

Public Schools Branch
Forty-First Public Board of Directors Meeting
June 29, 2022

Minutes

The Board of Directors for the Public Schools Branch met on Wednesday, June 29, 2022 in the Southport Boardroom, Stratford.

Present: Bethany MacLeod, Board Chair
Mary Jane Ready, Director
Norman Beck, Director

Also in Attendance:

Norbert Carpenter, Director of Public Schools Branch
Karen Redmond, Manager of Policy and Planning
Sheri Gauthier, Confidential Board Secretary
Becky Chaisson, Director of Corporate Services
John Cummings, Executive Director, DELL
Sterling Carruthers, School Health Specialist, DELL
Michelle Harris-Genge, Director, Inter-ministerial Women's Secretariat, DELL

1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 5:28 p.m. Board Chair MacLeod welcomed all in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

06/29/01 It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE MARCH 28, 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

06/29/02 It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck Jane Ready that the minutes of the March 28, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

3.2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No business to report.

4. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE UPDATE

John Cummings, Executive Director, Educational Services with the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning and Sterling Carruthers, School Health Specialist with the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning joined the meeting and provided an update.

5. FINANCIAL INVOICES

5.1 INVOICE 334166 – FEBRUARY FLEET CHARGES – CHARLOTTETOWN GARAGE

06/29/03

It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that invoice #334166 dated March 24, 2022 in the amount of \$139,278.23 for February fleet charges for the Charlottetown garage be approved as presented. Motion carried.

5.2 INVOICE 334675 – MARCH FLEET CHARGES – SUMMERSIDE DEPOT

06/29/04

It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that invoice #334675 dated March 31, 2022 in the amount of \$138,432.16 for March fleet charges for the Summerside depot be approved as presented. Motion carried.

5.3 INVOICE 334685 – MARCH FLEET CHARGES – CHARLOTTETOWN GARAGE

06/29/05

It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that invoice #334685 dated March 31, 2022 in the amount of \$183,682.08 for March fleet charges for the Charlottetown garage be approved as presented. Motion carried.

5.4 INVOICE 335728 – APRIL FLEET CHARGES – CHARLOTTETOWN GARAGE

06/29/06

It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that invoice #335728 dated May 16, 2022 in the amount of \$107,644.88 for April fleet charges for the Charlottetown garage be approved as presented. Motion carried.

6. DIRECTORS REPORT

(The complete Directors' Report will be filed with the official minutes).

Director, Norbert Carpenter, shared the following report.

The Public Schools Branch is putting the finishing touches on the 2021-22 academic school year. It has been another successful year with many things to celebrate. However, it has also been one of the more challenging years in recent memory. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to cause multiple challenges. Similar to the year previous, we are extremely proud of the work that all of our employees have done throughout the year. Both staff and students rose to the occasion. Our schools, once again, juggled the regular demands on top of the added challenges with the pandemic. Thank you staff, students, parents and stakeholders, for the unprecedented level of cooperation. We are excited to have returned to a level of normalcy during the final few 6-7 weeks of the school year and are looking ahead to next September.

Enrollment Trends and Review of Schools

As part of a regular practice, we will continue to keep a watchful eye on our enrollment trends and associated capacity at our schools. We currently have two schools in planning stages for construction, Sherwood Elementary and Stratford High. Furthermore, we have both Eliot River Elementary and Montague Consolidated currently receiving significant

renovations. As part of the review of schools process, currently five schools are being closely monitored. These schools are Birchwood Intermediate, Queen Charlotte Intermediate, Stonepark Intermediate, East Wiltshire Intermediate and Bloomfield Elementary. A report will be provided to the Board of Directors in the coming weeks highlighting any challenges and concerns with the five schools as we move forward.

Good things happening in schools

With COVID restrictions easing, schools had the opportunity to re-offer events and activities again!

- LM Montgomery Elementary hosted their science fair with over 70 projects from their grade 6 students.
- Kindergarten and Grade 4 students from Alberton Elementary were able to do their book buddy reading program and had a great time at a field trip that brought them to their local community library and Green Park Provincial Park.
- Colonel Gray Senior High School hosted an agricultural expo: Farm Day at the Gray. Students had the opportunity to interact with animals, check out some impressive farm machinery, and learn about the many job opportunities available in the agriculture and agri-food industries.
- The Easter Seals Ambassador School Tour was able to happen this year with our own Vaeda Matheson visiting schools across the province delivering her valuable message, "Be different and follow your heart".

