

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

**Tuesday, June 11, 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 Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects
 Marc Andres, Trustee Amy Grey, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
 Elliott Slinn, Trustee Matt Brito, Director of Facilities & Operations
 Laura Goodman, Recording Secretary

REGRETS Robert Weston, Executive Director, HR

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 6:36 p.m.

Chair Connelly put forward the following amendment to the agenda, that agenda item 3.(d) be moved to 3(b)1.

Moved and Seconded

THAT the agenda for the June 11, 2024, Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Nil.

3. **REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

a. Capital Projects Update

Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects provided an update on Memorial Park and the Queen Elizabeth Elementary Expansion Project.

1. Memorial Park Update:

- The first phase, decommissioning and demolition of the old school site is complete. The team is in the process of planning more user-friendly access to the site by creating a new entrance to the existing parking lot on 8th Street (off the corner of 8th and 10th Ave.). A request for this change was sent to the Ministry's Consumer Protection Branch for final approval as they are responsible for all changes and/or modifications to cemeteries. Once final approval is received, a tender for a landscape contractor to complete the park will be put out.

2. Queen Elizabeth Expansion Project:

- In a follow-up to Crowe's last report to the Board, he was disappointed to report that there will be a delay in the commencement of the pile driving at QEE School which was initially planned to occur during the summer months. Although his team and City partners have been working diligently, they continue to experience ongoing unpredictable site challenges; the initial start time is no longer feasible and will be delayed to the fall of 2024. Notification of the pile-driving schedule change has been sent to all school principals, and PAC Chairs. In addition, immediate news information will be sent out to those in the surrounding community, and to our general partner groups for their information.
- The District received approval from the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) to proceed to tender by the end of June which will enable them to bring a new contractor on board to create a new schedule to proceed with this project.

b. Operations Update

1. Facilities & Finance Report (M. Brito & A. Grey).

FRMS and Qayqayt daycare to classroom renovations:

- The project at both sites is progressing well with 70% of the renovations complete; full completion is expected in time for a September 2024 occupancy.

Short-Term Capacity:

- One more portable will be installed at Queen Elizabeth in July. Wiring for power, communications, and life safety devices is currently in progress; cabinetry is now being built for portables already placed at Qayqayt, Queen Elizabeth, and Lord Kelvin Schools. City occupancy inspections to follow which will allow for a September 2024 occupancy.

Playground Enhancement Program:

- The District received \$195K in funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) for Lord Kelvin Elementary.
- NWSS Cooling Project:
The NWSS cooling project continues with the mechanical engineer and successful bidder, Entity Mechanical; the construction schedule will ensure the high school will have cooling by this time next year.

Chair Russell acknowledged and thanked all the maintenance staff that work on District events and celebrations.

Finance:

The team completed the annual rotation of internal school-generated fund audits to ensure their processes were aligned with documented procedures. Grey noted that letters were sent to school principals that summarized their observations; no significant issues were found.

2. Financial Projection to June 30th (A. Grey)

Current projections to June 30th are consistent with last month's report. We are expecting an operating deficit of approximately \$800K for the year end of June 30th. Increases to revenue are being offset by higher-than-estimated salaries and benefits relating to student support salaries deployed earlier than budgeted, and substitute salaries that are trending higher than budgeted. Financial results will be finalized over the summer and presented in September for approval.

3. Technology Information Services Report (TIS) (J. Razzaq)

Jawad Razzaq, Technology and Information Services Lead provided a comprehensive IT report on key projects. *Highlights included:*

Staff and Student Laptops

- The TIS Department has embarked on a four-year staff device refresh cycle, and continues to deploy student devices as budget allows; over 500 staff and student devices have been distributed this school year.

Library Kiosks

- Configured and tailored iPad Kiosks were deployed to serve as search stations for students use, and have been placed in the following libraries: Fraser River Middle School, Ecole Glenbrook Middle School, Queensborough Middle School, and NWSS; all with positive feedback from librarians.

