

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

**Tuesday, April 30, 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

Sylvia Russell, Interim 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  
Krista Macaulay, DPAC Treasurer  
Erica Bigland, CUPE 409 Vice-President  
Kristie Oxley, NWTU President  
Connie Swan, District VP Indigenous Education  
Ken Millard, NWPVPA Chair

***The New Westminister 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 7:02 pm.

*Chair Russell recognized May 5, 2024, as Red Dress Day and the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and what we can do to ensure that Indigenous Women and Girls, and non-binary, two-spirit people are safe in our schools and our communities.*

**2024-021  
Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminister) adopt the agenda for the April 30, 2024, Regular School Board meeting.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

2.    **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

a.    Minutes from the Open Meetings held:

i.    March 12, 2024, Regular School Board Meeting

**2024-022**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the minutes distributed for the March 12, 2024, Regular Open School Board meeting.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

b. Business Arising from the Minutes.

Nil.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

a. 2024 – 2025 Preliminary Budget Stakeholder Presentations.

To view the presentations please refer to the meeting video at [\[7:03 p.m.\]](#).

i. Laura Kwong, Chair – District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC).

DPAC priority areas were identified for budget support via annual survey feedback from parents, caregivers, and PAC groups. They include safe learning environments for students and staff, including increased FTE for childcare workers and counsellors; addressing cooling for portable classrooms, and support for transportation burdens and traffic around schools which include utilizing community partners to fill gaps in safety.

ii. Erica Bigland, Treasurer - Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE 409).

Treasurer Bigland shared the Local's priorities which included a request for additional clerical staff, educational assistants, Indigenous professional development opportunities, maintenance, custodial and IT support to reflect the growing population and alleviate the workload in several schools.

iii. Kristie Oxley, President - New Westminster Teachers' Union (NWTU)

NWTU President highlighted the results delivered to their members and identified priorities which included the importance of the mentorship facilitator role, replacing vacant TTOC positions with administrators, a call for additional child and youth care workers, separating the Indigenous curriculum facilitator position and the Indigenous education transitions support position into two separate roles, and the hiring of one District on-call priority counsellor.

iv. Indigenous Advisory Committee

Connie Swan, District Vice-Principal; Sheryl Wright, QayQayt First Nation, and Amy Laidlaw, Director of Indigenous Education and Transitions Support, shared their 2024-2025 budget priorities. Highlights included adding a 1.0 FTE teaching

position to create two distinct roles for grad coach and curriculum supports. Connie and Amy are developing terms of reference for an Indigenous Education Committee which is supported by the Indigenous Council.

v. Ken Millard, Principal - New Westminster Principals & Vice Principals (NWPVP).

Millard spoke on behalf of the NWPVPs and requested funding initiatives and support for the NWPVP priorities. Highlights included increasing the vice principal time at schools to support the growing student population, supporting complex learners by hiring more specialists, and maintaining educational assistance.

vi. Student Voice – New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS)

Student Voice advocates shared their budget priorities for 2024-2025. Feedback was received from the fall survey, and the Student Symposium held on April 12, 2024. Highlights included funding requests for transportation and support staff to mitigate climate emergencies, counselling at the middle schools and NWSS, storage space in classrooms, and increased funding for child care programs.

*Chair Russell thanked the stakeholder groups for joining tonight's Board meeting, and noted that stakeholders provide the community the opportunity to hear the guidance they are providing which is valuable.*

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

DPAC: Krista Macaulay, Treasurer

- This month DPAC sent out their annual parent and caregiver survey and requested feedback on student safety and wellbeing, capacity and facilities, diverse learners support, inclusive education, transportation, programs of choice, and parent information topics. Preliminary results were shared at the April DPAC meeting; full survey results will be shared with staff and the Board at their next District meeting.
- The BCCPAC Conference and AGM will be held this weekend in Richmond, B.C.; they have co-submitted resolutions with other DPACs.
- DPAC has participated in a number of District-led Committees and is grateful for the opportunity to participate as they bring the parent's voice into the conversations at these tables.
- DPAC AGM will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at Fraser River Middle School, and they invite all parents and caregivers to attend; all executives are up for election.

