

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

**Tuesday, March 12, 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

Karim Hachlaf, Superintendent
Julie Pearce, Interim Associate Superintendent
Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer
Robert Weston, Executive Director, HR
Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects
Amy Grey, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
Laura Goodman, Recording Secretary

Members of the Public
Laura Kwong, DPAC Chair
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.

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

2024-016

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) adopt the agenda for the March 12, 2024, Regular School Board meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

a. Minutes from the Open Meetings held:

i. Regular Open Board Meeting held February 27, 2024.

2024-017

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the minutes as distributed for February 27, 2024, Regular Open School Board meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

b. Business Arising from the Minutes.

Nil.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

- a. Nil.

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

DPAC: Laura Kwong, Chair

- DPAC and PACs participated in the district-hosted Elementary & Middle School AP Fundraising Consultation meeting on February 29, 2024; an opportunity to engage with the District's ad hoc AP 520 committee and provide feedback.
- Neurodiversity celebration week: Monday, March 18 to Sunday, March 24, 2024.
 - Kwong provided clarification on the neurodiversity data that she had initially referenced at the Open Board meeting on February 27th. An overview of B.C. Public School Data is located at <https://studentsuccess.gov.bc.ca> The 2022-2023 District school year shows a graduation rate for non-diverse learners at 96% which ranks SD40 near the middle of the pack at twenty-one out of fifty-two school districts in the province. Their diverse learner graduation rate is 28% lower, 68% for which the District ranked thirty-seventh out of fifty-two school districts in the province. Kwong clarified that it is the spread between these two numbers for which the District ranked forty-seventh out of fifty-two school districts makes it appear that they are failing diverse learners and not non-diverse learners.
- Short Term Capacity Update: DPAC requests that the District provide consultation and engagement to the families and school communities that will be affected by the loss of play space in elementary schools.

Chair Russell thanked Kwong and DPAC for their clarification regarding the Diverse Learners data.

Superintendent Hachlaf thanked Kwong for her clarification about the Diverse Learners data, and noted that Rhonda Jones, Director of Instruction had provided him with a summary of the provincial completion rates, and clarified that their six-year graduation rate for all learners is 92%. Hachlaf also confirmed that the six-year completion rate for their diverse students for the 2022-23 school year is 68% as initially reported. A concerning range difference of 24%, a gap that the District is aware of will strive to do better moving forward. Rhonda Jones, Director of Instruction will provide an exclusive education update at the Open Board meeting in May.

CUPE 409 Dave Bollen, President

- Bollen noted that grievances are down, and appreciates the collaborative work with Human Resources over the last few weeks.
- Bollen congratulates Amelia Laidlaw for acquiring the position of Indigenous Curricular Coordinator for CUPE 409.

NWTU: Kristie Oxley, President

- The BCTF Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held from March 16-19, 2024.
- Oxley noted a lack of staple supplies for their photocopiers and welcomed budget input.

The public was given the opportunity to ask questions on items related to the agenda with staff responding where appropriate. To view the full comment and question period, please refer to the meeting video at [\[7:07 p.m.\]](#).

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Nil.

6. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. The next EPPC & OPPC Meetings will be held on April 16, 2024.

7. **REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

- a. Extracurricular Athletics Audit Update (S. Rai)

Sukh Rai, Vice-Principal at QMS provided a report on the Extracurricular Athletics Audit that he conducted at New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS) and three middle schools. In December 2023, a motion was passed at the Open Board meeting to review the District's approach to providing and supporting extra-curricular physical activities. The Board expressed that athletics opportunities should be offered "Equitably" by removing barriers to student participation which may include socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, disability, and gender. The main goal of this audit was to explore if the District's extracurricular athletics were being offered in an equitable and meaningful way to all their students. Rai also spoke about the next steps, timeline, and plans, and reiterated the importance of extracurricular athletics as learning opportunities for students as they can have a huge impact on creating a strong school culture, and building strong connections between students and staff. *Questions and discussions ensued.*

Rai to provide a summary report of findings to the Board of Education at the Open Board meeting on April 30, 2024.

To view the report in its entirety please refer to the meeting video at [\[7:18 p.m.\]](#).

- b. Short Term Capacity Update for New Westminster Schools (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham provided a comprehensive Short Term Capacity Update, regarding the ongoing enrollment challenges in New Westminster Schools, and stated that the District continues to experience a rapid rate of enrolment growth. The registration process for the 2024-25 school year is now complete; 350 new students will join our schools in the fall.

Highlights include:

- **Fraser River Zone:** Anticipated growth in this zone will be supported by portables that will continue to be installed as enrolment projections increase. The immense capacity pressures will continue to grow between now and the tentative construction completion of the new Simcoe Elementary School in September 2027.
- **Mainland Middle Schools:** projected Middle School Enrolment vs. Operating Capacity which includes approved Capital Projects as of December 2023, Middle School Projections vs. Operating Capacity, and the expected growth projections in mainland middle schools as the City continues to grow. Ketcham noted that approval for the middle site acquisition and building is currently pending.
- **Options Under Consideration:** Ketcham stated the following options under consideration to alleviate the enrolment projections are Option 1). Portable Placement Strategy, and

Option 2) Hold Grade 6 students at Elementary; the Pros and Cons of each option were outlined, and discussed in detail.

- **New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS):** Projected Secondary School Enrolment vs. Operation Capacity including approved Capital Projects as of June 2023 was presented. Items under consideration to deal with enrolment growth at NWSS are portables, renovations, International education phase-out, and the implementation of a 5-block timetable. Staff recommend a 5-block timetable modification.
- **Next Steps:** Staff will continue to implement the guiding principles when doing important work regarding short term capacity issues. Ketcham noted that staff will seek direction and approval at the April 30th Open Board meeting.

Questions were raised, and discussion ensued.

To view this comprehensive report please refer to the meeting video at [\[7:32 p.m.\]](#).

Chair Russell requested a 5-minute recess at 8:35 p.m.

Chair Russell reconvened the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

c. Short Term Capacity Guiding Principles (B. Ketcham & P. Craven).

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham spoke to the original Guiding Principles for Short Term Capacity Review and noted that in June 2022, the original guiding principles stated require revision in light of the continued growth challenges faced in the District. Ketcham presented draft Guiding Principles for the Board's consideration which is to be approved in April 2024.

Pam Craven, Director of Instruction and Learning, Secondary Programs, spoke to space utilization for Guiding Principals as they relate to New Westminster Secondary Schools (NWSS) Grade 9 - 12 students. The space utilization is different from how the District prioritizes space for K - 8 students as there is only one zone and one catchment area for secondary students. Highlights include: 1). To ensure all students who reside in New Westminster are placed in NWSS and/or in one of the alternate programs: 2) To ensure all students have equitable access to all educational opportunities by creating additional space for students in specialty instructional programs; and 3). To maintain 21st century learning opportunities within NWSS which allow flexibility, collaborative learning, and accessible open/visible spaces. Craven also spoke to the 5-Block timetable model which will require another set of guiding principles in collaboration with students, staff, and partner groups.

d. AP 520 Fundraising Activities Update (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer, Ketcham noted that ongoing consultations continue to take place with DPAC & PAC groups and the Board's ad hoc School Generated Funds Committee. The District continues to listen to community feedback as it relates to the revisions, and work continues to progress. The AP 520 revisions were to be brought to the Board meeting this evening for adoption. However, this item will be postponed until the work of the School Generated Funds Committee completes its final recommendations. Ketcham stated that all groups who have provided input will receive an updated version of AP 520 prior to it being brought forward to the Board for discussion.

Chair Russell thanked Trustees Sluis and Connelly for agreeing to Co-Chair this committee, and to the partner groups for their continued participation in this process.

- e. 2024-2025 District Calendar (J. Pearce)

Interim Associate Superintendent brought forward the following motion for consideration.

2024-019

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the 2024-2025 District Calendar as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- f. Terms of Engagement with Auditor (B. Ketcham) (Verbal).

Secretary-Treasurer, Ketcham put forward a request to the Board for one additional year of engagement services with KPMG LLP for the 2023-2024 year, as the District had concluded its 5-year term engagement with KPMG last year. Ketcham noted that their fees are in alignment with the marketplace and similar districts. An audit rotation was also completed two years ago which helps with any questions as it relates to independence between the engagement with KPMG and the District. The District seeks the Board's approval to have KPMG LLP services for one more year to complete the year-end audit services with the intent of going to an RFP in the fall.

