

Public Schools Branch
Forty-Third Public Board of Directors Meeting
October 19, 2022

Minutes

The Board of Directors for the Public Schools Branch met on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 in the Southport Boardroom, Stratford.

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

Also, in Attendance:

Norbert Carpenter, Director of Public Schools Branch
Karen Redmond, Manager of Policy and Planning
Sheri Gauthier, Confidential Board Secretary
Becky Chaisson, Director of Corporate Services
Blake Chaisson, Financial Services, Coordinator
Kelly Drummond, Director of Human Resources, Corporate Planning and Principal Support
Dave Gillis, Director of Transportation and Risk Management
Dominique Lecours, Director of Student Services
Janet Perry-Payne, Director of EAL/FAL Programs

1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 5:28 p.m. Board Chair MacLeod welcomed all in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

10/19/01 It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE JULY 26, 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

10/19/02 It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck Jane Ready that the minutes of the July 26, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

3.2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No business to report.

4. FINANCIAL INVOICES

4.1 INVOICE 336850 – JUNE FLEET CHARGES – SUMMERSIDE GARAGE

10/19/03 It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that invoice #336850 dated July 6, 2022 in the amount of \$106,224.39 for June fleet charges for the Summerside garage be approved as presented. Motion carried.

4.2 INVOICE 337013 – JUNE FLEET CHARGES – CHARLOTTETOWN GARAGE

10/19/04 It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that invoice #337013 dated July 13, 2022 in the amount of \$242,509.47 for June fleet charges for the Charlottetown garage be approved as presented. Motion carried.

4.3 INVOICE 337862 – JULY FLEET CHARGES – CHARLOTTETOWN GARAGE

10/19/05 It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that invoice #337862 dated August 23, 2022 in the amount of \$131,194.21 for July fleet charges for the Charlottetown garage be approved as presented. Motion carried.

4.4 INVOICE 338442 – LIABILITY PREMIUMS FODR 2022-2023

10/19/06 It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that invoice #338422 dated September 20, 2022 in the amount of \$766,538.00 for Liability Premiums for 2022-2023 be approved as presented. Motion carried.

10/19/07 **4.5 INVOICE 338455 – PROPERTY PREMIUMS FOR 2022-2023**

It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that invoice #338455 dated September 20, 2022 in the amount of \$1, 171,493.00 for Property Premiums for 2022-2023 be approved as presented. Motion carried.

10/19/08 **4.6 INVOICE 338457 – AUTOMOBILE PREMIUMS FOR 2022-2023**

It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that invoice #338457 dated September 20, 2022 in the amount of \$385,609.00 for Automobile Premiums for 2022-2023 be approved as presented. Motion carried.

5. 2022-2023 OPERATIONAL BUDGET

10/19/09 It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that the 2022-2023 PSB Operational Budget be approved as presented. Motion carried.

6. DIRECTORS REPORT

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

Director, Norbert Carpenter, shared the following report.

Director's Office

The 2022-23 school year is up and running. The Public Schools Branch (PSB) is very excited about the 2022-23 school year. After two and a half years of challenges posed by COVID-19, a fresh start has been welcomed by staff, students and stakeholders. While the global pandemic has not ended, the routine measures that we are currently following are more aligned with pre pandemic times. We will continue to collaborate with the Chief Public Health Office in determining best practices for keeping students and staff safe during in-class learning.

We applaud the efforts of all branch based and school-based staff for their collective efforts to get another school year off to a successful beginning. This year extra attention has been placed on the importance of social emotional learning and its crucial role in the overall development and success of our students. Furthermore, the PSB will focus on the importance of regular school attendance and work closely with our partners to ensure students and staff feel safe and supported in their learning and work environments. We are looking forward to a productive and memorable school year.

As of September 16th, the Public Schools Branch has a student enrollment of 20,143. This represents an increase of 242 students from this time last year.

