Public Schools Branch
Board of Trustees Public Meeting
September 10, 2026
Minutes

The Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees hosted a public meeting on Thursday, September 10, 2026 at Montague Intermediate 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
Peter Fullerton, Trustee- Kensington and Kinkora Families of Schools
Wade Czank, Trustee- Montague Family of Schools
Marcella Byrne, Trustee- Morell and Souris Families of Schools
Andrew Avery, Trustee- Westisle Family of Schools
Rob MacAdam, Acting Director, Public Schools Branch
Natasha Monaghan, Executive Assistant, Public Schools Branch
Kelly Morris, Manager of Policy Public Schools Branch
Janet Perry-Payne, Presenter
Jolene Johnston, Principal, Montague Intermediate School
Michelle VanColen, Vice-Principal, Montague Intermediate School
Debra Matheson, Home and School Association Representative
Members of the Public

Present virtually:
Emily McKeown, Trustee- Three Oaks Family of Schools
Andrew Rose, Appointed Trustee
Dennis Lewis, Appointed Trustee

Regrets:
Stephanie Arnold, Appointed Trustee

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Board rose into the public meeting which was called to order at 7:39p.m. Chair Andrew MacFarlane welcomed all in attendance including the MLAs for Montague-Kilmuir and Morell-Donagh and thanked the staff at Montague Intermediate for hosting the Board.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

9/10/01 **It was moved by Peter Fullerton and seconded by Andrew Avery that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried**

3. MEETING MINUTES:

9/10/02 **3.1 It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Gaylene Carragher that the minutes from the July 30, 2026 meeting be approved as presented. Motion carried**

9/10/02.2 **3.2 It was moved by Marcella Byrne and seconded by Peter Fullerton that the minutes from August 27, 2026 be approved as presented. Motion carried**

4. SCHOOL STUDIES:

4.1 Montague Intermediate School

9/10/03 **It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Karen Clare that a public consultation regarding Montague Intermediate School Study be held for at least 30 days following this meeting in accordance with the School Review Policy. Additional information about the consultation will be posted on the PSB website. Motion carried**

4.2 Westwood Primary School

9/10/03.2 **It was moved by Karen Clare and seconded by Gaylene Carragher that a public consultation regarding Westwood Primary School Study be held for at least 30 days following this meeting in accordance with the School Review Policy. Additional information about the consultation will be posted on the PSB website. Motion carried**

5. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair Andrew MacFarlane shared the following report:

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

As the new school year begins, I hope our students and families enjoyed the summer break and had an opportunity to rejuvenate.

The Board of Trustees was busy in July and voted on four important items: 2026-27 Operating Budget, 2025-26 Financial Statements, 2027-28 Capital Budget, and a Treasury Board Submission for additional resources. In August, our Board of Trustees voted on the name of the new elementary school in East Royalty. There will be a public announcement at a later date.

In August, the Board of Trustees also began preliminary planning for the Fall. We have several priorities with various deadlines from mid-September to December 31. And, finally, I was pleased to attend the Administrators Meeting on August 26 as our Principals and Vice-Principals prepared for this school year. It was a great learning experience for me and gave me a greater appreciation for the dedication and commitment of our Administrators.

Remember the student.

Andrew MacFarlane CD
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
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6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Acting Director Rob MacAdam shared the following report:

Director of Public Schools Branch Update

As we finish a busy summer at the Public Schools Branch, I wish to welcome our Board of Trustees and share my thanks for your commitment to education in Prince Edward Island.

I am pleased to welcome our two new Administrative Support Leaders (ASL) Maria Gallant and Ryan McAleer to our leadership team. Maria's previous role was Principal of Stonepark Intermediate and has a long career in our K-9 system. Ryan joins us from his role as Principal of Kinkora Regional High and both bring extensive experience and expertise to our system.

I would like to recognize the work of our staff, trustees and school communities in shaping our capital budget that was submitted this July, which includes the proposed expansion of Queen Elizabeth Elementary following the school review process.

Related to capital projects, we are happy to announce that Dylan Mullally, who was an ASL with the PSB, was the successful candidate for the principal of the new Stratford High. The opening of Stratford High School will take place to start the 2027-2028 school year. Our team has been working behind the scenes to prepare for this opening with several elements including student registration, staffing and community engagement planned throughout the upcoming school year.

Over the last several months, we have transitioned our approximately 4500 employees to a new absent management system called Smartfind. I would like to thank our team and partners for their work on this significant task. Modernizing our employee system combined with implementing recommendations from the Jenkins Report such as increased employee screening, offence declarations, and criminal record checks are important to enhance student safety and build public confidence.

The policy team at the PSB is working through a full review all while developing a number of new frameworks that will support school culture across the province. This includes development of a code of conduct that will apply to all in our school communities and finalizing policies and procedures on the updated school nutrition guidelines for schools to name two.

We're all looking forward to a great school year full of excitement and accomplishment and all the wonderful things that happen in classrooms, on fields, in libraries, in theatres and trades spaces across the fifty-six schools of the Public Schools Branch.

Regards,
Rob MacAdam
Acting Director of the Public Schools Branch

EAL/FAL Update

Data

In summary, the province has:

- welcomed 161 new multilingual students since July 1st, 2026;
- 928 multilingual learners (MLLs) who will receive English or French as an additional language support;
- 51 secondary MLLs taking EAL courses online at Bluefield, Charlottetown Rural, Colonel Gray, Kensington Intermediate Senior High, Montague Regional High, Souris Regional, Three Oaks, and Westisle;
- 4,042 MLLs in Prince Edward Island Public Schools.

Staffing Updates
New hires for the 2026-2027 school-year were filled in the following positions: an EAL/FAL Assessment Specialist, an EAL Inclusive Education Consultant, an EAL Online Itinerant Teacher, two additional EAL Itinerant Teachers, one FAL Itinerant Teacher, and three EAL Youth Service Workers. This brings the EAL/FAL Division to an overall complement of 63, which includes 40 EAL/FAL itinerant teachers and 13 EAL Youth Service Workers.

STEP (School Transition EAL Program)
Due to the ongoing capacity challenges in PEI Public Schools, as well as the low number of new students arriving with lower levels of English proficiency, STEP is not continuing at Spring Park Elementary or West Royalty this September. As many EAL Itinerant teachers have lower numbers of students on caseload, especially in the Charlottetown area, there will be an expectation that elements of the STEP continue in terms of support in functional language programming where required.

EAL Kindergarten Teacher Support
Last year, a kindergarten pilot at Spring Park Elementary consisted of an EAL itinerant teacher visiting English and French kindergarten classrooms. The biggest theme during these visits and conversations with teachers was communication gaps with newcomer families. While families were communicating with the school to some extent, attendance and academic achievement were the school's most pressing concerns. Kindergarten teachers identified their strong understanding of language and social development, and are often able to scaffold appropriately. They felt that when they (or a resource teacher) worked with an MLL student in kindergarten one-on-one, or in a small group, they saw a lot of progress academically. Based on this feedback and increasingly high numbers of EAL and FAL students entering Kindergarten, the same EAL itinerant teacher will continue with part of her assignment supporting teachers in Kindergarten classrooms at Sherwood and Lucy Maud Montgomery Elementary Schools. She intends to address the obstacles identified in the pilot program last year and to continue to look at ways to work more closely with newcomer parents and to extend this support to other kindergarten classrooms where possible.

Online Professional Learning
Our virtual professional development program, *Supporting Newcomer Children and Youth in PEI Schools through Professional Learning* aims to:

- provide a virtual and professional learning opportunity for all staff of the PEI public-education system;
- support PEI public-school staff with the training, knowledge, and learning to best meet the learning needs of our newcomer students;

- maintain the most up-to-date data of EAL/FAL student enrollment in PEI schools;
- support the responsibilities of its educational authorities on PEI;
- "... ensure that each student enrolled at a school operated by the education authority and each staff member employed by the education authority is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and a sense of belonging" (Education Act of PEI, 2022, p. 16).

To date in 2026, 110 people have completed Level 1, and 56 people have completed Level 2. Completing Level 1 is part of the onboarding process for all new PSB employees.

Stronger Together

The EAL/FAL Team started the year together on September 1st, reflecting on its connection between its "Why" and its *Vision* & *Mission*. Under the theme of "Stronger Together," the team reflected on MLL stories, videos, voices, successes, challenges, and the tremendous amount of change that comes with this file. We collaborated on ways to come together and to be *stronger together* despite the physical distance of staff located in schools across PEI. The energetic and positive day continued with reviewing lists of MLLs recommended for support, looking at total counts for each school, and reviewing our updated *2026-2027 EAL/FAL Staff Orientation Binders*. Christine Arsenault, from Payroll, presented on *Entering Leave in PeopleSoft*. The agenda for the afternoon included meeting in smaller groups: Secondary EAL Online, New Staff-Onboarding and Mentorship, FAL itinerant teachers, EAL YSWs, and teams of EAL/FAL staff who are assigned to the same school.

Finance Update

PSB's financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2026, were approved and signed on July 30, 2026. Management would like to acknowledge and thank the Finance and Payroll teams for their hard work and attention to detail throughout the audit process, which contributed to the successful completion of the audit and approval of the financial statements.

Under the guidance of the Office of the Comptroller's Procurement Services Division, PSB Finance completed the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for external audit services. Three firms submitted proposals: Doane Grant Thornton LLP, Fitzpatrick & Company, and BDO Canada. Following the evaluation process, a successful proponent has been recommended to the Board of Trustees for appointment as PSB's external auditor at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Schools were sent their 2026-27 budget allocations, along with reports detailing actual expenditures to July 31, 2026. Budget-to-actual reports are provided monthly throughout the school year to support ongoing financial monitoring and accountability.

Planning is underway for the development and submission of the 2027-28 Management Plan to the Department of Education and Early Years (DEEY). The completed plan is due to DEEY on November 16, 2026.

Student Services

The Student Services Division held its initial meeting of the school year on August 27th under the operational theme "Stepping Up Our Game in 2026–2027." The primary framework for the session

centered on strengthening internal operations, expanding external partnerships, and deepening divisional collaboration across all service areas.

Internal Operations: Staffing, PBIS, and Administrative Efficiency Internal operations focused on staffing updates, PBIS expansion, and administrative streamlined processes. The division welcomed several fixed-term and permanent staff members, including fixed-term Inclusive Education consultants Mandy Pigott, Jolene St John, and Marie Michelle Comeau, fixed-term Counselling Consultant Magan MacDonald, and permanent Speech-Language Pathologist Olivia Maynard.

Progress regarding Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS) highlighted steady expansion across Prince Edward Island to reinforce inclusive school culture. For the 2026–2027 academic year, Cohort 1 enters Year 3, prioritizing whole-school consistency, sustained staff commitment, and elevated student and community involvement. Simultaneously, Cohort 2 expands into five additional schools entering their Foundation Year without requiring supplementary full-time equivalent staffing. Cohort 2 will focus on establishing representative teams, training, setting clear expectations matrices, standardizing discipline flowcharts, and embedding Tier 1 data-driven tracking systems. On the administrative front, Public Schools Branch payroll staff provided targeted guidance to Student Services personnel regarding PeopleSoft leave tracking to ensure heightened accuracy in reporting.

External Partnerships and Specialized Supports Collaborative initiatives with external public entities focused on student health and multi-agency care coordination. Megan MacKenzie, Lead for the Student Well Being Team, provided a progress update outlining current services and community-facing mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Additionally, the Department of Health's Children with Complex Needs Team clarified the operational scope of the Complex Needs Care Coordinator Role. This clarification ensures seamless navigation across multiple agencies when managing high-needs students requiring intensive support.

Divisional Collaboration To eliminate departmental silos and to align service delivery, Director Raeanne Adams outlined new directives for inter-divisional collaboration. Every Student Services team is required to identify and partner with at least two other internal teams to conduct collaborative meetings and joint planning throughout the current school year.

Human Resources
We launched the Annual Offence Declaration process across all PSB staff in August with a deadline of October 10th. We are using the Peoplesoft system for the majority of teams and will track completions and follow-up where required over the next 6 weeks.
The remaining element of the updated Criminal Record Check process is in the final stages of being built in partnership with the Summerside Police Department. This online tool will enable a more seamless process for applicant, staff and HR teams.
We continue to work through reactivation of our Substitute / Casual pool of applicants. The enhanced elements are in place to complete all required checks, sign offs and training before individuals can start substituting.

Property Update

Summer Construction:
With the summer construction season officially concluded, the Property Services Division has successfully wrapped up major capital upgrades and maintenance projects across all school facilities in time for the return of students and staff. Through close coordination with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, contractors, and project managers, our focus over the past month shifted from active construction execution to final inspections, commissioning of equipment, and operational handovers. The proactive strategies established early in the season, including early tendering and material pre-procurement, paid off significantly. This allowed critical projects such as HVAC improvements, roof remediations, and accessibility enhancements to be completed on schedule.
While our major capital targets were achieved, a select group of minor capital projects could not be fully completed during the eight-week summer window. These outstanding items have now been deferred to our upcoming school closure windows: Christmas break, March break, and Summer 2027. Because unspent capital funds must be fully utilized prior to the end of the fiscal year on March 31, our division is pivoting to introduce and fast-track additional minor projects that can be realistically executed during the shorter winter and spring breaks. This ensures we maximize our allocated capital budget without carrying over unspent funds into the next fiscal year.
To support this shift and hit the upcoming construction windows, design work and public tendering for these new and deferred minor projects will begin immediately. Over the coming weeks, Property Services in collaboration with DTI will finalize project specifications, issue tender packages, and process close-out documentation for summer work. All PSB facilities are currently open, safe, and operating normally as we prepare for the next phase of winter maintenance and infrastructure upgrades.

Transportation and Risk Management Update

Ridership:
Approximately 5,000 routing changes were made during the summer months to accommodate new students entering our system, graduates exiting our system, student family movement, updates to childcare requirements, etc.
Initial student data indicates 16,897 students PSB students being eligible for transportation to/from their primary home address. 17,497 students, however, are scheduled to utilize PSB transportation for home & childcare purposes. While eligible ridership numbers are on par with last year (as are our number of drivers and school buses), the number of students utilizing PSB transportation to satisfy issues pertaining to childcare have been steadily increasing, thereby contributing to concerns regarding capacity and other issues on buses.

Extra/Co-Curricular Transportation Support
From September 2025 to September 2026, PSB school buses were used in support of 3,121 extra-curricular, co-curricular, and community support bus runs. This is an all-time high for our Transportation System.
Each of these trips require significant levels of coordination, support, detail, and attention which include:

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 re 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 including billings, driver overtime forms, substitute driver payroll forms, detailed information logged for reporting purposes, etc.
7) Address feedback regarding issues with any of the above.

Community supports during the summer months included support for Oak Acres, local swimming programs, B&G Clubs, regimental funeral, council of federal ministers, "Stuff a Bus" campaign and others.
Volumes continue to prove challenging to our limited support staff, in addition to supporting regular runs to and from school.

Start Up Driver Meetings
Six individual Start-up School Bus Driver meetings were hosted at Montague, Morell, Charlottetown, Bluefield, Summerside, and Westisle involving our 300 regular and substitute drivers. Points of emphasis included consistency of safe stops, Commit to Kids training and documentation, fleet and collective agreement updates, assignment of updated routes, and others.

5. POLICY:

9/10/04 **It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Marcella Byrne that the School Food Environment Policy be approved as presented. Motion carried**

6. POLICY COMMITTEEE:

9/10/05 **It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Peter Fullerton that effective August 13, 2026 Andrew Avery stepped down from the Policy committee with Marcella Byrne joining the Policy committee effective September 10, 2026. Motion carried**

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.
Next meeting Thursday September 24, 2026- AGM to be held at Stratford Town Hall

Chair Signature of Approval