

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**12:00 pm, Wednesday, May 14, 2025**  
**School Board Office**

**NOTES**

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Present: Jaclyn Miller, Maureen Mason, Gretchen Conti, Dale Lawson

Also in attendance: Vianne Kintzinger (Interim Superintendent), Steve Hopkins (Secretary-Treasurer)

Regrets: Kirsten Van't Schip (Trustee)

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The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm by Chairperson Miller.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

Child Care and Feeding Futures Program Review – R. Rainbow

R. Rainbow provided a comprehensive update on child care initiatives across the district. The review included actions taken in 2025 and plans for future growth. Licensing capacity was expanded at Westview and Edgehill, and the district trialed a dedicated child care worker role. It was determined that registration efficiency at Westview had peaked, and that additional staffing was not required. YMCA-operated daycares are now in place at Edgehill and Kelly Creek Elementary, though challenges remain due to staffing turnover and community desire for more localized support.

The JustB4 preschool program continues to operate at Westview and Henderson Elementary, though enrollment has declined and 2025–26 will be the final year of Ministry funding. Fee structures were identified as an area requiring review, particularly as the district's preschool fees are below the regional average. A request is under adjudication to permit a fee increase above the 3.5% threshold to improve cost recovery.

Before and after school programs are offered at most elementary sites, with Edgehill piloting a “Seamless Day” model for kindergarten students. Despite stable staffing and improved registration systems, some programs, like Texada’s after-school care, did not demonstrate enough demand to continue. Staffing shortages and limited hours of care remain challenges.

Moving forward, the district plans to use transition year funding to hire a Child Care Manager, explore a full-week preschool model, and refine its business approach to ensure sustainability. Other priorities include finalizing updated handbooks, improving fee collection systems, and clarifying a district-wide vision for child care that includes new site development on Texada.

## Artificial Intelligence Integration Initiative – A. Burt

A. Burt shared an overview of the district's Artificial Intelligence Integration Initiative, which takes a thoughtful, phased approach to introducing AI tools into K–12 education. The goal is to ensure alignment with the First Peoples Principles of Learning and the district's Strategic Plan, while focusing on curiosity, ethics, and equity.

The presentation outlined what AI is, including how generative tools can create text, images, and even feedback. It also explored how these tools might be used by teachers, support staff, and students. At the same time, A. Burt emphasized the importance of using AI responsibly. Risks such as bias (for example, AI tools scoring writing samples differently based on gendered names), privacy concerns, and overreliance were discussed, along with the challenge of determining when AI use enhances learning versus when it crosses ethical boundaries.

The Ministry of Education has stressed that human connection must remain at the heart of education. AI should serve as a tool to enhance teaching and learning, not as a replacement for the essential relationships between students and educators. In this spirit, the district is developing a local framework that reflects classroom needs and community values.

Key deliverables include an engagement and communication plan, a draft policy or administrative procedure, a district-specific AI framework, a training plan for staff, pilot programs, and a centralized resource hub. Focus groups with educators, CUPE members, families, and students are planned before the end of June, with policy development and framework review to follow later this summer.

Trustees also engaged in discussion around the potential benefits of AI, as well as the ethical considerations that will need to guide its use in schools.

## **1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MOVED: D. LAWSON**

**SECONDED: M. MASON**

**THAT the Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda of May 14, 2025, be adopted as circulated.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

## **2. STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **2.a) Finance and Facilities**

#### **2.a.i) 2025/2026 Annual Facility Grant (AFG) Plans**

J. Formosa presented the 2025/2026 Annual Facility Grant (AFG) plan, which outlines over \$850,000 in facility upgrades across the district. This year's funding represents an increase from previous years and supports projects that extend the life of district facilities, over and above regular maintenance and operations. Project priorities were shaped through feedback from school principals, vice-principals, and staff.

Several sites will see notable improvements. At Edgehill Elementary, work will align with the school's major capital expansion to maximize efficiency while crews are on site, including hallway upgrades, plumbing replacement to remove lead piping, and a fire alarm system upgrade. At Henderson Elementary, the recently completed HVAC replacement allowed for the removal of aging boilers. This year's focus will be on flooring replacement and improved playground drainage.

James Thomson Elementary will benefit from functional space upgrades, including new breakout areas and improved kindergarten storage. Kelly Creek Elementary will see updates to parking and traffic flow around the newly opened daycare, while Westview Elementary will begin a phased siding replacement and add a shaded structure near the Nootka early learning area.

Accessibility improvements are a focus at PIE sites, including new automatic doors at OVEC and added handwashing stations at the IDLC yurt. Texada Elementary will undergo long-needed bathroom renovations, and Brooks will move into phase two of its outdoor court development.

District sites such as the Board Office and Operations Centre will receive phased HVAC upgrades and renovations, including boiler replacements using reconditioned units from Henderson. The IT department will also implement new UPS systems to better protect infrastructure during power disruptions.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT the Board of Education approve the proposed list of projects under the 2025/2026 Annual Facility Grant program.**

#### **2.a.ii) Maintenance and Transportation Program Report**

J. Formosa provided an update on the district's Maintenance and Transportation Program. Over the past year, two new school buses were added to the fleet through the Bus Acquisition Program. This spring, the district also finalized its vehicle fleet insurance renewal, officially registering all vehicles under the updated district name.

