

Public Schools Branch
Fifty-Fifth Board of Trustees Public Meeting
Tuesday, October 3, 2023

Minutes

The Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees hosted their tenth public meeting on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at Amherst Cove Consolidated school.

Present: Stephanie Arnold, Vice-Chair
Beverley Ann Boulter, Trustee
Beckie Keezer, Trustee
Rachel McCarthy, Trustee
Jaclyn Massey, Trustee
Amanda Blakeney, Trustee
Jocelyne Ludgate, Trustee
Wade Czank, Trustee

Regrets: Jacob Jadis, Trustee
Jodi Zver, Trustee
Heather Mullen, Board Chair

Also, in Attendance:
Tracy Beaulieu, Acting Director of the Public Schools Branch
Sheri Gauthier, Confidential Board Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m. Vice-Chair Stephanie Arnold chaired the meeting in Chair Mullen's absence. Vice-Chair Arnold welcomed all in attendance and thanked Principal Paul Quinlan for hosting the Trustees for their October meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Arnold moved to add the following item to the agenda

Amherst Cove Consolidated School Presentation – Principal Paul Quinlan

10/03/01

It was moved by Amanda Blakeney and seconded by Beverley Ann Boulter that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2023 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

10/03/02

It was moved by Beckie Keezer and seconded by Rachel McCarthy that the minutes of the September 5, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

3.2 MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING

10/03/03

It was moved by Beverley Ann Boulter and seconded by Jaclyn Massey that the minutes of the September 21, 2023 Board of Trustees special meeting be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

4. AMHERST COVE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL PRESENTATION – PRINCIPAL PAUL QUINLAN

Principal Quinlan welcomed the Board of Trustees to Amherst Cove Consolidated and thanked the Board for the opportunity to host.

Principal Quinlan spoke about Amherst Cove and shared some good things happening in the school and some current challenges.

5. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

(The complete Board Chair's report will be filed with the official minutes.)

Vice-Chair Arnold shared the following report on behalf of Chair Mullen.

We are attentive to your feedback, and we've taken note of the concerns arising as the school year commences. A significant majority of these concerns revolve around the rising student population in our schools. While we welcome new students joining us across PEI, this growth necessitates a collective effort within the Public Schools Branch, the school community, and various Government Departments to identify these concerns and seek solutions within our allocated budgets. The Board will be planning a workshop this winter with many of our key stakeholders to hear their concerns and bring forward solutions that we can work on together as we serve our growing population. By working together, we can ensure that PEI schools continue to provide quality education to all students, even as the population increases.

One school community that is preparing for new development due to population growth is within Zone 5. Charlottetown Stratford areas have seen rapid population growth over the past ten years, leading to an announcement in 2018 to construct a new High School for the Zone. Currently, there are two high schools serving Zone 5 with over 2100 students. The new high school was designed with growth in mind. It will occupy approximately 34 acres of the Community Campus in Stratford and is designed for a student enrollment of 750 students. To address any future student population growth, an area of the site has been designated to allow for additional classrooms to be added in the future.

As part of our role as Trustees, we have appointed a School Naming Committee with representatives from the Board, local Home and School, a local student, and a Stratford Town Counsellor who will be engaging in the community to help determine the name for this new school. Stratford area students and families will receive direct links to participate in the school's announcements and by email. We will be working closely with your local Home and Schools, the Town of Stratford, and within the Public Schools Branch to hear your ideas for a potential school name.

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Congratulations to Jocelyne Ludgate, our newly acclaimed Trustee for Zone 7, Mt. Stewart, Morell, and Souris Families of Schools. You can find Trustee biographies, contact information, and meeting minutes online at <https://psb.edu.pe.ca/board-of-trustees>. We will be adding a new FAQ page section in the next month along with Jocelyne's information.

In recognition of Truth and Reconciliation Week and Orange Shirt Day, teachers are encouraged to have their students create a piece of artwork exploring what reconciliation looks like to them. A Virtual Gallery has been created to launch projects that recognize the impact of oppression and discrimination and celebrate diversity and inclusion. It offers students the opportunity to create artwork that reflects their learning and share it with the broader community.

Submissions will be accepted up to October 19, 2023. Students should submit a brief paragraph that explains their artwork. All art mediums are welcome to be used. Once the artwork is completed a photograph should be taken and submitted with the grade level in the subject line to ERDvirtualgallery@cloud.edu.pe.ca

Heather Mullen
Chair, Board of Trustees
Public Schools Branch
Prince Edward Island

Meeting Schedule September 2023

Sept 5	PSB Board of Trustees Meeting
Sept 11	Meeting to review Terms of Reference for School Naming Committee
Sept 13	Candidate information Session with Elections PEI
Sept 21	Planning Meeting
Sept 21	Special Board Meeting
Sept 21	Peace Pole Presentation, Charlottetown
Sept 25	School Naming Committee
Sept 27	Meeting with PSB Directors

6. PSB ACTING DIRECTOR REPORT

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

Acting Director, Tracy Beaulieu, shared the following report.

As we begin another school year, it is important to focus on the amazing things happening in our schools each and every day that go beyond the books. The mission of the Public Schools Branch (PSB) is to foster inclusive, diverse, safe and caring learning environments that inspire a commitment to lifelong learning and community engagement. The month of September is marked by some special events that set the tone for learning, community engagement, and inclusivity. Among these, two occasions hold significant importance: The Terry Fox Run and the Truth and Reconciliation initiatives.

The Terry Fox Run embodies the spirit of resilience and compassion. PSB schools honor this event in various ways to not only raise money for cancer research, but to also instill in students a sense of empathy and awareness that they too can make a difference. I had the pleasure of being invited to an event by the leadership group at Westisle Composite High School. It was amazing to see what the students and staff organized in an effort to evoke compassion, engagement, and an awareness of Terry's impact on the country even though he was only a teenager at the time.

The Truth and Reconciliation initiatives represent a profound commitment to acknowledging and healing the historical injustices faced by Indigenous communities. Schools play a pivotal role in fostering understanding, empathy, and reconciliation through educational programs, discussions, and engaging cultural community experts. These initiatives serve as a vital step towards building a more inclusive and harmonious society, where the Indigenous culture is respected and celebrated. Orange shirts are worn in schools as a symbolic representation of our commitment to ensuring that "every child matters". Athena Consolidated School also invited Indigenous author, actress, and poet laureate Julie Pellissier-Lush in to share her knowledge with the students and staff. This was noted as having a powerful impact on the understanding around the importance of this day.

A final example of the power of schools does not come with a title or event. It represents the fundamental skills of the PSB school staff to create teachable moments that emulate our mission statement. East Wiltshire Intermediate recognized the need for new signage to clearly identify their classrooms. Understanding the importance of clear and accessible information for all their staff and students, including one who was legally blind, they embarked on a journey to find a solution that would cater to the needs of every individual in their community. In collaboration with the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) and their Exploratory class, the students and teacher dedicated their time and creativity to utilizing 3-D printers to design the signs, which included the written word and Braille. The result? A set of signs that are not only functional and clear but also serve as a testament to the power of collaboration and determination.

These achievements stand as shining examples of the incredible potential that exists within each one of our schools. It showcases the value of a community that comes together to address a need, with students leading the way in innovation.

As we embark on this new academic year, let these stories be a reminder for us all that with creativity, compassion, and a shared sense of purpose, we can overcome any challenge that comes our way. Let us continue to work together, creating an environment where every student and staff, regardless of their race, gender or abilities, can thrive and succeed.

Policy and Planning Update

Efforts continue to roll out the Report It! campaign to all schools by mid-October. A student friendly video is being created as well as other supporting materials. There will also be a new student reporting procedure to accompany the campaign after phase two is completed this school year.

Student Services

After a request to the government was approved, an additional 50 FTE for EAs and Child and Youth Care Workers were added on August 14 which translated into several new postings. Schools are still in the process of hiring for those positions. To date, 54 of the 56 schools in the PSB have received additional hours. Almost all the hours have now been allocated and we are continuing our work with the schools to respond to requests.

On a related matter, in our continued effort to support schools, PD training for our CUPE 3260 staff took place in early September. Close to 400 Educational Assistants and Child and Youth Care Workers were trained virtually on the first component of NVCI training with a strong emphasis on de-escalation techniques and responses. Follow up training on physical holds will be offered to selected staff based on the needs in the schools.

PREPaRE – Train the Trainer workshops 1 and 2 took place between Aug 21-24. We will continue our rollout of PREPaRE with all vice-principals and school counselors on October 26 and 27. Those sessions will also include some participants from the Student Wellbeing Teams and the CSLF.

In conjunction with the Department of Education and Early Years, we are continuing our work with SEL training. Last year, we trained almost 100 staff and sourced them with resources to facilitate ABL activities directly linked to social & emotional learning outcomes. Another invite will be sent out in early 2024 to staff who may have missed the training last year.

On the staffing front, we can confirm that our four-school mental health support workers (SMHSW) have been hired and have already started their work with schools. Health PEI has also confirmed that our school physiotherapist position will be made permanent.

Human Resources

The HR Division has successfully hired Jessica Field into the Human Resources Manager, Organizational Growth and Employee Experience position. This position will focus on employee wellness (including accommodations, return to work and attendance support) as well as, French recruitment and general labour relations. Her start date is October 16, 2023.

STAFFING

The HR team can celebrate a successful school start up. Approximately 720 postings have been processed, filled, and on boarded since April 1st, 2023.

French Teacher Recruitment 2023-2024 has been successful. All French immersion and Core French teacher positions have been successfully staffed for the 2023-2024 school. Targeted efforts ensured that French teacher positions in rural PEI schools were among the first to be staffed. A total of 42 positions were staffed externally, 29 in French immersion and 13 in Core French. These positions are held by 39 teachers, all of whom are certified. Most of the positions were staffed through an open French teacher process. The candidate pool from this process was supplemented by several position-specific processes over the summer. The total candidate pool consisted of 88 applicants.

