

Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees Public Meeting
June 17, 2025

Minutes

The Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees hosted their seventeenth public meeting in person in the Library at Kensington Intermediate Senior High, on Tuesday, June 17, 2025.

Present: Stephanie Arnold, Board Chair
Wade Czank, Vice-Chair
Amanda Blakeney, Trustee
Jaclyn Massey, Trustee
Rachel McCarthy, Trustee
Beverley Ann Boulter, Trustee
Beckie Keezer, Trustee
Andrew Rose, Trustee
Tracy Bealieu, Director of Public Schools Branch
Dominique Lecours, Assistant Director of Public Schools Branch
Karen Redmond, Manager of Policy and Procedure
Blake Crockett, Director of Finance Public Schools Branch
Dale Sabeau, Presenter

Regrets: Jacob Jardis, Trustee
Jocelyne Ludgate, Trustee
Heather Mullen, Trustee

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. Chair Arnold welcomed all in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Beverly Boulter and seconded by Amanda Blakeney that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE May 20, 2025 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Rachel McCarthy that the minutes from the May 20, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting be approved as presented. Motion carried.

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair, Stephanie Arnold shared the following report:

**Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees
Chair's Report
June 2025**

Last month, I had the honour of representing the Board of Trustees at the Retirement Celebrations hosted by the Public Schools Branch. One hundred staff members across different functions will be retiring this year. We thank them for their many years of service and their commitment to our education system and wish them a fulfilling and well-deserved retirement.

The trustees held a meet-and-greet with Minister Croucher and Acting Deputy Minister Cummings last month. It gave everyone an opportunity to formally meet each other and set the stage for collaboration between the Board and the Minister's Office. As the Board seeks to actively increase its capacity, it will also build new and deepen existing relationships with educational partners and organizations. For example, we will be sending a delegate to the Canadian School Boards Association's National Gathering & Congress for the first time. I look forward to connecting with members in other jurisdictions and hearing about their work, challenges, and successes.

Dale Sabeau reviewed input collected from public meetings and online survey forms on the initial recommendations of 1) zoning adjustments for Charlottetown Rural and Colonel Gray High Schools in anticipation of the opening of Stratford High School and the new residential developments within the Charlottetown Family of Schools catchment areas as well as 2) the zoning adjustments and capacity needs within the Three Oaks Family of Schools in anticipation of the new residential developments within the school catchment areas. Members of the public reached out to our trustees as well. We thank everyone for their input and thank Mr. Sabeau for being responsive to public comments. This evening, Mr. Sabeau will share his updated recommendations and how they incorporated public feedback.

With the 2024-2025 school year drawing to a close, we applaud the students, staff, and administrators across the system for their hard work.

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 June 17, 2025

Director of Public Schools Branch Update

As the end of the school year is upon us, we would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the PSB staff. While there have been many ups and downs throughout the year, people continually showed up for students and each other. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to all of you.

Below are some highlights we would like to mention as we conclude this school year.

- ***Student Focus Groups***

This year, three student focus groups were organized, involving students from various schools across the province. These groups were convened to gather feedback on policies, procedures, and school culture, focusing on how these elements specifically impact the students.

May and June concluded the final two sessions for the 2024-2025 school year. At the end of May, focus groups were actively promoted within the schools to encourage participation and gather their perspectives as it relates to attendance and engagement. This focus aimed to ensure feedback was collected from a diverse student body. Schools will be submitting the themes to the PSB in order to inform the attendance policy and procedures.

In June, a group of junior high students from across the province had the honour of meeting the Lieutenant Governor at his residence to conclude the final focus group of this school year. The purpose of this meeting was to allow them to discuss and share insights on how school staff and students can create a safe and welcoming school environment that promotes a sense of belonging and mutual respect among all members of the school community. The feedback from all focus groups will be consolidated and used to inform decisions at the school, branch, and provincial levels. This approach ensures that the voices of students are heard and considered in the decision-making process.

We are so proud of the engagement and insights our students have to offer and look forward to hosting more sessions in the next school year.

- ***Graduation Congratulations***

Graduation marks a significant milestone, and we are incredibly proud of all the hard work and dedication that has led to this achievement. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all students graduating from the Public Schools Branch this year. As they move on to the next phase of their lives, we wish them well in their future endeavors.

- ***Retirement Congratulations***

We would also like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to all staff members who are retiring this year. Your dedication and commitment to education have made a lasting impact on our students and the entire school community. Your contributions will be remembered with great appreciation.

EAL/FAL Update

The EAL/FAL Programs and Services' Division has recently completed 1200 English and French language reassessments and made recommendations for language support and services for the 2025-2026 year. On June 19th and 20th, EAL/FAL itinerant teachers will meet with newcomer parents/guardians at our annual Parent-Feedback Sessions to share assessment results, recommendations, and most importantly the celebration of growth of our multilingual learners on PEI.

Due to population growth and many newcomer families arriving with permanent residency status, as well as multilingual learners arriving with lower language proficiency levels, the numbers of EAL/FAL students remaining on caseload for language support is increasing. With this and approximately 300-400 new student arrivals over the summer, the strain on the Division and in PSB continues to rise. Without additional positions this year, the EAL/FAL itinerant teaching staff will be increasing their caseloads from 1-27 to approximately 1-45. In addition, the number of multilingual learners arriving with additional needs has increased from 1 student a month (2019) to 3-4 students per month in 2024-2025. The increase in EAL/FAL in PSB schools also affects current school capacity challenges in PSB schools. The EAL/FAL Division appreciates the support and collaboration of the PSB schools as they feel the pressures of population growth. PSB schools continue to welcome newcomer students with open arms and go over and above to support their language and social/emotional needs.

A few of the Divisions' new initiatives this year include:

1. STEP Implementation– School Transition EAL Program Implemented in 7 Schools:
 - Athena Consolidated; Glen Stewart, Queen Charlotte, Sherwood, Spring Park, Stratford Elementary and West Royalty Elementary.
 - The EAL students at the very beginning stages of language acquisition are immersed in a highly functional, experiential language program that aims to build vocabulary so that participants can transition into their classes in a more seamless manner; and
 - The EAL students attend STEP for a half day with their transition supported by an EAL Youth Service Worker.
- 2) Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS) Pilot:
 - Phone interpretive services in over 300 languages for all EAL/FAL staff and 5 pilot schools: Belfast, LMM, QC, West Royalty, and Souris;
 - Feedback has been very good from EAL/FAL Staff and the pilot schools;
 - Full implementation for MCIS for all schools in September 2025;
 - Schools are still encouraged to use in-person interpreters from IRSA when available.
- 3) EAL Youth Service Worker Focus on Multiculturalism
 - This year we had 12 EAL Youth Service Workers. Three (4) were working to support the STEPP program and eight (8) were supporting schools in West Prince, Summerside, Charlottetown and Eastern Kings;
 - The EAL Youth Service Workers have spent a great deal of time highlighting the culture of our EAL students in the school system. The results have been phenomenal and include multicultural days, multilingual school announcements, multicultural trivia, cultural talent highlights, multilingual labeling of school rooms and objects, multilingual support for bus drivers, a comic strip in poster form depicting the challenges of being a new language learner in a new school and country, multicultural flag/banner ceremonies, murals depicting togetherness, etc.; and
 - EAL learners have expressed appreciation and validation and schools have reported a strong sense of community and belonging through these highlights.

In summary, the province has:

- Welcomed 655 new EAL/FAL students during the 2024-25 school year;
- Provided educational service to 204 refugee students, including 8 students from
 - Ukraine; 4 students from Lebanon and Turkey with asylum claimant status;

- Provided EAL/FAL learners with itinerant teacher support and students with school-based EAL courses.

Finance Update

Our work with our March 31, 2025 year-end is ongoing. Auditors from Grant Thornton have been working on the file since June 2nd and have been onsite performing payroll and expense testing on June 10th and 12 at our Stratford and Summerside Offices, respectively. Staff have been busy pulling samples, providing reconciliations and explanations for variances (year to year and actual to budget). Accounting staff are also working with schools on final balances from their fiscal 2024-25 financial budgets as well as work that continues for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Deadlines for PEI Government consolidation of March 31, 2025 year end financial statements are June 13th, 2025 for drafts and June 30, 2025 for final signed audited financial statements. The Finance Department is well on track to meet both deadlines as draft financials and consolidation package were submitted on June 13th and auditors see no issue with meeting the June 30th finals deadline. A meeting has been booked for June 26th, 2025 (3pm, PSB Stratford Office) for our Audit/Finance Committee to review the audited financial statements and auditor's report with Grant Thornton and Branch management (Director of Finance, Manager of Finance). The purpose of this meeting is to provide the committee/trustees with information and assurance to be able to approve/sign the statements for our June 30th deadline. The Finance Department reminds all Audit/Finance Committee members to please attend the June 26th meeting in order to have a quorum and if satisfied, be able to review/approve the audited financial statements and the 2025-26 draft operating budget.

