



Safe Schools Community Meeting Minutes

DATE: May 14, 2025

TIME: 9:00 a.m. Microsoft Teams Video Conference Meeting

Welcome/Introductions

Confirmation of Agenda

Board of Education	Lisa Guderyan, Vice Chair
City of Kelowna	Ron Cannan, City Councillor
COTA	Lori Dawson-Bedard, 1 st Vice President
COPAC	Jeannette Watson, Vice President
CUPE	Jessica Teasdale, CUPE Executive
District Administration	Sherri Roche, District Principal Learning Support Services Kevin Kaardal, Superintendent/CEO Jared Birkeland, Casorso Elementary Principal/COPVPA Rep
Traffic Safety Officer	n/a
Kelowna Fire Department	Brock Syrnyk, Acting Fire Prevention Officer
RCMP	Brandwyn Rigby, SRO Lake Country Schools
City of West Kelowna	n/a
District of Lake Country	n/a
Brain Trust	n/a
Recording Secretary	Wendy Kennedy
Regrets	<i>Cst. Jocelyn Noseworthy, Cst. Kirsten Macleod, Candace Friesen, Alan Lalonde, Melissa Hunt-Anderson</i>

Welcome & Land Acknowledgment

Sherri Roche welcomed everyone and acknowledged that this meeting was being held on the traditional, unceded territory of the Okanagan Syilx People.

Current Local Youth Trends: Insights & Data

In reviewing the data provided by the School District, City of Kelowna, and the RCMP for this school year, we are seeing a significant increase in youth vulnerability across our schools and the wider community. The ongoing challenges of digital harm and the evolving online environment—particularly the rise in grooming and recruitment—continue to impact our young people. Mental health and overall well-being remain pressing concerns. To ensure students receive the support they need, our master-level counsellors use a range of tools, including a suicide screener, to help assess and triage the level of concern when mental health risks are identified. This process allows us to provide timely, appropriate wraparound supports and, when necessary, connect students and families with relevant community services.

Of our youth on the pathway towards gang association or possible exploitation, we have had over 60 youth in our HRVY Program that are receiving wrap around supports. As of September 2024, the age that HRVY is supporting and providing services for is now age 6 to 13 (max age), and for the first time since launching the program, are now sitting with a waiting list. We are at capacity of the youth that we are serving with indicators that are quite concerning under 12 years of age right now.

We are continuing to promote the ERASE anonymous reporting tool and are seeing that tool being utilized more. That tool is the opportunity for youth to be able to report anonymously and share safety concerns that they have that are occurring in school sites.

The RCMP are also reporting and sharing from their data, a spike in youth related offenses, including assaults and weapon possessions. This year alone there were 15 bear spray incidents. So, we know the use of bear spray is becoming a concern because of how easily accessible that is for youth to get.

Our restorative justice program has had 43 youth files this year, so we are seeing more for that understanding of more of a diversion pathway and an educational pathway in early supports instead of the focus on more punitive, consequential. We are still learning a lot more about the THRIVE initiative, but that was the community driven framework that was spearheaded by the Kelowna General Hospital Foundation.

New City of Kelowna Community Safety Advisor

Sherri welcomed and introduced Simran Sidhu, the new Community Safety Advisor. Simran comes from the city of Surrey where she used to work as a Community Safety Coordinator. Her role involved delivering presentations, gap analysis and finding where that is, and running anti-gang workshops for parents. They found that 84% of gang involvement was due to the lack of child and parent connection.

Simran's portfolio is youth and she will be working closely with Sherri Roche and the RCMP School Resource Officers, helping the RCMP in delivering presentations, information sharing on resources on public safety topics when it comes to anti-gang, anti-bullying, anti-exploitation and helping the RCMP link youth to appropriate agencies so they can get that overall community wrap around support.

Simran will be meeting with the RCMP team and Sherri Roche, to brainstorm some ideas and is sure to have some great stuff coming up in the fall.

- **RCMP – Brandwyn Rigby** – They have had quite a few youth officers working evening and night shifts now to try to connect with the youth in the community. Other general duty members are meeting with School Resource Officers and going out together as teams, which has been quite positive. I had the opportunity to do that as well, because of course I don't work in Kelowna, but my students attend Kelowna after hours. So that was a really good experience, an opportunity for me as well. And I think through every weekend, over the next couple of months, we're having extra officers particularly dedicated to going where youth gather in Kelowna right now just to make those connections and see if we can support them in that way. I think that it has been a really good initiative.

Also, the summer program bicycle support for our youth officers throughout this summer, will kind of be focusing on the areas where youth tend to gather the most.

She points out that youth gathering is not a bad thing. They saw youth gathering in a positive way. It is a minute group in the mass that is needing the extra supports.

- **Board of Education - Lisa Guderyan** – Digital safety has been brought up in the Health Promoting Schools Committee and it has been amazing to see more schools having digital safety events with Constable Rode.
- **COTA – Lori Dawson Bedard** - nothing to report
- **CUPE - Jessica Teasdale** – nothing to report
- **COPAC - Jeannette Watson** – Just a repeat around e-bikes and e-scooters as to what is the actual law and who enforces it. Just some thoughts on an approach that we could move forward with to educate and ensure our students are staying safe.

Constable Rigby stated that ICBC is the best resource and that no helmets is their biggest concern because brain injuries are the most highest risk and not just getting a ticket.

ACTION: Constable Rigby to send information to Sherri Roche for distribution along with the minutes.

Constable Rigby added that on June 3rd, George Elliot Secondary, in partnership with the Police, Lake Country Fire Department and Ambulance Services will be hosting an event to share information about the risks of distracted driving and impaired driving, prior to grad.

- **City of Kelowna – Ron Cannan** – nothing to report but wanted to share that Simran is doing a fantastic job of representing the city.
- **Kelowna Fire Department – Brock Syrnyk** – Reminder to all that October 5 - 11, 2025 is Fire Prevention Week. October 5th is their annual open house for all members of the public. The "Fire Chief For a Day" event will be at the main hall on October 8th. The fire safety house will be brought around to schools in the fall. Dates are yet to be confirmed.
- **Elementary Administrators - Casorso Elementary Principal & COPVPA Rep – Jared Birkeland** – nothing to report but appreciated the data that was shared.
- **District Administration – Kevin Kaardal** – emphasized the importance of these committee meetings for hearing interesting things, connecting, and making partnerships so that all parties can work together.
- **City of West Kelowna - n/a**
- **District of Lake Country - n/a**
- **West Kelowna Fire Department - n/a**
- **Lake Country Fire Department - n/a**
- **Traffic Safety - n/a**
- **Brain Trust - n/a**
- **Secondary Administrators - n/a**

Correspondence

New Business

Summary and Wrap Up

Reach out to Sherri if you would like anything added to the next agenda. If anyone is missing or has changed from the agenda list, please notify Sherri Roche.

**Next Meeting Date
To be determined
Via Microsoft Teams**