

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

**Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 6:00 PM  
In-Person and Via Zoom Link**

PRESENT Cheryl Sluis, Chair  
Danielle Connelly, Vice-Chair  
Elliott Slinn, Trustee (Online)  
Kathleen Carlsen, Trustee  
Marc Andres, Trustee  
Maya Russell, Trustee

Mark Davidson, Superintendent  
Geraldine Lawlor, Associate Superintendent  
Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer  
Robert Weston, Executive Director, HR  
Anne-Marie Martin, Recording Secretary  
Jenny Richter, Director of Instruction, Leadership and Learning  
Jane Boutilier, Associate Director, Human Resources  
Ken Millard, NWPVPA, President

REGRETS

*Members of the Public*  
Laura Kwong, DPAC Chair  
Karrie Andrews; President CUPE 409  
Darryl Schelp, 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. **REMEMBRANCE OF CHIEF RHONDA LARRABEE**

Chair Sluis took a moment to honour the legacy of Chief Rhonda, whose leadership and advocacy continue to guide our work. We carry forward her example of centring students, strengthening community, and deepening our responsibility to reconciliation.

2. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Trustee Carlsen requested an amendment to the agenda to add a question period under Item 4a. Clarification was sought as to whether this would replace Item 12, the scheduled question period, and it was confirmed that it would not. Chair Sluis reminded members in attendance of Policy 7.1-3 regarding question periods during regular open board meetings and the associated regulations.

**2026-023  
Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) amend the agenda to include a question period as 4a. for the April 28, 2026, Regular School Board Meeting.***  
**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2026-024**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) adopt the agenda, as amended, for the April 28, 2026, Regular School Board meeting.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**3. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

- a. Minutes from the Open meeting held: March 10, 2026, Regular School Board Meeting.

**2026-025**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the minutes as distributed for the March 10, 2026, Regular School Board Meeting.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- b. Business Arising from the Minutes.

Nil.

**4. PRESENTATIONS**

During the added question period, the Chair reviewed the Board's public participation policy and invited questions from attendees in person and online. After waiting to allow time for responses, no questions or comments were received, and the Board proceeded to the next agenda item.

**5. DELEGATIONS**

- a. 2026 Day of Mourning Presentation (Sarah Wethered)

For the 2026 Day of Mourning, Sarah Wethered from the local district labour council addressed the Board to request ongoing recognition of April 28 as a day to remember workers killed or harmed on the job and to reaffirm workplace health and safety as a shared responsibility. The delegate stressed the need to treat psychological health with the same seriousness as physical safety in law and practice, underlined the role of schools in educating young workers about health and safety, and called on all levels of government to strengthen prevention, enforcement, and supports, including measures aligned with international standards.

The Board observed one minute of silence.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. Funding and Support for Child Care on School Grounds

Trustees expressed concern that the letter did not fully address requests for sustainable, predictable operating funding, timely communication of program changes, or increased StrongStart funding. It was also observed that the explanation appeared to attribute constraints to federal funding despite ongoing federal childcare commitments.

b. Funding for Queensborough Transportation

The Board received correspondence from the Ministry confirming one-time provincial funding of \$400,000 to support the transition of Queensborough student transportation from a previously funded service model. The letter outlined this as short-term, transitional support rather than ongoing operational funding, signalling that the district will need to work toward a longer-term, sustainable transportation solution for Queensborough students.

c. NWTU Correspondence to the Board of Education

The Board received correspondence from the NWTU outlining concerns about the district's proposed attendance management program. The letter raised questions about the program's impact on staff well-being, including how it would support, rather than discourage, appropriate use of sick leave and other wellness-related absences.

## 7. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

For Board Committee Reports, the minutes of the April 4, 2026, Coordinating Committee meeting were presented for approval. The chair of the committee indicated there were no additional comments, and the Board approved the minutes as distributed.

