

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

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026, 6:00 PM  
School Board Office (In-person & Via Zoom)  
811 Ontario Street, New Westminister**

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| PRESENT | Cheryl Sluis, Chair<br>Danielle Connelly, Vice-Chair<br>Kathleen Carlsen, Trustee<br>Marc Andres, Trustee<br>Maya Russell Trustee | Mark Davidson, Superintendent<br>Geraldine Lawlor, Associate Superintendent<br>Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer<br>Anne-Marie Martin, Recording Secretary<br>Sandra Singh, Director of Instruction-Learning & Innovation<br>Josh Angiola, Teacher Facilitator<br>Jenny Richter, Director of Instruction, Leadership and Learning<br>Sanj Johal, District Principal of Indigenous Education and Equity<br>Angela Jurgenson, NWSS Teacher<br>Trevor Gee, Manager, International Education |
| REGRETS | Elliott Slinn, Trustee                                                                                                            | <i>Members of the Public</i><br>Jenn Vander Zalm, DPAC Chair<br>Karrie Andrews; President CUPE 409                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

***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 6:00 p.m.

**2026-036**

**Moved and Seconded**

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

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

**2. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

a. Minutes from the Open meeting held: April 28, 2026, Regular School Board Meeting.

**2026-037**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminister) approve the minutes as distributed for the April 28, 2026, Regular School Board Meeting.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

- b. Business Arising from the Minutes.

Nil.

### 3. **DELEGATIONS**

- a. Monkey Rebels (Angela Jurgensen)

A group of secondary students from a school climate club, Luisa, Cole, Odessa and Waven presented to the Board in advance of provincial support for climate action, including expanded climate education from Kindergarten to Grade 9 and a required climate-focused course in senior grades, a phased transition away from fossil fuels with greater investment in renewable and nuclear energy, and free public transit for all ages to promote equity and environmental goals. Trustees thanked the students for their leadership, recognized alignment with existing district priorities, and indicated likely formal support following the students' provincial presentation.

### 4. **PRESENTATIONS**

- a. **Learning Story #6 – Intellectual – Numeracy (S. Singh)**

Director of Instruction-Learning & Innovation Singh provided an overview of numeracy, highlighting its alignment with district goals to enhance student learning and experience. Teacher-Facilitator Angiola shared key areas of numeracy development, including number concepts and problem solving, and described assessment practices used in the fall and spring to track student progress. Instructional approaches such as Math Minds, Jump Math and the RaPID model were noted, alongside resources available to staff.

Trustees discussed instructional shifts toward deeper conceptual understanding, as well as supports for teachers and parent engagement through initiatives such as math nights. While participation in numeracy assessments is high, results indicate many students are not yet meeting expectations, consistent with provincial trends. Trustees also raised questions about assessment tools, student attitudes toward math, and the need to consider multiple data sources.

Discussion also addressed ongoing work and funding, noting that initiatives will continue despite limited provincial support. The Coast Metro consortium was identified as a collaborative approach to resource development, with trustees emphasizing the need for greater provincial investment moving forward.

- b. **Aboriginal How Are We Doing Report (J. Richter & S. Johal)**

Superintendent Davidson spoke to raising expectations for students, noting that higher standards and strong accountability among school leaders and staff support improved outcomes, with early data showing positive movement. He emphasized that student learning, relationships and intent remain central to the work, particularly as the district continues to adjust its middle school model.

An overview of the new Indigenous support model was provided, highlighting a more integrated approach to supporting students and families through academic, cultural and mental health services. Proposed supports include Indigenous success teachers, increased supports at middle schools, literacy and numeracy support at the elementary level, and the addition of cultural facilitators to strengthen connections across schools. It was noted that

changes to the model are not intended to replace relationships, but to strengthen and sustain them.

Trustees acknowledged the sense of loss expressed by families and emphasized the importance of maintaining relationships while implementing change. The role of the Indigenous Education Council and ongoing engagement with families and students was highlighted, including initiatives to elevate student voice. Updates were also provided on identifying and supporting students with higher needs, with a continued focus on mental health and connection.

The discussion concluded with recognition of ongoing collaboration, the importance of cultural supports, and appreciation expressed for the work being done to strengthen outcomes for Indigenous students.

1. For Information: Letter from the Deputy Minister Kaye Krishna – Equity for Indigenous Learners attending BC Public Schools

### **c. International Program Report (T. Gee)**

International Program Manager Gee reported that the International Education program met its enrolment target of 170 FTE for the current year and is projecting growth to 180 FTE next year, supported by strong enrolment from Japan and increasing interest from European markets. A new reciprocal exchange partnership with a Japanese high school is underway and continuing to expand.

Challenges were noted, including federal caps on post-secondary permits, increased competition from Australia and New Zealand, and rising travel costs. Despite these pressures, the program remains self-funded and continues to generate net revenue for the district.

It was also noted that a small number of international students are enrolled at the elementary and middle levels, while at NWSS, graduation requirements take priority in course scheduling. Homestay capacity has increased, with a record number of placements reported. Host family compensation is currently \$1,200 per month and will increase to \$1,300 per month effective July.