Policy and Planning Update

The Safe and Caring Learning Environments policy and procedure were created in 2018 and establish the expectations for creating and maintaining a safe, caring, respectful and inclusive climate for learning and working, and promote a shared responsibility among members of the school community (staff, students, parents/guardians and volunteers) to create and maintain a positive school climate. These documents are currently being revised.

The revisions will include:

- a greater focus on student reporting,
- a revised Incident Response Chart for staff,
- a newly drafted Student Incident Reporting Document for Students, including multiple ways of reporting an incident and additional supports for students including the Child and Youth Advocate's Office,
- an On-line Reporting Form for students

Consultation with administrators, students, staff, parents and other interest groups, including the Child and Youth Advocate, will take place before the documents are complete.

Student Services

Welcome to Dominique Lecours who will be the new Director of Student Services. Dominique replaces Terri MacAdam. Terri has retired after a long career in our system. Terri's expertise and experience will be deeply missed. We wish Terri many years of health and happiness.

Student Services has had a very busy Spring. We have realigned our alternative programs to better meet student needs. Staffing has been a priority for CUPE 3260 positions. Also, transition meetings for students entering/leaving or transitioning to a new school are ongoing.

Mental Health Focus

Craig Clark has assumed the role of student services manager with a focus on mental health. Craig brings a vast amount of experience to this file. He is working on a mental health strategy and will be presenting to the Standing Committee on Education in late June.

Human Resources

Labour Relations

- We received the notice to bargain for CUPE Locals 1145, 1770, 1770. This will commence in the fall. PEITF and CUPE 3260 are moving to arbitration.
- The PSC/PSB joint RFP for Labour Relations Legal Council is finalized and approved by Treasury Board.

Staffing

Administrative staffing is almost complete. We hired 10 new principals and 18 new vice principals. We anticipate a couple more over the next two weeks. Since Easter the HR team has processed over 350 job postings.

- CUPE 3260 Assignments have been given to schools and job postings for vacancies have been posted. The following are vacant positions we will need to recruit to, EA 44 permanent (4,5,6 hour), 22 permanent (3 hour), two perm language interpreter positions, and 18 relief EAS.
- Over 260 fulltime and part-time teacher positions have been posted and filled. The majority being permanent contracts. Effective June 15, we move to open competitions.
- 63 candidates were interviewed for French positions. We've staffed 27 full year assignments, some are one-year fixed term, and some are assignments where school FTE is combined.
 - 5 unsuccessful and 9 declined offers (went elsewhere).
 - Still working on placements for some full year and partial year assignments.
 - 26 of the hires have Exempt/Superior/Advance + proficiency.
 - 10 have Advanced.
 - Waiting on at least 10 proficiency tests to come back.

Organization and Wellness

- We celebrated 107 retirees on June 9th.
- The "Core of the Community Campaign" is getting lots of attention on social media and feedback has been extremely positive.

Corporate Services

Finance

The Finance Department has been working hard to prepare and work through the March 31st year-end. Our external auditors have completed their on-site work and are now in the process

of completing our final financial statements. Draft statements have been submitted to the Comptroller's office and we will complete this process by June 30th. The finance staff is also assisting the schools in completing all the necessary financial work that has to be completed prior to the end of the school year. This is a busy time of the year for the finance staff and they have been working hard to ensure that everything gets completed on time.

Payroll

The Payroll Department has also been working hard to ensure that all the preparatory work is done to complete the teacher summer pays. They are also coming into another busy time where necessary position changes will have to be processed and ROEs will have to be issued for all 10 month employees. This is a busy time for the payroll staff as well, but they continue to work hard to ensure that everyone is paid on time.

We are also pleased to announce that Sanjeewa Rajapaksha will be joining the payroll department for a one-year term to backfill for an employee that is on leave. Sanjeewa will be working out of the Stratford office.

School Safety Services

School Safety Consultants continue to meet with school staff regarding the results from the hazardous materials assessments that were completed. These visits are almost completed, and the consultants continue to answer any questions that arise after the initial visit. School Safety Consultants have continued working with schools and property services to ensure any concerns are addressed and staff are educated on materials in their building and how to manage this accordingly to ensure a safe environment.

There are also a number of other priorities and initiatives within the system that the Safety Services Staff are continuing to work on to ensure a safe working environment. Many of these initiatives include various stages such as development/review, implementation and education of staff. The Safety Services team are working hard with all partners to ensure that the PSB safety program is a priority for the entire system.

