

**MINUTES OF THE NEW WESTMINSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, October 8, 2019, 6:30 PM
F.W. Howay Elementary School
91 Courtney Crescent, New Westminster**

PRESENT	Anita Ansari, Vice Chair	Karim Hachlaf, Superintendent	
	Dee Beattie, Trustee	Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer (out-going)	
	Danielle Connelly, Trustee	Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer (in-coming)	
	Gurveen Dhaliwal, Trustee	Caroline Manders, Recording Secretary	
	Mark Gifford, Chair	Guests:	
	Maya Russell, Trustee	Sarah Phelan, Principal	
	Student Trustees:	Sandra Browning, Teacher, Division 3	
	Rebecca Ballard	Lori Cantafio, Teacher, Division 1	
	Sam Killawee	Bruce Cunnings, Director, Instruction, Learning Services	
	Sierra Rose-Hand	Zaida Manji, District Support Counsellor	
		Maureen McRae-Stanger, Director of Instruction – Learning & Innovation	
	REGRETS	Mary Lalji, Trustee	
		Maryam Naser, Associate Superintendent	

Chair Dhaliwal recognized and acknowledged the Qayqayt First Nations, as well as all Coast Salish peoples, on whose traditional and unceded territories we live, we learn, we play and we do our work.

1. Approval of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Committee Chair Dhaliwal welcomed the student trustees, Rebecca Ballard, Sam Killawee, Sierra Rose-Hand to their first Board Committee meeting.

Moved and Seconded

THAT the agenda for the October 8, 2019 Education Policy and Planning Committee meeting be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Presentations

a. Evolution of F.W. Howay School Growth Plan

Principal Phelan welcomed the student trustees, Board of Education and the public. She introduced teachers Sandra Browning and Lori Cantafio who presented the School Growth Plan.

During the 2018-2019 school year, F.W. Howay focused on reading development, which identified a significant number of students that were not yet meeting expectations. Timelines/baselines were introduced to track progress. The goal for 2019-2020 school year is to continue to develop and implement assessment strategies that align with the District's belief that strengthening students' core competencies will empower students in their learning journey as they move towards being confident, capable, lifelong learners. Additionally, staff assessment teams and assessment tools will be developed.

3. Comment and Question Period

Nil.

4. Reports from Senior Management

a. May Day Update

Superintendent Hachlaf indicated that after last school year's move to offering May Day dance instruction outside of the school day, we felt this direction aligned with our strategic priorities. In recognition of the 150th anniversary, we will maintain this model for May Day 2020 and still host a district-wide event at Queens Park.

The school district will be moving away from this model entirely after 2020. The annual concept of bringing our elementary schools together for a district-wide celebration will remain a priority. To that end, our elementary school teams will be engaging in a working group this year to plan an event which better aligns with our priorities and ensures broader participation for all of our students. The location of the 2021 event will be part of that discussion. The Superintendent confirmed that there will be an opportunity for community groups to participate in a dialogue once a draft plan has been developed.

Trustee Gifford asked whether staff resources will be assigned for the May 2020 event. Superintendent Hachlaf confirmed that a coordinator will be used again.

The audience members in attendance for the May Day update, indicated their support and thanked the Superintendent.

b. Special Education Review October Update

Director, Instruction, Learning Services Cunnings provided an update:

- Trustees Russell and Beattie have been assigned as the new co-chairs of the Advisory Group.
- Primary and Alternate members are now attending all meetings.
- Data points were reviewed with the group to ensure everyone is clear as to the questions/outcomes.
- Stakeholder engagement with the community will take place at the end of October 2019.
- October 25, 2019 Provincial Professional Development day will launch the engagement with the District's Educational Assistants.
- Advisory Group meetings will take place during the afternoon, part of regular work day (will cost approximately \$3,000 to cover salaries for participants to attend 6 meetings); consultant rates are \$110/hour.

Stakeholders will be involved via focus groups; ThoughtExchange (online survey) and individual in-person interviews. Students will be engaged along with other stakeholders according to their school age level (via parents), advertising engagement opportunities and reaching out directly to all parents, not only parents of designated students via communication to Parents Advisory Councils and schools.

