Board Chair's Annual Report to the Board – October 28, 2026

Presented by Valene Johnson, Chair, Board of Education

Building Strong Foundations for the Future

Policy 1070 states that the Chair will provide an annual report and during an election year, this occurs at the meeting prior to the inaugural meeting.

I have the privilege to reflect on both the past year and the conclusion of this Board's four-year term and I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside dedicated trustees, students, staff, families, and community partners. Public education is strengthened when people come together with a shared commitment to supporting students, and this year has been a strong example of that commitment in action.

The 2025-2026 school year has been a year of transition, renewal, and preparation for the future. Together, we welcomed new staff, participated in the hiring of a new Assistant Superintendent, refreshed our Strategic Plan, strengthened our governance practices, continued our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, and planned for the future growth and success of Central Okanagan Public Schools.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the year was the development and adoption of the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. Through many engagement opportunities including students, families, staff, Indigenous partners, employee groups, and community members, we listened to the voices of those we serve and created a plan that reflects the hopes of our community. The resulting vision, that each student learns, belongs, and thrives, will guide our work for years to come.

This year also marked a significant milestone in governance. Trustees invested substantial time in reviewing and modernizing the Board policy structure, clarifying the distinction between governance and administration, and implementing a Governance Framework and Annual Workplan. This work was supported through Board interchanges and in-services sessions focused on policy review, strategic planning, and governance renewal. Trustees participated in professional development with BCSTA Parliamentarian Lisa Zwarn to strengthen our understand of parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules. Some of this work may not always be visible to the public, but it creates the foundation for effective decision-making, accountability, and stewardship for future Boards. As trustees, we have a responsibility not only to address today's challenges but also to ensure that future Boards inherit strong governance systems that support student success.

Throughout the year, trustees remained focused on students. Through school visits, Community Student Learning Plan conversations, student performances, assemblies, Indigenous graduation blanketing ceremonies, graduation celebrations, and Board presentations, we witnessed firsthand the impressive achievements of our learners. Students continued to demonstrate leadership, creativity, resilience, and innovation through academic pursuits, athletics, the arts, entrepreneurship, environmental

initiatives, cultural exchanges, trades, and community service. The District was also proud to support the 2026 BC Summer Games by opening our facilities to athletes and visitors from across BC. Trustees were honoured to participate in ceremonies that showcased the important role public schools play as gathering places within our communities.

Our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation continued to guide our work. The signing of the Equity in Action Agreement for Truth and Reconciliation 2025-2030 reaffirmed our commitment to meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities and to improving outcomes for Indigenous learners. Throughout the year, students and staff participated in learning opportunities, celebrations, and events that deepened understanding, nurtured relationships, and advanced the important work of reconciliation. Attending Indigenous Graduation Blanketing Ceremonies and witnessing the pride, love, and celebration of students, families, and communities remains one of the most meaningful moments of serving as a trustee.

The Board also continued to focus on responsible stewardship and long-range planning. We approved operating budgets, reviewed financial forecasts, engaged the public in budget discussions, and advocated for sustainable funding for public education. Significant progress continued on major capital projects throughout the district, including planning for the opening of École George Pringle Secondary School, continued investment in existing schools, and receiving the Capital Project Funding Agreement for the future middle school on Burtch Road. These projects represent years of advocacy and planning and will benefit students and families for generations to come.

Advocacy remained a key part of our work. Trustees met with provincial representatives, local government leaders, education partners, and community groups to share district priorities and advocate for the needs of our students. We met with local MLAs to discuss funding and district priorities, participated in a Thompson Okanagan Branch meeting with the Okanagan Similkameen school district, attended the BCSTA Academy, BCSTA AGM, and the Canadian School Boards Association conference, and met with the Mayor and Council of West Kelowna to discuss growth, partnerships, and opportunities to support students and families. We also welcomed opportunities to connect with parents at the COPAC Parent Conference and through many other engagements throughout the year.

One moment that stands out to me was welcoming Premier David Eby to tour the future Ecole George Pringle Secondary School. The visit provided an opportunity to showcase the growth occurring in our region and to continue advocating for the capital investments needed to support our communities.

As this Board term comes to a close, I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow trustees. Serving on a Board of Education requires dedication, thoughtful decision-making, and a genuine commitment to public service. While we did not always agree on every issue, we shared a common purpose: supporting students and strengthening public education.

I extend my thanks to the five trustees whose service concludes with this term. Trustee Julia Fraser with 15 years of service, Trustee Lee-Ann Tiede with 12 years of service, Trustee Amy Geistlinger with 8 years of service, Trustee Chantelle Derosiers with 8 years of service and Trustee Wayne Broughton with just over 5 years of service. Their contributions have helped shape the direction of our district, and their commitment to students and families has made a lasting difference.

I would like to extend an additional special thank you to our Vice-Chair, Trustee Derosiers. Serving as Board Chair is not a role that I've done alone. Throughout the year, Chantelle provided advice, support, and leadership, always willing to step forward when needed and serving as a trusted partner.

I would also like to thank our Superintendent Jon Rever, our Secretary-Treasurer Delta Carmichael, our Executive Assistants Lise Bradshaw and Mona Essler, the senior leadership team, the principals, vice-principals, teachers, support staff, Indigenous partners, parent advisory councils, employee groups, and community partners. The success of our district is the result of the collective efforts of many dedicated individuals who work every day to support students.

Finally, thank you to the students of Central Okanagan Public Schools. You are the reason for every decision we make and every conversation we have. Your achievements, your voices, and your aspirations continue to inspire us.
As we welcome a new Board and begin a new term, I am optimistic about the future. The foundations we strengthened this year, through strategic planning, governance renewal, partnership, advocacy, and student-centred decision-making, will support the important work ahead.

It has been a privilege to serve as Board Chair. I look forward to continuing to work with students, staff, families, and community partners as we continue building a strong future for public education in the Central Okanagan.

Val Johnson
Board Chair
Central Okanagan Public Schools