Filling educational assistant positions continues to be a pressure point for the PSB. Approximately 70 Education Support Relief Contracts are filled with non-certified personnel (these numbers have improved from last year). In response to this, PSB, Skills PEI and Holland College will re-offer an accelerated program for 26 uncertified employees starting in January 2024. Last year 21 uncertified staff became certified through this program.

PSB continues to monitor labour shortages occurring in other jurisdictions and uses predictive data to inform future needs and help prioritize proactive measures in recruitment and retention.

Corporate Services

Finance

After the final approval of the 2023-2024 operational budget by the Board of Trustees, we have sent out operational budgets to all schools and PSB departments. We have been working with Administration at any school that has required some additional support in understanding their budgets or working with it.

The Finance Team has also been working on the second quarter forecast to submit to the Province of PEI before the end of September as well as getting accounting information inputted and brought up to date with the invoices and packing slips that have been coming in from the schools after returning from Summer break.

Payroll

The payroll staff have continued to enter payroll data and changes that have been coming in with the addition of the extra educational assistants' staff as well as final staff changes that have occurred at schools. The first pay of the school year has been completed but there are still several startup tasks that are required.

Property Services

The Property Services department (trade workers, utility workers, school custodians and cleaners) have all done an exceptional job getting the buildings ready for students and staff to return. Startup has gone well, and some additional planning has been done to prepare for any weather events that may occur in the fall. All staff have done an amazing job to complete the volume of work that they have, with the limited timeframe that the summer months provide them. Work is ongoing with major renovation planning and projects and the PSB managers continue to play an integral role in this work while partnering with our various partners.

School Safety Services

Angie MacCaull will be returning to her role as a School Safety Consultant and we are pleased to have her back on our team. She will be returning mid-October and then we will be back up to our full complement of consultants. School Safety Services have continued to work closely with Property Services on some projects at schools and the team has also been planning the next step of roll out on various safety initiatives. In addition, the School Safety Services continue to plan for upcoming safety training needs for the system.

EAL/FAL

Approximately 475 new EAL/FAL learners have entered PSB schools from August 28-September 26. New EAL/FAL learners have come from many places including, the Philippines, Vietnam, China, India, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Ukraine to name a few. Many of our new EAL/FAL learners require support for language acquisition and some new EAL/FAL learners require support for diagnosed and undiagnosed needs. New arrivals are anticipated to continue as the province increases population.

The professional learning opportunity entitled *The Big Picture*, offered on September 1 was a tremendous success. More than 1800 CUPE3260 and PEITF members completed the training. Certificates of completion are being delivered to individual participants. Feedback is being collated into a report which will help guide the development of the next level.

STEPP, the School Transition EAL Pilot Programs, offered at LM Montgomery Elementary, Stonepark Intermediate and West Royalty Elementary have had a successful start with some students transitioning into their regular classes already. Administrators, staff, students and parents are pleased with the initial roll out. Constant monitoring and evaluation will guide minor changes to the program as it unfolds.

Transportation/Risk Management

School Year Start-Up

Overall, Transportation Services is reporting that this year's start-up has gone quite smoothly compared to years past. As we manage approximately 5,000 change requests per year, we will always have some degree of tweaking to do regarding routing with efficiency, overcrowding, student time aboard buses, and fiscal responsibility continuing to be key considerations. With our fixed number of buses and drivers, and limitations on range and charging infrastructure the process of altering, adding, or eliminating bus runs poses challenges that have a direct impact on students, drivers, and our system.

Driver Recruitment, Interviewing/Hiring, and Training

We continue to focus on driver recruitment, hiring and training. OJT training is ongoing for our new casual drivers. We welcomed approximately fifty new school bus drivers into our system last school year. We expect similar numbers this year.

Buses and Infrastructure

By the end of September, the province will have 107 electric school buses in its provincial fleet. This equates to about one-third of all PSB buses. Electric buses continue to pose many additional challenges for our system, with range and charging infrastructure being paramount. These limitations impact on our ability to support extracurricular activities and emergency situations, including early dismissal due to inclement weather.

Community Engagement

In September, PSB Transportation supported community initiatives such as the "Stuff a Bus" program for food kitchens, and the "Touch a Truck" campaign in support of Family Place. The PSB has also partnered with Law enforcement and the Province in school start up campaigns drawing greater attention to school bus safety. Our next concentrated efforts on this front will be in support of our annual school bus safety week, the third week of October.

7. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

7.1 YOUTH VAPING PREVENTION – LUNGNSPEI

Julia Hartley, PEI Director of Operations from LungNSPEI joined the meeting to provide a presentation on youth vaping prevention and other initiatives that are currently being worked on.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.