TRAUMA-INFORMED  
APPROACHES

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# 4 Pillars of Schoolwide Well-being & SEL



## Indicators of School Wide Wellbeing & SEL

~District Trends~



### Highest Rated Areas

1. Supportive  
Discipline

2. Physical Environment

3. Implementation  
Planning

### Areas for Growth

1. Systems for  
Improvement

2. Professional Learning

3. Adult SEL

4. Family and Community  
Partnerships

# Looking Forward

## Expansion



Expanding SEL and student wellbeing – finding opportunities across teams within our district and collaborating our colleagues from other districts

## Collaboration



Ongoing partnership with BCCH to strengthen action plan and implementation in a thoughtful and effective way.

## Capacity



Continue internal capacity building regarding trauma informed Critical Incident Response and Management, and Threat Assessments



# Student Advocate

- Purpose:
  - To provide support to the school district by working collectively with students at risk of disengagement from the school system and graduation.
  - To provide support for safe, caring and orderly initiatives within district or community by working with students and family in a proactive way.
- Structure:
  - Three teacher-counsellors assigned 0.2 FTE per zone,
  - One Outreach Coordinator
- Referral Paths:
  - Administration – Counsellor
  - School Based Team
  - Education or Student Review

# Current Trends

- Attendance concerns
- CIRM
- Substance use
- Concerning behaviour earlier (Middle School)
- More Advocate involvement at middle school
- Online activity
- ILC early intervention at Grade 9 works
- Better understanding of what ILC offers
- Career programs
- Community partnerships/ programs (e.g. Beacon, Thrive, PTB, AIDTP)
- District Resources (e.g. Community Outreach Coordinator, Employment Exploration Coordinator)

# Themes in Advocacy

Social Isolation

Trauma

Negative School Experiences

## Mental Health Challenges

Family Systems

Unsafe Behaviour

School Avoidance

Risk Taking

Peer Conflict

# The Power of the Cohort: Andrew's Story

- Started Middle School with concerns about well-being and impact of trauma from elementary Youth and Family Counsellor
- Grade 6 transition was difficult
- During grades 6 and 7 had difficulty making friends and with peer conflicts – many office referrals
- Grade 8 Threat Assessment & Suicidality
- Connected to supports – community-based counsellor and Child and Youth Psychiatrist - stabilized
- Pathway forward through an ILC Cohort Recommendation

# Safe School Update



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- Lower Island/Tri-district trends
  - Negative peer groups and violence
  - Vigilantism
  - Neurodiversity and risk
- Deep-fakes and the future
- Radicalization - INSET
- Extortion
- ERASE/SST/WOB reports
- Agency Collaboration – Beacon Community Services/Youth Probation/Police Partners/Youth Shelters/MCFD/Victims Services
- Relationship

# Restorative Practice – a scenario

- CONTEXT - Vigilantism and the current youth justice picture on the lower island
- EVENT – Sidney – October 2025
- PROPSAL – a restorative practice led community response
- TEAM – Sidney RCMP, Beacon Counsellors, Youth Probation, Legal Aid Lawyers, Crown, parents
- SESSIONS – 6 meetings over 8 weeks to explore justice, consequences and options
- RESOURCE
- TESTIMONIAL

"\_\_\_\_\_needs something like this to keep him from getting in more\_\_\_\_\_"



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Time for Questions

