

Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees Public Meeting
January 12, 2026

Minutes

The Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees hosted a public meeting in person at the Stratford Town Hall, on Thursday January 15, 2026.

Present: Stephanie Arnold, Board Chair
Wade Czank, Vice-Chair
Marcella Byrne, Trustee
Peter Fullerton, Trustee
Karen Clare, Trustee
Andrew MacFarlane, Trustee
Emily McKeown, Trustee
Andrew Rose, Trustee
Gaylene Garragher, Trustee
Tracy Beaulieu, Director Public Schools Branch
Rob MacAdam, Assistant Director Public Schools Branch
Natasha Monaghan, Executive Assistant
Matt MacLeod, Senior Communications Officer Public Schools Branch
Jennifer Poirier, Presenter, Member of the Public
Members of the Public

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Chair Arnold welcomed all in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

1/15/01

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE November 12, 2025 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

It was moved by Andrew Rose that the minutes from the November 12, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting be approved as presented. Motion carried.

1/15/02

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair, Stephanie Arnold, shared the following report:

Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees
Chair's Report January 2026

January 15, 2026

Page 2

The Board of Trustees has been active since the fall election. The transition from the previous Board has been smooth. The Board currently consists of six newly elected Trustees and three returning Trustees, including myself as Chair and Wade Czank as Vice Chair. Earlier this evening, the Board held a Meet-and-Greet with Minister Croucher and Deputy Cummings. The Trustees look forward to working collaboratively with the Minister's Office and the Department of Education and Early Years (Department).

The Board held its Annual General Meeting in December and has been working with the Public Schools Branch (PSB) on the Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Department on the School Food Environment Policy. With the Policy Committee being filled this evening, policy review and engagement will have a dedicated group moving the work forward.

There are other Committees being filled. The Hearing Committee will be responsible for managing the appeals process. The Audit and Finance Committee oversees matters such as annual budgets, independent audits, and insurance.

The Trustees have also been connecting with schools and school community members. They have been bringing to the full Board questions, comments, and concerns from their zones. This helps the Board to get a system-wide understanding of where things are going well in the education system, as well as areas that require adjustments.

As always, the Board encourages local schools to invite your Trustee to events and meetings concerning your school community. Our contact details are available on the PSB website.

Stephanie Arnold
Chair, Board of Trustees
Public Schools Branch
Prince Edward Island

5. DIRECTOR REPORT

Director, Tracy Beaulieu shared the following report:

Director's Report January 15, 2026

January 2026 Public Schools Branch - Board of Trustees Update

Director of Public Schools Branch Update

As we welcome the New Year, we look forward to new opportunities for learning, growth, and success. Although we are entering a new calendar year, we are at the midpoint of the academic year. This period brings a renewed focus on the goals that will guide us toward a successful conclusion of the current year and a strong start to the next.

Attendance: One area where we are seeing positive progress is student attendance. We are pleased to report that attendance continues to trend upward, with December closing at a rate 3% higher than the same period last year. January figures remain consistent with last year's performance, which is encouraging. As we are in the cold and flu season, schools will

January 15, 2026

Page 3

be reminded to prioritize health and wellness by practicing proper hygiene and encouraging individuals to remain at home when unwell,

Sexual Misconduct Policy and Student Safety Website: Ensuring the well-being of our school communities is a priority. In recent weeks, several consultations have been conducted with a range of stakeholder groups to allow opportunity for feedback on the new Sexual Misconduct policy. These discussions will continue over the coming weeks and are essential in informing our planning and decision-making processes. Additionally, we have launched a new Student Safety Website, accessible through the Public Schools Branch's main webpage, which will provide regular updates and resources to support student well-being.

Planning for the 2026-2027 School Year: Looking ahead, planning for the upcoming school year is already underway. Kindergarten registrations have been completed, and meetings will be scheduled to evaluate and address the needs of incoming students at each school. We have also initiated collaborative discussions with the Department of Education to outline anticipated requirements, and recruitment efforts will begin shortly to ensure appropriate staffing for September.