Impacts of Post Tropical Storm Fiona

Like all Islanders, the Public Schools Branch was impacted by the massive weather event that took place in late September. All schools and properties were affected by the storm to some degree. However, a few schools suffered significant damage. Cardigan Consolidated School and Queen Charlotte Intermediate School both had significant damage to the roofing structure. Therefore, Cardigan students have been temporarily moved to Montague Regional High school while repairs are being made. Queen Charlotte Intermediate has reopened after some repairs. However, a section of the school has been sectioned off and work is ongoing in the specific area. In the meantime, students are being transported for certain specialty programming such as, Physical Education and Industrial Arts at sites off school property. The clean-up and restoration of power took several days. As of Friday, October 7, 2022 all students were able to return to classes. The Public Schools Branch would like to thank all employees, partners and stakeholders for their patience and cooperation throughout this difficult period.

Elected School Board

The PSB will have a new Board of Trustees in January 2023. There will be 11 trustees; 8 elected and three appointed.

One trustee will be elected from each of the seven electoral zones across the province, plus one additional trustee from the Charlottetown electoral zone, due to the larger student population. The three appointed board members will include one Mi'kmaq representative and two appointed through Engage PEI. Elected trustees serve a three-year term and may seek re-election. Appointed trustees serve a two-year term and may serve two consecutive terms.

Elections PEI will accept nominations for candidates from September 12-23. A candidate must live in the electoral zone they are seeking to represent and must have their nomination supported by ten or more eligible voters also living in the same electoral zone.

Elections will be held in September/October 2022 by mail-in ballot only. Voters can request a mail-in ballot from September 6 until October 2; and submit their mail-in vote to Elections PEI from September 28 until noon October 21.

Additional information can be found on the Elections PEI website.

Student Attendance

The Student Attendance and Engagement procedures were recently updated. These procedures were paused for the past two years due to COVID-19. We hope that student attendance will be less impacted by COVID-19 this year and so the procedures have been reinstated with some changes.

The changes to the procedures attempt to balance the need to stay home when sick and the importance of regular school attendance. Parents had previously been contacted by phone or letter when a student missed 5, 10, 15 and 20 days. Parents will now be contacted when absenteeism is having a negative impact on the students' learning.

New Staff

Carolyn Johnston joined the Policy and Planning Section recently as a Policy Analyst. Carolyn brings valuable experience as a teacher and employee within government. We are very excited to have her with us. Welcome Carolyn!

Student Services

Inclusive Education Consultants/Behavior Resource/Community Access

- Two new Itinerant Behavior Resource Teachers have been hired.
- After a successful pilot, Foundations is now in place from K-2
- Junior highs have seen an increase of students who need Wilson from the feeder schools.
- Expansion in the FI intervention pilot
- Pilot with Gr. 2 students; coaches took groups and worked with students
- Looking at some standardized level B assessments in French
- Evaluation kit that is standardized for everyone - level A

Autism Consultants

- Professional Development: Autism in Education Symposium will be held virtually on October 13th & 14. *Topic: The Role of Assent, Choice and Compassion in Supporting Learners with Autism and Behavioral Challenges.*

- Team Project: Handbook for new Autism Consultants- Meghan Etchell has taken the lead on this project.
- NVCI: (Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training) – this is ongoing, but we need to address the backlog caused by COVID restrictions.
- Work is underway to update the kindergarten list identifying kindergarten students who will receive IKS (Intensive Kindergarten Support) and/or transition support.
- Transition support up until December 1st – monthly consults to schools (school team responsible for programming and materials)
- IKS students will be consultative on a once-a-month basis- focus more materials and education around behaviors
- Autism Consultants caseloads currently range from approx. 72 to 76.

Speech Language Pathologists

- This team provides two streams of service and talks about two “caseloads”.
1) school caseload, 2) AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) caseload
- 1 fixed term SLP position was added this year to address the increase in needs.) This position will end in June 2023

HEAR Itinerants

We had a challenge filling the 2 ASL positions which impacted the work of the HEAR itinerants at the start of the year. Both positions have now been filled.

New referrals from Provincial Audiology were held over the summer break and they will be forwarded on to HEAR over the next 2 weeks.

Several students are carried over on the assessment list from June 2022, they will be seen in September/October for assessments to determine eligibility and level of service.

School Psychology Services

The “Reference Guide for School Psychology Services” is updated yearly and is currently being revised. It will be available shortly.

School personnel are now doing a great job efficiently completing referrals which streamlines the process.

We are optimistic that the wait time for Psychoeducational Assessments will continue to be reduced while the submission of new referrals is ongoing and other services, such as consultations, re-evaluations, and crisis response, continue to be provided.

School psychology team members are also represented in supporting alternative programs (ELP, PELP), PREPaRE - training, support, and response.

Assistive Technology Facilitators

We will be launching the PowerSchool Special Programs module this fall. This module enables school-based student services staff to capture data on students on their caseloads.

This access to PowerSchool will also offer the opportunity for schools to create IEPs and adaptation forms in the PowerSchool environment. The use of PowerSchool for this purpose will result in a more comprehensive gathering of data in a highly secure environment.

Training for staff of the Student Services division at PSB will be offering training to all resource teachers in schools on how to use the PowerSchool Special Programs module in late September and early October.

APSEA

- As always, there will be a focus on accessibility to curriculum and the environment. Two of our BVI students have transitioned to new schools this fall and this requires a lot of support.
- The APSEA Virtual Learning Series that offers disability- specific sessions and skills will begin in October. We have, in the past, had strong uptake by PEI students and hopefully this will be the case this school year too.
- Approx. 45 students with referrals pending. Some of these are preschool students (8), some from First Nations (2), some from the French school board (2).
- Teamwork and relationships with schools, families, Health PEI and community organizations is strongly encouraged.

Occupational Therapist

- Our team is made up of 8.5 FTE OT positions to service both schools within the Public Schools Branch as well as the six schools within CSLF. Of the 8.5 FTE positions, 7.1 FTE position would be dedicated to direct work with students within the PSB and .5 for schools within CSLF. 0.8 is dedicated to clinical lead/supervisor position within the program
- We have a temporary vacancy in our full-time position for the Colonel Gray family of schools as well as three French schools - Ecole Francois-Buote, Ecole Saint-Augustin and Ecole La-Belle-Cloche.
- The summer was very busy for our team with respect to ensuring mechanical lifts were inspected for the new school year, equipment recommended in May and June was ordered, received and installed as well as recommended renovations or moving of equipment between schools was completed to support students with physical needs.
- Our team prioritizes students with equipment and accessibility needs at the beginning of the school year to ensure a successful transition into the new school year. Our goal is to ensure both students and school staff feel confident, safe and comfortable when using equipment such as a mechanical lift.

- To best support schools with understanding the role of OT working in schools, opportunities to collaborate in supporting students as well as our tiered levels of service delivery and referral process, our team developed a video to share with school staff within the first two weeks of school. In the past we have tried to schedule presenting to staff in person but felt the video would be more efficient and we will follow-up with school if there are any questions. Attached is the link for our video https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ORsZ9-ynkvtCo_VOF4vGFTYK9N2CXeYF/view?usp=sharing Our next step is to develop a video that is parent friendly to share with parents/guardians.
- Our focus again this school year is primarily kindergarten to grade six however we do accept referrals for students in grades 7 -12 if they meet our referral criteria. We see the need for OT services to be more accessible in junior high and high school, but we currently do not have the human resources within our program.
- Last year we received from the PSB schools 655 individual student referrals - we anticipate a busy year again this school year. Most of our referrals were in relation to supporting students with self-regulation, written output and environmental/equipment and programming supports for students with physical needs.

Counseling Consultants

The main focus of our team to start the year is getting all the Alt Ed sites up and running, doing intakes, transportation organized, working on schedules/credits and getting some sites situated after moves.

For PD, one focus is on ABL training coming up in October. We also want to look at using the Prepare and DBT training that has been done to help schools feel comfortable with the material.

There are a number of new counsellors, therefore the Team is meeting with them for student consultation, to provide resources, offer support, discuss our role with them, answer questions, etc.

We also are reconnecting with the Student Well-being Team and attending their weekly team meetings.