Trustees reflected positively on the value of international students, noting the benefits of cultural exchange for all learners. Questions were raised regarding program capacity and potential impacts on course availability; it was confirmed that there is no evidence of students being unable to access courses due to international enrolment, and that overall balance remains strong. The program continues to contribute additional revenue beyond staffing costs, supporting district operations.

Discussion also addressed public perception, with acknowledgement that international students are generally understood to benefit the broader student community. It was noted that some external factors, including perceptions about limited post-secondary opportunities in Canada, may influence enrolment decisions, though targets have remained consistent.

An update was provided on homestay placements, with a record number achieved this year. Recruitment efforts are ongoing, and host families are currently compensated \$1,200 per month, increasing to \$1,300 in July.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Nil.

6. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Committee Reports to be presented at the June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Regular Board Meeting.

7. **REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

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

The Board received updates on recent school and district events and activities. Superintendent Davidson highlighted the success of the International Cultural Fair, noting strong student participation, cultural sharing and positive experiences, with students expressing appreciation for their time in the program as they transition to post-secondary or return home. Additional events were acknowledged, including musical performances, school productions such as The Wizard of Oz, and elementary track and field, which saw participation from all schools and strong student engagement.

An upcoming Indigenous Ceremony was noted, along with recent communications shared with the community. Updates were also provided on capital projects across the district, with a reminder that upcoming business cases are for planning purposes and do not confirm project approval. Trustees emphasized the importance of approaching this work thoughtfully and continuing to support students throughout the process.

b. Long Range Facilities Plan Update (B. Ketcham) (Verbal)

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham provided information on the Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP), which is underway and progressing well. Coordination across leadership teams continues, supported by recent communications from the Superintendent, including a video shared with the community. A public engagement session is scheduled for June 1, 2026, with both virtual and in-person options. Scenarios will be presented to the Board on June 16, in advance of submitting the required five-year capital plan to the province at the end of June.

c. 2026 Trustee Election Bylaw (B. Ketcham)

The Board considered and unanimously adopted Trustee Election Bylaw 2026 TE SD 40 01, which updates administrative provisions for the 2026 trustee election, authorizes electronic access to nomination and disclosure documents (without requiring online publication of home addresses), and ensures compliance with the legislated August 4, 2026, bylaw deadline.

**2026-038**

***Moved and Seconded***

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) complete all three readings of trustee election bylaw 2026-TE-SD40-01.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

**2026-039**

**Moved and Seconded**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve first and second reading of the trustee election bylaw 2026-TE-SD40-01.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2026-040**

**Moved and Seconded**

**THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the THIRD and Final reading reconsideration and final adoption of the trustee election bylaw 2026-TE-SD40-01.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

d. Annual Facilities Grant Plan (M. Brito)

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham presented a background report outlining the annual facilities plan, with up to \$1.57 million allocated to support maintenance, capital repairs and upgrades to ensure buildings remain safe and functional. The maintenance team continues to consult with school principals to identify priorities, including work at Queen Elizabeth as the new building comes online, parking lot and roof repairs at Herbert Spencer, and other summer maintenance projects. Investments in energy efficiency were also noted.

Trustees acknowledged the work of the accessibility committee and staff responsiveness, and received updates on safety-related initiatives, including asbestos abatement, confined-space training and transformer testing amid ongoing electrical labour shortages. Site-specific discussions included accessibility improvements at Howay, with further information to be provided regarding ramp access, and the installation of portables at Spencer, with assurance that classroom spaces are being used appropriately.

Additional discussion focused on prioritizing ventilation and cooling improvements and exploring potential collaboration with the city. Trustees also raised a safety concern regarding floor lighting at the secondary level, which staff will review further.

e. School Fees for 2026-2027 (G. Lawlor)

Associate Superintendent Lawlor provided an update to the Board on the 2026–2027 school fees, noting that most fees remain stable, with some reductions at NWSS for student activity/leadership and photography (due to discounted rates and bulk purchasing), that optional school supplies and athletic fees continue under existing structures, and that a hardship provision remains in place to ensure fees do not create barriers for students.

Trustee Connelly raised a question regarding wrestling fees, specifically whether higher costs are related to students needing to practise outside the district, and it was noted that Associate Superintendent Lawlor will follow up.

f. Sanctuary Schools Report (G. Lawlor)

Associate Superintendent Lawlor provided an update on the Sanctuary Schools policy, which has been in place since 2017 and guarantees that students can attend district schools

regardless of immigration status. The report highlighted steady growth in the number of students and families supported under the policy and reaffirmed the district's commitment to equity, inclusion, and safe access to education, while also noting emerging concerns about the impact of recent federal settlement funding cuts on school-based supports.

