

Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees Public Meeting
May 20, 2025

Minutes

The Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees hosted their sixteenth public meeting in person at Southport Boardroom, Town of Stratford on Tuesday, May 20, 2025.

Present: Stephanie Arnold, Board Chair
Wade Czank, Vice-Chair
Jocelyne Ludgate, Trustee
Amanda Blakeney, Trustee
Heather Mullen, Trustee
Jaclyn Massey, Trustee
Rachel McCarthy, Trustee
Beckie Keezer, Trustee
Andrew Rose, Trustee
Tracy Beaulieu, Director of Public Schools Branch
Dominique Lecours, Assistant Director of Public Schools Branch
Karen Redmond, Manager of Policy and Procedure

Regrets: Beverley Ann Boulter, Trustee
Jacob Jardis, Trustee

Also, in Attendance:

Natasha Monaghan, Executive Administrator to the Director
Matt MacLeod, Senior Communications Officer
RCMP Inspector Harder
RCMP Scott Ferris
Members of the public

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 Rachel McCarthy and seconded by Jocelyn Ludgate that the agenda be approved as presented.

05/20/01

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE April 22, 2025 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

It was moved by Beckie Keezer and seconded by Jaclyn Massey that the minutes from the April 22, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

05/20/02

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair, Stephanie Arnold shared the following report:

Public Schools Branch

Board of Trustees

Chair's Report

May 2025

Providing safe and caring learning environments continues to be at the forefront of our work. The recent information that has become public through legal processes involving former substitute teacher Matthew Craswell is deeply concerning. The Board of Trustees welcomes the news of Minister Croucher's initiation of a third-party review by The Honourable David H. Jenkins into the policies, processes, and procedures related to student safety in Island schools. In the meantime, PSB leadership and staff have already begun identifying areas of improvement and have introduced several key reforms and initiatives since August 2024. For example:

- The PSB Human Resources Department has implemented a centralized tracking system for complaints and misconduct, including retroactive documentation;
- PSB is offering enhanced training for all school personnel: teachers, principals, educational assistants, bus drivers, etc. on identifying and reporting concerning behaviour and misconduct;
- PSB leadership is working with relevant authorities to ensure external reporting is done appropriately and in a manner that incorporates their expertise;
- The Director is exploring opportunities to expand advocacy on expanding background and vulnerable sector checks in the interest of protecting vulnerable sectors across Canada.

There is more work to be done. Alongside PSB leadership and staff, the Board of Trustees are also members of our school communities. Alongside its own internal reviews, the PSB will fully cooperate with the review and work to implement any further resources to address structural gaps in its systems. We are committed to serving the students of this province. For those with inquiries, the Director's office has been designated as the primary place to direct anyone with questions or concerns. Additionally, you can include your local trustee in those communications anytime you wish.

Work on increasing the capacity of our public schools continues. Over a hundred people attended public meetings earlier this month regarding the zoning adjustments Charlottetown Rural and Colonel Gray High Schools in response to the opening of Stratford High School as well as the recommendations on zoning adjustments and potential school replacement within the Three Oaks Family of Schools in response to the growing population in the City of Summerside and surrounding areas. A wide variety of input was received at these meetings and continues to be submitted through the

online survey. Please visit the PSB website to access the reports, options considered, draft recommendations, and online survey. The Board of Trustees expects to receive an updated list of recommendations from consultant Dale Sabeau at our June public meeting.

With a little over a month left of the 2024-2025 school year remaining, many students are looking forward to their year-end trips and graduation ceremonies. It is an exciting time every school year and we wish all students success in their final month of learning and extracurricular activities.

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 May 20, 2025 Table of Contents

Director of Public Schools Branch Update

Acknowledging difficult times:

Over the past few weeks, the Public Schools Branch has faced deeply unsettling news that has made us aware of the gaps within the systems and safeguards meant to protect students. This moment has caused deep self-reflection, but also prompted action and awareness. We're glad to see that PSB leadership and staff have taken this moment as a catalyst for change and are optimistic that the independent review taken by the Hon. David H. Jenkins will work to further identify resources and gaps that the PSB can use to fortify its systems.

School review updates:

The public consultations for the Charlottetown review on high schools zoning and the Three Oaks Family of Schools regarding capacity are well underway and will close on Monday, June 2nd, 2025. After analysis of the feedback from the public, final recommendations for both reports will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the next meeting in June. Reviews of Queen Elizabeth Elementary, Montague Intermediate and Westwood Primary are currently underway and we will seek preliminary input from the public by sending guiding questions through PowerSchool. This first round of information will close before the end of June 2025 and will be followed by recommendations that will be presented to the

Board of Trustees in August-September. This will generate a full 30 day public consultation for each of these schools and their communities.

EAL/FAL Update

This school year to date, the EAL/FAL Division received 655 new EAL/FAL students into the school system which has resulted in an overall EAL/FAL total of 3770, 18% of the public-school enrollment. Of the 3,770 EAL/FAL students, approximately 1,090 have received support for language acquisition (1,043 at the PSB, 47 in the CSLF), and 49 are being monitored.

Language acquisition plays a crucial role in settlement and population growth on PEI. Recognition of the importance of language acquisition to settlement and population growth has resulted in significant growth in the EAL/FAL section over the past few years. While new positions were added in March of 2023 (9 FTE Instructional and 20 FTE Non-Instructional) to support the increased influx of EAL/FAL students within the PSB and CSLF, no new positions were added in 2024-2025. Pressure points continue to arise due to increased enrollment in the province and with the increasing need for support due to the increasing number of EAL/FAL students arriving with exceptional needs.

Ongoing work

- Due to the high volume of new EAL/FAL students into the school system and the widespread nature of registrations across PEI, the need for professional development opportunities has become paramount;
- In September 2024, the online professional development modules were updated;
- *Level One: The Big Picture* was offered to all PEITF members and CUPE members. To date, almost 2,105 administrators, teachers, educational assistants, youth service workers, administrative assistants, bus drivers and custodians have received certificates of completion;
- *Level Two: Building Capacity in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Schools* was completed and offered to all PEITF members. Approximately 75 educators in 2024 have received certificates of completion;
- Professional learning with Dr. Carol Salva, *Boosting Achievement: Reaching Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education* occurred on March 27th and 28th. Over 100 stakeholders across our education system spent the day focusing on strategies to support EAL students. Beneficial to all learners, Dr. Salva highlighted strategies for educators to use in the classroom by fostering a more inclusive, engaging, and supportive learning environment. On March 28th, Dr. Salva spent the morning at Prince Street Elementary modeling her strategies in a classroom and debriefing the session with administrators and teachers. The afternoon followed the same process at Stonepark Intermediate.

New Initiatives

1. STEP Implementation– School Transition EAL Program Implemented for .5/day in 7 Schools: Athena Consolidated; Glen Stewart, Queen Charlotte, Sherwood, Spring Park, Stratford Elementary and West Royalty Elementary.

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. Full implementation for MCIS for all schools in September 2024.

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 1,090 EAL/FAL learners with itinerant teacher support and approximately 200 EAL students with school-based and online secondary EAL courses.

District/Board	Number of Students	Percentage
PSB	3, 621	96.0%
CSLF	149	3.95%
Total	3, 770	100.0%

Finance Update

Our work with our March 31, 2025 year-end is ongoing, Finance staff are busy preparing final trial balances and working with the Department of Education on related party transactions. Management and staff are also preparing for our external auditors, Grant Thornton, to be actively working on the file starting the week of May 20th in preparation for our June 30th deadlines with the province.

At the same time our staff are working on finishing up work on the 2024-25 fiscal, new year 2025-26 is well underway and staff are working on posting invoices for that as well. This can be a complicated juggling act as year-end cut-off is important and the implications for posting in the wrong year can be arduous to fix. Our Finance staff must maintain a high level of attention to detail, of which they are extremely strong.

The Finance team is also working with schools on final balances from their fiscal 2024-25 financial budgets.

As the Fiscal 2025-26 Budget has been presented in the PEI Legislature and deliberation as concluded, the Public Schools Branch is anxiously awaiting their 2025-26 budget letter. This notification of funding has implications for both budgets and FTE staffing allotments. The Finance department is in the beginning stages of preparing budget worksheets in order to be ready to expedite the process and have 2025-26 budgets calculated and uploaded as soon as possible.

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.

Human Resources Update

Staffing for the upcoming 25/26 school year has begun for Administrator and Branch Based positions. Teacher staffing will begin, we expect this week, once we receive the budget letter. CUPE 3260 employees will receive their assignments for the 25/26 school year on June 6, 2025 and the first round of positions for this group will begin on June 9, 2025.