School Physiotherapist

This new service has been added this year. A referral process is in place for schools and as part of this, data collection will also be part of the referral to have a better understanding of the needs. The person is covering all schools in the province.

This position will work towards filling the gaps in care and building a program to support student's needs while at school. This year will act as a Need's Assessment year for the program. The long-term vision of the STPT program will be to service more children who present with various physical abilities and improve the physical literacy of children on PEI.

Human Resources (HR)

French

French Teacher Recruitment for 2022-2023				
	As of June 30, 2022	As of July 31, 2022	As of August 31, 2022	
Number of applicants	78	85	93	
Number of interviews completed	65	72	78	
Number of interviews scheduled	0	0	0	
Number of interviews to schedule	6	0	0	
Withdrawals	N/A	26	28	
Prior to assessment process	N/A	8	10	
During assessment process	N/A	5	5	
After assessment process *	N/A	13	13	
* Includes declined offers				
Unsuccessful in assessment	N/A	5	6	
Number of positions to staff	63	63	65	
- Full-year	46	48	49	
- Part-year	17	15	16	
- Full-time	50	47	47	
- Part-time	13	16	18	
- Core French	N/A	N/A	16	
- French immersion	N/A	N/A	49	
Number of positions staffed	48	56	65	
Percentage of positions staffed	76%	89%	100%	
Number of teachers hired	42	49	56	
- Out of province	14	15	15	27%
- In province	28	34	41	73%
- Certified	42	48	50	89%
- Uncertified *	0	1	6	11%
* Two of the six will complete their BEd in December 2022				

French Oral Proficiencies (teachers hired)	42	49	55	
Exempt and Superior	13	14	16	29%
Advanced Plus	17	19	19	35%
Advanced	11	12	13	24%
Intermediate Plus	0	1	4	7%
Intermediate	1	3	3	5%

Recruitment for 2023/2024 School year has already begun. On September 14, 2022, HR participated in a job fair with St. Ann’s University.

Job Fair Update

The Job Fairs held in August were very successful. We received 499 applications and have conducted approximately 300 interviews as of Sept 16 for substitutes and casuals. There are 215 interviews remaining. Interviews are conducted daily. The Registrar's office has been very supportive throughout this process.

As of September 14, 2022, we have 225 substitutes authorized EAs substitutes activated, 39 Youth Service Work Substitutes, and 391 Teacher Substitutes (322 certified). There are 100 plus activations in the queue. Initial targets of achieving substitute and casual lists that represent 12% of our permanent workforce have been surpassed. The cleaner and custodial group continue to be a pressure point.

Bargaining

CUPE 3260 is currently in conciliation. Two days of conciliation have occurred and there is one final day left to be scheduled.

TF dates are set for Arbitration (Nov 9th and Nov 10th).

CUPE Support Agreement (Bus Drivers, Custodian/Cleaners, and Administrative Assistants) – The bargaining committee has been struck; however, dates have not been set. Paula Anear and Becky Chaisson will represent PSB on the ENA.

HR Policy Review

The HR Team will be attending staff meetings at all 56 schools to review the Respectful Workplace Policy and the Drug, Alcohol and Prescription Medication Policy.

New Principal Orientation

On September 22, 2022 an orientation session was held for new principals. The Administrative Support Leaders coordinated information sessions that included Corporate Finance, EAL, Student Services, HR and Transportation. This is the second year for the orientation and the response has been very positive.

Doug MacDougall Inspire Award:

The Doug MacDougall “Inspire” Award allows all employees in the Public Schools Branch, and John J Sark Memorial School, the opportunity to recognize any employee who is making a difference in the school community. Their efforts inspire others to be the best that they can be and make the school environment a welcoming and safe place for both youth and adults alike.

This award will be given out at the end of January 2023.

Council of Atlantic Ministers Education and Training (CAMET) Standards

Further professional development around the CAMET Standards will be a focus of the Administrative Support Leaders. These standards of practice and their indicators are a growth model that describes the knowledge, skills,

competencies, and values that reflect the highest ideals to be attained by current and future school-based administrators.