New Biannual Newsletter: Another goal for this school year has been to introduce a biannual newsletter to share important updates and celebrate achievements across our schools. We are pleased to announce that the first edition will be distributed at the end of this month, highlighting the great work our students and staff are doing in their schools. This initiative reflects our ongoing commitment to transparent communication and community engagement.

As we move forward, our focus remains on creating safe, supportive, and engaging learning environments for students. This will guide us toward a successful conclusion to the current academic year while laying a strong foundation for continued growth and achievement in the year ahead.

Sincerely, Tracy Beaulieu

January 2026 Public Schools Branch - Board of Trustees Update

EAL/FAL Update

New EAL/FAL Arrivals

Over 400 new EAL/FAL learners have arrived in PEI since July 1, 2025. New EAL/FAL learners have come from many countries, including the Philippines, India, China, Vietnam, Nigeria, Ukraine, Morocco, Germany, USA, Cameroon, Jamaica, Somalia, South Africa, and many more. New arrivals are anticipated to continue as the province increases its population. The overall number of EAL/FAL students is increasing in the province as is the number of EAL/FAL students receiving EAL or FAL instructional support (1,092 students in grades 1-9 and 44 secondary EAL students who are completing EAL courses online, *January 2026, EAL/FAL Database*). The high caseload numbers can be attributed to students coming in at lower English or French proficiency language levels. EAL/FAL students at this level, especially from grades 4-12 will stay on caseload longer to acquire proficiency in the target

language to progress to a level where they are recommended for regular programming without EAL/FAL itinerant teacher support.

Chart 1: EAL/FAL **New Arrivals** **Total # Students** **Unanticipated**
 New Arrivals, (July 1-June 30) **Needs**
 Overall School
 Totals and
 Unanticipated
 Needs **Year**

Year	New Arrivals, (July 1-June 30)	Total # Students	Unanticipated Needs
2019-2020	465	2198	8
2020-2021	351	2358	14
2021-2022	580	2555	17
2022-2023	758	2915	23
2023-2024	911	3508	31
2024-2025	672	3807	34
2025-01/2026	415	3903	59

(Source: EAL/FAL Programs and Services Database, January 2026)

EAL/FAL Arrivals with Additional Needs

In 2019-2020, there were 8 EAL students with additional needs. The number of EAL/FAL with needs almost doubled with 14 in 2021-2022. The growing number of new EAL/FAL students arriving each year with exceptionalities continues to rise with 59 students identified with additional needs (since July 1st, 2025) this school year to date. Through our EAL/FAL intake process, we continue to see an increase in needs from our newcomer population. In some cases, they may be arriving without a diagnosis which can also complicate our staffing process as needs are assessed. Our ability to integrate these students into a classroom is not only a legal requirement under the Education Act and Human Rights Act but also contributes to the success of other government initiatives. For instance, our intake shows the arrival of a number of internationally educated health professionals who are arriving with children in need of additional support in schools, notably EA support. There have been almost 60 new EAL/FAL students arriving with additional/exceptional needs, requiring EA support since July 1st, 2025. While not all EAL students with additional needs require full-time EA support, 3 hours of EA or YSW support is often required. These newly arrived EAL/FAL students, arriving with exceptional circumstances, place additional pressure on the school system, and staffing allocations are not able to meet the needs.

EAL/FAL Spring Re-Assessments, 2026

From April - June, the EAL/FAL Division will begin re-assessments for an estimated 1200-1300 EAL and FAL learners from Kindergarten to Grade 9. Level B language assessments in English and French are consent-based. The team uses formal assessments with informal writing and speaking assessments to determine support recommendations for the 2026-2027 school year.

EAL/FAL Staffing

As the EAL/FAL Division continues to support the PSB and CSLF with the continuous influx of new EAL/FAL students, our team has grown to 60 staff members, including 39 EAL/FAL

Itinerant Teachers, 2 EAL Itinerant Support Teachers, 11 EAL Youth Services Workers, and 10 office staff.

Due to the national French language teacher shortage, the FAL section of the division has been short-staffed since September 2nd as we have not been able to fill an FAL Itinerant Teacher vacancy. FAL service has continued, but the staffing for this is not ideal as it includes our EAL/FAL Specialist teaching 2 days per week. With over 1200 re-assessments to complete this Spring, this creates pressure on the assessment team.