Wi-Fi Connectivity and Bandwidth in the School District

- Razzaq noted that TIS had consolidated networks over the Winter break, and deployed a new monitoring solution to help identify and address poor performance areas, and described the Wi-Fi connectivity performance as having ebbs and flows due to varying user demand (e.g. teachers and staff competing for usage). TIS continues to monitor schools' Wi-Fi capabilities with school principals to ensure the connectivity performance remains acceptable. Razzaq noted that bandwidth capacity allocation is managed by the Ministry, and is based on the number of students enrolled in a school. *Questions were asked and discussion ensued.*

Trustee Connelly clarified bandwidth capacity allocation for schools citing outdated methodology and put forward the following recommendation. This recommendation was initially presented at the June 11th Education Policy and Planning Committee and Tabled, until the committee is able to review this TIS Report presentation this evening. This tabled motion has been brought forward this evening for the Operation Committee's consideration.

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to send a letter to the Minister of Education and Child Care, the honorable Rachna Singh, to ask for a significant investment, prior to the start of the new school year, in technology for schools to meet the growing need for electronic devices in response to the new mandated legislation restricting the use of personal digital devices in schools as well as an increase in funding for bandwidth to ensure schools are able to manage the additional pressure to existing bandwidth capacity.

Trustee Sluis requested an amendment to the motion to not include the mention of bandwidth; thereby focusing on electronic devices in schools based on the update provided by Technology Lead Razzaq.

AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to send a letter to the Minister of Education and Child Care, the honorable Rachna Singh, to ask for a significant investment, prior to the start of the new school year, in technology for schools to meet the growing need for electronic devices in response to the new mandated legislation restricting the use of personal digital devices in schools. ~~as well as an increase in funding for bandwidth to ensure schools are able to manage the additional pressure to existing bandwidth capacity.~~

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To view the full report please refer to the video recording at [\[7:09 p.m.\]](#)

c. Audit Planning Report (A. Grey)

- Assistant Secretary-Treasurer noted that there were no significant changes and/or risks identified in the report since last year's audit plan.
- The new PS 3400 – Revenue accounting standard will be applicable this year and relates to revenue which has been discussed with the auditors; they do not anticipate a significant impact on their financial statements.
- KPMG auditors will commence their work at the end of July 2024, with their audit findings report and audit opinion being presented to the Board in September.

d. School Nutrition Program (R. Bloudell)

Rick Bloudell, Manager of Community Projects and Partnerships provided an update to the previous School Nutrition report that he presented to the Board on February 13, 2024.

Winter to Spring Snapshot:

There has been a 3% increase in paid orders from January to April 2024. Overall, the monthly average ordering has been very comparable to last year, and higher than in previous years. Student feedback resulted in the new cold menu items such as sandwiches and wraps being added to the menu. Bloudell was pleased to note that field trip lunches for subsidized families are available; over 332 divisions will be on field trips through May and June; the Lunch Lady staff are working diligently to ensure everyone is accommodated.

MOSAIC:

Settlement workers at the Welcome Center provide one-on-one sessions and group sessions for families on how to use the online ordering system (including computers, iPads, and mobile phones).

Ecole Qayqayt Environment Club

Bloudell was pleased to report that he had the opportunity to meet with Ruthie Bird (founder of the Lunch Lady), teacher sponsors, and 4 students of Qayqayt's Environment Club. Students requested reduced plastic packaging, improved food taste, and education on recycling to limit the food and packaging waste in our landfills.

Moving Forward:

- The cost of the lunch program will remain the same.
- Food quality improvements: added protein, more seasoning, and a menu with new and diverse options will now be available.
- Continue to reduce plastic waste in the program.

Trustees expressed their gratitude and thanked Bloudell for his continued work to ensure that the lunch program remains an accessible and equitable lunch program for all students.

Trustee Sluis informed the Board that the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) has a call out to individuals to write letters to their local MPs to underscore the importance of national school food programs.

Trustee Sluis put forward the following recommendation to consider as a Board.

Moved and Seconded

THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to write a letter to MP Peter Julian underscoring the importance of and outlining the urgent need for additional funding for food programs in our schools and to request more clarity about the method and timing of distribution of the national program funds.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. General Announcements

Nil.

5. New Business

Nil.

6. Old Business

Nil.

7. Question Period (15 Minutes)

Nil.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.