

Public Schools Branch
Fifty-Ninth Board of Trustees Public Meeting
Tuesday, July 30, 2024

Minutes

The Public Schools Branch Board of Trustees hosted their thirteenth public meeting on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, via Webex Virtual Platform.

Present: Heather Mullen, Board Chair
Stephanie Arnold, Vice-Chair
Beverley Ann Boulter, Trustee
Amanda Blakeney, Trustee
Wade Czank, Trustee
Jodi Zver, Trustee
Beckie Keezer, Trustee
Jacob Jadis, Trustee
Jaclyn Massey, Trustee
Rachel McCarthy, Trustee

Regrets: Jocelyne Ludgate, Trustee

Also, in Attendance:

Tracy Beaulieu, Director of the Public Schools Branch
Andrea Noye, Confidential Board Secretary
Karen Redmond, Manager, Policy, and Planning
Dale Sabeau,
Nathan MacLeod, Director of Property Services
Blake Crockett, Director of Finance
Dominique Lecours, Acting Assistant Director of the Public Schools Branch
Jonathan Mosher, Director of Human Resources
Matt MacLeod, Senior Communications Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Chair Mullen welcomed all in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Stephanie Arnold and seconded by Beckie Keezer that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE April 11, 2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

07/30/01

07/30/02

It was moved by Jacob Jadis and seconded by Beverley Ann Boulter that the minutes of the April 11, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

(The complete Board Chair's report will be filed with the official minutes.)

Chair, Heather Mullen shared the following report:

Reflecting back on the past few months, the three key areas that stand out are collaboration, planning and support. **Collaboration** In between our formal board meetings Trustees are busy visiting their local schools and communities, as well as working on committees within the Public Schools Branch, I want to thank them for their dedication in these areas. Many Trustees attended the 71st Annual Meeting of the PEI Home and School Federation (PEIHSF), this was a half day of meeting with parents, teachers, administrators, and many other interested groups discussing topics ranging from the Role of Education Assistants, Suicide Prevention, Foundations, COMPASS Results, Youth Sport Nutrition, and an Inclusion Report Update. I want to thank PEIHSF for their ongoing collaboration with the Public Schools Branch through the local and provincial leaders. Your feedback is important, and I hope you will continue to engage with your local Trustees as we begin a new school year.

The Public Schools Branch also hosted a half-day Safety in the Workplace "Think Tank" event. This was attended by representatives of all the union leaders involved in education in PEI. Thank you to Tracy Beaulieu and her team at the Public Schools Branch for hosting and facilitating this session on a topic which is difficult and affects all staff and students in various ways throughout the system. Thank you to everyone who attended for stepping forward in a collaborative manner to share your concerns and personal experiences and I look forward to future meetings of this group.

Planning A great deal of work goes into planning in the spring from Human Resources to ensure we have the staff teams in place for the fall, to the property services team gearing up to undertake repairs over the summer, our custodial teams do an incredible deep clean of our schools and I want to thank everyone for this effort which may feel like it is unseen but it ensures that we have a successful school year and is deeply appreciated. There is also a lot of planning regarding the future from our financial planning for the operating and capital budgets, the school review report for the Charlottetown Area of Schools and the recently released Inclusion report. As we continue to plan for the future of the Public Schools Branch in PEI, please share your feedback with [our office](#) or directly with your local Trustee, we want to hear from you.

Support All of this work is happening because we have excellent staff at all levels within the Public Schools Branch, everyone I have met is giving 110% in their roles and really care about the students of PEI. A familiar team member is now in a new role, and I am very pleased to welcome Dominique Lecours in her new role as Acting Assistant Director of the Public Schools Branch. Dominique's career in education has now

spanned over 30 years in roles such as teacher, department head, vice-principal and principal, all at the grade 7-12 levels.

Heather Mullen Chair, Board of Trustees Public Schools Branch Prince Edward Island

Meeting Scheduled – April/July 2024

PEI Home and School Federation Annual Meeting – April 13

Safety in the Workplace “Think Tank” - April 30

PSB Planning meeting – May 27

PSB Planning meeting – June 9

PSB Hearing Committee Planning – June 13

PSB Finance Meeting – June 14

Meeting with Minister/Deputy – June 18

PSB Finance meeting – June 26

PEI Coalition of Women in Government – June 24

PSB Finance meeting – July 24

PSB Hearing Committee Planning – July 26

5. DIRECTOR REPORT

(The complete Director’s Report will be filed with the official minutes.)

Director, Tracy Beaulieu shared the following report:

PBS Director’s Report - July 30, 2024

School Review and School Study

The recent review of our Charlottetown Family of Schools highlighted the need to address the impact population growth is having on our school infrastructure. Dale Sabeau - who was hired to conduct the study - followed up with a more comprehensive study and identified a need to accommodate the immediate and expected continued growth over the next several years. The study report being presented to the Board is recommending a series of strategic initiatives including expanding existing buildings, constructing new schools, and implementing more efficient use of available space.

With the continued population growth that has been experienced in many of our island schools, it is necessary that our focus be on planning and investing in our educational infrastructure to ensure that all students have access to quality learning environments. Mr. Sabeau has initiated the School Review process in the other Family of Schools and will be presenting his findings in a report that will be shared with the Board at an upcoming meeting. Section Header

Strategic Plan

Efforts to update the Public Schools Branch Strategic Plan are ongoing. April Howe has completed her survey of all PSB employees, and additional feedback was collected from branch-based staff during a June meeting. The draft plan will be presented to the Board for input at a later date.

Student Services

The Student Service Division completed a very busy year with planning and preparation continuing for the coming school year. The Acting Director of Student Services is Sandra Jay who is replacing Dominique Lecours until March 2025. In addition, we have three Managers of Student Services. Raeanne Adams joins Alison Campbell and Craig Clark in this role. The team looks forward to providing leadership and support to the staff of this very busy division.

Dianne Johnstone, a Speech Language Pathologist, retired in June. We congratulate her on a successful and committed career. Bethany Maynard was hired in her position. We are in the process of hiring a new SLP before September to complete our allocation. The staffing process is ongoing for our Alternative Education sites.

A video providing an overview of the PREPare program is in process and it will be provided to all PSB staff (teachers, bus drivers, EA's, YSW's, administration) as we move ahead with this important initiative.

Non-violent crisis intervention (NVCi) training for substitute and casual support staff was provided this summer.

Our annual SNAP process identified many more students requiring educational assistant support than was provided in the staffing allocation. As well, many more unanticipated needs have been identified after April 19 when the SNAP process was completed. Ensuring that we can meet the needs of students who require support is always a concern and we expect that more needs will be identified as the new school year begins. We are working with the Department to address the need for additional resources.

Human Resources

Staffing Announcement

The Public Schools Branch welcomes a new Human Resources Manager of Organizational Growth and Employee Experience, Andrew Austin, who will be starting on August 12. Andrew is coming to PSB from Health PEI where he was the Human Resources Manager for the past several years.

School Staff Planning

The Human Resources team have engaged with all 56 schools in the staff planning process for the 2024-2025 school year. Timelines for Teacher Transfers (June 15) and CUPE 3260 group (June 30) were met.

From June 1, 2023 to May 31, 2024 – HR Team has processed 14,672 job applications, successfully filling positions for 918 job competitions.

Collective Agreement - Bargaining

Agreement was reached with CUPE 1145 (Transportation), 1770 (Administration) & 1775 (Property) bargaining unit. New Collective Agreement was signed on June 14th for a 3-year deal from September 2022 through to June 2025. Education session

completed with PSB team on changes, wage increases to be implemented July 18, retro pay to be provided on August 15.

Agreement was reached with PEITF, with new Memorandum of Agreement ratified on June 27, awaiting final copy of the new agreement for signing and implementation. CUPE 3260 (EAs/YSWs) collective agreement expired on March 31, 2024, the Education Negotiating Agency (ENA) team has been formed, expect to commence bargaining in the Fall of 2024.

Projects

Vendor (Workland) has been selected for the new Applicant Tracking System (ATS). The new ATS is targeted to go live November 29, 2024 and will replace the current applicant system – Canada Gateway. Workland ATS will significantly streamline PSB's recruitment process and will make for a far better applicant experience.

Vendor (SABA) has been selected for the new Learning Management System (LMS). There is not a targeted go live date as of yet for the LMS system, once the change plan has been formalized there is expected to be a 26-week timeline for implementation. The new LMS will allow for on-demand, asynchronous training that can be easily delivered to all staff across PSB that can be tracked and reported upon to ensure the right training is delivered at the right time to the right employees.

Our Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, Accessibility Plus (EDIA+) initiative is underway. A PSB wide survey was conducted in the month of June, we are currently working with Crayon Solutions (3rd party supplier supporting this initiative) on analyzing feedback and putting together EDIA+ framework for review, further consultations with key interest holders.