CUPE 409: Erica Bigland, Vice-President

- The New CUPE site reps are up to date with CUPE standards, and will participate in stewardship training on Pro-D Days.
- Next year CUPE 409 will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (older than CUPE National) and are currently preparing for the event.
- Job Evaluations are on track with the Board of Education, and CUPE 409 is appreciative of the time the Board meets with them to support them as workers.

NWTU: Kristie Oxley, President

- Oxley spoke to Options 1 and 2 of the Kindergarten Gradual Entry program that were discussed at the April 16<sup>th</sup> Education Board meeting. Oxley noted that in follow-up discussions kindergarten teachers expressed concerns about shortening gradual entry and requested additional support.
- Oxley requested that the Board reconsider their decision to go with Option 2 of the Kindergarten Gradual Entry schedule selected on April 16<sup>th</sup> and contemplate going with Option 1. If this is not possible at this time, NWTU requests that a commitment be made by the Board to provide additional support in the form of extra TTOCs, EAs, and Child and Youth Care workers for kindergarten classes during, and immediately following the gradual entry time, and that funds be put aside for these positions. Oxley requested a meeting with the Board in the fall to review this program and gather feedback.

*Chair Russell thanked Oxley for her important feedback, and to assure the teachers, and noted that Ileana Neilson, Manager of Childcare did report persuasively to the Pedagogical value of the program, and appreciates the chance for other teachers to do so directly.*

*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 [\[7:46 p.m.\]](#).*

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Nil.

6. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

a. Education Policy & Planning Committee, April 16, 2024.

i. Comments from the Committee Chair, Trustee Andres.

Trustee Andres highlighted topics at the meeting which included school fees, school learning plan goals, a District presentation by SOGI lead Kai Smith, and a brief overview of the Kindergarten Gradual Entry program.

ii. Approval of the April 16, 2024, Education Policy and Planning Committee Minutes.

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-023**

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the minutes from the April 16, 2024, Education Policy & Planning Committee meeting.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

iii. Kindergarten Gradual Entry

Chair Russell noted that the Kindergarten Gradual entry program discussion was brought forward to the Board from the Education Policy and Planning Committee meeting on April 16, 2024, to allow for a more thorough discussion.

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-024**

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approves Gradual Entry Option 2 for the 2024-2025 school year.***

*Trustee Connelly put forward the following Amendment.*

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-025**

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approves Gradual Entry Option 2 for the 2024-2025 school year; and include the addition of a supporting adult above and beyond those that are already assigned to students with designations during the gradual entry period.***

*Questions were asked and discussion ensued and comments made by several trustees.*

*The original challenge continues to be child care during the gradual entry period with option 2 not really meeting the needs to reduce child care burdens. Trustees expressed that neither option 1 or 2 seem to support teachers in what they have expressed with concerns over a reduced gradual entry period with students to better understand needs. Overall sentiment is that nevertheless, parents were engaged and they did select option 2 as their preferred gradual entry experience.*

*Superintendent Russell acknowledged the challenge to parents during the gradual entry period. She understands the needs of K teachers for which these meetings and smaller size settings to have a better introduction to students. Gradual entry supports the success for students. Superintendent supports the review after the gradual entry trial. Does not believe extra staffing is needed to support the gradual entry itself. Supported by non-enrolling staff, Administrators, existing EAs, youth care workers. We have a process that is already quite strong and a departure from what other districts are doing can be concerning. What can we do to make it work for more families. Need to go back to K teachers, PVP – what are the logistics behind this that support families through this gradual entry period.*

*Trustees indicated that communication piece needed to do as far in advance as possible to support the child care coordination by caregivers. Staff indicated that meetings have been set up with PVP with the aim to debrief board's decision and provide them with more information including logistics such as communication. Emphasis to administrators that once gradual entry is set, send info sooner of when the welcoming discussions will take place so parents can better plan for those meetings. Not the specific time but general window of time.*

Trustee Dhaliwal asked the Superintendent what other supports could be provided.