**2026-026**

***Moved and Seconded***

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the minutes as distributed for the April 14, 2026, Coordinating Committee Meeting.  
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

## 8. **REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

a. Superintendent Update (M. Davidson) (Verbal)

Superintendent Davidson reported on a successful district-wide professional development day focused on supporting Indigenous learners, truth and reconciliation, and decolonizing education, noting strong participation (about 900 registrants) and very positive feedback from staff. Updates were provided on ongoing work with the City on joint-use planning, budget and capital/long-range facility planning, and preparations for upcoming spring productions and sports days across schools, including the launch of a middle school flag football league. It was noted that much of the current work would also appear in later agenda items related to budget and planning.

b. Superintendent Budget Recommendations – Preliminary 2026-2027 Budget (M. Davidson)

Superintendent Davidson outlined that the 2026–27 budget is grounded in the district's strategic plan and aims to maintain and, where possible, enhance services to students

despite significant cost pressures. The update noted a projected 1.3% enrollment decline for 2026–27 (after years of growth), no increase to the provincial per-pupil grant, and substantial unfunded cost increases, particularly in salaries, benefits (about \$750,000 this year), and inflation on goods and services. Within this context, the Superintendent emphasized priorities of protecting classroom services, expanding supports for literacy and inclusive learning, maintaining counselling levels, and addressing student safety and well-being, while making targeted efficiencies away from classrooms where possible. The budget recommendations also reflect investment in risk mitigation (including privacy, technology security, and emergency preparedness) and continued work on long-range facility and capital planning, with a view to managing future structural pressures and advocating for improved provincial funding.

**2026-027**

***Moved and Seconded***

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) complete all three readings of 2026-2027 budget bylaw as presented.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

**2026-028**

***Moved and Seconded***

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve first and second reading the 2026-2027 budget bylaw as presented.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

**2026-029**

***Moved and Seconded***

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the THIRD and Final reading of the 2026-2027 budget bylaw as presented.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

c. Capital Plan Response Bylaw 2026-2027 (B. Ketcham)

The Board considered the Capital Plan Response Bylaw, which reflects the Ministry's response to the district's 2026–27 capital plan submission which did not include the Lord Tweedsmuir redevelopment project. It was highlighted that a resolution was passed to modify the 2026-27 submission to include the Tweedsmuir redevelopment project now that government had issued direction to move to business case. The Board proceeded with the required readings of the bylaw to align the district's capital planning with provincial approvals.

**2026-030**

***Moved and Seconded***

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) complete all three readings of Capital Bylaw No. 2026-2027***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

**2026-031**

**Moved and Seconded**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve first and second reading of Capital Bylaw No. 2026-2027**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2026-032**

**Moved and Seconded**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve third reading, reconsideration and final adoption of Capital Bylaw No. 2026-2027**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

d. Long Range Facilities Plan 2026 Survey Results (B. Ketcham)

The Board received a report on the Long-Range Facilities Plan 2026 survey, which drew approximately 1,000 responses from students, families, staff, and community members. Key themes included concerns about overcrowding and capacity, interest in climate-resilient and energy-efficient schools, and a strong preference for more outdoor and green spaces, flexible learning areas, and healthy, comfortable indoor environments (light, air quality, noise). Respondents emphasized the importance of accessible, inclusive design, outdoor learning opportunities, and school sites that support both education and broader community use; these priorities will inform the next phase of long-range facilities planning and future capital submissions.

e. Police Partnership Program

i. Policy 28 – Police Partnership Program (PPP) (M. Davidson)

The Board received an update on Policy 28 – Police Partnership Program (PPP), summarizing feedback gathered from students, staff, families, and community partners. Key themes included trust, equity, safety, and student voice, with recommendations to strengthen the policy’s grounding in human rights and equity, deepen commitments to reconciliation, and enhance transparency and accountability in police–school interactions. The report also proposed making individual rights more visible to students and families, ensuring consistent training and expectations for all officers and staff involved in the program, and exploring options for independent oversight and clearer reporting mechanisms.