Finance Services

Accounting Department Update

The Public Schools Branch completed its year-end work and, as per last year's AGM recommendation, engaged Grant Thornton for the audit engagement. The accounting firm completed its work and delivered an unqualified audit opinion. It is a credit to this department that staff take such care and skill in their work as to ensure it is accurate and free from material misstatement which leads to our continued unqualified audit opinion. The Board of Trustees Finance Committee (Jodi Zver, Becky Keezer) met with Grant Thornton (Partner Dennis Carver, Manager Jesse Knox and Senior Adam Ryan), Blake Crockett (PSB Director of Finance) and Ashley Higginbotham (PSB Finance Manager) on June 25th to go over the statements and ask any questions. The Finance Committee, after all questions were addressed, tentatively approved the statements for signing (formal approval occurs at the Annual General Meeting). Board Chair Heather Mullen and Finance Committee Chair Jodi Zver signed the statements on June 28th, 2024 and the final financial statement package was sent to the provincial government to meet our reporting deadline (due June 28th, 2024).

The accounting department is now busy preparing budgets, preparing for the fall school year and paying invoices related to summer maintenance/major projects. The department will also be planning to complete the 2nd Quarter Forecast for Government submission by early September.

Payroll Department Update

The Public Schools Branch payroll department completed a very busy spring/beginning of summer with year-end payroll. The department is extremely busy during the majority of the year, however, end of school year procedures, final pays, retirements, deferred pays, records of employment (ROE), summer schedules (maintenance and branch office) and general employee questions/inquiries make for a heavy start to the summer. As stated in the accounting section relating to our year-end audit; it is also a credit to the payroll department staff that they take such care and skill in their work as to ensure it is accurate and free from material misstatement which leads to our continued unqualified audit opinion.

The payroll department is now busy completing summer pays for various employee groups as well as working with our Human Resources Department to set up new hires and be ready for the 2024-25 school year.

Property Services

Maintenance & Minor Capital Repairs

Property Services are actively working through our summer priority projects that were requested by each school (more than 150 projects across the province), while still tackling the day-to-day maintenance across the system and full summer cleaning at each of the schools.

Property Services is also working with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) on the 2024/2025 minor capital projects, which has grown to 69 different projects. Many of these projects are currently ongoing at the schools, most expected to be completed prior to school returning in September.

Major Capital Projects

Property Services and DTI are continuing to work through two major capital projects, Sherwood Elementary and Stratford High, as well as finishing Eliot River Elementary renovation and addition. Construction on these projects is progressing well, with Eliot River expected to be complete (including deficiencies) by end of August. A major capital project for Queen Charlotte addition was also initiated. The planning committee that was appointed has met several times over the last few months and a space program and concept floor plan was created. DTI is currently working through their process and expects our next committee meeting to take place in September.

School Safety

School Safety Services collected the radon tests from the second round of schools and when the test results were received, the information was provided to the public. All schools in the second round of testing came back with levels in the acceptable range, so no mitigation is required at these schools. Out of the four schools from the original round of testing that showed signs of elevated levels of Radon, two were mitigated in August 2023 and monitored again this past winter. The other two schools are having their mitigation system installed this summer (2024) and will be complete prior to school in September. These schools were monitored this past year and will be monitored again over the next year to ensure the mitigation system is working as designed. The

remaining 16 schools will be tested over the next season. The tests will be collected, and results received next Spring.

EAL/FAL

New EAL/FAL Learners

Approximately 110 new EAL/FAL learners have arrived on PEI since July 1. New EAL/FAL learners have come from many countries, including the Philippines, Vietnam, China, India, Bangladesh, Morocco, Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahamas, Nigeria, Colombia, Maldives, and Ukraine. New arrivals are anticipated to continue as the province increases its population, especially in the next few months, as August and September typically represent our heaviest influx of new students.

Retirement

Congratulations to Director Janet Perry-Payne on her retirement in July. Janet has been a steadfast advocate for our EAL students, families, and community. She has earned great respect from her colleagues in education, who have had the privilege to work and learn alongside her. We wish Janet all the best as she embarks on this new chapter in her life and thank her for her dedicated work throughout her career in our school system.

Staffing Announcement

We would like to congratulate Vicki Whitlock who has assumed the role of Director of EAL/FAL. Vicki brings vast knowledge and experience working with this file and we are pleased that she will continue to be a strong advocate. Congratulations Vicki.