Superintendent indicated we maybe able to set up supports from older peers an existing adult supervision that is already in the building. Consideration could be given to community partners. Refer back to the superintendent to complete a review of the option 2 gradual entry once completed in October 2024.

Chair Russell indicated that based on the discussion, staff have been given sufficient direction now to staff on communication and support to classroom and clear plan to revisit in October.

Trustee Andres proposed the following amendment:

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-026**

**AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT**

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approves Gradual Entry Option 2 for the 2024-2025 school year; to include the appropriate resources above and beyond those that are already assigned to students with designations during the gradual entry period.***

Superintendent Russell indicated that the words “above and beyond those that are already assigned to students with designations” was unnecessary and Chair Russell indicated that by board consensus that these word be stricken from the final motion.

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-027**

**AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDED MOTION**

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approves Gradual Entry Option 2 for the 2024-2025 school year; to include the appropriate resources ~~above and beyond those that are already assigned to students with designations~~ during the gradual entry period.***

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-028**

**FINAL MOTION AS AMENDED**

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approves Gradual Entry Option 2 for the 2024-2025 school year; to include the appropriate resources during the gradual entry period.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

b. Operations Policy & Planning Committee, April 16, 2024.

i. Comments from the Committee Chair, Trustee Connelly.

Trustee Connelly provided brief highlights which included Sara Wethered’s presentation on the National Day of Mourning ceremony, the final submission for the Queen Elizabeth expansion project, Simcoe Elementary School build, and the NWSS Cooling fund; the work is currently underway and will be completed sometime in Spring 2025.

ii. Approval of the April 16, 2024, Operations Policy and Planning Committee Minutes.

***Moved and Seconded  
2024-029***

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the minutes from the April 16, 2024, Operations Policy & Planning Committee meeting.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

iii. Approval of the Board & Committee Meeting Schedule (B. Ketcham)

***Moved and Seconded  
2024-030***

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the Board and Committee Schedule for the 2024-25 School Year as presented.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

7. **REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

a. Superintendent Update (S. Russell)

Russell highlighted two separate items: 1). The District’s current budget process, and 2). Short Term Capacity Review.

*Budget Process:* Russell noted that the District is in a different, but positive circumstance and is not anticipating any layoffs or service reductions. Russell thanked Secretary-Treasurer, Bettina Ketcham, and the Finance team for setting up the school district in a very positive and strategic way financially; the District has added some significant pieces of infrastructure over the last three years in terms of equity and social justice pieces to the school district. Russell also thanked parents and caregivers for their thoughtful submissions and provided reassurance on budget constraints, highlighted strategic investments in staffing and programming, and emphasized the need for careful planning and investment in new initiatives.

*Short Term Capacity Review:* Russell identified the short-term capacity crisis and the need for new schools to address the growing student population especially over the next 3-5 years. The superintendent stated that very good planning has been done around the purchase of portables, and interior renovations to create classrooms; Russell reassured parents that there is space available in their schools for students that have registered during the registration period for the 2024-25 school year.

b. Health, Wellbeing, & Safety Report (M. Smith)

Melanie Smith, District Vice Principal-Safe and Caring Schools presented a report on 'Safe and Caring Schools'. Topics: Health and Wellness, Student Symposium Themes, Wellness Centre, Safety Updates, Data Tracking, MOU with the New Westminster Police, Climate and Culture Scan, and the New Westminster Situation Table.

