

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR OPEN BOARD MEETING
OF THE NEW WESTMINSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Tuesday, September 24, 2024, 7:00 PM
In-Person and Via Zoom Link**

PRESENT Maya Russell, Chair
Cheryl Sluis, Vice-Chair
Gurveen Dhaliwal, Trustee
Danielle Connelly, Trustee
Elliott Slinn, Trustee
Cheryl Sluis, Trustee
Kathleen Carlsen, Trustee

Mark Davidson, Superintendent
Geraldine Lawlor, Associate Superintendent
Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer
Robert Weston, Executive Director, HR
Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects
Matt Brito, Director Operations & Facilities
Amy Grey, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
Laura Goodman, Recording Secretary

Members of the Public

Dan Healy & Kinga Urbanovich, KPMG
Krista Macaulay, Treasurer
Dave Bollen, CUPE 409 President
Kristie Oxley, NWTU President

The New Westminster School District recognizes and acknowledges the Qayqayt First Nation, as well as all Coast Salish peoples, on whose traditional and unceded territories we live, we learn, we play, and we do our work.

Chair Russell welcomed new Superintendent Mark Davidson, and new Associate Superintendent Geraldine Lawlor to their first Open Board meeting at the New Westminster School Board.

Chair Russell made a statement to the Board and Members of the Public acknowledging the National Date for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30th. To view the full statement, please refer to the meeting video at [\[7:08 pm\]](#).

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2024-061

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) adopt the agenda for the September 24, 2024, Regular School Board meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

- a. Minutes from the Open meeting held:
 - i. June 24, 2024, Regular School Board Meeting.

2024-062

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the minutes as presented for the Regular School Board meeting held on June 24, 2024.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- b. Business Arising from the Minutes.
 - Nil.

Chair Russell paused the meeting at 7:12 p.m. due to audio & video technical difficulties.

Chair Russell requested a 5-minute recess at 7:14 p.m. due to ongoing audio & video technical difficulties, and will reconvene the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Chair Russell reconvened the meeting earlier than anticipated at 7:17 p.m.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

- a. FESL – Learning Story No. 1 – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism

Pam Craven, Director of Instruction-Secondary Programs introduced the framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) - Learning Stories series which begins this evening. Over the school year, a new learning story will be presented each month at an Open Board meeting; topics include the DEIA framework, literacy focus, Indigenous, Human and Social Development, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Early Learning Project, Grad rates, Careers and Post-Secondary Transition, Numeracy, and Student voice – reflections from the symposium.

Kenneth Headley, District VP, of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (DEIA) presented Learning Story No. 1 - DEIA which focuses on the "Reimagining and Rebuilding Communities Together" document, which outlines a collective approach to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism in Westminster schools.

Headley noted that this document initially evolved from a 2020 Bakau report which involved feedback on consultative surveys with teachers, staff, students, and the school community. Feedback was also gathered from various partners, senior teams, anti-racism committees, principals and vice-principals. Headley stated that the purpose of this document is to share the journey and the collective approach to anti-racism work. Priority areas include increasing racial literacy, implementing culturally responsive practices, and addressing student well-being. Headley also spoke to the six guiding principles (or six R's) emphasizing respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, relationship, and resilience.

The framework also includes a tool for educators to engage in culturally responsive practices which focus on student representation and support; a framework which is supported by the Board of Trustees, and various committees and teams.

To review the full presentation, refer to the meeting video at [\[7:17 p.m.\]](#)

b. 2023-24 Year End Review (B. Ketcham and A. Gray)

1. 2023-24 Year End Financial Statements

Audit Findings Report (Dan Healy - KPMG)

Healey presented his executive summary audit report and highlighted key areas of focus. The audit is complete pending discussions, obtaining a signed representation letter, and getting board approval. There have been no changes to the audit plan, which was originally presented back in June 2024, and is consistent with previous years.

Questions and discussion followed.

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham shared highlights of the 2023-2024 Year, the 2023-2024 priorities that were executed, and the 2023-2024 priorities that are supported for the upcoming year.