School Transition EAL Program (STEP)

EAL/FAL students arriving with significantly low levels of English greatly benefit from our School Transition EAL Program (STEP). The STEP focuses on the transitional needs of EAL students with limited language proficiency and/or limited prior schooling. In 2023-2024 three STEP Pilot Programs were expanded to an implementation of seven STEP programs in 2024-2025. In September 2024, STEP was implemented in six schools: Prince Street, Sherwood, Spring Park, Queen Charlotte, West Royalty, and Athena Consolidated. In February 2025, STEP expanded to Glen Stewart and Stratford Elementary for a combined program. The importance of the STEP was recognized in the second pillar, “Supporting Strong Starts” in the *Inclusive Education Action Plan*. STEP has been received very well by new EAL students, their parents, and schools. STEP programs in schools support new EAL students by giving them a strong and supportive start to school in Canada. STEP has been placed in Spring Park Elementary School and West Royalty School for the 2025-2026 school year.

EAL Teacher Support Teachers (EAL-ESTs) Pilot Positions

Over the last few years, classroom teachers have expressed the need for more support in the teaching and assessing of their EAL learners in their content-area classrooms. In response to this need, and in examining other jurisdictions who have had great success with EAL Support Teachers, the EAL/FAL Division is piloting two EAL Support Teachers (EAL-ESTs) in 7 schools in the Charlottetown-Area for the 2025-2026 school year.

The role of EAL Support Teacher is to support classroom teachers of EAL students. More specifically, ESTs will work with classroom teachers on how to support EAL students with access to and participation in the content-area curriculum. The EST supports the integration and inclusion of all students by co-creating classrooms of belonging. The goal of the EST is to build capacity within the classroom by co-creating culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and assessing strategies and techniques. ESTs are the bridge of support between the language level and the content being covered in the subject-area classroom. ESTs provide real-time support, in addition to locating resources to be used to support classroom teachers of EAL learners. At times, ESTs may work with students outside of the classroom; however, the goal is to provide more push in support that is seamless, effective, and easily accessible with the ESTs located at the school.

The intermediate-level EST will be supporting Stonepark, Birchwood, and Queen Charlotte. The elementary-level EST will be supporting Lucy Maud Montgomery, Sherwood, Prince Street and Spring Park. ESTs can also provide support to schools when new EAL students arrive. They can be part of supporting a new EAL student’s transition to the school and

classroom. ESTs can support classroom teachers with access to professional learning, additional resources, and to gain a greater understanding of an EAL student's receptive and expressive English language skills. The role of the ESTs will continue to evolve. The ESTs will work closely with the EAL Teacher Support Specialist, Sherri Carmichael, who will support these roles by offering PD, shadowing opportunities, and navigating questions and situations that may arise. Ongoing communication, collaboration, and feedback with school administrators has been appreciated and encouraged.

EAL/FAL Professional Learning Opportunities

Virtual Course Offerings

The virtual courses, **Level I, The Big Picture** and **Level II, Building Capacity** in the **Supporting EAL/FAL Learners in PEI Schools through Virtual Learning Program** were updated in the fall of 2025. These online courses continue to be offered during provincial PD days. The first level is part of the onboarding process for new PSB hires. These courses consist of valuable support for all staff in Island schools and classrooms. The courses consist of videos and voices from the lived experiences of our newcomer children and youth in our Island classrooms. They also consist of detailed information on the programs and services provided by the EAL/FAL Division as well as strategies and techniques and resources to support all staff in PEI schools with new EAL/FAL learners. The courses continue to be very well-received by participants who receive a certificate upon completion of the courses.

Finance Update

As we enter the final months of the fiscal year, our Finance teams are fully engaged in supporting the organization through this critical period. This is traditionally a very busy time, as PSB departments and school-based staff rely on Finance for guidance related to budget management, final procurement activities, and planning for the upcoming fiscal year.

While completing the fiscal year, we also look ahead to the next fiscal year and the collaborative planning that takes place with the Department of Education and Early Years to ensure strong fiscal stewardship and effective resource planning.

Our Payroll team has completed the 2025 payroll year while successfully managing tight deadlines throughout the holiday season. They are now focused on finalizing all payroll information required for the preparation and processing of T4s. The team continues to work closely with HR on ongoing projects and timely processing needs. After a busy summer and fall that included onboarding several new team members and establishing a new position, the Payroll team is working cohesively and continues to demonstrate strong commitment in meeting a significant workload.

Our Administrative staff continue to be a valuable resource for both employees and the general public seeking information. They play an essential role in ensuring that people, information, mail etc. reach their intended destinations in a timely and efficient manner.

Human Resources Update

The Learning Management System (LMS)

- The LMS project is progressing, we recently started user acceptance testing across a number of teams and roles.
- Currently we have 9 testers across multiple departments including, Policy, Student services and HR.

CUPE Bargaining

- Preparations began late last year and we have had one bargaining session in December with CUPE 3260 (EA group). We are back at the table Jan 22/23.
- Bargaining for remaining CUPE groups (Bus Drivers, Custodians/Cleaners, Admin support) will begin later in the 1st quarter of this year.

Absence Management Tool (AESOP) replacement

- Began project planning for AESOP replacement (SmartFind Express) implementation.
- The new tool is part of the Powerschool suite and will include tracking and communicating with all employee groups which is not the case currently.
- Plan is to test the tool with a couple of groups before this school year ends, with all groups utilizing it for Sept 2026.

Ministers Directive regarding Record Checks to Support Student Protection and Safety

- We are in the final stages of two new items (Immediate Disclosure and Annual Declaration)
- Working with ITSS / PSC teams to complete the process in Peoplesoft for ease of execution and tracking.

Staffing for 26/27 school year.

- We are preparing the process, communications, and tools for the staffing process which will begin in March.

Student Services

Increased Speech Language Pathology Services (SLP) Junior & Senior High

In August, Student Services received 3 additional full-time equivalent SLP positions. Two of these positions have been filled and efforts are being put into expanding the reach of the posting to see if we can recruit for the vacant position.

The PSB has now dedicated 1.5 full-time equivalent (“FTE”) positions for junior high and senior high services as follows:

- 1FTE: Split between five SLPs and includes SLP assessments, services and consultations for junior and senior high students.
- 0.4 FTE: Split between two SLPs and includes Augmentative Assisted Communication (AAC) consultation and support for junior and senior high students.
- 0.1 FTE: One SLP dedicated to completing voice referrals for junior and senior high students.

Under the new model, students in Grades 7 through 12 will now have access to the noted SLP services on a referral basis.

Kindergarten Case Conferences

Below is a summary of the current PSB process for students who may require a Kindergarten Case Conference organized by PSB Student Services.

1. Purpose of the Kindergarten Case Conference

The primary goal is to share information, and to identify and coordinate supports a child may require upon starting Kindergarten. It is typically initiated if a child:

- Presents with significant developmental, behavioural, physical and/or communication challenges
- Requires specialized medical supports or equipment.
- Has been receiving significant support from Early Childhood Centers or external agencies (like Early Years Autism Team, Speech-Language Pathology or Occupational Therapy).

2. Timeline

The process generally follows a structured timeline leading up to the school year:

- **November- December:** Parents register their child for kindergarten (usually in November). Currently, parents or early childhood educators identify the need for a transition meeting at this time.
- **January- March:** Case conferences are typically held during this period to determine specialized resources, supports and planning that may be required.
- **June:** Transition visits to the school are often scheduled following the formal kindergarten case conference. In addition schools offer Welcome to Kindergarten Night and Kindergarten Orientation Day.

Property Update

Major Capital Projects

- Public Schools Branch (PSB) Property Services continues to be extremely busy with several major capital projects currently in various stages of construction. These projects are essential to supporting population growth and meeting the evolving needs of our school communities. PSB remains committed to increasing school capacity, modernizing aging infrastructure, and creating inclusive, welcoming learning environments for students across the province.

Stratford High School

- Construction is progressing very well at Stratford High School. Several areas of the building are approaching the finishing stages, while mechanical crews are installing and beginning to commission HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems in other areas. The school will accommodate approximately 750 students on a 34-acre site within the Town of Stratford's Community Campus. PSB anticipates the school will open in September 2027.