Corporate Services

Finance

Over the summer months, the finance department worked to get individual budgets prepared for schools and branch-based departments and worked to ensure timely payment of invoices for all the property services work underway as well as regular monthly and school tender invoices. Work was also completed on some necessary tenders and continued to work on the implementation of the upgraded school cash on-line system/database.

Payroll

Throughout the summer months, payroll staff had to process all new hires/new substitutes to set them up in the payroll system to be ready for the first pay period. Initially, this pay was scheduled for September 15th but after receiving feedback, the date was agreed to be changed to September 1st for this year only, causing additional work to be completed in the payroll system. In addition to new hires, any necessary reassignments/transfers/schedule changes had to be adjusted by the payroll department as well.

The payroll department had a new staff member hired in June, Sanjeewa Rajapaksha, who works out of the Stratford branch office and completes instructional and administrative assistant payroll for some assigned schools.

Property Services

Property Services had a busy and challenging construction season during the summer months when students and instructional staff were not in the buildings. Many school projects

faced unique challenges due to additional pressures with contractors and supply shortages. Property Services Staff also worked closely with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure on the major renovations and repair projects, which included the ventilation improvement projects at some schools. We appreciate all the support that all school staff have given in order to allow necessary work to be completed. The short-term challenges experienced will ultimately result in an improved learning environment for staff and students in the buildings.

In addition to the capital projects that are currently underway, Property Services staff continued to work on, and provide input to, the design committee for the new Stratford school during the summer months. There has been a lot of work completed on this committee and the process continues to move forward quickly.

School Safety Services

Over the summer months School Safety Consultants have been conducting visits to schools, consulting with Custodians on multiple items from an OHS perspective and working with individuals on manual handling, electrical safety, working alone and hazardous management plans. School Safety Consultants have also been working on many programs and procedures to ensure all schools are safe learning environments for students and all staff. These visits will continue through the school year and the feedback received so far has been positive.

During the startup of school, the school safety consultants will be ensuring that schools understand the roles, responsibilities and the importance of Joint Health and Safety Committees and touching base with schools to ensure that they understand their hazardous material management plans within the schools.

School Safety Services did hire a new consultant so the team members that will be working with the schools are Elise Azar and Shiloh Schmidt. Both consultants come with a wealth of knowledge and experience and are eager to work with the schools on all aspects of safety for the system.

EAL/FAL

Prince Edward Island has embarked on a population growth strategy which will see our population increase year over year. As a result, we have received many new families over the summer months and will continue to receive families throughout the school year. The cultural diversity coming to our province is tremendous, providing both opportunities and challenges. The fact that we operate on a continuous intake model means that many schools will receive new students throughout the school year. While this will pose some challenges, we work with schools to problem solve those challenges and celebrate the benefits.

To date, the EAL/FAL Reception Centre has received a total of 340 new EAL/FAL students. The number of EAL/FAL arrivals over the summer of 2022 has been high and we expect to receive a significant number of new arrivals throughout the Fall.

The EAL/FAL Reception Centre provides intake and assessment for newcomer families prior to starting school. The purpose of our intake and assessment process is threefold:

- 1) to determine the right of students to access free education through confirmation of their immigration status and;
- 2) to gather all pertinent information needed for EAL students to begin school such as immigration status, proof of residential address for school zone purposes, prior school records, identification of any potential challenges the student may have and;
- 3) to determine the student's language proficiency in either English or French and offer EAL/FAL itinerant support or registration in EAL courses if needed.

Many EAL/FAL staff provided additional support in the areas of assessments and registrations during the month of August and the first week of September.

Once again, we are offering the high school EAL courses online for those rural high schools who do not have school based EAL teachers. This model has been very successful for the past two years from a student, teacher and school perspective. To date, we have 51 students registered for synchronous EAL courses in seven high schools. As this number increases, we need to ensure that students at the beginning level of language proficiency are getting the contact they need.