The official letter outlining budget approvals for 2025-26 was received on June 3rd, 2025 from the Department of Education. The Finance Department is now busy preparing both school based and board based budgets. These exercises require analysis, review and adjustment based on funding received, prior year official enrollment, vocational and trades class enrollment, large changes, etc. As such, the Finance Department is planning to have the 2025-26 operating budget for approval for the Board of Trustees Audit/Finance Committee meeting on June 26th, 2025 for conditional approval for posting/distribution.

Payroll staff are continuing to work hard to process payroll for our over 2,940 permanent FTE and ever growing substitute and casual staff. Every bi-weekly pay is a combination of change, data entry, review and audit; all of which are becoming more and more hectic as our payroll system grows. Our payroll staff are highly efficient, organized and committed to ensuring each pay is complete and accurate. As we continue to approach the end of the school year, staff are increasingly busy as they work to ensure deferred banks and final summer pays are accurate.

The Department of Finance Payroll Department received one additional FTE from the 2025-26 management plan. This addition was strongly advocated for and greatly needed in order to better distribute workloads, provide flexibility for positive structure/process updates and provide greater support to the Public Schools Branch payroll system as a whole. A position/posting, based out of Stratford Office, had been posted, closed and interviews were conducted on Friday, June 13, 2025. We look forward to welcoming our successful candidate and getting them trained during our summer months.

Human Resources Update

Human Resources Staff are in full staffing mode for the 2025/2026 school year. The transfer postings for teachers closed on Friday, June 13 and the open postings will continue throughout the next few months. The CUPE 3260 postings have just started and will continue to have 3 more required posting dates over the next month and a half with a significant number of postings to be filled.

Staffing for Administrative positions is in the final stages with 3 schools remaining to be filled for Vice Principals. Prince Street, Somerset and Souris Regional. Those will be completed before the end of this school year.

The new ATS (Applicant Tracking System) is up and going and has streamlined the process in an efficient manner for administrators to receive applications and screen competitions in a timely manner. We will continue to work with administrators and the ATS team for the future and ensure we are utilizing this software that continues to improve the posting and application process for hirings.

The casual/substitute re-activations will look different for 25/26 as they will be required to apply to a posting with the ATS system to reactivate. This will allow our HR team to have a streamlined process for review reactivation resumes and if further information is required that can be communicated and tracked through the ATS system.

Human Resources continues to advocate for additional HR staff to support the high volume of work that is entailed with supporting schools and branch staff. With the addition of significant FTE additions to the school system over the past number of years as well as the commitment to interview/process all casuals/substitutes and ensure HR is compliant with RIM as well as the HR team must have additional permanent resources.

Property Update

Maintenance, School Safety & Minor Capital Repairs:

Property Services and School Safety are actively working with the schools, ensuring issues and concerns are addressed in a timely manner across the system. There is great work happening each day at the schools to provide a safe learning environment.

Property Services and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) continue to work on this year's minor capital repair priorities, which takes into consideration building infrastructure and school revitalization upgrades. There are over 100 projects on this list, with many of these projects in preparation for 2025/2026 summer construction. Property Service is also coordinating our summer maintenance projects. This involves discussions with Principals about projects they would like to see completed by our maintenance team.

Major Capital Projects:

Property Services and DTI are now working on four major capital projects, Stratford High school, East Royalty school, Queen Charlotte Intermediate addition, and Stratford Intermediate. Construction at Stratford High is progressing well. Consultants have been actively working through the design for East Royalty and concept plans for Queen Charlotte addition. The planning committees for both these projects have been meeting with the team of consultants to move these projects forward. Stratford Intermediate is still in early stages of the process, with groups working on a space program. This program will be used as the basis of the design.

Student Services Update

There are many changes in staffing in Student Services. Raeanne Adams is the successful candidate for the position of Director of Student Services. Raeanne brings great knowledge,

experience, and commitment to supporting students with special needs, making her an excellent choice for this position. She did the review of Inclusive Education for the Department of Education, resulting in the **Better Together** report, for which there is now an action plan the Department is working to implement.

Raeanne's position of Manager of Student Services has been posted and will close on June 16th.

Student Services is pleased to announce the following successful candidates for Autism Consultant Positions: Doug Martin and Rosalyn Strickey who now have permanent positions and Nicole Simpson who has been hired in a fixed term position. Congratulations also to Danielle MacIsaac and Jillian Power who are permanent Inclusive Education Consultants.

A final divisional meeting for Student Services staff was held on May 29. Laura MacPherson, Policy Analyst with the Department provided an update on the Inclusive Education Action Plan.

Transportation Update

End of Year Trips

PSB Transportation Services is scheduled to service over 400 co-curricular/extra-curricular school bus trips during the 19 instructional days in the month of June, 2025. Each of these trips requires:

- 1) Communication with schools to ensure all details around requested times, number of students and chaperones involved, destination(s), preferred routes, return times, etc.
- 2) Evaluation of availability of drivers or buses to support the timing of the request.
- 3) Communication with drivers, including ensuring that the collective agreement is followed regarding allocation of additional trips, and that the buses assigned are appropriate (i.e. electric bus range restrictions, special needs students may require wheelchair access, etc.)
- 4) Should trips extend beyond regular school day schedules, assignment and communication with substitute drivers is required.
- 5) Day-of communications with all parties regarding clarification or issues.
- 6) Follow up paperwork which includes: billing schools appropriately, regular driver overtime or extra-time forms, substitute driver payroll forms, detailed information logged for reporting purposes, etc.
- 7) Address feedback regarding issues with any of the above. As indicated, each trip involves and requires significant levels of detail and attention. As a result it is primarily due to the outstanding efforts of **Darlene David** and **Cora Lee Pidgeon**, two key members of our office support staff, that the PSB deals with remarkably few issues in servicing this hefty volume of requests.

School Bus Driver Job Fair

The fifth annual PSB School Bus Driver job fair is scheduled for Saturday, June 14. Recruitment stations will include at least one bus, permanent driver, and supervisor at the Bloomfield Mall in western PEI, Royalty Crossing for central, and the Montague Superstore down east.

Over the past 5 years, the PSB has had to recruit, train, hire and manage approximately 50 new drivers each year to offset retirements, long term leave, and attrition of our substitute pool.

6. Trustee Distribution Payment Approval:

06/17/03

It was moved by Beverly Boulter and seconded by Wade Czank that the payment distribution changes discussed amongst the Trustees be approved as amended, to come into effect January 1, 2026. Motion carried

7. Charlottetown Re-Zoning School Report:

06/17/04.1

7.1: It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Amanda Blake that effective September 2027 all high school students resident in the Donagh and Stratford catchment areas attend Stratford High School for Grades 10-12. Motion carried.

06/17/04.2

7.2: It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Beverly Boulter that effective September 2027 all students (other than Donagh and Stratford area) who attended Stonepark Intermediate attend Charlottetown Rural High School for grades 10-12. Motion carried.

06/17/04.3

7.3: It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Andrew Rose that effective September 2027 students who attended Birchwood (other than Donagh and Stratford areas) or Queen Charlotte Intermediate attend Colonel Gray High School for grades 10-12. Motion carried.

06/17/04.4

7.4: It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Rachel McCarthy that all students completing Late French Immersion at Birchwood, Queen Charlotte or Stonepark Intermediate School attend grades 10-12 at the high school designated for their home address. Motion carried.

8. Three Oaks Family of Schools School Report:

06/17/05.1

8.1: It was moved by Becky Keezer and seconded by Jaclyn Massey that the Public Schools Branch request the Government of PEI approve a new Grade K-9 dual track Consolidated School for the Three Oaks Family of Schools. Motion carried.

06/17/05.2

8.2: It was moved by Becky Keezer and seconded by Jaclyn Massey that Parkside Elementary School be permanently closed upon opening of the new facility. Motion carried.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.



Chair Signature of Approval