We are pleased to announce that Elise Azar will be joining the school safety services as a School Safety Consultant on a one-year term to replace a leave within the department. Elise comes with vast experience and knowledge and we look forward to working with her and having her working with the schools.

Property Services

Property Services continue to be busy dealing with many maintenance issues that are arising. They continue to work with schools to find creative solutions for the many needs that they are being faced with on a daily basis.

Property Services staff have been busy planning for summer cleaning and maintenance work that will need to be completed when the instructional staff and students are not in the buildings. This includes managing staff allocations, ordering supplies and securing contractors to do the necessary work. The department wants to ensure that they are able to use the time that they have in the summer in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

Property Services staff also continue to play an integral role in the major construction projects that are under way and also in the planning stages. West Royalty Elementary is nearing the

end of the project but the summer months will be busy at the ongoing projects at Eliot River Elementary and Montague Consolidated. Planning work at Sherwood Elementary and Stratford High will continue over the summer months.

EAL/FAL

It has been a very busy Spring with new arrivals from all over the world. This school year, we have had 550 EAL/FAL learners enter the school system in K-12 from Souris to Tignish and all points in between. Our top source countries have been the Philippines, Hong Kong, Vietnam, China, India, Mexico, Ukraine, Jamaica and the Bahamas.

We have just completed more than 900 language proficiency re-assessments and are delighted with the progress our EAL/FAL learners are making. Our feedback sessions with parents will indeed be a celebration.

We are anticipating a busy summer with new arrivals and will continue to welcome our new families to our beautiful island.

Transportation

Driver recruitment, interviewing/hiring, and training continues to be a necessary focus of Transportation Services. Saturday, June 18, we held our second annual province-wide school bus driver job fair. Supervisors and drivers were on location in each of PEI's three counties promoting future positions as PSB school bus drivers. Electric buses were taken to each site, and overall feedback was excellent.

Electrification of Buses

The PSB continues to implement the Provincial initiative to replace all of its public school buses with electric. Between the FLSB and the PSB, we currently have 47 electric buses. Thirty-five additional electric buses have been ordered and are scheduled to be received during our next school year.

Infrastructure and charging stations continue to be our most significant challenge regarding the move to electric buses. As approximately 80% of PSB drivers currently park their buses at home, we are advocating strongly for future charging models to consider the impact the provincial charging strategy will have on our drivers.

School Bus Safety Task Force

Safety is of highest priority when it comes to transportation. A task force was implemented this year to address school bus safety in a more formal and structured way. Active members include representation from drivers, the PSB Home and School Association, Dept of Education, FLSB, and PSB. Other individuals and divisions of government are called upon when topics require.

Current focus includes: 1) the development and implementation of school bus safety educational materials to be delivered to primary students during the first few weeks of all future school years. 2) materials to better assist all school bus drivers 3) implementation of a school bus safety week each October that will highlight safety and celebrate the amazing

work currently being done. This year's focus will be on the issues of drivers going through flashing school bus lights.

Routing Updates

Significant changes to school bus routing have been developed for the Summerside family of schools, which are expected to better align the length of the school day for elementary schools in that area, as well as offer enhancements to issues around supervision, transfers, overall efficiency, and others. Changes are scheduled to go into effect in September.

Efficiency, overcrowding, student time aboard buses, and fiscal responsibility continue to be the driving factors that shape our routing efforts. Summer months always prove challenging with planning and preparation for September (removing graduating students, adding new kindergarten students, accounting for other new students (immigration or otherwise), students that move, etc. With a fixed number of buses and drivers, altering, adding, or eliminating bus runs are challenges that have direct impacts on students, drivers, and our system. Efforts during the summer in routing are among the most important decisions we make all year long.

Increases in Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular Travel

In light of COVID, our students have traveled very little in the past 2 years. With restrictions on student travel being lifted in the spring, our students have been participating in off-campus activities to a very significant extent. In addition to getting kids to and from school each day, in our final 3 weeks of the school year, transportation services will also have scheduled buses and drivers to accommodate 408 co-curricular and/or extra-curricular trips. In addition, we have also evaluated and approved 12 off-Island trips that do not involve PSB busing, to destinations as far away as Oxford, Ohio.

7. PUBLIC PRESENTATION

7.1 PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC – GENDER DIVERSITY GUIDELINES

Ms. Wanda Mehta presented to the Board of Directors. A copy of the presentation will be filed with the official minutes.

The Board expressed appreciation for the presentation. Chair MacLeod noted that a response would be provided to Ms. Mehta.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

No new business to report.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.