Given an increase in the number of students arriving with limited to no prior schooling, we are utilizing the work of Carol Salva, an ESL teacher and author from Houston, Texas, to develop a pilot in one of our intermediate schools. This pilot will highlight the skills and prior knowledge that many of our students with limited prior education bring to the classroom/school in an effort to move these students forward in a positive learning direction. While focusing on basic numeracy and language acquisition, students will be provided with opportunities and experiences which will build their foundation for future opportunities.

We are partnering with the Immigrant and Refugee Services Association of PEI to pilot a Cultural Awareness Training program for grade 6 students in ten of our elementary schools. The first cohort of this pilot will begin in October.

Transportation

Routing and School Year Start-Up

The summer months into September are extremely busy for PSB Transportation Services. Approximately 3,000 routing changes were individually implemented over the summer months, and hundreds more continue during the first weeks of school. Great appreciation is extended to this team for remaining professional and ensuring that all students were safely looked after, leading to a relatively smooth start to the school year. Efficiency, overcrowding, student time aboard buses, and fiscal responsibility continue to be the driving factors that shape our routing efforts. With a fixed number of buses and drivers, altering, adding, or eliminating bus runs are challenges that have direct impacts on students, drivers, and our system. We take these decisions very seriously.

Driver Recruitment, Interviewing/Hiring, and Training

This continues to be a necessary focus. Recruitment efforts included job fairs on June 18 and again in late August. The summer months saw training for several drivers, and by September's end we expect to have all new substitutes' OJT training complete and our new employees fully operational. This is a tremendous feat, particularly during the summer months. Transportation hired 48 new school bus drivers during the last school year, and we expect to require similar numbers this year and next.

Driver Meetings

On September 1, 2, and 6 a total of six school bus driver meetings were held throughout the province which allowed open and two-way conversation with drivers on topics including Communication (transition to Outlook email extremely challenging for drivers, mass texting, appropriate use of bus radios, cell phones, paper memos, face to face communication); Massive volume of route adjustments (expected to be ongoing, appropriate turn-around locations, parking); HR and contract related issues; Availability and use of substitute drivers; Introduction of new Accident Procedures including manifests now being required; PD on Dealing with Student Problems Aboard Buses; English as an Alternative Language Students; Requirements for drivers for Canada Games; Electric Buses being introduced to more areas; COVID requirements; as well as other topics. Meetings and conversations were professional – indicative of PSB school bus drivers being "The most professional drivers on the road."

Buses and Infrastructure

Thirty-five additional electric buses have been tendered and are expected to arrive by Christmas. Due to age and mechanical condition, many buses in our existing fleet have not been able to be active in our fleet due to safety concerns. This has led to fewer "spare" buses available to allow for maintenance on our regular fleet and to support co-curricular/extra-curricular student travel. This is a pressure point that we will continue to monitor and manage to the best of our abilities.

The PSB has received Treasury Board and Department of Education and Lifelong Learning approval to install 15 charging stations in school bus driver yards this year. Last year, two were installed on a pilot basis. This is a very positive development for drivers, but will come with additional challenges re: installation, maintenance, and ongoing support.

Bus Passes

In the school year prior to COVID-19, the PSB issued over 75,000 bus passes. Considering we only have 179 instructional days (minus storm days, etc.), the time schools were taking each day to evaluate each request, complete the required paperwork, for drivers to track and accommodate was at an unsustainable level, particularly in light of new bus manifest requirements. Direction has been given such that bus passes are no longer to be used to support social or "optional" activities. Restrictions will remain in place with passes issued to support primary childcare concerns or in support of an exceptional situation, at the discretion of school administration.

School Bus Safety

PSB Transportation has partnered with law enforcement in a number of school start up campaigns to enhance school bus safety. Continued efforts will be placed on the introduction and ongoing implementation of a school bus safety week slated for October each year that will highlight safety and celebrate the amazing work currently being done in our transportation system.

7. **EAL/FAL UPDATE**

Janet Perry-Payne, Director of EAL/FAL Programs, provided a presentation to the Board of Directors.

8. **OTHER BUSINESS**

No new business to report.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.