Highlights:

- Schools request more specific and consistent instruction on sexual health topics.
- The District aims to address washroom safety concerns by increasing supervision, including adding new supervisors and child and youth care workers and adopting student surveys to better understand safety perceptions.
- Peer-to-peer support, consent, and substance use education are priorities for youth.
- The availability of resources for students, including Wellness Center services and community partnerships. This includes the success of wellness resource fairs and pop-up events at schools; all receive positive feedback from students & community partners.
- Using technology to better communicate resources to youth.
- School district discusses improving communication with police after changes in their relationship; improvement in terms of process and procedure is required.
- School District aims to improve student safety and address hateful incidents through climate and culture scans in collaboration with Safer Schools, which includes data tracking and analysis to improve student safety.
- Establishing a situation table to mitigate risks for families, and the School District actively involved in setting up a situation table for rapid triage of at-risk families.
- Adults cannot report on behalf of minors, but seek feedback from counsellors and youth care workers on trends of unsafe experiences. Includes Adults reporting on behalf of children, cultural empathy and awareness building in schools.

*To view the full report please refer to the meeting video at [\[8:48 p.m.\]](#).*

c. 2025-2026 NWSS Timetable Implementation (P. Craven) (Verbal)

Pam Craven, Director of Instruction-Secondary Programs provided an overview of the 2025-2026 implementation process for the 5-block timetable model from now until the end of June 2024. Craven stated that the challenge and focus on their timetable is to make changes to best support their students. The process has begun with a focus on



structural items such as static vs rotating 5 block model, 1 lunch vs 2 lunches, one of the 5 blocks being extended for additional support, and linear vs semester system. Staff, students, and families will have an opportunity to share their own personal preferences in a survey. After the presentation on May 7<sup>th</sup> at NWSS a survey link will then be provided for stakeholder groups to provide their input on the structural items. Survey questions will include preferred timetable, 3 start time priorities, and preferences on extended lunch and extended block time. The survey will remain open for approximately 2 weeks. The New Westminster Secondary School 2025 - 2026 Timetable Information Session will be held on Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at NWSS. Craven noted that they will meet with teachers to review the survey results; these results will be presented at a future Board meeting. Next step will involve the group working with HR to create a time allocation with the chosen 5-block model as there are many union considerations that will need to be taken into account. More information to follow.

*Marc Andres put forward the motion at 9:26 p.m. to extend meeting past 9:30 p.m.*

- d. 2024-2025 Budget Feedback Update (B. Ketcham) (Verbal).

The budget feedback presentation was not presented given time limitations and was made available on the District's website along with the agenda package. It is available for review and is included in this evening's [April 30, 2024, Agenda package on our website.](#)

- e. School Fees for 2024-2025 (J. Pearce)

Interim Associate Superintendent Pearce stated that this item was briefly presented at the Education Policy and Planning Committee meeting on April 16, 2024, and has been brought forward to tonight's Open Board meeting for approval. Pearce referenced a document of recommended fees to the Board. Pearce noted that she had met with Sukh Rai, Vice Principal at Queensborough Middle School who is currently working on the extracurricular programs such as teams' sports, predominantly at New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS); this extracurricular piece requires further attention and discussion. Pearce noted that based on the *School Act B.C.*, the Board is required to approve fees that are part of the educational program, related to course work and timetables, and lead to high school graduation. Russell noted that the Board is approving all the fees, except the extracurricular / athletic fees at this time.

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-031**

***THAT The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the 2024-2025 School Fees.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

f. Short Term Capacity Guiding Principles Approval (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer, Ketcham noted that the short term capacity Guiding Principles in this evenings Backgrounder report were initially presented at the Open Board meeting held on March 12, 2024. It was noted that there was a need to revise the Guiding Principles for K-8 and 9-12; the Trustees did submit revisions which are reflected in this evening's report as redlined text. The following motion has been brought forward to the Board for consideration.

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-032**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the short-term capacity guiding principles for space utilization for grades K-8 and grades 9-12 as presented.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

g. Capital Plan Response Bylaw (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer, Ketcham stated that the Capital Plan Response Bylaw was originally presented at the April 16, 2024, Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting, and has been brought forward to the Board of Education for approval; unanimous consent is required for all three readings for the Capital Bylaw to be approved.