Alternative Education Centre

- PSB is currently working with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, along with consulting partners, to complete the design for Phase 2 of this project. Construction of Phase 2 is expected to begin within the next few months and is scheduled for completion in early 2027.

East Royalty Elementary

- Construction at East Royalty Elementary School is progressing on schedule. Crews are currently working on the foundation walls and are preparing to begin structural steel installation in the coming months. In parallel with the construction of the new school, a new roadway is being built to connect MacWilliams Road to Emily Drive and Tara Heights. This new connection will significantly improve traffic flow and reduce congestion around both schools.

Queen Charlotte Intermediate

- The design team continues to advance concept plans for the addition to Queen Charlotte Intermediate. Nine Yards Studio has partnered with Architecture49 to collaboratively design an addition that integrates well with the existing school while introducing supportive, innovative learning spaces for current and future students. Once the design phase is complete, the project will move into construction.

Revitalization Fund & Minor Capital Repair Budget

- With funding from the Revitalization Fund and the Minor Capital Repairs Budget, PSB, in partnership with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, is undertaking numerous projects across all Public Schools Branch facilities. These initiatives include a significant number of student-focused improvements, as well as critical infrastructure upgrades across our 56 schools. The outstanding work of our Maintenance and Custodial Teams continues to be reflected in the high standard of our facilities and their ongoing efforts to improve learning environments for students and staff.

Transportation and Risk Management Update

Routing - Approximately 3,500 routing changes have been implemented in the PSB transportation system since the end of our last school year (approx 1,500 since September). 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, alterations to bus runs impacts students, drivers, and our system directly. As such we take these changes seriously and are proud of the efforts of our support staff in addressing challenges positively.

Bus Monitors- The PSB now employs 20 school bus monitors during daily runs. This number represents a continued expansion of the pilot program initiated in 2024. Results have proven positive and valuable to date. Work continues on adding monitoring technology to buses including cameras both inside and outside the bus. Policy, implementation logistics, and cost are focal points of ongoing discussion.

Winter Weather Impact on School Schedules- Since December 1, the PSB has experienced 3 days where weather has been cause for class cancellations in all or part of the province. Issues with power and/or mechanical infrastructure have forced an additional 3 early dismissal situations at individual schools. Credit is extended to our drivers and support staff for responding to all such “out-of-the-ordinary” situations in a calm, timely, and professional manner.

It was moved by Peter Fullerton and seconded by Andrew Rose that invoice #369405, Charlottetown Garage November Fleet, be approved as presented. Motion carried

It was moved by Marcella Byrne and seconded by Andrew Rose that invoice #370065 for the Charlottetown Garage December Fleet, be approved as presented. Motion carried

1/15/04

7. NEW COMMITTEE:

It was moved by Karen Clare and seconded by Marcella Byrne that the Outreach and Engagement Committee be approved as presented. Motion carried

1/15/05

8. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

8a) It was moved by Gaylene Carragher that the following Trustees, Andrew Rose, Emily McKeown, and Stephanie Arnold be appointed to the Finance and Audit Committee. Motion carried

8b) It was moved by Marcella Byrne and seconded by Gaylene Carragher that Andrew Rose be named chair of the Finance and Audit committee. Motion carried

9a) It was moved by Emily McKeown and seconded by Andrew Rose that the following Trustees, Karen Clare, Andrew MacFarlane, and Wade Czank be appointed to the Policy Committee. Motion carried

9b) It was moved by Gaylene Carragher and seconded by Peter Fullerton that Karen Clare be named chair of the Policy Committee. Motion carried

10a) It was moved by Emily McKeown and seconded by Andrew Rose that the following Trustees, Gaylene Carragher, Peter Fullerton and Marcella Byrne be appointed to the Hearing Committee. Motion carried

10b) It was moved by Andrew MacFarlane and seconded by Gaylene Carragher that Peter Fullerton be named chair of the Hearing Committee. Motion carried

The Trustees were also joined by member of the public, Jennifer Poirier, who presented her experience with Learning supports in schools.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Santana", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Chair Signature of Approval