2024-020

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) confirm and continue the engagement of KPMG LLP for the year-end audit services for 2023-24.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chair Russell announced that this would be Superintendent Hachlaf's last Board meeting with New Westminster schools, before he takes on his new role as Superintendent at Burnaby Schools. She thanked him for his hard work, dedication, and contributions over the past 7 years to the District, New West Schools staff, students, and families within the community.

- g. Superintendent Update (K. Hachlaf)

Superintendent Hachlaf of New Westminster Schools expressed his gratitude for his 7 years spent at New Westminster Schools District, and highlights a snapshot of its significant achievements, including being named one of the top 10 districts in Canada.

- Building relationships and Inclusive Education: Westminster School District prioritizes building meaningful relationships with students, parents, and staff to ensure every student thrives.
- School renaming, employee recognition, and district leadership: New Westminster School District recognizes employees and leaders for their contributions.

- Indigenous education and school development in BC: Board invests in new school openings and renovations, despite pandemic and flooding challenges.
- School nutrition program and student involvement. Westminster schools implemented a district-wide school nutrition program, student voice verification committee, and childcare and early learning initiatives.
- The Board of Education invested in significant land acquisition over the years to secure future school development, the complete seismic update and renovation of Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary School and the beginning of the new 3-story expansion at Queen Elizabeth School.
- Toonies for Tummies demonstrates their commitment to ensuring students have access to healthy food. And the implementation of a district-wide school nourishment program without barriers to handle the budget cycle that now has robust district input.

Superintendent Hachlaf acknowledged the tremendous community, and expressed his gratitude for support and growth in New Westminster School, and looks forward to his future in Burnaby Schools.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

Nil.

9. **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Board Advocacy Draft Plan (M. Russell) (Verbal).

Chair Russell spoke to the Board Advocacy Draft Plan and noted that it had not been included in this evening's Board Agenda package as the latest version was circulated today.

The updated changes to this document are as follows:

- Removed the 2024 date as it has been determined this is more than a one-year plan.
- Added a Purpose header at the top of the first page.
- A reference was added to denote that the plan may evolve which warrants updates.
- Added that advocacy activities should be in support of the plan and be coordinated.
- The Engagement / Information Gathering language was placed in its section.
- Added a reference to the Memorial Site at NWSS under Capital Projects.
- Added a reference to schools as gathering places as part of wider emergency response planning in the context of climate resilience.

Chair Russell noted that the Board Advocacy *Draft* Plan will be brought forward to the next Open Board meeting for final adoption. In the interim, the latest Draft Plan will be available for review on their website under [Board News Bulletins](#).

To review the Board's 2024 Draft Advocacy Plan discussion, refer to the video at [\[9:24 p.m.\]](#)

At 9:27 p.m. Trustee Andres put forward the motion to extend the meeting past 9:30 p.m.

Trustee Gurveen Dhaliwal left the meeting at 9:28 p.m. and did not return.

10. **TRUSTEE REPORTS**

Trustees spoke to various meetings and events they attended over the past month.

Chair Russell highlighted the remarkable accomplishment of the New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS) program having received the Canada Young Theatre Award for last year's Shrek Musical, and to the incredible Jazz band students who won at the Surrey Provincial competition. *To review the full Trustee Reports refer to the meeting video at [\[9:30 p.m.\]](#).*

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

The public was given the opportunity to ask questions on matters that arose during the Meeting. Members of the public voiced their concerns to the Board of Education on the following topics: 5-block timetable model, enrolment pressures and impacts, and the Board Advocacy Draft Plan.

Questions and discussions ensued; Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham responded to questions. Refer to the meeting video at [\[9:34 pm\]](#) for full Q&A comments.

12. **NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Events

- World Autism Awareness Day - Tuesday, April 2nd
- International Women's Day – Friday, March 8th
- Earth Day - Monday, April 22nd
- BCSTA Provincial Council & AGM - Thursday April 18th to Sunday, April 21st
- Volunteer Recognition Day - Sunday, April 14th

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

- a. Record of the February 27, 2024 In-Camera Meeting

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer