

Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees Public Meeting
April 9, 2026

Minutes

The Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees hosted a public meeting in person at the Stratford Town Hall on Thursday, April 9, 2026.

Present: Andrew MacFarlane, Board Chair
Karen Clare, Vice-Chair
Andrew Avery, Trustee
Emily McKeown, Trustee
Peter Fullerton, Trustee
Gaylene Carragher, Trustee
Wade Czank, Trustee
Marcella Byrne, Trustee
Andrew Rose, Appointed Trustee
Tracy Beaulieu, Director Public Schools Branch
Rob MacAdam, Assistant Director Public Schools Branch
Heather Palmer, Executive Assistant
Matt MacLeod, Senior Communications Officer Public Schools Branch

Regrets: Natasha Monaghan, Executive Assistant
Stephanie Arnold, Appointed Trustee

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. Chair Andrew MacFarlane welcomed all in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Peter Fullerton and seconded by Andrew Avery that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

4/9/01

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE March 12, 2026, BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

It was moved by Andrew Avery and seconded by Andrew Rose that the minutes from the March 12, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting be approved as presented. Motion carried.

4/9/02

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair Andrew MacFarlane, shared the following report:

Chair's Report April 2026

I would like to begin by thanking Stephanie and Wade for their hard work and leadership over the past year as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. Their service and commitment supported the work of our Board through a transition period from the previous Board, and I want to recognize and sincerely thank them for their valuable contributions.

Since assuming the role of Chairman following our last Board meeting, I have been working closely with fellow School Board Trustees and Public Schools Branch Administration to maintain momentum on the key priorities before us. As part of that effort, I am meeting regularly with Public Schools Branch Administration to improve communication, strengthen coordination, and ensure that priority matters are moving forward in a timely and focused manner. Also, our Trustees recently met with the various Directors at the Public Schools Branch. This gave our Board a better understanding of the challenges these Directors face and progress being made towards our shared goal of supporting student success.

Policies are foundational in providing a framework to guide education staff in their day-to-day responsibilities. Our Board will soon be reviewing important policies that are currently under development. This includes the Sexual Misconduct Policy, School Food Environment Policy, and other related policies. Recommendations made in the Jenkins Report, stakeholders' input, and feedback from the public have all been carefully considered in this important work. Once approved, these policies will be made available on the Public Schools Branch website.

Public engagement and outreach continue to be an essential part of our work. Upon completion of a School Study Report for Queen Elizabeth Elementary School last month, our Board commenced a school review public consultation process. A public consultation was scheduled for Queen Elizabeth Elementary School on April 8. That forum provides an opportunity to hear directly from families, staff, and community members. The School Study Report is available to the public, and the public will have 30 days to provide their input via the Public Schools Branch website.

Home and School Associations are another avenue for connecting with school communities. Our Trustees have been reaching out to Home and School Associations in their respective zones. These conversations help our Board to remain focussed on what matters most to students and their communities. We're also looking forward to attending the PEI Home and School Federation's Annual General Meeting on April 18. This is a valuable opportunity for open dialogue with many participants during this one-day event.

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Looking ahead, our Board will continue examining how it governs and where improvements can be made. This includes exploring efficiencies, strengthening partnerships and collaborations, and advancing the work of our new Outreach and Engagement Committee. As we move forward, we remain committed to transparency, focus, respect, and strong governance in the public interest.

Remember the student.

Andrew MacFarlane
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Public Schools Branch
Prince Edward Island

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director, Tracy Beaulieu shared the following report:

Director of Public Schools Branch Update

As we welcome spring on the calendar, we are reminded that this season represents renewal and opportunities for growth. This forward-focused momentum aligns well with the most recent trustee leadership transitions and the collective efforts ahead as we work to strengthen our education system in support of students, staff, and families.

With this in mind, I would like to welcome Andrew MacFarlane to the role of Board Chair and Karen Clare as Vice Chair. I look forward to working with them, and with all trustees, to provide governance and leadership that supports a positive, collaborative vision of a strong educational system that is focused on student achievement, well-being, and engagement across the Public Schools Branch.

April marks the start of the familiar "busy season," as we focus on wrapping up the current school year while planning ahead for the next. At the same time, it offers an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate our collective progress. While this report highlights work that is underway, it is equally important to recognize the dedication and professionalism of our school staff, the engagement of our students, and the support of families and education partners.