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-033**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) complete all three readings of Capital Bylaw No. 2024-2025- CPSD40-1.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-034**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the first and second reading of Capital Bylaw No. 2024-2025 CPSD40-1.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-035**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the third reading, reconsideration, and final adoption of Capital Bylaw No. 2024-2025 - CPSD40-1.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

f. School Site Acquisition Charge (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer, Ketcham provided an overview of the School Site Acquisition charge in the detailed Background report presented this evening which explains what school site acquisition charges are and how they are established through local government. The school site acquisition charges are raised in order to cover up 35% of school site acquisition costs. The SSAC bylaw was established by our municipal government, and is procedurally required to be approved by the Board on an annual basis.

***Moved and Seconded***  
**2024-036**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) complete all three readings of SSAC Bylaw No. 2024-1.**

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

***Moved and Seconded***  
**2024-037**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the first and second reading of SSAC Bylaw No. 2024-1.**

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

***Moved and Seconded***  
**2024-038**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the third reading, reconsideration, and final adoption of SSAC Bylaw No. 2024-1.**

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Conduct (M. Russell)

Chair Russell provided an overview of the Trustee Code of Conduct and noted that Secretary-Treasurer, B. Ketcham had completed the required documentation within the Background report presented this evening. The Ministry of Education and Child Care requires that certain criteria guidelines for school trustee codes of conduct be in compliance. Russell noted that their Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Conduct now reflects the changes that are required to be in compliance which are: a statement around intent, student wellness, anti-racism, reconciliation and relations with local First Nations, acceptable use of social media, and mechanisms to regularly review and reaffirm the code. Chair Russell requested that this item become part of the Board's evaluation process, and be brought back in the fall for review.

**Moved and seconded  
2024-039**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) accept the revisions to Policy 4 - Trustee Code of Conduct as presented.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

9. **OLD BUSINESS**

a. MAC Lands (M. Russell) (Verbal)

Trustee Russell provided an update on the MAC lands which is the Memorialization site around the former New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS) site. The District is currently implementing Phase 1.A. of their memorialization park plan. The site will include bike pathways, greening of the site, and the majority of the parking will remain. This is the limit of change that the District is able to complete under their current funding envelope, and continue to look for resource partners to bring this vision to light. The District is excited to be close to finalizing a memorialization installation plaque for this site which will tell the story of this site and will begin to recognize the significant number of burials that were not deemed worthy of recognition by our community, and are currently working with local first nations groups in this regard.

*Trustee Russell acknowledged Trustee Connelly for all the work she has contributed to this committee.*

b. Board 2024 Advocacy Action Plan (M. Russell)

Trustee Russell spoke to the final version of the Board 2024 Advocacy Action Plan which has been brought forward to the Open Board for final approval. The final version of this plan is available on the website under [‘Our Board’](#).

*Trustee Connelly requested that “mental health” in the advocacy plan be changed to include mental health, wellness, and safety. The board reached consensus that this was an appropriate change to the advocacy plan and would be updated to include this change.*

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-040**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the board advocacy plan as presented.***

**Moved and Seconded  
2024-041**

**MOTION AMENDED**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the board advocacy plan as presented, AND That the Board commits to annually reporting on their advocacy work in late fall, and to update the plan as needed.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

10. **TRUSTEE REPORTS**

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

*Trustee Andres put forward the motion at 9:59 p.m. to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m.*

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

Nil

12. **NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Events

- World Autism Day – Tuesday, April 2, 2024
- Board In-Service: 2024-2025 Budget Review - Tuesday, April 9, 2024
- National Volunteer Week - Sunday, April 14 to Saturday, April 20, 2024
- British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) All General Meeting (AGM) and Provincial Council Meeting - Thursday, April 18 to Sunday, April 21, 2024
- Earth Day – Monday, April 22, 2024
- Administrative Professionals' Day – Wednesday, April 24, 2024, National Day of Mourning – Sunday, April 28, 2024
- Red Dress Day and the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – Sunday, May 5, 2024

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

- a. Record of the March 12, 2024 In-Camera Meeting.
- b. Record of the April 9, 2024, Special In-Camera Meeting.

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary-Treasurer