Committee Chair Dhaliwal asked whether there will be dedicated page on the website; Director, Instruction, Learning Services Cunnings said that has not yet been discussed but information regarding the process could be posted. The Review is scheduled to be completed by March 2020.

c. Mental Health Initiatives

Director of Instruction – Learning & Innovation McRae-Stanger and District Support Counsellor Manji provided an update on the Mental Health Initiatives in the District. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health Literacy support student success at school. District Support Counsellor Manji explained that in her new role she will support all District initiatives; provide support to students, staff, parents and fellow counsellors; clinical counselling; professional development.

Some of the ongoing SEL initiatives in the District include:

- Review of MDI and student learning survey to promote planning.
- Positive Behaviour Supports in Schools.
- Flexible Furniture and environments.
- School goals on sense of connection/belonging/mindfulness.

An exciting new initiative will be the pilot launch of the Grade 8 Wellness Conferences on October 24, 2019 at Fraser River Middle School. Students will take part in workshops where they will learn how to maintain physical and mental wellness; learn to reduce stress and build resilience. Next steps will be to adapt this format to the other two middle schools as well has a district-wide middle school conference.

Board Authority Authorized (BAA) Self-Efficacy Courses for grades 10, 11, 12 will focus on self-regulation; self-advocacy; self-efficacy; emotions; behaviours; relationships; metacognition; coping strategies; goal-setting.

In 2018, a provincial grant was provided which enabled the Andrew Baxter training sessions; in 2019, the Ministry has set aside \$8.7 million for the province – we should know soon what New Westminster Schools' share will be.

A mental health initiatives update will be provided to the Board in Spring 2020.

Discussion followed:

- Student Voice will be involved in providing feedback regarding these initiatives.
- A Handbook is being developed to support consistency between counsellors. A Handbook for parents would be helpful as well. District Support Counsellor Manji indicated that parents could provide questions for gathering FAQs.
- BAA courses, having them included in the curriculum not as an elective may be more effective. Director of Instruction – Learning & Innovation McRae-Stanger indicated that initially they will be rolled out as a BAA with the goal to have them incorporated into the curriculum in the near future.
- Work is being done to identify and include students who may need help but are not easily identified in the classroom. As well, as ensuring inclusion and diversity.
- Currently, New Westminster Schools' counsellors (18) is above ratio. However, it was mentioned that more counsellors are needed specifically at the high school. It was mentioned that provincial school districts' counsellor ratios could be raised at BCSTA for their consideration.

5. New Business

a. Services for Students with Dyslexia

Trustee Beattie felt that it was very beneficial to have had the Special Education Review update (see item 4b), however, she cautioned that Dyslexic students are not easily identified and may not benefit from the Review. Trustee Beattie

mentioned that a human rights case is being filed in Ontario which may set a precedent for the rest of Canada.

Director, Instruction, Learning Services Cunnings explained that Dyslexia does fall within the learning disabilities category and other interventions, it could dovetail into the current Review.

Superintendent Hachlaf indicated that further work would be required to provide a more comprehensive timeline as to next steps.

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Education Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to direct staff to articulate our current continuum of support, including prevalence and process for identification of students who are struggling to learn to read, and further that, staff identify gaps in support and make recommendations to close these gaps.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Student Voice

Committee Chair Dhaliwal asked that the Student Trustees provide feedback on their first meeting. For future meetings, they are encouraged to provide topics for the agenda.

Student Trustee Ballard indicated that May Day celebrates colonialism and does not promote Indigenous history. May Day should not be brought into the classroom.

Student Trustee Killawee indicated that lockers for special education students are separated from where the other students' lockers and lunch rooms are thus keeping students physically separated. He asked what support looks like for students in the middle needs range. Director, Instruction, Learning Services Cunnings indicated that the concerns raised will help to develop questions for the surveys for the Special Education Review - this all will help to develop information for asks for resources to support recommendations to be brought to the Board.

Student Trustee Rose-Hand was very appreciative of the work that is being done. The students conducted a poll regarding May Day, which asked whether or not students found the event educational or relevant - the majority of the students did not feel it was relevant - there should be more community involvement for this event.

Committee Chair Dhaliwal confirmed that the Student Voice portion will be moved up in the agenda to be right after the Comment and Question Period.

7. General Announcements

- a. World Teacher Day - October 5

Committee Chair Dhaliwal acknowledged all the teachers, Educational Assistants, and staff at New Westminster Schools for their excellent work.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm.