

Public Schools Branch
Twenty-Eighth Public Board of Directors Meeting
June 29, 2020

Minutes

The Board of Directors for the Public Schools Branch met on Monday, June 29, 2020 at Parkdale Elementary.

Present: Bethany MacLeod, Board Chair
 Norman Beck
 Mary Jane Ready

Also in Attendance:

Parker Grimmer, Director, Public Schools Branch
Erin Johnston, Assistant Director, Public Schools Branch
Becky Chaisson, Director of Corporate Services
Dave Gillis, Director of Transportation Services
Karen Redmond, Manager of Policy and Planning
Kelly Drummond, Director of Human Resources
Terri MacAdam, Director of Student Services
Sheri Gauthier, Confidential Board Secretary
Paula Annear, Human Resources Manager
Tanya Tremere, Information Officer

1. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

06/29/01 **It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

3. Parkdale Elementary School Presentation

The Board Chair welcomed Principal Lynn Hufnagel to share a few words about her school. Principal Hufnagel provided a historical review of Parkdale Elementary and shared highlights.

4. Minutes of the December 16, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting

06/29/02 **It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that the minutes of the December 16, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting be adopted as presented. Motion carried.**

5. Director's Report

(The complete Director's Report will be filed with the official minutes).

5.1 COVID-19 Update

The circumstances around our health response to COVID-19 required that our schools remain closed since March Break. The decision created significant challenges for PSB

students, parents, and staff. These last months have been like no other. We have all been doing things much differently than we have in the past. 2019-2020 has been a busy, demanding, challenging, at times frustrating, but ultimately a successful year for students and those who have worked with them including parents and staff. We hope everyone is able to reflect back on some positive, productive, and successful moments. We want to take a moment to recognize the efforts of students, parents, and staff and thank them for their patience, energy, commitment, teamwork, willingness to try new things, and do old things in new ways.

Erin Johnston, Assistant Director, will provide summary of the events that have transpired since the middle of March, our system response to adjusting to at-home learning, and readiness planning for a return to learning in schools.

Planning is underway to bring students and staff safely back to our schools and work spaces. The Provincial Government's Fall Education Readiness Committee has been working to determine the plan for returning to school in September and the PSB is working with the Chief Public Health Office (CPHO) and partners at the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning to determine the best configurations for buses, schools, and workspaces.

While there is still some uncertainty to all this, we know with certainty that students are best served when we work together. We thank everyone for their patience and cooperation as we work through planning to return to school. We look forward to the 2020-2021 school year, with all of the challenges and opportunities it will hold.

5.2 Threat to Island Schools

On the evening of Friday, February 21st, law enforcement received an anonymous tip suggesting that an unknown person would bring a firearm to a school. An extensive investigation, involving all police agencies in the province, and in consultation with school officials, failed to turn up any information that would suggest that this threat was credible.

Given the fact that investigating these type of incidents often results in false rumors and assumptions, all involved felt that the public should be made aware of the information that was received. A shared media briefing was held by officials from the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning and law enforcement on Sunday, February 23rd.

While student attendance was lower on Monday, February 24, than usual, it was a safe and productive day for the many students who were present in their schools. Schools received several calls from parents, primarily about whether to send their children to school. Staff shared concerns related to how they should talk with students and ensure building security. Resources were made available on the PSB website titled "Helping Children Cope with Threats". Additional support were provided by Student Services staff as needed.

Police started their day at many intermediate and high schools and visited many other schools. Principals reported that police were successful in helping people feel more calm and comfortable. There were counselors or branch based counselling support in almost every school for at least part of the day to support students and staff.

5.3 Malware Attack and Term Two- Report Cards

In early March 2020, many Island government servers were the victim of a malware attack. The timing of this attack coincided with term 2 report cards in the PSB, and thus, term 2 reports for K-9 students were not able to be finished or distributed in the normal fashion.

Parent teacher interviews were able to proceed as normal and thus parents were updated as to the progress of their child during the term 2 reporting period. The onset of COVID-19 meant that term 2 report cards experienced further delays, and distribution was again put on hold. In late May and early June, term 2 report cards for K-9 students were successfully distributed to families.

5.4 Transportation Review

A review of the Transportation Department was conducted from November 2019 through January 2020. This was the second departmental review to be undertaken as per section 4.5 of the Branch's Strategic Action Plan, which includes regular review of departments within the Branch for functionality and efficiencies. As part of this process, the Director is required to provide a report containing overarching themes, along with recommendations for the Public Schools Branch to consider.

The purpose of this review was to determine what is working well and what could be improved in the Transportation Department, with a focus on the work of transportation office staff. The review process included interviews and contacts with the Transportation Department staff, other key personnel, and senior transportation personnel from three School Boards in other jurisdictions, a satisfaction survey of stakeholders including bus drivers and administrators, and related research.

The Transportation Department has made a significant contribution to the Public Schools Branch. With a small number of division office staff, they provide the full range of services that support the safe transporting of Public Schools Branch students to and from school daily. Organizational issues that were identified in need of being addressed included: work stress, lack of staff, lack of time, lack of design, communication, leadership, management, technology, role of other departments, bus maintenance, office staff performance evaluations and bus driver assessments, and bus driver leave and related substitute issues.

Suggestions for consideration included having the division determine where it will focus its energies for the most impact; directing more staff to where they can best help the department's functions; improve communication and build greater confidence in the system; use technology more appropriately; increase professional development and personal growth opportunities for all staff; and review busing routes for efficiencies. Transportation leadership has also been asked ensure there is a check-list process to review the progress of addressing the recommendations and considerations, as well as to review whether any changes resulted in positive outcomes or efficiencies.

Efforts to act on considerations and recommendations addressed in the report to improve the system is now taking place, and some restructuring of the division has followed. The continued patience and cooperation of staff and stakeholders is requested along the way as change does not often happen immediately, and everyone's help will be necessary as the effectiveness of any changes that are made are reviewed and evaluated.

5.5 Extra Mile Awards

In March, the PEI Home and School Federation presented their Extra Mile Awards to school staff who have gone the "extra mile" for their students. This year's three recipients came from two schools. Nena Matheson and Robyn Burgess, from Montague Consolidated, and Lorna Maclsaac from Hernewood Intermediate, all known as the "lunch ladies" in their schools were recognized by students, staff, and home and school representatives for the great things they have done promoting healthy eating opportunities for students.

5.6 Congratulations Graduating Students

The Public Schools Branch would like to send congratulations and best wishes to all our 2020 Graduates. We congratulate students on their many accomplishments during their education journey these last 12 years. There certainly have been some bumps along the way, including COVID-19, but their journey is the story to their experiences, and they are made stronger through the more difficult times.

High School staff were very creative in organizing graduation events to recognize student success. Schools worked hard to incorporate as many of the traditional elements as possible while following the public health and safety guidelines. Many schools needed to stagger graduation times of multiple groups and increased the spacing and times between group ceremonies in order to follow CPHO guidelines. School administration worked collaboratively with grade 12 students to plan events and submitted their operational plans to the CPHO. Each school graduation was different given that the number of grads range from a small number to 292 graduates.

Graduates will never forget the year they graduated. Even though they graduated from public schooling during a worldwide pandemic, they remained focused and pushed forward and developed their skills to cope and capacity to learn as a result. Their determination and resolve has been inspiring. We wish all graduates the best of success in what life has to offer as they head to university, college, the work force, or other pursuits.

2020 High School Graduations			
School	Date	Time	Location
Bluefield Senior High	June 24	8:30 AM	Bluefield
Ch'town Rural Senior High	June 22 June 23	Cafeteria each day 9:00 am 11:00 am 2:00 pm 4:00 pm	Gym each day 10:00 am 1:00 pm 3:00 pm
Colonel Gray Senior High	June 23	7:30 p.m.	Brackley Drive-In
Kinkora Regional High	June 26	4:00 PM	Kinkora Gymnasium
KISH	June 22	4:00 PM	KISH Gymnasium
Montague Regional High	June 23 June 24 June 25	3 waves each day at 4:30 pm, 6pm and 7:30 pm	Montague Regional High

Morell Regional High	June 24	6:00 PM	Morell Regional High Gymnasium
Souris Regional	June 23	7:00 PM	Souris Regional School
Three Oaks Senior High	June 23	8:30-11:30 Group 1 12:30-3:30 Group 2	TOSH
Westisle Composite High	June 23	2:00 PM	Westisle Composite High Theatre

5.7 Thank You to our PSB Retirees

The Public Schools Branch would like to send congratulations and best wishes to all our 2020 retirees. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an in-person send-off wasn't possible, but a wonderful virtual event was created to recognize our retirees and the significant milestone that was being celebrated. Along with the traditional Maurice Bernard print and union gift, each retiree also received a \$50 gift certificate to put towards a restaurant outing with their special guest or family members. There was also an option for retirees to opt to make a donation to our school food program instead.

Our retirees have represented us so well over their careers. Each have been the face of the branch, sometimes the first or last person to see our students or staff during their school or work day.

As a Bus Driver, Educational Assistant, Youth Service Worker, Workplace Assistant, Student Attendant, Teacher, Administrative Assistant, Custodian, Cleaner, Maintenance Worker, or staff member at one of our branch offices, our retirees have shown that we all can make a difference in a student's life by the day-to-day things we do for them.

We want to thank our staff who worked to put this event together, and we thank our retirees for sharing this special time in their life with us. We wish all retirees the best of success in what life has to offer as they head into their next chapters.

5.8 Good Things Happening in PSB Schools Intermediate Honour Band

One hundred and fifteen grade 9 band students participating in this year's Intermediate Honour Band program capped off an incredible weekend of learning and fun together by performing in concert on Sunday, January 26th, at the Charlottetown Delta Convention Centre.

The Intermediate Honour Band performed works by Nishimura, Sheldon, Standridge, Sweeney, Vaughn Williams and Watson under the direction of guest conductor, Paul Hutten, a highly regarded music educator from Nova Scotia. This concert was both an entertaining and uplifting celebration of the dedication and fine musicianship of our PEI Intermediate Honour Band students. Congratulations to these students and all their band teachers who volunteered their time so this important program could happen.

Anna's Pink and Purple Glasses

An Island storybook that has been authored by Marlene Bryenton and illustrated by Leanne Bowlan was recently delivered to kindergarten, grade one, and grade two students. The book launch of *Anna's Pink and Purple Glasses* took place during 'I Read

Canadian Day' at Sherwood Elementary School on February 19th in the company of two kindergarten classes.

Anna's Pink and Purple Glasses is a children's story about empathy, inclusion, awareness and optometry. The storybook also intended to inspire parents or caregivers to book an eye exam for their kindergarten children as they are eligible for the PEI Government Free Kindergarten Eye Glass Program.

A total of 3,362 books were provided for PSB schools and students through the generosity of Vogue Optical, Lions Clubs on PEI, PEI Association of Optometrists, CUPE PEI, Instant Imprints and Opticians Association of Canada.

Congratulations to Marlene and Leanne on their success and thank you to all the sponsors of this book.

Teachers and Schools Engage with Students during Unprecedented Times

It has been great to see all the positive social media messages highlighting some the efforts that teachers and school staff have been making with students in June, despite the fact that regular classes were cancelled because of the pandemic. From reviewing at-home learning outcomes and learning materials, reading stories, using Google Meet, participating in 'hands-on' learning activities like gardening, teachers and staff have been engaging students in learning. We thank our PSB school staff for continuing to engage students and searching for new ways to learn and work.

6. Update Regarding September 2020

Erin Johnston, Assistant Director, provided a presentation regarding the Public Schools Branch's response to COVID-19 and also updated the Board with plans for September 2020.

7. Student Enrolment Projections

Tanya Tremere, Information Officer, provided a presentation on Student Enrolment Projections based on September 2019 data.

8. Financial Invoices

Becky Chaisson, Director of Corporate Services, presented the following invoices for approval.

8.1 Invoice #313861 October 2019 Fleet Charges for Charlottetown Depot

06/29/3

It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that the invoice be approved as presented. Motion carried.

8.2 Invoice #314189 November 2019 Fleet charges for Charlottetown Depot

06/29/4

It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that the invoice be approved as presented. Motion carried.

8.3 Invoice #315600 January 2020 Fleet charges for Charlottetown Depot

06/29/5

It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that the invoice be approved as presented. Motion carried.

9. Other Business

Nothing to report at this time.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.