**2026-033**

**Moved and Seconded**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve Policy 28 Police Partnership Program as presented.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ii. Administrative Procedure 192 – Police Partnership Program (PPP)

The Board reviewed Administrative Procedure 192 – Police Partnership Program, which operationalizes Policy 28 by setting out procedures, expectations, and safeguards for police involvement in schools. The AP emphasizes that police presence must align with human rights, equity, reconciliation, and student well-being, clarifies the scope of police activities on school grounds, and reinforces that educational staff remain responsible for day-to-day discipline and relationship-building with students. It includes provisions for clear communication with students and families, respect for individual rights, appropriate training and orientation for officers working in schools, and mechanisms for raising and addressing concerns, with the aim of ensuring that any police involvement supports safe, caring, and inclusive school environments.

iii. Administrative Procedure 193 – Information Sharing with Law Enforcement

Administrative Procedure 193 – Information Sharing with Law Enforcement was presented as a companion to the Police Partnership Program, outlining how and when student and staff information may be shared with police in compliance with privacy legislation. The AP clarifies that educational and privacy obligations remain paramount, sets limits on disclosure (e.g., requiring a clear legal authority, consent where appropriate, or emergent safety concerns), and provides guidance on documentation, consultation with senior staff, and communication with families where possible. Its purpose is to ensure that any information sharing with law enforcement is necessary, lawful, minimal, and transparent, and that it supports safety while safeguarding individual rights and confidentiality.

iv. Memorandum of Understanding – Police Partnership Program

The Board received an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Police Partnership Program, outlining the shared roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the school district and police services. The MOU reinforces that police involvement in schools must align with district policies on human rights, equity, reconciliation, and student well-being, clarifies the scope of police activities and decision-making authority on school grounds, and establishes processes for communication, information sharing, training, and issue resolution between the partners. It is intended to provide a clear governance framework that supports safe, caring, and inclusive learning environments while maintaining appropriate oversight and accountability for police–school interactions.

Trustees posed questions about how the updated Police Partnership Program, procedures, and MOU will center student safety, equity, human rights, and Indigenous perspectives, while ensuring that school staff remain responsible for day-to-day discipline and relationships with students. Clarification was sought on accountability and oversight mechanisms, including processes for raising and addressing concerns about police conduct, as well as on training expectations for officers and safeguards for privacy and information sharing with law enforcement under AP 193.

In response, staff emphasized that the revised Police Partnership Program, related administrative procedures, and MOU are explicitly grounded in human rights, equity, reconciliation, and student well-being, and reaffirm that educators remain responsible

for day-to-day discipline and relationships with students. They noted that ongoing student, Indigenous, and community input will continue to inform implementation and review, and that clear complaint and oversight processes will be used to address any concerns about police conduct. Staff also confirmed that information sharing with law enforcement will follow privacy legislation, rely on clear legal authority or emergent safety grounds, and be limited to what is necessary, with documentation and communication with families wherever appropriate.

f. Administrative Procedure 492 Conflict of Interest – Volunteer Coaches (M. Davidson)

Superintendent Davidson noted that Administrative Procedure 492 – Conflict of Interest (Volunteer Coaches) sets expectations and safeguards to address real or perceived conflicts of interest in volunteer coaching, particularly around team selection, playing time, and access to opportunities. The procedure is intended to protect students, support volunteer coaches in understanding their responsibilities, and maintain confidence in the fairness and integrity of school athletic programs.

Trustees asked how the conflict-of-interest procedure for volunteer coaches would operate in practice and sought assurance that it would not discourage or unduly burden current school-based volunteers. Staff emphasized that the AP is intended to clarify expectations, provide oversight, and support fairness—not to replace or disrupt existing volunteer models—and expressed appreciation for the time and commitment of volunteer coaches.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Chair Report (Chair Sluis) (Verbal)

Chair Sluis acknowledged that this was the first regular open meeting since the passing of Chief Rhonda Larrabee and paid tribute to her legacy. The Chair emphasized the Board's responsibility to carry its work forward through its decisions and governance, highlighted the importance of respectful public participation in board processes, and linked the evening's agenda items—including budget, facilities, childcare, and partnership policies—to the broader goals of student well-being, community engagement, and transparent, accountable decision-making.

b. Queensborough Bussing (Chair Sluis)

The Board discussed the future of Queensborough student transportation in light of the Ministry's one-time \$400,000 transition grant to replace the previously funded service. Trustees acknowledged this as a short-term measure and approved a motion to use the transition funding to maintain the current bussing model for the coming year while the district, local government partners, and the community continue to explore a sustainable long-term solution. The discussion recognized both the importance of reliable transportation for Queensborough students and the need for ongoing advocacy for stable funding.

**2026-034**

**Moved and Seconded**

**THAT** the Board use a portion of the one-time funding to continue the current model (families register for the service, pay monthly fee, and district contracts buses that go directly to NWSS) for the duration of the first term of the 2026-2027 school year;

**AND THAT** staff monitor current bus usage through contract services through the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year and the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year;

**AND THAT** staff work collaboratively with the City of New Westminster, TransLink, and the Province of British Columbia to seek a long-term, sustainable transportation solution, with consideration given to implementing a one-seat ride option;

**AND THAT** staff provide regular monthly progress reports to the Board and that recommendations and potential options be presented as soon as it is practical.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

c. Continuation of Federal Funding for the New Westminster Youth Hub (Chair Sluis)

Chair Sluis presented a motion to advocate for the continuation of federal funding for the New Westminster Youth Hub, noting that the Hub provides early, low-barrier supports and services for youth and plays a critical role in prevention and well-being. Trustees discussed the potential impact on vulnerable young people if current federal funding were not renewed and emphasized the importance of stable, long-term support for integrated youth services in the community. The motion directed that a letter be sent to the federal government outlining these concerns and urging continued funding for the Youth Hub.

**2026-035**

**Moved and Seconded**

**THAT** the Board direct the Chair to write a letter to the appropriate federal Minister and the local Member of Parliament advocating for the continuation of federal funding for the New Westminster Youth Hub;

**AND THAT** the letter highlight the Hub's critical role in providing early, low-barrier supports to youth, its strong collaboration with the school district, and the significant impact its potential closure would have on student well-being and community safety.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

10. **TRUSTEE REPORTS**

*Trustees provided highlights of the events they attended in March 2026*

Trustees reported on ongoing student voice work, upcoming year-end arts performances and events, and continued climate action and sustainability efforts. They acknowledged pressures faced by families, including transportation and cost-of-living concerns, and emphasized the importance of advocacy for stable, equitable funding and supports. Trustees also relayed community feedback on major facilities projects—such as seismic

safety, transportation, and outdoor spaces—and highlighted the need for clear communication and careful transition planning for affected school communities.

*To view the Trustee Reports agenda segment, refer to video recording.*

**QUESTION PERIOD (15 Minutes)**

The public was given the opportunity to ask questions on matters that arose during the meeting with staff responding where appropriate.

Comments were shared regarding the budget, the Life Skills program, and attendance management. It was noted that attendance management is intended to support staff wellness and maintain healthy learning environments for students.

Questions were raised regarding the planned Tweedsmuir redevelopment including concerns over relocation of students to a seismic unsafe building, school safety, transportation, catchment considerations, and support for families who may not feel comfortable with the transition. It was noted that the Province has advised that many schools continue to operate in similar conditions and that transportation and catchment requests would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Additional concerns and questions were raised regarding policy language, facilities funding gaps, declining enrolment, capital projects, ventilation, land dispositions, mold and HVAC assessments, school capacity, transportation commitments, before and after school care, active transportation routes, and future school design considerations including neurodiverse design and adequate play space. The Board acknowledged the concerns and advised that discussions and advocacy efforts with relevant partners are ongoing. Requests were also made for greater transparency through website updates and public reporting. To view the full comment and question period, please refer to the meeting video.

13. **NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Tuesday, May 26, 2026; Regular School Board Meeting

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

Nil

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

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*Chair*

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*Secretary-Treasurer*