I am pleased to extend congratulations to Lesley Cousins of Kinkora Regional High School, who was recognized with the Extra Mile Award on March 11. This wonderful celebration allowed staff, students, and community members to come together to acknowledge Ms. Cousins' exceptional dedication to teaching and the incredible work she does to ensure students have the best possible educational experiences. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Provincial Home and School for their continued efforts in recognizing the great people within our system who consistently go above and beyond in support of students and schools.

The PEI School Food Program assists schools across the island in benefitting from access to hot and healthy food options. On March 30, Souris Regional School welcomed a number of special guests,

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including The Honourable Anna Gaaney, Secretary of State (Children and Youth), MP Kent MacDonald, and The Honourable Robin Croucher, Minister of Education and Early Years, to tour the School Food Hub at their school. They learned about the program's success and had the chance to speak with staff, students and others during their visit.

On March 31, as the final part of their 2026 ArtsSmart project, Grade 5 students at Sherwood Elementary presented a concert where each of their four grade 5 classes were paired with a community member. This community member visited the class a number of times, acting as a cultural teacher and mentor. They were able to share about their culture, history, traditions, food, music and art. The goal of this project was to tackle discrimination through creating new relationships, exploring new music, dance and culture, in order to foster empathy and community. As a final part of the project, students shared what they have learned with the rest of the school through a concert celebration.

Our schools will be alive with the energy of spring sports, rehearsals for musicals and concerts, and preparations for graduation ceremonies. These moments highlight the dedication and effort of both staff and students in ways that extend well beyond academics. I look forward to our continued collaboration in the months ahead, ensuring we provide the resources and support our students need to be successful.

Warmly,
Tracy Beaulieu

EAL/FAL Update

Staffing

We would like to welcome Megan Harper who has been hired as EAL Youth Service Worker for Summerside-West, starting April 7th.

Reassessment Period

Spring reassessment of EAL/FAL students begins on April 7th, with 74 students to be reassessed in grade 9.

EAL/FAL Pilot Program at Spring Park Elementary School

On March 30th, members of the EAL team, Spring Park Administrators, and the grade 3 and resource teachers met with Anne Inman (Department of Education and Early Years) to begin planning for the implementation of a small group instruction for grade 3 EAL students.

Professional Learning

On April 10th, the EAL itinerant teachers in grade 1-9 will participate in virtual professional learning in the areas of: *Technology, AI, French/English Language Goals & Resources, and our EAL/FAL Learner Passports and Reporting Process.*

On April 14th, the EAL YSWs will participate in professional learning on "Courageous Conversations" facilitated by Andrea Garland and Debbie Langston from the Department of Education and Early Years.

Finance Update

We are pleased to share that our new permanent Director of Finance, Suzanne Iwankow, joined our team on March 27, 2026. The Finance team will be supporting her as she transitions into her new role, and we are excited to have her join our team.

The Finance Department is currently progressing through the fiscal year-end closeout and preparing for the upcoming audit process. The team is also awaiting the release of budget information in order to begin planning activities for the next fiscal year.

Human Resources Update

Staffing process for fall 2026

We have completed all 56 schools staffing meetings, which include each Principal, the Admin Support Leader (ASL) and one HR member. This annual process is to review current staffing, any pressure points and any considerations for the 26/27 staffing process. We have recently posted six (6) Principal vacancies and one open Admin Support Leader role.

We will be launching in the coming weeks the Annual Offence Declaration Process to all PSB staff (Perm/Temp/Casual) & Volunteers. This will be completed in the PeopleSoft system with reporting beginning 3 weeks after the launch to track and follow-up.

Janet Horne will be joining the Public Schools Branch (PSB) on April 15th, as our new Manager of Human Resources and Talent Management. Janet comes to us with nearly two decades of HR expertise within the public sector. Her extensive background spanning PEI and Nova Scotia, including specialized experience in bilingual recruitment, makes her uniquely suited to meet the diverse needs of our school board.

Student Services

Behaviour Threat Assessment and Management - April Training

There will be a full-day training regarding *Behaviour Threat Assessment and Management* (BTAM) by our PSB Student Services BTAM Team trained by psychologist, Dr. Melissa Reeves that will be offered by the Public Schools Branch April 16th and 17th, 2026. The one-day training will take place in two locations on two consecutive days. Our High Schools received this training back in the Fall with Dr. Melissa Reeves.

Student Services Divisional Meeting

At the most recent Student Services Divisional Meeting, the following groups/individuals presented to the division.

- AccessAbility Supports - This presentation was led by Mary MacDonald-Pickering and Lori Jones from the Provincial AccessAbility Supports program. This program offers support to assist families with accessibility and inclusion.

- Sexual Misconduct Policy - Kelly Morris shared this work with the Student Services Division and responded to policy-related questions, supporting clarity and shared understanding.
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports - Meghan Etchell delivered an update on PBIS, highlighting strategies and practices that foster positive, supportive learning environments.

Property Update

March Break Maintenance Work

During the March break, PSB Property Services worked extremely hard on a wide range of facility improvement projects across our schools while buildings were unoccupied. This work focused on maximizing productivity within a short timeframe and ensuring that critical upgrades were completed with minimal disruption to staff and students.

The scope of work included asbestos abatement, installation of new flooring, removal of outdated lockers and installation of modern replacements, and minor ventilation and mechanical upgrades to improve the performance and reliability of air-handling and heating systems. Crews also completed essential electrical work in preparation for upcoming service upgrades, enhancements to public address (PA) systems, roof repair and maintenance activities, and the resurfacing of gym floors to improve safety and longevity. In addition, teams carried out exterior fencing installations to strengthen site security and completed targeted bathroom renovations to modernize facilities and support improved accessibility.

These combined efforts reflect PSB Property Services' ongoing commitment to maintaining safe, functional, and modern learning environments across all PSB sites.

Cooling Projects

PSB is actively working towards improving comfort within learning environments across our facilities. While all new school construction includes mechanical systems designed with cooling capability, integrating cooling into older buildings presents significant challenges. Retrofitting existing infrastructure is both costly and complex due to the wide range of building ages, system configurations, and mechanical limitations found throughout our facilities.

Under the direction of the Department of Education and Early Years, PSB is implementing targeted pilot projects to explore feasible cooling solutions for existing schools. One pilot will assess the performance, efficiency, and practicality of portable air-conditioning units within classroom settings. A second pilot will evaluate the functionality of heat pumps in common areas, such as libraries, cafeterias, or multi-purpose rooms, where centralized solutions may offer the greatest benefit. These pilot projects are being introduced at 4 schools currently, with the goal to expand to more schools when given additional funding.

Transportation and Risk Management Update

Bus Driver Professional Development Day

On April 10, all PSB school bus drivers are scheduled to attend a professional learning session at the Community Complex in New London. In addition to providing an excellent opportunity for drivers

to interact with their peers, presentations will include updates from HR personnel, instructors from the Atlantic Police Academy, Highway Safety, and others.

Implementation of SmartFind for School Bus Drivers

Discussions were held regarding the implementation of SmartFind human resource software for use with PSB school bus drivers. This substitute management system is designed to streamline the process of filling staff absences. Primary benefits include automating the staffing process, enhancing communication, and providing data-driven insights to improve absenteeism rates. While this sort of automation is not new for our branch, it will be the first time we have attempted to implement such technology with our school bus driver employee group.

Donations in Memoriam of Belfast School Bus Driver Carey Gillis

We are pleased to share that *significant* donations have been received by Belfast Consolidated School for their breakfast program, in honour and memoriam of bus driver Carey Gillis. For over thirty years, Carey served his community as a school bus driver at Belfast Consolidated, where he became a familiar and trusted face to generations of students. This support speaks volumes to the impact our bus drivers continue to have on their school communities.

6. Committee Updates

- 6.1 It was moved by Karen Clare and seconded by Andrew Rose that Wade Czank be named Chair of the Policy Committee. Motion carried.**
- 6.2 It was moved by Karen Clare and seconded by Gaylene Carragher that Andrew Avery be named a member of the Policy Committee. Motion carried.**
- 6.3 It was moved by Gaylene Carragher and seconded by Wade Czank that Marcella Byrne and Karen Clare be named members of the Outreach and Engagement Committee. Motion carried.**

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.


Chair Signature of Approval

4/9/03