The Board discussed potential impacts of federal funding cuts to the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program. It was noted that reductions are expected to result in a loss of two FTE positions, affecting support for families facing language and settlement barriers. Advocacy efforts are underway, including an upcoming meeting with the local Member of Parliament, and further information will be provided to support these discussions. Trustees acknowledged that similar impacts are being experienced across other districts. Trustees also inquired about sanctuary practices in schools and how staff are supported, with staff noting the importance of maintaining confidentiality, particularly during student registration processes.

g. Operations Report (For Information)

Chair Sluis inquired about the anticipated opening date for Queen Elizabeth Elementary, with January 2027 identified as the current target. She also asked about the timeline for removing fencing at Memorial Lands, and it was noted that this is tentatively scheduled for September.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Chair Report (Chair Sluis) (Verbal)

Chair Sluis noted the many upcoming year-end celebration opportunities, including the Indigenous graduation and transitioning ceremony, student showcases, dance performances, and the NWSS scholarship and graduation ceremonies. An update was provided following a meeting with the local Member of Parliament regarding Settlement Workers in Schools, where the importance of strong supports was reinforced. While related funding has been restored, it has been directed to the city, and follow-up will occur. Trustees were also reminded of the upcoming Long-Range Facilities Plan public meeting scheduled for June 1 at 5:30 pm at the School Board Office and were encouraged to attend.

b. Policy and Administrative Procedures Process (M. Russell)

The Board reviewed the district's approach to policy and administrative procedures, confirming the separation of roles where Board policies set direction and values, and administrative procedures are developed by staff to implement those policies operationally. The process emphasizes regular review, alignment with legislation and strategic priorities, consultation with affected stakeholders, and an equity/anti-racism lens, with staff bringing recommended policy changes to the Board for approval while updating procedures at the administrative level.

The Policy Committee, consisting of Trustee Russell, Trustee Connelly, Trustee Carlsen and Superintendent Davidson, is reviewing policies with guidance from BCSTA and considering promising practices. Updated recommendations will be brought forward to the June Board meeting.

- c. Climate Action Working Group – Advancing Climate Literacy in BC's K-12 Education System (Trustee Andres)

The committee report was introduced, with background information reviewed. Trustees discussed the importance of supporting student interest in climate action and recognized that, when equipped with accurate information and support, students are capable of meaningful contributions.

The proposed motion aligns with a 2025 AGM resolution calling for climate action and received support. An amendment was introduced to include requests for provincial funding to support implementation, including resources and professional development for educators, and was carried.

Trustees discussed the wording of the motion and the importance of demonstrating commitment regardless of funding outcomes, while also acknowledging the need for adequate support for successful implementation. Consideration was given to the impact of additional curriculum requirements on educators, with recognition that while there is enthusiasm for new curriculum, it presents challenges and requires appropriate training and resources. The Board agreed to proceed with the committee's recommendation.

**2026-041**

***Moved and Seconded***

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) amend the motion to write a letter to the Ministry of Education and Child Care advocating for the further development and implementation of mandatory climate change curriculum.***

***Motion amendment proposed by Trustee Connelly***

**2026-042**

***Moved and Seconded***

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) write a letter to the Ministry of Education and Child Care advocating for the further development and implementation of mandatory climate change curriculum and dedicated provincial funding to support implementation, including teacher professional development and related resourcing.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) write a letter to the Ministry of Education and Child Care advocating for the further development and implementation of mandatory climate change curriculum and dedicated provincial funding to support implementation, including teacher professional development and related resourcing.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

9. **OLD BUSINESS**

Nil.

10. **TRUSTEE REPORTS**

Trustee Carlsen highlighted her recent community and committee work, including updates from several district and community groups, and noted upcoming events and observances. She also acknowledged the start of Pride Month, underscoring the district's commitment to inclusion and support for 2SLGBTQIA+ students and families.

Trustee Andres provided an update on committee work, including activities of the Climate Action Working Group and the Racism Committee, highlighting ongoing efforts to advance climate learning and strengthen anti-racism, equity and inclusion initiatives across the district. Questions were raised regarding the future role of the Racism Committee with the new Board, with further discussion anticipated. An upcoming DPAC meeting was noted, including impacts of new school builds on communities. Trustee Andres also shared a recent classroom visit experience.

Trustee Connelly reported on the work of the Accessibility Committee, noting that an audit was conducted at Lord Kelvin. She highlighted the value of student liaisons in contributing to the committee's work and recognized the importance of acknowledging their contributions, including through certificates of recognition.

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

The Board received questions from members of the public. One speaker expressed concern regarding the elimination of Indigenous support worker positions, emphasizing the impact on relationships and supports for Indigenous students and urging the Board to reconsider these changes. A question was raised regarding walking school bus routes, with a request for greater clarity on decision-making. Clarification was also sought on changes to recorder programs and differences in costs between boys' and girls' sports, with responses noting budget constraints, program adjustments and ongoing efforts to ensure fairness and manage fees.

12. **NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Regular Board Meeting – Tuesday June 16, 2026 – 6:00 p.m. (SBO and via Zoom)

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

Nil

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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*Chair*

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*Secretary-Treasurer*