

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

**Tuesday, April 16th, 2024, 3:30 PM
Skwo:wech Elementary School**

PRESENT

Marc Andres, Committee Chair
Danielle Connelly, Trustee
Cheryl Sluis, Trustee
Maya Russell, Trustee
Kathleen Carlsen, Trustee

Sylvia Russell, Superintendent
Bettina Ketcham, Secretary Treasurer
Anne-Marie Martin, Recording Secretary
Julie Pearce, Associate Superintendent
Kathleen Chad, Principal – Skwo:wech Elementary
Darren Elves, Vice Principal – Skwo:wech Elementary
Sandra Singh, Director of Instruction, Learning & Innovation
Ileana Neilson, Manager, Early Learning and Child Care
Kenneth Headley, District Vice Principal – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
Rhonda Jones, Director of Instruction, Inclusive Education
Pam Craven, Director of Instruction, Secondary Programs
Murray McLeod, Principal, NWSS

REGRETS

Robert Weston, Executive Director Human Resources
Gurveen Dhaliwal, Trustee
Elliott Slinn, Trustee

Committee Chair Andres recognized and acknowledged 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.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 pm

Moved and Seconded

THAT the agenda for the April 16th, 2024, Education Policy and Planning Committee meeting be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. **PRESENTATIONS**

Skwo:wech Elementary School (Kathleen Chad, Principal, Darren Elves, Vice Principal)

Students: Nathaniel, Rafaela, Sima, Olivia, James, Gabriel, Charlie, Felix, Becky, Ruby, Izabella, Elizabeth

The presentation demonstrated the weaving the story of the school learning plan through the themes of, Literacy (writing), Development of Identity, SEL/RULER Program.

Students introduced the five Learning Communities:

The Salmon Community
The Bear Community
The Wolf Community
The Eagle Community
The Raven Community

Examples of the Mood Meter, and Story Champ icons were discussed, and events were shared including the celebration of Students/Teachers with a pancake breakfast, the Salmon community gathering and First Nations Fridays.

Questions and Comments

- Q. Trustee Connelly asked the students if they stay in the same community.
A. Kindergarten is the Salmon community, while the Bear community is Grade 1/2, Wolf community is Grade 2/3 and Raven and Eagle community is Grade 4/5.

Trustee Russell gave koodoo's to the students and commented that she was impressed with the events and especially the First Nation Fridays.

Chair Andres thanked them for being brave and presenting as it was impactful and demonstrated that caring is part of learning.

The presentation ended with the Kindness Video created by students/staff at Skwo:wech Elementary School, which can be viewed [here](#).

3. **COMMENT AND QUESTION PERIOD**

Nil.

4. STUDENT VOICE

Julia and Callum provided a brief overview of the Student Symposium that was held on Friday April 12th, 2024 at the Shadbolt Centre.

The main topics of discussion were around mental health, safety, anti-racism, and student success with technology.

Some students are curious about the policy around vaping and phone use.

Student Voice will be attending the budget meeting next week to report on the students' top five needs.

Q. Trustee Sluis asked what the top idea was coming out of the day.

A. Callum mentioned the students wanted a speaker, someone to come in and talk to them about the dangers of vaping, as well as air conditioning.

Chair Andres commented that the student facilitators training was neat and well done.

5. REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT

a. Review SOGI Report – Kai Smith

Kai produced a PowerPoint which reflected on the Anti-SOGI protest, and how school administrators are careful to ensure families understand the “why” behind the learning opportunities. Kai discussed how District staff want to be sure that they have language they feel confident using.

Successes discussed were the creation of the First New Westminster School District SOGI Advisory Committee (Policy 17). SOGI School Leads are an exemplary model, and that Glenbrook Middle School teacher Sheelagh Brothers has increased the SOGI team from one School Lead to six.

Sheelagh mentioned the challenges that staff face: they are afraid to lead alone, afraid of saying something wrong, and staff are tired.

They spoke to how they engage in courageous conversations from meeting with parents, staff and advising on GSA's (Gender and Sexuality Alliance) and Diversity Clubs across all school levels.

Key messages were to increase students' understanding of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, to equip them for teamwork and leadership in our diverse society. Schools and spaces must be a mirror in which students see themselves, a window through which students see the outside community. The need for further development and implementation of Safer In Here was noted. Support SOGI Programming to ensure widespread informed, respectful, person-to-person communication and connection that settles fears, builds capacity, and fosters inclusion.

Questions and Comments

Trustee Connelly questioned if there was a recommendation to the Board of Education. Kai confirmed that the recommendation was to gather further information and direction to District Vice-Principal of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Ken Headley to decide on further actions/directions.

Trustee Russell commented that we need to take a harder look inside and outside, as she worries about sustainability and their wellness as a team, as it is not getting easier, with additional pressures on educators.

Trustee Sluis concurred with Trustee Russell. Trustee Sluis asked one question What do you need?

Kai responded that they need to get out there and meet more of the parents and students and get feedback on what is working, and we need the students and parents to communicate.

b. Kindergarten Gradual Entry Update – Ileana Neilson and Sandra Singh

Ileana and Sandra spoke to who are kindergarten students are, why we have gradual entry, Child Care/Pre-School vs Kindergarten and what is the difference.

The presenters explained what happens during gradual entry and provided a sample gradual entry schedule.

The Board of Education requested survey's regarding gradual entry feedback (which were completed in February) to gather a representative group of K-5 Admin, Kindergarten teachers, and district staff to discuss feedback on how best to support parents needs, and to provide an update to the Board of Education at an April or May Education Meeting.

This survey results were reported on. Summary of feedback was provided from Kindergarten teachers.

Questions and Comments

Trustee Connelly voiced concern over parents getting notification to late.

Sandra advised that parents/guardians will receive this information during the following times:

- Welcome to Kindergarten events in May & June
- Emails, School Messenger, Kindergarten handbooks/documents to be sent to families May/June.
- Information is on our school websites.
- Early July district-wide Gradual Entry schedule shared with all families.
- End of August Welcoming Conversations times shared.
- Families who register in the summer, admin will reach out to families at the end of August.

Chair Andres read and brought forward the following motion to allow for further discussion at the open board meeting.

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Education Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No.40 (New Westminster) that the Gradual Entry Option 2 be adopted for the 2024/25 school year.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Moved and Seconded

Chair Andres motioned to extend the Education Policy and Planning Committee meeting 10 minutes to be able to review the 2024-2025 School Fees

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

c. Review School Fees (2024-2025) – Julie Pearce

The fees' were reviewed, and highlighted items indicated changes from 2023-2024 school year. Cost increases included locks, the Graduation activity fee, Football, Carpentry and Chef Apprenticeship fees.

Questions and Comments

Trustee Sluis noted the large discrepancies in fees due to gender. What does this say about the experience that the girls are getting? This information should be provided to Sukhdeep Rai as he is currently putting together a report for the Board of Education on Extracurricular Athletics Audit.

Principal Mr. McLeod at New Westminster Secondary School advised that these fees may vary depending on coaches and tournaments they are registered for. Some students play in more games/tournaments.

Trustee Connelly does not see how Math and Band practice books are optional and would like to know the cost for us to cover these fees, so every student gets a practice book. Trustee Connelly also questioned the Accounting workbook fee not listed. Mr. McLeod confirmed that this fee is no longer charged.

Trustee Connelly also noted the Graduation Fee indicates that the grad gown, cap, and tassel are rentals, but this is not the case students keep these. Would like to have a program in place to recycle or reuse them.

Mr. McLeod advised that they will take a look at recycling and/or reusing gowns for next year. The major cost incurred is from the company ProShow, this cost has almost doubled.

Trustee Connelly would like to see everyone pay the same fees for sports, and if they are not used then a refund provided.

Trustee Carlson noted the same concern with different fees for Basketball.

Mr. McLeod mentioned that different coaches are registering for different tournaments and fundraising.

Chair Andres mentioned that the following motion was to be considered, but noted there are still many questions and comments regarding the 2024-2025 School Fees and recommended the motion be tabled.

Trustee Russell recommended that all comments and questions be sent to Chair Andres by the end of April as this will be added to the Agenda for the April 30th, 2024, Board Meeting for consideration of approval.

**Moved and Seconded
Motion to Table**

THAT the Education Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of No.40 (New Westminster) that the 2024-2025 School Fees be approved

**TABLED
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nil.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 pm.