



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

**Tuesday, April 16, 2024, 6:30 PM  
In-person & Via Zoom Link**

**PRESENT**     Danielle Connelly, Committee Chair                     Sylvia Russell, Interim Superintendent  
                  Maya Russell, Trustee     Julie Pearce, Interim Associate Superintendent  
                  Cheryl Sluis, Trustee     Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer  
                  Gurveen Dhaliwal, Trustee                                     Robert Weston, Executive Director, HR  
                  Marc Andres, Trustee     Amy Grey, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer  
                  Kathleen Carlsen, Trustee                                     Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects  
   Matt Brito, Director of Facilities & Operations  
   Laura Goodman, Recording Secretary

**REGRETS**     Elliott Slinn, Trustee     Members of the Public  
   Kristie Oxley, NWTU President  
   Laura Kwong, DPAC

***Committee Chair Connelly 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 6:33 pm.

**Moved and Seconded**

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

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

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

Nil.

**3.     DELEGATION**

a.     Annual Day of Mourning Presentation (S. Wethered)

On behalf of the New Westminster & District Labour Council (NWDLC), teacher Sarah Wethered read a statement in commemoration of the National Day of Mourning. The National Day of Mourning ceremony for workers killed or injured on the job will be held on Sunday, April 28, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at Westminster Pier Park. For the full statement, please refer to the meeting video at [\[6:52 pm\]](#).

*Trustee Russell thanked Sarah for her presentation and emphasized the importance of safety education and spoke to the Alive After Five Young Worker Awareness Program of the BC Federation of Labour; an innovative initiative that seeks to make the province a healthier and safer place to live and work for all of us. The New Westminster Schools District holds this program at various school libraries.*

### 3. **REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

#### a. Capital Projects Update (D. Crowe)

##### i. Queen Elizabeth Expansion Project:

Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects presented the following highlights for Queen Elizabeth Elementary School.

- The District received both the variance approval and the development permit application from the City of New Westminster which will allow the District to proceed to the building permit process.
- On-site challenges continue, and the team is working through these including the pile driving which is on schedule to commence in July 2024.
- The final submission for the expansion project was submitted to the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) last week; once approved the project will move to the tender process. In the interim, a call-out for contractor pre-qualifications was completed which resulted in 6 quality contractors, the shortlisted group will be invited for tender.

##### ii. NWSS Decommissioning Project

- The decommissioning project is now complete at NWSS; the next phase of the process is to finalize the design and create the Memorial Park. The District will continue to work on the final design of the Memorial Park and proceed with creating working drawings which will go out for tender to the landscape contractor building the park.
- Over the last four weeks, the team has been working on creating and rebuilding parking areas throughout the site which has increased the parking around the Massey Theatre. The District will commission an engineering firm to help create a better traffic flow plan for the parking lots around the theatre, stadium, and school to address congestion issues.
- Signage around the construction site will be provided to inform the public about the project status and what areas are being developed. Signs will be placed on the fencing surrounding the site once the design and conceptual drawings are confirmed.

*Chair Connelly requested a timeline for the placement of the signage around the site. Crowe noted that they have expedited this process and are currently awaiting confirmation once the fence has been installed.*

iii. Simcoe Elementary School

- Crowe provided an update on the Simcoe Elementary School project, including the submission of a final business case to the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC); they are also working with the City of New Westminster to address the traffic concerns on this site regarding the pick-up and drop-off areas along Queens Ave. They believe they have a solution in place to mitigate their concerns and have put forward their 'motion to the solution' to the City which has enabled them to move forward in this process. Crowe stated that their team is looking forward to approval from MECC in the coming months.

*Questions and discussion ensued.*

b. Operations Update

i. Finance and Facilities Report (M. Brito & A. Grey)

Matt Brito, Director of Facilities and Operations highlighted key capital projects:

*F.W. Howay and Tweedsmuir Daycare Centres:*

- Both sites are operational, and they continue to monitor a successful startup. F.W. Howay has been in operation for one and a half months, and Tweedsmuir for one month.

*Fraser River and Qayqayt Classroom Conversions:*

- To minimize disruption to the school, the demolition of the walls occurred at both sites over Spring Break.
- The mechanical and electrical demolition continues to progress, along with new walls and door frames being built at both sites.
- Currently, waiting for the City of New Westminster wall framing inspections before drywall is installed. Both spaces are moving along very well within a very tight schedule and will be ready for September 2024.

*Short Term Capacity:*

- Two portables have been placed at Qayqayt for September 2024. One portable has been placed at Queen Elizabeth Elementary with a second one planned for July 2024. The team will also start site prep for one portable at Lord Kelvin next week, as they have just received the required building permit. To create additional classroom space at Glenbrook Middle School, a renovation to the library for a classroom is being contemplated.

*NWSS Cooling Project:*

- Brito was pleased to state that the Ministry announced funding for the New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS) cooling project; a 3-million-dollar approval from the School Enhancement Program, along with the \$500,000 Board approved funds. The District is currently working with their mechanical engineer and the successful bidder to create a construction schedule. Brito stated that the plan is to install two air source heat pump units with individual hydronic cooling units for each classroom on the second and third floors which will be separate from the heating and ventilation system that is currently in place at the high school. They look forward to the start of a much-anticipated project.

Questions were asked by Trustees Connelly, Russell and Sluis. Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham, and Director of Facilities Brito provided answers to their questions.

Trustee Connelly requested that Brito reach out to Communications Manager, Mike Lee to facilitate the process of having both the NWSS cooling information and the school classroom project information placed on the District website.

Trustee Connelly requested that it would be beneficial to have a breakdown of the District's classrooms regarding how their individual tech ed, art room and music rooms have changed over the last few years and how they are going to be changing moving forward. Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham stated that they are currently working on a report of this nature to bring back to the Board in May 2024.

ii. March 31<sup>st</sup> Financial Projection (A. Grey)

Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Grey provided highlights.

- The projected operating deficit as of March 31 to June 30, 2024, is \$800K, a higher deficit of \$400K more than anticipated from the 2023/24 amended budget deficit of \$389K.
- Grey stated that increased expected revenue of approximately \$364K is being offset by higher-than-expected salaries and benefits.
- Staff salaries and benefits are projecting about \$920K higher than budget due to student support salaries that have been deployed earlier than budgeted to address the current student needs in our schools; substitute costs are also trending higher than budgeted.
- The HR department has seen significant successes in recruiting thereby reducing unfilled absences which also leads to higher replacement costs.
- The accumulated surplus balance which will carry into the 2024-2025 school year is estimated at \$2.3 million; above the \$2 million threshold set by Board Policy 19.

To view the operations update and the budget update in their entirety please refer to the meeting video at [\[7:03 pm\]](#).

c. 2024-2025 Base Budget Presentation (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham reviewed the 2024-2025 Base Budget.

Highlights:

- Enrolment is anticipated to increase by 315 FTE.
- The base budget without any additional efficiencies and priorities is a structural deficit of \$129K.
- Labour settlement funding related to the Cost of Living (COLA) for teachers and support staff have been confirmed at 1%; to date the funding allocations have not been announced by the Ministry.
- District is also waiting on Ministry announcement for exempt/PVP funding.
- Superintendent recommendations will be presented at the OPPC meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Significant consultation process commencing, which includes: the district budget survey which opened today and will remain open until April 26<sup>th</sup>, one-on-one partner budget consultations with Board Trustees on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, and ongoing open meeting presentations.

Questions and discussion ensued.

To view the 2024-25 Base Budget Presentation in its entirety please refer to the meeting video at [\[7:17 pm\]](#)

d. Board and Committee Meeting Calendar Approval (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham outlined proposed changes for the Board and Committee Meeting calendars for the 2024-25 school year, and noted that this meeting calendar is a roll-over schedule with no significant changes.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) that the Board and Committee Meeting Calendar be approved as presented.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

e. Capital Plan Response Bylaw (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham provided highlights to the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) announcement of the \$3-million-dollar funding for the NWSS School Enhancement Program. The District has completed the tender and awarded the contract for the above-noted project and will commence work in the Summer 2024. Ketcham noted that the bylaw will be brought to the April 30, 2024 Board meeting where three-readings of the capital bylaw will be requested for approval.

f. Human Resources & Staffing Update (R. Weston)

Executive Director, Human Resources Weston shared highlights and noted that HR has been successful in vacancy replacement. They were able to recruit additional TTOCs and casual EAs, and noted that their replacement record has improved since the fall of 2023. They have created additional strategies that they will employ over the next few months in order to place them in a better position for the fall.

Human Resources Department is currently getting ready for their spring staffing process for the 2024/25 school year at which time they will typically have 200 postings under both the NWTU Collective Agreement and CUPE 409.

Weston noted that the newly hired Superintendent will be arriving at the end of May to visit their District.

g. Guiding Principles – Information Campaign (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham noted that this item was introduced at the last Board meeting on March 12, 2024. The purpose of bringing this notification back to the Board is to determine if the trustees have any comments and/or questions they would like to be discussed prior to the Open Board meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Ketcham noted that these

Guiding Principles have been shared broadly with the community to advise them of their capacity challenges, and the guiding principles that the Board will consider at the Open Board meeting on April 30, 2024.

Trustee Sluis noted that this would be a good opportunity to simplify some of the language within the guiding principles (e.g. plain language). Questions were asked, and discussion ensued with the Trustees. Interim Superintendent S. Russell noted that the Board of Education is also required to keep inline with the language within the School Act of B.C. and that there are quite a few places where there is the intersection between the School Act, Policy, and Administration Procedures and the Guiding Principals Document. Russell noted that the use of the language is quite purposeful yet at the same time they have a communication obligation to their community. Trustee Connelly suggested that the District create a FAQ sheet in plain language for members of the community, and that this information be posted on the District website.

4. **General Announcements**

Committee Chair Connelly was pleased to announce Mark Davidson as the new Superintendent for the New Westminster School District, and will be welcoming Mark to SD40 on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

5. **New Business**

Nil.

6. **Old Business**

Nil.

7. **Question Period (15 Minutes)**

Questions directed to the Chair on matters that arose during the meeting.

*Refer to the meeting video at [\[8:37 pm\]](#) for full comments.*

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm.