Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees Public Meeting
October 8, 2026
Minutes

The Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees hosted a public meeting on Thursday, October 8, 2026 at Westwood Primary School.

Present in person:	Andrew MacFarlane, Board Chair- Charlottetown Family of Schools Karen Clare, Vice-Chair- Bluefield Family of Schools Gaylene Carragher, Trustee- Charlottetown Family of Schools Wade Czank, Trustee- Montague Family of Schools Marcella Byrne, Trustee- Morell and Souris Families of Schools Emily McKeown, Trustee- Three Oaks Family of Schools Andrew Avery, Trustee- Westisle Family of Schools Dennis Lewis, Appointed Trustee Robyn MacDonald, Acting Assistant Director, Public Schools Branch Natasha Monaghan, Executive Assistant, Public Schools Branch Sherry Flynn, Principal, Westwood Primary Patrick Richard, Vice-Principal, Westwood Primary Lorraine Jameson, Home and School Association Representative
Present virtually:	Stephanie Arnold, Appointed Trustee Andrew Rose, Appointed Trustee Members of the public
Regrets:	Peter Fullerton, Trustee- Kensington and Kinkora Families of Schools Rob MacAdam, Acting Director, Public Schools Branch

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Board rose into the public meeting which was called to order at 7:50p.m. Chair Andrew MacFarlane welcomed all in attendance and thanked the staff of Westwood Primary for hosting the Board.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

10/08/01 **It was moved by Andrew Avery and seconded by Gaylene Carragher that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried**

3. MEETING MINUTES:

10/08/02 **It was moved by Gaylene Carragher and seconded by Marcella Byrne that the minutes from the September 10, 2026 meeting be approved as presented. Motion carried**

4. RESOLUTION AMENDMENT:

10/08/03 **It was moved by Emily McKeown and seconded by Andrew Rose that the resolution passed at the August 27, 2026 meeting regarding the naming of the new East Royalty School be amended to the following:**

WHEREAS the Public Schools Branch (PSB) is establishing a new elementary school facility located in the **East Royalty** / Charlottetown family of schools area to serve local students and the surrounding community;

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees has authority and oversight concerning the official naming of public school facilities across the district; and

WHEREAS stakeholder feedback, community engagement, and consultation processes have concluded with the proposed name reflecting Prince Edward Island's cultural heritage and identity;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Trustees of the Public Schools Branch hereby approves the official name of the new facility located in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, as **Green Gables Elementary School**; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Director of Public Schools Branch (or their designate) be authorized and directed to execute all administrative, operational, signage, and communications steps necessary to formalize and implement the approved name.

5. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair Andrew MacFarlane shared the following report:

Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees
Chair's Report
September-October 2026

These past few weeks have been busy as everyone settles into the new school year. I hope that everyone has a good year.

The Board of Trustees held its Annual General Meeting on September 24. One of our priorities this Fall was the Public Schools Branch's 2025-2026 Annual Report, which was approved that evening. The Annual Report gives the reader a better understanding of the PSB's activities, successes, challenges, and its finances. That report will be published by the PSB when the provincial government tables the Annual Reports this Fall. Another priority was appointing an Auditor for the PSB's financial statements for the next three years. Through the bidding process, Doane Grant Thorton was awarded a contract. This Fall, we'll also review more policies, as well as a Code of Conduct under the Minister's Directive 2026-06. In the coming weeks, we are also looking at learning opportunities for the Trustees as part of our professional development.

We've previously mentioned that we're making efforts to raise awareness of the Board of Trustees and its activities. We recently added a "News" tab to our Board of Trustees page on the PSB website, and we encourage Islanders to check out that page from time to time. Our latest post is

about the four L.M. Montgomery students who helped name the new Green Gables Elementary School. We're also holding our meetings across the province and tonight is our second meeting in the community, and we're pleased to be here tonight.

I wanted to remind everyone about the P.E.I. Home and School Federation's Semi-Annual Meeting on Tuesday, October 20 at Gulf Shore Consolidated School. These meetings are great for bringing together the school community to connect, learn, understand, and share ideas.

Lastly, the Board of Trustees will say "good-bye" to one of our appointed Trustees, Stephanie Arnold, who has participated as an active member of the first Board of Trustees established four years ago, as well as the first year for this Board of Trustees. Stephanie has supported students, the education system, and the school community for several years in various capacities. Their wisdom, contributions, and passion have greatly benefited our Board of Trustees. Thank you, Stephanie.

Remember the student.
Thanks
Andrew MacFarlane CD
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
School Board Trustee Zone 5 (Charlottetown & Stratford Family of Schools)
amacfarlane@edu.pe.ca
Cell: 902-200-1804

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Acting Director Rob MacAdam shared the following report:

Director of Public Schools Branch Update

We are approximately one month into the 2026–2027 school year, and it has been an exciting, energetic, and productive start for our students, staff, parents, and guardians. Across the district, our schools have quickly established vibrant learning environments while strengthening the bonds between home, school, and community.

I am pleased to welcome Robyn MacDonald to our leadership team as our new Assistant Director. Robyn brings extensive K-12 experience as a dedicated school administrator. Her deep understanding of school operations and student success makes her a tremendous asset to our team and school district.

Schools across the Public Schools Branch (PSB) hosted annual Meet the Staff evenings throughout September, welcoming families into our buildings. These events provide crucial information and establish a strong foundation of communication between home and school to ensure a positive experience for every student.

A number of our schools in the Charlottetown area have partnered with community organizations to pilot the Bike Bus model. This initiative gives students a safe, active way to bike to school in

groups led by adult volunteers. It is an outstanding example of what can be accomplished when our schools and families work together.

Our fall sports season is in full swing. PEISAA competition is underway in soccer, volleyball, field hockey, golf, baseball, and cross country running. Cross country has been a highlight, seeing many elementary students step into school athletics for the very first time. Best of luck to all student-athletes competing this fall!

School band programs have begun rehearsals and concert practices as students work toward regional competitions and public performances throughout the year.

Schools across the province took part in our annual Terry Fox Run. Students raised funds and awareness for cancer research while taking time in the classroom to learn about Terry's legacy. I am proud of how our students continue to carry forward his enduring message of hope.

In reflection and observance of Orange Shirt Day on September 29th and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, schools provided meaningful opportunities for students to learn about residential schools and reflect on our shared responsibility for reconciliation.

As part of these educational activities, Senator Brian Francis visited East Wiltshire Intermediate to speak directly with students about truth, healing, and indigenous leadership.

Our back-to-school bus safety campaign is receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback. In partnership with provincial government departments and law enforcement agencies across PEI, we are promoting a unified message: we all play a vital role in keeping children safe in school zones, at bus stops, and on the road.

The PSB team continues dedicated work on a new PSB Code of Conduct to fulfill the requirements and timelines set out in Ministerial Directive MD 2026-06. Formal consultations with internal and external partners, as well as the broader community, will begin in the coming weeks.

Over the next two months, students at our three capital city high/intermediate schools will begin the registration process for the upcoming school year in preparation for the opening of the new Stratford High School. Parents and guardians should watch for communications from the PSB and their respective schools in the coming weeks to ensure a smooth, successful transition.

Thank you to our educators, support staff, and community volunteers who lend their time, talent, and energy to creating these rich experiences for our students. Your dedication sets the tone for a fantastic year ahead.

EAL/FAL Update

This September, Prince Edward Island welcomed over 3900 multilingual students across island public schools, which is a 50% student increase (2358) since September of 2019. Approximately 935 multilingual students are receiving English or French language instruction from an EAL or FAL

itinerant teacher. The number of newly arrived students has decreased 42%, from 331 new arrivals last year to 193 this year. Trends show this decrease is mainly in the Charlottetown and Stratford areas. As a result, we require more EAL/FAL itinerant teachers and EAL Youth Service Worker in the western area of the province.

While multilingual student arrivals and caseload numbers are down, we are still seeing a significant increase in arrivals with exceptional needs, which has a 650% increase (from 8 students in 2019-2020 to 60 for 2026-2026). With approximately 40 new arrivals out of 331 presenting with additional needs in 2025 as compared to 25 new arrivals out of 193 presenting with exceptional needs, this fall, the percentage is still increasing overall. The DIvision added another EAL Inclusive Educational Consultant to the team and continues to advocate for additional support (i.e. Educational Assistants and Youth Service Workers).

The Division provides secondary virtual EAL courses for 55 students across the province. There are 8 schools participating. One of our online EAL itinerant teachers also provides a hybrid model with in-person support. EAL YSWs support these virtual programs as well. While we do not provide pull-out language support for new multilingual kindergarten learners due to the play-based curriculum, three of our current EAL itinerant teachers provide in-class support to kindergarten teachers in classrooms with multilingual learners.

Consequently, we have increased our capacity to maximize the support we provide through our language programs and services. This may include providing more targeted functional language support for new learners with formal education gaps and/or for those at lower language levels. We have also added more opportunities for EAL/FAL teachers to provide push-in support, where they enter content-area classrooms to work with EAL learners in addition to providing targeted language instruction, using the pull-out model for smaller groups.

Finance Update

The Director of Finance has performed a detailed review of expenditures to date. The forecasted impacts of pricing increases on non-discretionary expenditures e.g. heating fuel have been identified and communicated to the Department.

We are now working with PSB's 2026-27 appointed auditors, Doane Grant Thornton, to ensure a smooth adoption of the new financial statement presentation Public Sector Accounting Standards. Our Payroll team has been exceptionally busy at the start of the school year, working closely with the Human Resources Department to support the rollout of the SmartFind Express tool. Their hard work, dedication, and commitment to supporting implementation of this new technology are greatly appreciated.

Promoting the importance of financial stewardship and supporting principals' financial literacy has long been a key responsibility of Finance leadership. We have identified this as a key initiative for the year, focused on strengthening principals' financial literacy through simplified financial reporting and scenario-based learning integrated into Principals' meetings.

Student Services

The start of the 2026–2027 school year saw significant engagement and direct support from the Public Schools Branch (PSB) Student Services team. Consultants worked closely with schools across the province to ensure smooth initial startup and facilitate student transitions. While early efforts have been warmly welcomed, ongoing operational challenges related to unanticipated student needs and inter-school moves continue to impact staffing allocations.

In addition to direct school-based support, system-wide Professional Development (PD) sessions were successfully delivered in early September for both Resource Teachers and School Counsellors to align priorities, launch key safety initiatives, and streamline inter-agency services.

Resource Teacher PD
The primary focus of the Resource Teacher professional development session was equipping educators with clear role expectations, updating them on multi-agency support teams such as the Student Well-Being Team and Health PEI Children with Complex Needs Team. Resource teachers were also provided dedicated time for start-of-year school preparation.

School Counsellor PD
The primary focus of the School Counsellor session focused heavily on provincial youth safety strategies, suicidal ideation protocols, and mental health programming updates. Several key resources were shared with School Counsellors to support their work in schools.

Human Resources

SmartFind Express System
The Human Resources, Payroll, and IT teams are actively supporting schools through the introduction of the SmartFind Express tool, maintaining continuous dialogue with the vendor to address system challenges and ensure a consistent experience across all teams. To support future system enhancements and refine training materials, key learnings are being documented throughout the process.

Background Checks
The implementation of the Minister's directive is nearing final completion in partnership with the Summerside Police. Scheduled for rollout in October, a new online platform will allow permanent employees to update their background checks seamlessly. This process significantly improves efficiency, allowing over 90% of checks to be completed digitally with minimal need for in-person visits to a police station.

Property Update

Facility Emergencies
Following the completion of summer capital projects and the successful reopening of schools, the Property Services Division experienced an unusually demanding month in September due to a series of urgent facility emergencies. Across several school sites, our team was called upon to

respond to multiple critical incidents, including localized school fires, solar battery fires, power outages, interior flooding, and entire school sewer backups. In each instance, our staff and emergency maintenance teams reacted swiftly to contain the damage, restore vital building services, and ensure student and staff safety with minimal disruption to class schedules.

Tender Preparation

In tandem with emergency response efforts, Property Services continued to advance the budget reallocation strategy outlined in September. Design work and tender package preparation are now actively underway for the minor capital projects slated for execution during the Christmas and March breaks. Early tendering remains a priority to secure materials and contractors well ahead of these short construction windows, ensuring our remaining capital funds are fully allocated prior to the March 31 fiscal year-end.

Winter Preparation

Over the coming month, Property Services will focus on finalizing remediation and insurance documentation for October's emergency incidents while pushing winterization projects across all PSB facilities. By balancing immediate crisis management with proactive winter planning, our team remains committed to maintaining safe, reliable, and operational environments across all schools.

Transportation and Risk Management Update

Start-Up

Overall, our school year start-up has gone quite smoothly as compared to typical years past. With thousands of changes and requests each new school year, school start-up always presents a period of adjustment with bus loads and route modifications. 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 drivers and buses, our ability to accommodate all requests is limited, however we evaluate every proposed change carefully due to its direct impact on our students and staff.

School Bus Safety

A new school year presents a critical time for the reinforcement of school bus safety protocol. This year we are pleased to report enhanced partnerships with local law enforcement and various divisions of government. It has been recognized that student safety is a shared responsibility between our bus drivers, the travelling public, students and parents, our schools, and the communities and support systems we serve. Increases in safety related communication have included media campaigns via both social and traditional media outlets, enhanced direct instruction to drivers and school staff, and information for students and parents to be reinforced at both the school and home levels. In October, police services will further support our efforts by hosting a series of local police stops, whereby they will distribute school bus safety related pamphlets. October 19 to 23 will be recognized as our fifth annual provincial school bus safety week. We use this week to place even greater focus on safe school bus transportation, as well as acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our school bus drivers and system staff in safely addressing the transportation needs of tens of thousands of students daily.

7. POLICY:

0/08/04 **It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Marcella Byrne that the School Community Memorial Activities Policy be approved as amended, ensuring section 5.1 is finalized, establishing a consistent and compassionate framework for the consideration, approval, and management of memorials within the Public Schools Branch. Motion carried**

8. PISA REPORT REQUEST:

0/08/05 **WHEREAS the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) produces Canadian and provincial-level results, including results relating to Prince Edward Island; and**

WHEREAS the Board requires an authoritative record before discussing or relying on PISA results for Prince Edward Island students or schools;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees request that the Department of Education and Early Years provide an official copy of every publicly releasable PISA record held by, or accessible through, the Department that specifically reports on Prince Edward Island students or schools, including provincial and, where available, English- and French-language-system results, including the most recent 2025 results;

AND THAT the requested package include the applicable PISA cycle, assessment domain, sampling and participation information, technical notes, methodology, limitations, and any PEI-specific interpretation or evaluation;

AND THAT if the Department does not hold the authoritative record, it identify the responsible custodian and the correct request route, including any applicable Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, or OECD source.

Moved by Andrew Avery
Seconded by Gaylene Carragher
Motion Carried

0/08/06 **9. ADJOURNMENT:**

It was moved by Andrew MacFarlane and seconded by Wade Czank that the public meeting be adjourned. Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.
Next meeting November 12, 2026- Tignish Elementary School

Chair Signature of Approval