- Ketcham noted that although the financial report highlights an overall surplus to the District of \$289,160; the operating fund has an anticipated deficit of \$809,000 which is primarily due to the cost of the by-election which was held in February 2024, and the increased costs and commitments to the \$500,000 capital cost share for the NWSS cooling project.
- Between the 2022-23 year and the 2023-24 year, the accumulated operating reserve continued to decrease; the current reserve now at \$2.3 million highlights the need to continue to monitor the balance throughout the upcoming budget cycle/year.

2. 2023-24 Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis

Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Grey shared highlights of the operating, special purpose, and capital funds. Grey noted that the draft financial statements and the financial statement of discussion and analysis are included in the Board agenda package and provide further details regarding the 2023–2024-year end. *Questions and discussion followed.*

To review the 2023-24 Year End Review, and the Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis in its entirety refer to the *meeting video at [\[7:20 p.m.\]](#)*

Chair Russell acknowledged Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham, and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Grey for their hard work in preparing the 2023-2024 financials.

2024-063

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the 2023-2024 Financial Statements as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **COMMENT & QUESTION PERIOD FROM VISITORS**

DPAC: Krista Macaulay, Treasurer

- DPAC sent a letter to the Minister of Education and Child Care (MECC), and two New West MLAs which outlined their concerns: capacity pressures and a request for transparency of the funding formula. MLAs Singh and Whiteside invited DPAC to discuss their concerns raised within this letter.
- Items brought forward also included the walking school bus; a survey on the personal digital device ban; the need for better planning and legislation to address school capacity issues, and the need to have schools be engaged at the beginning of the development process.
- DPAC looks forward to hearing how the new health authority bulletin on ventilation will impact classrooms.

CUPE 409: Dave Bollen, President

- CUPE 409 will be 75 years old in 2025.
- CUPE 409 and the NWTU are in their bargaining year; a high volume of prep work.
- A new CUPE 409 Job Evaluation system is in place which allows for all jobs to be evaluated annually; this system will now be streamlined for efficiency purposes.
- Elections were held this month for Site Reps & Occupational Health & Safety Officers.

NWTU: Kristie Oxley, President

- Oxley questioned the amount of funds that are being taken from the Operations Fund in order to fund the cost of new portables.
- Oxley highlighted the ongoing issue of overheating in portables.
- Oxley raised the issue of the 0.5 sexual health position and suggested extending this role to elementary schools to start the student's sexual health education earlier.

The public was given the opportunity to ask questions on matters that arose during the meeting with staff responding where appropriate. To view the full comment and question period, please refer to the meeting video at the [\[8:07 p.m.\]](#) mark.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Nil.

6. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. The next EPPC and OPPC Committee Meetings will be held on October 15, 2023.

7. **REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

- a. Superintendent Update (M. Davidson)

New Superintendent Mark Davidson spoke about various activities that he had the opportunity to participate in since joining the New Westminster Schools District.

Highlights include:

- Superintendent Davidson welcomed new Associate Superintendent Geraldine Lawlor; a tremendous addition to the team.

- Spent quality time with critical partners DPAC Chair, Laura Kwong and executives; NWTU President Kristie Oxley and executives, and CUPE 409 President, Dave Bollen.
- Engaged in excellent conversations with both the outgoing Deputy Minister and the Assistant Deputy Minister which developed his level of understanding regarding the historical relationship between the school system and the Province.
- Participated in visits to all New Westminster Schools which included meeting with Principals, Vice-principals, teachers, administrative staff, and students.
- Discussed a no-cost reorganization of the central office, and District Leadership Team (DLT) meetings in order to provide professional leadership to administrators around instructional leadership. Davidson noted that Kenneth Headley, VP of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (DEIA) will be part of the monthly agenda in order to provide professional learning and conversation with administration to support this work at a universal level.
- Davidson participated in the Terry Fox Run at Lord Kelvin Elementary School noting the warmup was spectacular with the students' favourite part being yelling in unison.
- Davidson emphasized the importance of building relationships with the Board of Education, staff, and students, and expressed his gratitude for the SD40's staff hard work. He is grateful to be here and excited for the work in the years ahead.