Significant staffing changes for the EAL/FAL Division include the recent retirement of Director, Janet Perry-Payne. Vicki Whitlock began her transition to the role of Director on July 1. Kieran Hennessey will move into the role of Manager of EAL/FAL Programs and Services on August 5. As the EAL/FAL Division continues to support the PSB and CSLF with the continuous influx of new EAL/FAL students, our team has grown to 60 staff members, including 37 EAL/FAL Itinerant Teachers, 13 EAL Youth Services Workers, and 10 office staff. To support school guidance counsellors in meeting the social, emotional, cultural, and transitional needs of our EAL/FAL students, our new EAL/FAL Counseling Consultant, Rosalyn Strickey, will join our team on September 2.

Summer STEP

The Summer STEP (School Transition EAL Program) was received very positively by parents of new EAL learners. The Summer STEP is offered out of Murphy's Pharmacy Community Centre for new EAL/FAL students with lower levels of English language proficiency in grades 1-9 from July 8 to August 16. Currently, there are 35 children in this summer program, staffed by experienced EAL Itinerant Teachers and EAL Youth Service workers. Staff work on the development of students' functional language levels to support their successful transition to PEI schools in September.

Transportation/Risk Management

Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Transportation Up

In addition to transporting students to and from school daily, PSB Transportation Services has supported 2,243 co-curricular and extra-curricular trips throughout the 2023-24 school year. This is up significantly from years past - particularly since COVID. There were 400 additional bus trips in the month of June alone. Kudos to our drivers, substitutes, and office support staff for successfully organizing and completing such a significant volume smoothly and without incident.

Daily Ridership Numbers Up

During the 2023-24 school year 16,496 PSB students were supported with transportation services to and from school daily. This is approximately 80% of the PSB student population, which, from a percentage basis, is on par with years past. Considering our increases in overall student population, however, this equates to approximately 710 more students supported by our daily transportation services as compared to 3 years ago. This has contributed to concerns regarding overcrowding and student travel time aboard buses. We have received word that, effective the 2024-25 school year, we will receive 2 additional school bus driver FTEs, as well as one additional support personnel FTE to assist. We are grateful for this help, however we estimate that between 15 and 25 additional buses and drivers would be required to bring all PSB student travel times to under one hour, with loads of not more than three to a seat for elementary ages and two to a seat for Intermediate and High School students.

School Bus Fleet Numbers Down

25 new PSB buses have been earmarked for purchase this year and are expected to arrive late August/early September. These will be Internal Combustion Engine (ICE / fossil fueled) buses. This purchase of new diesel buses will help address range concerns with our electric buses, given system demands and existing infrastructure. Of particular note, however, 31 PSB buses are scheduled to be removed from our fleet this summer due to age restriction legislation and/or condition. Discussion is ongoing regarding additional electric bus purchases this year; however, this is contingent upon federal government funding, which has yet to be approved. Considering time required for manufacture and delivery, as well as two additional buses being required to support our two new drivers, the PSB expects to begin our next school year with 8 fewer buses available to us than we ended with in 2023-24. This may pose challenges should demand resemble that of our past year.

Driver Recruitment Up

In June, the PSB conducted a recruitment campaign for school bus drivers. 155 prospective drivers submitted their names for consideration. We are optimistic that this will result in approximately 50 new school bus driver hires that we anticipated will be needed to offset retirements and long-term leaves among our driver population this year. These numbers are positive and encouraging!

6. ROLE of the CHAIR of the HEARING COMMITTEE

07/30/03 It was moved by Wade Czank and seconded by Jacob Jadis that the role of the Chair of the Hearing Committee be temporarily appointed to Heather Mullen.

7. CHARLOTTETOWN AREA of SCHOOLS STUDY REPORT

07/30/04 It was moved by Beverley Ann Boulter and seconded by Rachel McCarthy to receive the Charlottetown Area of Schools Study Report 2024.

8. FINANCE – CAPITAL PRIORITIES

07/30/05 **8.1** It was moved by Jodi Zver and seconded by Becki Keezer to approve the 2024-2025 PSB Capital Priorities Letter as presented.

8.2 It was moved by Amanda Blakeney and seconded by Jacob Jadis to approve the 2024-2025 PSB Budget.

8.3 It was moved by Jodi Zver and seconded by Becki Keezer to approve the 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements as presented.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.