The 2025/2026 capital program includes projects supported under the Annual Facility Grant, the School Enhancement Program, and the Carbon Neutral Capital Program. Looking ahead to the 2026/2027 funding cycle, staff are exploring additional HVAC and lighting projects as well as a potential submission under the Playground Equipment Program. Structural capacity was added to the Edgehill school expansion to support a future solar array, which may also be part of next year's plan.

Updates to the student transportation system have improved accuracy and efficiency. Approximately 600 eligible student riders were automatically re-registered for next year, down from 1,100 previously, due to better tracking of non-use and courtesy riders. Bus passes can now be printed, creating a more organized system overall.

Finally, the district is preparing to launch a new web-based platform for auctioning surplus fleet vehicles and equipment. Designed internally, the platform will support a competitive and transparent disposal process.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT the Board of Education receive the Maintenance and Transportation Program Report.**

2.a.iii) Occupational Health & Safety Report

L. McMurray shared an update on the district's Health and Safety Program since stepping into the Manager role in October 2024. The work has focused on strengthening compliance, improving committee engagement, and building sustainable systems for long-term safety management.

The district has adopted new legislative requirements, including site-specific first aid assessments under updated Workers Compensation Board regulations. Work is also underway to streamline incident reporting and emergency preparedness. Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are now actively managed at all school sites, and updates to the district's emergency response plan are in progress, with a goal of completion in the next six months.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs) are now active in all schools, though practices vary. To promote consistency, a district-developed training course was delivered to 27 JHSC members earlier this year and will continue on a biannual basis. A central tracker has also been introduced to support self-reporting and oversight.

Ergonomic assessments have been conducted for multiple staff, and efforts are underway to standardize recommended equipment. The district is also exploring long-term solutions for training management, with new course offerings already introduced for both committee members and custodial staff.

A Health and Safety page has been added to the staff portal to serve as a central resource for staff, and a longer-term plan is in place to build a sustainable health and safety management system that keeps practices up to date and accessible.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT the Board of Education receive the Occupational Health and Safety Report.**

2.a.iv) Information Technology Report

B. Grant provided an overview of the district's recent and ongoing work in Information Technology. He noted that cybersecurity remains resource-intensive, with many processes requiring manual intervention. Key improvements included consolidating IT operations, reducing contractor dependency, and transitioning to a shared support model across the department.

A major shift this year was the migration to a cloud-based SharePoint platform, supporting modern collaboration and reducing reliance on older servers. The department has also implemented a new centralized work order system, improved network infrastructure, and expanded its use of cybersecurity tools like Multi-Factor Authentication. A 'Zero Trust' model is being developed to improve network security and mitigate the risk of unauthorized access.

Ongoing initiatives include replacing aging projectors with BenQ interactive panels. A trustee inquiry raised the possibility of assigning panels to teachers instead of rooms, though this presents logistical challenges.

Looking ahead, the district plans to shift to iPads for students in K–3 and laptops for Grades 4–12. Older devices will be repurposed where possible to extend their lifespan and support equitable access. Additional infrastructure upgrades include fiber conversions, faster backhaul at Brooks, and transitioning school phones to a centralized system. Cell phone plans are also moving to a stipend-based model to streamline management and reduce costs.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT the Board of Education receive the Information Technology Report.**

2.a.v) 2025/2026 Budget Planning Update – S. Hopkins (oral)

S. Hopkins provided an update on the 2025/2026 budget planning process. A full presentation will be delivered at the June Committee of the Whole meeting, with final Board approval scheduled for the regular meeting later that month. Consultations with union representatives and school principals are currently underway.

Staffing remains a central driver of the budget, and the district is now in the final stages of confirming staffing needs for the coming school year. While the provincial funding model remains unchanged for next year, the district is operating with a smaller accumulated surplus than in past years. Despite this, the budget is still in a healthy position and reflects a new staffing plan designed for greater efficiency.

Some concerns have been raised around reductions in teacher staffing, driven in part by more efficient timetabling and a reduction in low-enrollment courses. The current conversion process, originally intended as a short-term solution, is now resulting in more teacher positions than are sustainable under current staffing needs. The district is actively reviewing the process to explore potential adjustments.

2.b) Education and Strategic Planning

2.b.i) *See Presentations*

2.c) Audit

2.c.i) N/A

2.d) Policy Development

2.d.i) Board Development Plan – Discussion

The Board revisited its previous self-evaluation and the accompanying recommendation to develop a formal Board Development Plan. While preliminary discussions took place last year, the process was paused to allow for the arrival of the new Superintendent. With leadership now in place, trustees expressed support for moving forward with a formalized plan for the 2025/2026 school year.

P. McKenzie emphasized the value of aligning the Board's development goals with district priorities and engagement efforts. He suggested dedicating planning time in late August or early September, potentially at the OLC, to reflect on the year ahead. This would mirror similar planning sessions being scheduled with the senior leadership team and offer an opportunity for focused conversations around governance, strategic alignment, and district engagement with staff, union partners, DPAC, and others.

Trustees were supportive of the approach. Staff will return with proposals for the structure and content of the planning session.

3. **OTHER INFORMATION**

3.a) June Committee of the Whole – Revisit scheduled meeting date – Discussion

The Board revisited the previously rescheduled June Committee of the Whole meeting, which had been moved to June 18. Following further discussion, trustees agreed to return the meeting to its original date of June 11.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED: D. LAWSON**

**THAT the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.

SH/attachments