The new administrator hires/changes are as follows for the 25/26 School Year:

Tanya Gaudet, VP at O'Leary

Michaela Stephan, VP at Spring Park

Evan Killorn, VP at CRHS

Lynette MacKinnon, Principal at Spring Park

Andrew Petrie – VP at Colonel Gray

Chrissy Appleby – VP at Queen Elizabeth

Alisha McGillvray – VP at Bluefield

Elizabeth MacKenzie – VP at West Kent

Patti Davidson – VP at West Royalty

Natasha Bromley – VP at LM Montgomery

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 is also working with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) 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 designed and tendered in preparation for 2025/2026 summer construction. Property Services is also planning all summer maintenance projects. This involves discussions with Principals about projects they would like to see completed by our maintenance team.

School Safety has been working on the final phase of the radon testing, which includes 16 schools. Samples were gathered and sent for testing already, and results will be posted on PSB's website once all are received. The schools that received the mitigation systems were also monitored again to ensure the systems are working as designed. These results will also be posted to the public once available.

Major Capital Projects:

Property Services and DTI are now working on three major capital projects, Stratford High school, East Royalty school and Queen Charlotte Intermediate addition. 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 committee for both these projects have been meeting with the team of Consultants to move these projects forward.

Student Services Update

PSB Strategic Plan:

All Students Services Teams have been working to provide their contribution to the development of the PSB Strategic Plan. All teams have met to discuss how they support the success, well-being, and community engagement of all students and staff within the vision and mission of the Board. Discussion and sharing will take place at the next Team Rep meeting on May 20th.

Craque-Code

PSB Student Services and the Department of Education (French Division) are happy to share information on the development of a long-awaited, evidence based, PSB-specific literacy intervention for French Immersion students called Craque-Code. It is based on the Science of Reading and was developed by Anne Marie Valois and Nathalie Ricard Campbell, PSB staff members.

Craque-Code is similar in scope and application to Foundations in English. It is aligned with the Tier 1 classroom instruction and curriculum and has been developed as a corresponding Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 Literacy intervention.

School Counsellors Meeting

School Counsellors met on May 8 and covered a number of topics including Substance Use and Adolescence and presentations by Chad Morash, the Provincial Responsible Gambling Coordinator, Child and Youth Advocates Dr. Erica Evans and Dr. Merissa Mitchell, and Provincial Mental Health & Addictions Patient Navigator Kaley Knox.

Special Needs Assessment Process (SNAP)

At the Principal's Meeting on May 13th, information on the status of the SNAP process was shared. The team in Student Services is allocating educational assistant hours based on the status quo, that is the resources that have been provided for this current school year. The challenge is always the exiting needs versus entering needs. This year we have 138 hours of needs exiting our school system, with 678 hours of needs entering our system based on the SNAP criteria. This does not include any "unanticipated needs" that may be identified before the school year begins in September. Additional needs will be identified as children are diagnosed, are registered for school late, or move to the province.

This information is stressful for schools who already are challenged to meet the needs of current students. Student Services staff work hard to equitably provide limited resources to students who require additional support to be successful in school.

Transportation Update

Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular Transportation

In addition to conducting 660 school bus runs utilizing 264 regular buses every school day, PSB Transportation Services has also organized drivers, buses, and schedules to support over 1,500 co-curricular and extra-curricular trips thus far this year. We expect an additional 500 or so to take place between now and the end of June. Further, assessments are completed annually for approximately 200 additional off-Island or overnight student travel opportunities that do not involve PSB buses.

New Buses

The 41 new buses scheduled to be purchased for PEI schools are scheduled to enter the production line the week of May 19. Delivery is expected to begin mid-June, with the remainder to be received prior to the end of the summer school break. 37 of these are earmarked for the PSB, 4 of which will be wheelchair accessible, and all will be diesel powered. These new purchases will offset the same approximate number required to be removed from the provincial fleet due to age limitations and maintenance related issues, etc.

Level 3 Charging Stations

Contractor site visits are currently underway re planning for Level 3 charging station installations at our prince county High Schools, as well as at all PSB schools with intermediate grades. i.e. all schools offering grade 7 or above. Should our bus fleet ever become fully electric, Level 3 chargers will be essential to support PSB extra-curricular and co-curricular travel needs (see above).

6. RCMP Presentation- Inspector Harder- Criminal Background Process

05/20/03

Inspector Harder of the RCMP provided a presentation regarding criminal records check and vulnerable sector check processes in Canada. The checks are Canadian-only. In accordance with the *Criminal Records Act*, checks cannot use information from other countries due to verification issues. The discussion emphasized the importance of thorough background checks and due diligence beyond the records checks.

7. Path to Advocacy

05/20/04

The Board will continue to examine avenues for advocating enhanced background checks that capture international offences.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



Chair Signature of Approval