b. Summer Learning Update (P. Craven)

Pam Craven, Director of Instruction – Leadership and Learning provided an overview of the 2024 Summer Learning Program at Qayqayt Elementary and NWSS. The 3-week learning program at Qayqayt offered a well-rounded mix of academic and creative classes that kept students excited and engaged. NWSS 3-week learning site achieved a new record number this year with 1,350 students: *Highlights:* 640 grade 10-12 students were able to fast track their classes by taking full-credit academic courses which lasted 5 weeks. A total of 58 courses were offered to middle and secondary students and included introductory courses in robotics, filmmaking, business, laboratory science and math to name a few. Craven stated that she looks forward to working with Principal Tu Loan Trieu, and District Vice-Principal Mr. Innes on this years Summer Learning Program in review.

c. Five-Year Capital Plan – Minor Capital Projects (M. Brito)

Matt Brito, Director of Maintenance and Operations provided an overview of the 2025-26 Minor Capital Plan submission. Submission highlights included the overall costs for the School Enhancement Program (SEP) at \$7,075,000; the Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP) at \$4,500,000, and the Playground Equipment Program (PEP) at \$585,000; all of which reveal the District's priorities for upcoming years. The District's entire request across the Minor Capital Project envelope that the District is looking to the Ministry to support is \$12,160,000. The submission deadline to the Ministry for minor capital projects is September 30, 2024. The District will report back once they receive approval from the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC), sometime in March 2025. *Questions and discussion ensued.*

To review the Minor Capital Projects in its entirety please refer to the video at [\[8:28 p.m.\]](#)

2024-064

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approves the 2025-26 Minor Capital Plan as presented for submission to the Ministry of Education and Childcare.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Annual Reimbursement of Costs to Address Capacity (D. Connelly).

Trustee Connelly referred all to review the Backgrounder Report that was included in this evening's Open Board Package and instructed those who may have questions to reach out to their staff.

2024-065

Moved and Seconded

That the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) write a letter to the Honourable Rachna Singh, asking for the Ministry of Education and Child Care to 1. Reimburse school districts annually for costs associated with all government-supported major capital projects related to the costs for project planning; and 2. Fully fund the purchase and related costs (including site-prep, accessibility requirements and permits) of portables for enrolment growth.

Trustee Dhaliwal requested that the Board wait until a new governance has been sworn in before the letter is sent to the Ministry of Education and Child Care

Chair Russell put forth the recommendation to the Board to pass the motion, and send the letter to the new Minister.

2024-066

Moved and Seconded

That the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) wait until a new government has been sworn in before a letter is sent to the new Minister, asking for Ministry of Education and Child Care to 1. Reimburse school districts annually for costs associated with all government-supported major capital projects related to the costs for project planning; and 2. Fully fund the purchase and related costs (including site-prep, accessibility requirements and permits) of portables for enrolment growth.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- b. 22nd Street Visioning (C. Sluis)

Trustee Sluis stated that the 22nd Street station area vision will eventually be the home to 30,000 new residents at its full build-out, which will place tremendous pressure on their already over-capacity school system. Sluis noted that she would like to ensure that their School District works with the City of New Westminster to determine the potential growth rate and subsequent school site requirements. *Questions were asked and discussion ensued.*

2024-067

Moved and Seconded

THAT School District No. 40 (New Westminster) work with the City to determine projected population growth and school needs and include specific school needs and projected school site requirements as a formal response to the City's engagement process.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9. **OLD BUSINESS**

Nil.

10. **TRUSTEE REPORTS**

Trustees provided highlights of the events they attended in September. Refer to the meeting video at [\[8:48 p.m.\]](#) for full comments.

11. **QUESTION PERIOD (15 Minutes)**

Nil.

12. **NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Tuesday, October 29, 2024: School Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. (In-person & via Zoom link).

Events

- Orange Shirt Day and National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Monday, September 30, 2024.

13. **REPORTING OUT FROM IN-CAMERA BOARD MEETING**

- a. Record of the June 24, 2024, In-Camera Meeting.

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer