

## **REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**4:00 pm, Wednesday, May 28, 2025**  
**School Board Office**

### **AGENDA**

#### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**PRESENTATIONS:** Mental Health in Schools – M. Brooks, L. Gaudreau and E. Maxwell  
James Thomson Elementary School Growth Plan – M. Hull

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

**1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** "THAT the Regular meeting agenda of May 28, 2025, be adopted as circulated."

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** "THAT the Regular meeting minutes of April 23, 2025, be adopted as circulated."

**3. REPORT OF CLOSED MEETINGS**

3.a) April 23, 2025 – The Board met in-camera to discuss items which include property and personnel.

**4. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE**

- 4.a) SD33 – Re: Urgent Request for Increased Public Transportation Funding in Chilliwack
- 4.b) SD73 – Re: Recruitment and retention of Certified Education Assistants
- 4.c) Min. Osborne – Re: Accessibility of Foundry BC Services in Rural and Remote Areas

**5. OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE**

- 5.a) Board to D. Harper and C. Sinkewicz – Letter of Appreciation
- 5.b) Superintendent to L. Wallace – Cell Phones Usage at Brooks

**MOTION:** "THAT the correspondence in items 5.a) to 5.b) be received."

**6. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS' REPORT**

- 6.a) Superintendent of Schools – First Thirty Days (presentation)
- 6.b) Community Connections Report (presentation)
- 6.c) Suspension, Exclusion, and Seclusion Report – September 3, 2024, to April 30, 2025

**MOTION:** “THAT the Superintendent of Schools’ Report be received as presented.”

**7. SECRETARY-TREASURER’S REPORT**

- 7.a) Capital Plan Response Letter – Amended
- 7.b) Capital Plan Bylaw – Amended

**MOTION:** “THAT Capital Plan Bylaw No. 2025/26-CPSD47-02 be adopted in support of the projects identified in the amended capital Plan response letter.”

**8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- 8.a) Committee of the Whole Report for May 14, 2025  
Recommended motions arising from the Committee of the Whole Meeting:

2025/2026 Annual Facility Grant (AFG) Plans

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

Maintenance and Transportation Program Report

**MOTION:** “THAT the Board of Education receive the Maintenance and Transportation Program Report.”

Occupational Health & Safety Report

**MOTION:** “THAT the Board of Education receive the Occupational Health and Safety Report.”

Information Technology Report

**MOTION:** “THAT the Board of Education receive the Information Technology Report.”

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.a) Amended Committee Appointments
- 9.b) Meeting with Minister of Education and Childcare (Oral)
- 9.c) BCSTA AGM (Oral)
- 9.d) School Goals - M. Mason

**QUESTION PERIOD**

## **MEDIA QUESTION PERIOD**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

SH/attachments

## **REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**4:00 pm, Wednesday, April 23, 2025**

**School Board Office**

### **MINUTES**

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

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

Regrets: Kirsten Van't Schip

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The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairperson Miller.

### **OATH OF OFFICE**

Secretary-Treasurer Hopkins administered the Oath of Office for Gretchen Conti who was elected in the 2025 School Trustee By-Election.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### Kelly Creek Elementary School Growth Plan – M. Hilleren

Principal Hilleren provided an overview of Kelly Creek Elementary's School Growth Plan, which focuses on improving literacy and fostering student and family engagement. The school continues to build on its literacy goal by using strategies such as DIBELS assessments, class reviews, and the use of a staff-adopted literacy toolkit. Activities like Literacy Week, book clubs, and open library times before and after school have helped increase student interest in reading. The school has also created opportunities to engage families, including hosting open reading sessions, a BBQ and Book Fair, and after-school library access. These efforts have contributed to improved reading levels across primary grades. Staff remain committed to professional growth and are seeking additional collaboration and release time to continue this work.

The school has also made strides in student and family engagement. Students have taken on leadership roles with announcements, land acknowledgements, and weekly recognitions. PAC attendance has increased, and student council activities, such as a trash-free lunch challenge, have been well-received. "Explore Days" provide opportunities for outdoor learning and environmental stewardship. Future plans include adding framed student artwork to the halls,

replacing colonial maps with Indigenous place names, and creating sensory gardens at the school entrance.

Student feedback indicates they feel connected, supported, and successful at school, with high levels of engagement and no office referrals reported. Staff also expressed feeling supported, valued, and respected in their work. Positive attendance patterns were highlighted, including two students who had previously struggled with attendance but are now regularly attending and participating.

Looking ahead, the school plans to develop a numeracy goal based on recent assessment data, continue its focus on literacy, and review its engagement goals to ensure they remain relevant. Principal Hilleren also shared ongoing concerns regarding road safety at the school entrance, noting challenges with traffic flow during pick-up and drop-off times. The school is working with the qathet Regional District and PAC to explore improvements, including crosswalks, roadway widening, and digital speed signage. Early discussions with partners have been encouraging, and the school remains hopeful that these changes will help improve safety for students and families.

#### Foundry qathet Presentation – D. Harper and C. Sinkewicz

The Board received an update from Delyth Harper and Collette Sinkewicz on the ongoing development of Foundry qathet, an integrated health and wellness hub designed to provide youth ages 12–24 with easier access to mental health care, substance use services, physical and sexual health care, peer supports, and social services. Operated by Youth & Family (Powell River Child, Youth & Family Services Society), Foundry qathet is designed to remove barriers to care by offering walk-in, no-referral, free services in a safe, youth-friendly, and culturally inclusive environment.

Since the project began, Foundry qathet has made significant progress. A centrally located space has been secured, with schematic design work underway in collaboration with youth, families, and community partners. An architect and engineering teams have reviewed the space to ensure it meets all regulatory requirements. Advisory tables with local and regional representation have been established, and youth and family advisory committees remain central to the planning process to ensure services reflect the community's needs.

Community engagement has identified the importance of not only providing services but also creating a safe space for youth to gather, connect, and build relationships. Foundry qathet's vision is to meet youth where they are, whether they are seeking support for mental health, physical health, or simply a welcoming space to belong.

Looking ahead, the team is focused on raising \$5 million to complete renovations and outfit the space. Work continues on service planning, partnership development, and ensuring community involvement remains at the forefront of all decisions. Foundry qathet is aiming to open its doors in approximately two years, providing local youth and families with a much-needed, accessible resource in the qathet region.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

There were no questions.

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

As we gather for today's meeting, we find ourselves at an important moment of transition—and one that brings with it both gratitude and excitement for the road ahead.

First, I want to take a moment to acknowledge that this is our final board meeting with our Interim Superintendent, Vianne Kintzinger. Over the past nine months, she has provided thoughtful, steady leadership through a period of change. Her professionalism, calm presence, and genuine care for students and staff have helped to guide our district with clarity and confidence.

She has supported the board and senior leadership team with wisdom and collaboration, and she has strengthened the foundation on which we now move forward. We are so grateful for the time, energy, and heart she has poured into our district. On behalf of the Board of Education, thank you—it has truly been a privilege to work alongside you.

At the same time, we're thrilled to welcome Trustee Gretchen Conti to the Board of Education. Gretchen brings a deep commitment to our schools and a strong connection to community. We're excited to have her voice at the table, and we look forward to working together to serve our students and strengthen public education in our district.

Looking ahead, we're also preparing to welcome our new Superintendent, Paul McKenzie, who begins next week.

Paul brings more than 30 years of public education experience, with a strong record of leadership in large and diverse school districts in both British Columbia and Ontario. His work has driven student success through strategic planning, Indigenous education initiatives, community engagement, and innovations in curriculum and technology. Over the past few months, we have been hearing a lot of good things about Paul, namely his collaborative leadership and deep commitment to student well-being. And so, this marks the beginning of a new chapter—one rooted in possibility, partnership, and progress. The Board is eager to collaborate closely with Paul as we build on the strengths of our district, tackle challenges with openness and innovation, and continue to prioritize the success and well-being of every learner.

This moment is one of transition, yes—but it is also one of alignment and renewed purpose. With appreciation for where we've been, and optimism for where we're going, we look forward to this new phase in our journey together.

**1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MOVED: D. LAWSON**

**SECONDED: G. CONTI**

**THAT the Regular meeting agenda of April 23, 2025, be adopted as amended.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED: G. CONTI**

**SECONDED: D. LAWSON**

**THAT the Regular meeting minutes of March 12, 2025, be adopted as circulated.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

**3. REPORT OF CLOSED MEETINGS**

- 3.a) March 12, 2025 – The Board met in-camera to discuss items which include legal and personnel.

**4. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE**

- 4.a) N/A

**5. OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE**

- 5.a) Board to PRISMA – PRISMA Partnership 2025  
5.b) Board to JT PAC - Request for Proper Reporting Policies

**6. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS' REPORT**

- 6.a) Program Review - Inclusive Education Services / Sexual Health

The Board received two program review presentations focusing The Board received two program review presentations focusing on Sexual Health Education and Inclusive Education Services.

W. Dunlop provided an overview of the district's Sexual Health Education Program, highlighting the progress made over the past three years and thanking the Board for its ongoing support. She shared that the program continues to reach students through classroom workshops and has benefited from positive engagement with families. Questions from the Board focused on themes arising from parent concerns. Willow noted that misinformation continues to circulate about what SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) looks like in schools. She shared that parent conversations have been constructive, providing opportunities to clarify what is taught in classrooms. An alternative learning option remains in place that allows parents to address learning outcomes at home, with assessments reviewed by school administration.

T. Gaudreau presented a comprehensive review of Inclusive Education Services, aligning the district's approach with Ministry expectations and the Board's strategic priorities. She emphasized that meaningful inclusion involves more than physical placement—it requires intentional design of programs, learning environments, and supports that allow all students to succeed. Drawing on models like Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Instruction, and Response to Intervention (RTI), the district continues to build capacity for proactive, personalized student support.

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) guides the district's framework, ensuring universal instruction is paired with targeted and intensive interventions based on need. Ms. Gaudreau outlined the student support services process, from early identification through school-based team meetings, implementation, and potential assessment and designation. She also described key transition supports in place at three stages: preschool to Kindergarten, elementary to secondary, and secondary to adulthood.

**MOVED: D. LAWSON**

**SECONDED: M. MASON**

**THAT The Board of Education receive the Inclusive Education Program Review (Level 2), as attached and presented.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

6.b) Administrative Procedure Updates

V. Kintzinger shared the following updates to administrative procedures:

- AP 425 – Long Term Personal Leaves for Teachers:  
Deadline for leave requests has been moved from the end of April to the end of March to better align with the staffing process and allow sufficient time for planning.
- AP 422 – Employee Code of Conduct (formerly AP 420):  
A new procedure developed with Human Resources to outline standards of conduct for all employees. This AP consolidates expectations previously found across multiple procedures. The draft is currently watermarked and requires links to referenced APs. Intended for onboarding use; rollout to existing staff is under discussion (e.g., through a staff newsletter or phased highlights).
- AP 404 – Conflict of Interest:  
Minor revision to broaden the definition from “immediate family” to “family” in general.

6.c) Suspension, Exclusion, and Seclusion Report – September 3, 2024, to March 31, 2025

Staff are preparing the required exclusion report for the Ombudsperson, due in June. A detailed review of student suspensions, as requested by the Board, will be completed as part of this process.

**MOVED: G. CONTI**

**SECONDED: M. MASON**

**THAT the Superintendent of Schools’ Report be received as presented.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

**7. SECRETARY-TREASURER’S REPORT**

7.a) 2025 School Trustee By-Election

A report was provided by the Chief Election Officer for the by-election.

**MOVED: M. MASON**

**SECONDED: G. CONTI**

**THAT the Chief Election Officer’s Report for the April 12, 2025, By-Election to elect one School Trustee, be received by the Board.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

7.b) Government Grant Information Review



S. Hopkins provided a brief overview of the grant summary included in the Board agenda package. He noted that core Ministry of Education and Child Care funding grants remain largely status quo for the 2025–2026 school year, with few surprises. The majority of funding continues to be based on the per-student grant. Additional budget discussions will take place at the May Committee of the Whole meeting, with a draft budget to be presented in June and final adoption scheduled for the June regular meeting.

7.c) 2025/2026 Capital Plan Response Letter and Bylaw

The ministry has approved the following capital plan projects for 2025/2026:

- Edgehill Elementary (SEP) - HVAC Upgrades \$1,125,000
- Edgehill Elementary (CNCP) - Energy Upgrades \$65,000
- Westview Elementary (CNCP) - Energy Upgrades \$190,000
- Brooks Secondary (FIP) - Kitchen and Equipment Upgrades \$54,278
- Brooks Secondary (FIP) - Kitchen Upgrade \$48,431
- Brooks Secondary (FIP) - Delivery Vehicle \$55,000

**MOVED: D. LAWSON**

**SECONDED: G. CONTI**

**THAT Capital Bylaw No. 2025/2026-CPSD47-01 be adopted in support of the projects as outlined.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

7.d) Quarterly Fiscal Accountability Report

The report compares financial results at the end of Q3 with the same period in the previous year, noting a modest 2% increase in spending. The favourable outcome is attributed to mitigating strategies introduced mid-year as part of the amended budget process.

**MOVED: M. MASON**

**SECONDED: D. LAWSON**

**THAT the Secretary Treasurer's report be received as presented.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

**8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

8.a) Committee of the Whole Report – No meeting in April

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

9.a) 2025-2026 Trustee Professional Development Plan

**MOVED: D. LAWSON**

**SECONDED: M. MASON**

THAT, as a one-time exception to Board Policy 7 (Sections 12.5 and 15.3) and due to fiscal constraints, trustee attendance at the 2025 CSBA Conference and any other national or international conferences be suspended; AND THAT trustee professional development for the 2025/2026 fiscal year be limited to BCSTA and BCPSEA events, with full trustee participation planned for the CSBA Conference hosted in Whistler during the 2026/2027 fiscal year.

**STATUS: CARRIED**

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

A request was made for a copy of the Inclusive Education presentation. The presentation will be added to the agenda package and posted on the district website.

I. Loveluck noted that the Teacher Professional Standards echoes the employee code of conduct Administrative Procedure.

#### **MEDIA QUESTION PERIOD**

There were no questions.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED: D. LAWSON**

**SECONDED: M. MASON**

**THAT the Regular Meeting of April 23, 2025 be adjourned.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

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J. Miller  
Chairperson

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S. Hopkins  
Secretary-Treasurer

SH/attachments



May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

EMAILED

Honourable Mike Farnworth  
Minister of Transportation and Transit  
Government of British Columbia  
Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

**Re: Urgent Request for Increased Public Transportation Funding in Chilliwack**

Dear Mike Farnworth,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Education for School District No. 33 (Chilliwack) to express our concern over the growing transportation challenges facing the students and families we serve. Chilliwack has rapidly evolved into one of Canada's fastest-growing communities, and our current transportation infrastructure has not kept pace with the region's expanding needs. This gap jeopardizes students' access to regular attendance, increases the financial strain on families, and places a significant burden on the district's already limited resources. This letter is endorsed by numerous community partner groups who share our deep concern for the educational equity and accessibility challenges faced by our students and families.

As one of our province's most vibrant and diverse school districts, we pride ourselves on providing safe and inclusive education for every student. However, the lack of robust public transit services in many areas of Chilliwack creates substantial barriers for students who rely on public transportation to get to school. While the City of Chilliwack continues to collaborate closely with our District to find local solutions, the current level of provincial funding is simply not enough to meet the demands of our growing population. We respectfully urge the provincial government to address these challenges by increasing targeted funding for public transportation in Chilliwack and the surrounding region.

The recently completed Transportation Future Action Plan for Chilliwack and the Fraser Valley Regional District highlights numerous service gaps that particularly impact school-aged children and their families. The BC Transit "Free Transit 12 and Under" program, while well-intentioned, remains inaccessible to many Chilliwack families due to limited route coverage in school neighborhoods and inadequate service during school start and dismissal times.

From a policy standpoint, this reality runs counter to our district's commitment to educational equity. According to Board Policy 310: Student Expectations, Rights, and Responsibilities, we strive to ensure every student attends school regularly and is supported in doing so. In order to truly uphold these expectations, the district must offer barrier-free transportation options. Yet the most essential resource, reliable transportation, remains a gap that must be addressed to fully realize our commitment to accessible education.

Beyond policy considerations, our district's budget is also stretched thin. Despite spending more than what is allocated by the Ministry specifically for student transportation, we struggle to keep up with demand. Resources that could enhance programming are instead redirected to cover transportation shortfalls.

Considering these challenges, we respectfully ask for enhanced provincial funding focused on:

1. **Prioritizing Expanded Services:** BC Transit expanding route coverage and frequency in Chilliwack, with particular attention to school access routes, and new transit routes in under-served neighborhoods.
2. **Investing in Infrastructure:** purchasing additional buses, improving transit shelters, and school-focused transit route development.
3. **Support for Families:** providing or maintaining low-cost or free fare options that are practical and accessible, reducing the burden on families who otherwise struggle with transportation costs.

The Chilliwack School District remains committed to collaborating with all levels of government and community partners to address these critical issues. We work closely with the City of Chilliwack and BC Transit on local solutions, but without significant provincial intervention, the fundamental barriers to equitable education will persist.

In closing, every day that passes without adequate transportation funding is another day many of our students face preventable challenges in accessing the education they deserve. We urge you to recognize the urgency of this matter and look forward to working together toward sustainable, meaningful solutions for the Chilliwack community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these proposals in greater detail and to explore any further avenues for collaboration.

Sincerely,

Board Chair  
School District No. 33 (Chilliwack)

cc:

Heather Maahs, MLA Chilliwack North,  
A'aliya Warbus, MLA Chilliwack-Cultus Lake  
Mayor and Council, City of Chilliwack  
Minister of Education and Child Care  
Minister of Infrastructure  
BC Transit Board of Directors  
BC School Trustees Association

Enclosures:

1. Letter from Chilliwack Teachers Association (CTA)
2. Letter from District Parents' Advisory Council (DPAC)
3. Letter from Chilliwack Principals' and Vice Principals' Association (CPVPA)



**Honourable Mike Farnworth**

Minister of Transportation and Transit  
Government of British Columbia  
[minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca)

**RE: Public Transportation Advocacy for Chilliwack Students and Families**

Dear Minister Farnworth,

On behalf of the Chilliwack Teachers' Association, representing over 900 educators in the Chilliwack School District, I write to express our strong support for the Board of Education's call for increased public transportation investment in our community.

Access to reliable, affordable public transit is not a peripheral issue—it is fundamental to educational equity. In March 2025, the CTA conducted a comprehensive survey of our members to better understand the effects of Chilliwack's limited transit system on students, families, and staff. The results were compelling and deeply concerning:

- Over 90% of respondents agreed that better public transit would contribute to a more equitable and inclusive school environment.
- More than half of educators reported witnessing students struggling to attend school due to transportation barriers - particularly those from low-income households, single-parent families, or rural areas with little or no transit service.
- Teachers shared firsthand accounts of students arriving late, missing school entirely, or being forced to leave early in order to catch infrequent buses. Many are unable to participate in after-school sports, clubs, tutoring, or community programs, simply because they cannot get home afterward.
- Some families, including those without access to vehicles or experiencing health challenges, rely on walking long distances with young children, even in poor weather, just to reach school. Others must make difficult choices between attending school and accessing employment or child care.
- Several teachers also noted that the strain on district-operated school buses—which are increasingly used to fill the public transit gap - has begun to limit field trip opportunities, inter-school programming, and student access to specialized sites such as trades programs.

While only 9% of our members currently use public transit to commute, nearly 60% said they would consider it if services were more accessible and reliable—highlighting the potential for broader community benefit and reduced traffic congestion.

Simply put, students cannot thrive if they cannot get to school. Public transportation should not be a barrier to education. It should be a bridge.

We therefore urge the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to commit to increased investment in Chilliwack's public transit infrastructure. Expanded service coverage, frequency, and affordability would meaningfully improve access to education, participation in the broader community, and long-term outcomes for thousands of students and families.

Thank you for considering the voices of Chilliwack's educators. We hope this evidence-based perspective helps inform a transportation strategy that supports equity, dignity, and opportunity for all.

Reid Clark  
President

cc Heather Maahs, MLA Chilliwack North  
Á'a:liya Warbus, MLA Chilliwack-Cultus Lake  
Mayor and Council, City of Chilliwack  
Minister of Education and Child Care  
Minister of Infrastructure  
BC Transit Board of Directors  
BC School Trustees Association



January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

City of Chilliwack  
8550 Young Road Chilliwack, BC V2P 8A4

Subject: Urgent Appeal for Improved Bussing Infrastructure to Support Student Transportation

Dear Mayor Ken Popove,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you on behalf of the Chilliwack District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC), representing the collective voice of parents within our community. Our organization is deeply invested in the well-being and educational success of our children.

We would like to draw your attention to a matter of pressing concern—the need for enhanced bussing infrastructure in Chilliwack to ensure that students can access schools safely and efficiently. As you are undoubtedly aware, the landscape of our city is evolving, and the demand for reliable and accessible public transportation has become more critical than ever. Due to the city's development in size and layout, the Chilliwack School District's transportation budget is one of the highest in BC. Because of the lack of infrastructure support within the city of Chilliwack additional strains are put on the students and families.

Our primary concerns are as follows:

- **Limited Accessibility:** Many students, particularly those residing in outlying areas, face challenges in accessing public transportation. This limitation hampers their ability to attend school regularly and participate in extracurricular activities.
- **Safety Concerns:** In the absence of comprehensive bus coverage, some students are compelled to use alternative, less secure modes of transportation, which poses safety risks. Ensuring that our children have a safe and reliable means of commuting to and from school is paramount.
- **Educational Equity:** Disparities in transportation options can contribute to educational inequalities. Students without convenient access to reliable transportation may face obstacles in fully participating in the educational opportunities available to them. The strain on families to drive students contributes to financial inequity as well.

We recognize the budgetary constraints and logistical challenges that the City of Chilliwack may face. However, we firmly believe that investing in an improved bussing infrastructure is an investment in the future of our community. Therefore, we urge the City to consider the following actions:



- **Comprehensive Route Review:** Assess the current bus routes to identify gaps in coverage, with a particular focus on areas with high concentrations of students.
- **Collaboration with the Chilliwack School District:** Work closely with school district administrators to synchronize bus schedules with school hours, ensuring that transportation aligns seamlessly with the academic day.
- **Engagement with Stakeholders:** Seek input from parents, students, and educational professionals to gather valuable insights that can inform decisions on bussing infrastructure improvements.
- **Exploration of Funding Opportunities:** Investigate potential funding sources and grants that could be used to enhance bussing services for students and continued advocacy to the Ministry of Transportation for financial support in this matter.

The Chilliwack Parent Advisory Council is ready and willing to collaborate with the City in addressing these concerns. We believe that by working together, we can create a transportation system that meets the needs of all students, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to seeing positive developments in our city's bussing infrastructure. Thank you for your dedication to the welfare of our community's youth.

Sincerely,



 Katie Bartel  
DPAC Chair

Chilliwack District Parent Advisory Council

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Chilliwack Principals' and Vice Principals' Association, we are writing to express our strong support for expanded public transportation services in Chilliwack. As school leaders, we are deeply concerned about the impact that limited transit options have on student attendance and access to education.

Absenteeism is at a crisis level in schools across the province, and in our city, transportation challenges are a significant contributing factor. Many students rely on school buses as their primary mode of transportation, but when they miss the bus, there are often no viable public transit alternatives to get them to school on time - or at all. This lack of options disproportionately affects our most vulnerable students, including those from low-income families, students with disabilities, and those who live in areas with limited transit coverage.

In a recent survey of principals and vice-principals across our district, the majority of respondents estimated that between 11% and 70% of student absenteeism can be attributed to transportation barriers. Several noted that the degree of impact depends significantly on where students live and the availability of transit routes in those areas. Perhaps even more concerning, the survey also revealed that a number of principals and school-based staff are regularly required to leave their schools during the day to transport students who cannot otherwise get to school. This not only disrupts daily school operations but underscores how urgent and widespread the transportation gap has become.

To ensure all students have equitable access to education, we urge decision-makers to prioritize the following improvements:

- **Increased Bus Routes and Coverage** – More transit routes, particularly in high-need areas, would ensure students who miss their school bus or have other transportation barriers can still reach school.



- **More Frequent Service** – Greater frequency of buses, especially during peak school hours, would help reduce wait times and make public transit a more reliable option for students.
- **Student-Friendly Scheduling** – Aligning transit schedules more closely with school start and dismissal times would allow more students to use public transportation as a backup when necessary.

As school leaders, we see firsthand how transportation barriers impact student learning and well-being. Expanding public transit in Chilliwack is not only an investment in infrastructure but also in the future of our students and the broader community. We urge you to consider these concerns and work towards solutions that will better support our young people in accessing their education.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and collaborate on strategies to improve student transportation options. Thank you for your time and commitment to this important matter.

Sincerely,

*The Chilliwack Principals' and Vice Principals' Association*



**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson)**

1383 - 9th Avenue, Kamloops, BC V2C 3X7 | Tel: 250-374-0679 | Fax: 250-372-1183 | [www.sd73.bc.ca](http://www.sd73.bc.ca)

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May 8, 2025

Tracy Loffler, President  
British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCTSA)

email: [tloffler@bcsta.org](mailto:tloffler@bcsta.org)

Dear President Tracy Loffler:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Kamloops-Thompson Board of Education to invite you to join us in advocacy to improve recruitment and retention of Certified Education Assistants locally and provincially.

We have a letter (attached below) with what we have shared with each of our local MLAs, and we invite you to share the best way to continue to advocate with BCSTA to the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC), to the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), and other provincial organizations.

This joint advocacy effort is intended to inspire a local and provincial conversation about the experiences of Certified Education Assistants in classrooms to provide insight into what we require provincially and locally as Boards of Education to address common barriers for CEAs to improve recruitment and retention of this employee group.

We look forward to hearing from you, and please let me know if there is any way that we can support your Board's efforts in this joint advocacy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me: [hgrieve@sd73.bc.ca](mailto:hgrieve@sd73.bc.ca)

With gratitude,

Heather Grieve, Board Chair  
School District No.73 (Kamloops-Thompson) Board of Education

cc: Board of Trustees; Superintendent; Acting Secretary-Treasurer; Communications Director and Board Administrator; Suzanne Lloyd, CUPE CEA Committee Chair; Sholeh Pickell, BCSTA Thompson Okanagan Branch President

May 9, 2025

Honourable Members of Legislative Assembly  
Peter Milobar, Ward Stamer, Tony Luck, Lorne Doerkson, Rosalyn Bird

Dear Honourable Members of Legislative:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Kamloops-Thompson Board of Education to invite you to advocate to improve recruitment and retention of Certified Education Assistants (CEAs) to support more inclusive and supportive classrooms for our children in BC.

We are working with CUPE 3500 on a committee to hear firsthand the experiences of CEAs in classrooms to identify barriers that are getting in the way of recruitment and retention of CEAs.

I have highlighted a few poignant excerpts from the many stories we have listened to as a Board to provide you with the common barriers to help us to overcome provincially:

- ***Higher wages and more hours:*** *Imagine my surprise, opening my T4 for 2024 and seeing an income of \$32,459.45 after a year of supporting our most vulnerable students, a year of wiping bums, a year of learning to read and add, a year of picking up pieces when a student has destroyed a classroom...I and my colleagues, who are also the only income earners in the home, have to work extra jobs or find alternative methods of bringing in income just to make ends meet. Paying loyal and professional CEAs low wages comes at a cost. Poor employee retention and high employee turnover are a huge issue.*
- ***More CEAs in schools to handle the many roles CEAs have:*** *CEAs are put into high stress roles every day, if not multiple times a day, inevitably leading to burn out and injuries. We are expected to be everything, all at once, all the time to these students, which is another reason for our burnout levels – We are teachers, providing academic support; we are nurses, providing diabetic care, seizure management, tube feeding, catheterization, toileting, and basic hygiene care; we are counselors, giving guidance, tools, and support to help students deal with emotions such as stress, anxiety, anger, sadness, to name a few; we are behaviorists, physical therapists, social workers, supervisors, crossing guards, life coaches, and sadly, babysitters.*
- ***More CEAs in schools to manage the increasing workloads, which are unsustainable.*** *With so many students to support, it's difficult to give individualized attention each child deserves, and needs and that parents expect.*

- ***Increase safety in classrooms with more CEAS to support each other and administration who know how to support. We are put into situations that are not safe. During a room clear for a behavioural situation, while the teacher was taking the rest of the students out of class, the CEA in the room was slapped across the face by another student because he was frustrated with having to leave the classroom.***


There were many more stories that I was privileged to hear that day, and as we continue this journey together to improve inclusive conditions in classrooms, I would ask that as Members in the Legislature that you advocate for:

- higher wages for CEAs
- increased hours for CEAs
- increased numbers of CEAs in schools

Our Board is writing to the President of the British Columbia School Trustees' Association to highlight the concerns and to consider opportunities for joint advocacy for recruitment and retention of CEAs provincially.

Please do not hesitate to contact me: [hgrieve@sd73.bc.ca](mailto:hgrieve@sd73.bc.ca)

With gratitude,



Heather Grieve, Board Chair  
School District No.73 (Kamloops-Thompson) Board of Education

cc: Board of Trustees; Superintendent; Acting Secretary-Treasurer; Communications Director and Board Administrator; Suzanne Lloyd, CUPE CEA Committee Chair; Sholeh Pickell, BCSTA Thompson Okanagan Branch President



May 16, 2025

1304281

Via email: [mrussell@BCSTA.ORG](mailto:mrussell@BCSTA.ORG)

Carolyn Broady  
President  
British Columbia School Trustees Association  
1580 West Broadway  
Vancouver BC V6J 5K9

Dear Carolyn Broady:

Thank you for your email of January 15, 2025, regarding the accessibility of Foundry BC services for youth in rural and remote areas. I am pleased to respond on behalf of my colleagues, the Honourable Jodie Wickens, Minister of Children and Family, and the Honourable Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

As you mentioned in your letter, Foundry plays an important role in providing mental health and wellness services for young people. Living in a rural area myself, I could not agree more that we need an inclusive and accessible mental health care system that empowers every young person in our province to seek help without barriers.

I know there are many communities interested in hosting a Foundry centre—large and small—and I want to assure you that a great deal of consideration goes into the Foundry community selection process. We are committed to expanding the total number of Foundry centres in British Columbia to 35, and in the latest process for new Foundry centres announced April 13, 2023, communities were selected from around the province including Powell River, Vernon, Vanderhoof, Port Alberni and Quesnel. Some existing Foundry centres are also exploring the opportunity for 'satellite' centres that could expand their reach into smaller outlying communities. In every phase of its expansion, Foundry has aimed to select communities across all five regional health authorities to promote broader access and always with equitable service distribution in mind.

...2

Foundry is committed to supporting youth in rural and remote communities, this includes partnering with Indigenous-led organizations. Foundry's first Indigenous-led centre, Foundry East Kootenay, opened in Cranbrook in May 2024. A Foundry led by Carrier Sekani Family Services near Burns Lake will be open soon, and a new Foundry is under development with the Snuneymuxw First Nation on Vancouver Island. Foundry also provides outreach services to communities facing barriers in accessing services, such as Foundry Kelowna's Wellness on Wheels service that provides a mobile unit to outlying communities, as well as Foundry Penticton which offers outreach services.


Finally, young people can access Foundry services through the Foundry BC app or virtually at <https://foundrybc.ca/virtual/> from anywhere in the province. Although internet connectivity and infrastructure challenges remain, I understand the Foundry team is actively working on innovative measures to build relationships and support enhanced access to virtual services and supports in rural and remote communities. This includes the development of localized "Access Points" in partnership with local schools and communities, as well as hosting a "Rural Champions" provincial community of practice.

I hear you that connectivity is a serious barrier for youth living in some parts of BC, and we will continue to support the work of the Ministry of Citizen Services to connect every household in BC to high-speed internet access by 2027. Notably, the commitment to specifically connect every First Nations household in BC is outlined in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan.

BC is a strong partner with Foundry and we agree that their services are invaluable. We will continue to work in partnership to ensure innovative approaches are identified to reach children and youth in every corner of the province. There is more work to do to strengthen the system of care, and I really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.

Should you wish to share any detailed results of your gap analysis, we welcome them. Please contact Kristina Ponce, Senior Director, at [kristina.ponce@gov.bc.ca](mailto:kristina.ponce@gov.bc.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josie', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Josie Osborne  
Minister

pc: Distribution list follows

pc: Honourable Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and  
Poverty Reduction  
Honourable Jodie Wickens, Minister of Children and Family Development  
Allison Bond, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Development and  
Poverty Reduction  
Keith Godin, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Children and Family Development  
Tiffany Ma, A/Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health

May 21, 2025

Youth & Family Services  
Ms. Delyth Harper  
Ms. Collette Sinkewicz

**Delivered via Email**

Dear Ms. Harper and Ms. Sinkewicz,

On behalf of the Board of Education, thank you for your recent presentation and update on the development of Foundry qathet. Your team's commitment to building an integrated health and wellness hub for youth in the qathet region is both inspiring and deeply aligned with our district's strategic priorities.

We appreciate your efforts to create a safe, inclusive, and accessible space—where youth ages 12–24 can access mental health, physical health, and social supports without barriers—demonstrate a strong alignment with our priority of Cultivating Connection (*paʔa kʷʌms qʷayigən*), which emphasizes mental health, community partnerships, and inclusive environments.

Foundry qathet's engagement with youth and families in the planning process also directly supports our commitment to Supporting Self-Determination (*ʔaʔjɪnʷegəs*), particularly through culturally relevant and identity-affirming spaces that reflect the diverse needs of the young people in our region.

As outlined in our Strategic Plan Framework 2023–2028, we recognize that education—and by extension, youth well-being—is a shared responsibility. Your collaborative approach exemplifies this vision and advances our shared purpose of ensuring every young person can thrive in a healthy, connected community.

The Board wishes you continued success in bringing this important project to life and looks forward to the many ways Foundry qathet will enhance the lives of youth and families in our region. Please accept our sincere thanks for your leadership and continued advocacy.

Sincerely,



Jaclyn Miller  
Chairperson  
Board of Education

cc. P. McKenzie, Superintendent





**From:** [Paul McKenzie](#)  
**To:** [Laura Wallace](#)  
**Cc:** [Jaclyn Miller](#)  
**Subject:** Re: your recent email  
**Date:** May 7, 2025 3:54:00 PM

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Dear Laura,

Thank you for reaching out with your concern regarding cell phone usage at Brooks Secondary School. My apologies on not responding to your thoughtful email earlier. I am acclimatizing myself to this wonderful District! I appreciate and value your engagement in fostering a positive and focused learning environment for our students. Addressing the concerns from your email, the qathet School District recognizes both the benefits and challenges associated with personal digital devices (PDD's) including cell phones. As outlined in the qathet School District Administrative Procedure 145, the regulated use of such devices can contribute to student safety and security, while unregulated use may disrupt instruction, impact mental health and compromised academic integrity. To address these concerns, the district has implemented age- appropriate restrictions and procedures to ensure responsible use of PDD's in schools.

Aligned with the British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care's provincial direction, all school districts in BC have updated their codes of conduct to restrict students' use of personal digital devices during instructional time. The goal is to minimize distractions, support focussed learning environments, and promote online safety. At Brooks Secondary School, students are required to keep their cell phones in silent mode during class, and their use is permitted only when it directly supports instructional objectives, as determined by the teacher. While we understand your concerns, a complete ban may have limitations. The Provincial guidelines, which inform our policy and our code of conduct, emphasizes the importance of balancing restrictions with accessibility and accommodation needs, ensuring that students who require digital devices for learning support or health-related reasons are not disadvantaged. Additionally, responsible use of technology is an essential skill for students to develop in today's digital world. We remain committed to fostering a learning environment that prioritizes student success and well-being, while addressing concerns related to digital distractions.

I remain open to discussing this matter with you further, particularly around sharing additional strategies that support student well-being. I want to close by expressing my appreciation to you for raising your concerns. I share with you a strong appreciation for the invested efforts of our educators, school leaders, support staff and families, in the common commitment to the students of this tremendous district.

Respectfully,

Paul

**Paul McKenzie (He/Him)**

**Superintendent of Schools**

**q̓at̓et (qathet) School District**

**4351 Ontario Ave, Powell River, BC V8A 1V3**

**Website:** [sd47.bc.ca](http://sd47.bc.ca)

**Phone:** (604) 414-2600

**@qathetschooldistrict**



*I acknowledge with gratitude that I live, work, learn, and play on the traditional and unceded territory of the łaʔamun (Tla'amin) Nation. I am committed to my own learning and unlearning while courageously working towards decolonization through truth, healing, celebration, and reconciliation.*

# Suspension, Exclusion and Seclusion Report YTD Sept 2024 to April 30, 2025.xlsx

SUSPENSIONS (BY INCIDENT)	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	YEAR TO DATE
10 days or less (non-violent)		4	2	3	1	1	3	6			20
10 days or less (violent)	1	2	2	1	4		2				12
11-20 days (non-violent)											0
11-20 days (violent)											0
20 days or more (non-violent)											0
20 days or more (violent)											0
Indefinite (non-violent)											0
Indefinite (violent/threats of violence)											0
Indefinite (first drug offence)											0
Less than 20 days (first drug/alcohol offence)	4	3	1	2		2		2			14
Less than 20 days (second + drug/alcohol offence)											0
20 + days (first drug offence)											0
20 + days (second + drug offence)											0
Indefinite (second + drug/alcohol offence)											0
In-school suspension											0
<b>TOTAL SUSPENSIONS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>EXCLUSIONS</b>											
Exclusions - Elementary											0
Exclusions - Secondary											0
<b>SECLUSIONS</b>											
Seclusions - Elementary											0
Seclusions - Secondary											0

(Violent incidents include: fighting, physical altercations, threats of bodily harm, etc.  
Verbal is considered violent if threatening)



May 15, 2025

Ref: 23449

To: Secretary-Treasurer and Superintendent  
School District No. 47 (qathet)

**Capital Plan Bylaw No. 2025/26-CPSD47-02**

**Re: AMENDED Ministry Response to the Annual Five-Year Capital Plan Submission for 2025/26**

This **AMENDED** letter is in response to your School District's 2025/26 Annual Five-Year Capital Plan submissions for Major Capital Programs and Minor Capital Programs. This letter also contains important information regarding your upcoming 2026/27 Annual Five-Year Capital Planning submission. The following tables identify major capital projects that are supported to proceed to the next stage of development and minor capital projects that are approved for funding and can proceed to procurement. **Please see the "New projects for BUS" section below for AMENDED information.**

On March 13, 2025, the Province introduced legislation that identifies country of origin requirements for all procurements. What this means is U.S. bidders must be excluded, except in certain circumstances, for all future procurements. The Ministry will have further conversations with school districts as the tariff situation evolves and commit to working closely with you to navigate this challenging situation.

**MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Major capital consists of the following program areas:

- Seismic Mitigation Program (SMP)
- Expansion Program (EXP)
- Replacement Program (REP)
- Site Acquisition Program (SAP)
- Rural District Program (RDP)

A variety of emergent issues including a significant number of school fires, unprecedented enrolment growth and a challenging fiscal environment have resulted in a limited ability to advance major capital projects. As a result, there are no new major capital projects in your School District that were supported to move forward at this time.

**MINOR CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The table below reflects approved minor capital projects for your School District in the following program areas:

- School Enhancement Program (SEP)
- Food Infrastructure Program (FIP)
- Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP)

- Building Envelope Program (BEP)
- Playground Equipment Program (PEP)
- Bus Acquisition Program (BUS)

#### **New projects for SEP, FIP, CNCP, BEP, PEP**

Facility Name	Program Project Description	Amount Funded by Ministry
Edgehill Elementary	SEP - HVAC Upgrades	\$1,125,000
Edgehill Elementary	CNCP - Energy Upgrades	\$65,000
Westview Elementary	CNCP - Energy Upgrades	\$190,000
Brooks Secondary	FIP - Kitchen and Equipment Upgrades	\$54,278
Brooks Secondary	FIP - Kitchen Upgrade	\$48,431
Brooks Secondary	FIP - Delivery Vehicle	\$55,000

All projects are now to proceed to design, tender and construction, and to be completed by March 31, 2026.

#### **New projects for BUS**

The table below identifies Bus Acquisition Program (BUS) approved projects with bolded sections identifying additionally approved internal combustion engine and/or electric buses as designated. BUS funding amounts to be confirmed after school districts place their order(s) with bus vendors during the upcoming bus standing offer timeframe which runs from April 2, 2025 to June 2, 2025. Please refer to the attached *School Bus Letter* for additional school bus purchasing details.

New/Existing Bus Fleet #	New/Replacement Bus Type	Amount Funded by Ministry
<b>A9470</b>	<b>INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE - Type A2 Over 6350Kg (24-33) with 2 wheelchair space(s)</b>	<b>TBD</b>

An **AMENDED** Annual Programs Funding Agreement (APFA) accompanies this **AMENDED** Capital Plan Response Letter which outlines specific Ministry and Board-related obligations associated with the approved Minor Capital projects for the 2025/26 fiscal year. Please email a signed/dated copy of the Annual Programs Funding Agreement to the Ministry at [CMB@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CMB@gov.bc.ca)

In accordance with Section 143 of the *School Act*, Boards of Education are required to adopt a single Capital Bylaw (template can be found on the Ministry [website](#)) using the Capital Bylaw Number provided at the beginning of this document, for the supported and/or approved 2025/26 Five-Year Capital Plan projects as identified in this letter. The Capital Bylaw must be adopted by

your Board and uploaded onto your School District's online MyCAPS portal in order for the Ministry to issue Certificates of Approval. A step-by-step guide of this process is attached for your reference.

Please contact Branch Director [Michael Nyikes](#) with any questions regarding Minor Capital projects.

### **2026/27 ANNUAL FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN SUBMISSIONS**

Capital Plan Instructions for the 2026/27 Annual Five-Year Capital Plan submission process will be available on the Ministry's capital planning [website](#) in early April.

School districts' capital plan submission deadlines for the 2026/27 fiscal year are:

- **June 30, 2025**
  - Major Capital Programs (SMP, EXP, REP, RDP, SAP)
- **September 30, 2025**
  - Minor Capital Programs (SEP, CNCP, PEP, BEP, BUS)
- **October 1, 2025**
  - Minor Capital Programs (FIP)

Additionally, the Annual Facility Grant (AFG) project requests for the 2025/26 fiscal year are to be submitted using the MyCAPS portal, on or before **May 16, 2025**. The 2025/26 AFG Allocation Table will be available on the Ministry's capital planning [website](#) in early April.

The Ministry recommends school districts discuss draft versions of their intended capital projects and Annual Facility Grant project requests with minor capital staff in advance of submission deadlines.

The staggered deadlines are intended to provide the Ministry with input required to initiate planning for the next budget cycle, while enabling school districts additional time and flexibility to plan over the summer.

Sincerely,



Damien Crowell, Executive Director  
Education and Child Care Capital Branch  
Ministry of Infrastructure

pc: Geoff Croshaw, Director, Major Capital Projects, Education and Child Care Capital Branch  
Michael Nyikes, Director, Minor Capital Projects, Education and Child Care Capital Branch

**CAPITAL BYLAW NO. 2025/26-CPSD47-02**  
**CAPITAL PLAN 2025/26**

WHEREAS in accordance with section 142 of the *School Act*, the Board of Education of School District No. 47 (*qathet*) (hereinafter called the "Board") has submitted a capital plan to the Minister of Education (hereinafter called the "Minister") and the Minister has approved the capital plan or has approved a capital plan with modifications,

NOW THEREFORE in accordance with section 143 of the *School Act*, the Board has prepared this Capital Bylaw and agrees to do the following:

- (a) Authorize the Secretary-Treasurer to execute a capital project funding agreement(s) related to the capital project(s) contemplated by the capital plan or the capital plan with modifications;
- (b) Upon ministerial approval to proceed, commence the capital project(s) and proceed diligently and use its best efforts to complete each capital project substantially as directed by the Minister;
- (c) Observe and comply with any order, regulation, or policy of the Minister as may be applicable to the Board or the capital project(s); and,
- (d) Maintain proper books of account, and other information and documents with respect to the affairs of the capital project(s), as may be prescribed by the Minister.

NOW THEREFORE the Board enacts as follows:

- 1. The Capital Bylaw of the Board for the 2025/26 Capital Plan as approved by the Minister, to include the supported capital project(s) specified in the letter addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer and Superintendent, dated *May 15, 2025*, is hereby adopted.
- 2. This Capital Bylaw may be cited as *School District 47 (qathet) Capital Bylaw No. 2025/26-CPSD47-02*.

READ A FIRST TIME THE 28<sup>th</sup> DAY OF *May 2025*;  
READ A SECOND TIME THE 28<sup>th</sup> DAY OF *May 2025*;  
READ A THIRD TIME, PASSED THE 28<sup>th</sup> DAY OF *May 2025*.

***APPLY CORPORATE SEAL***

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Board Chair

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Secretary-Treasurer

I HEREBY CERTIFY this to be a true and original *School District 47 (qathet) Capital Bylaw No. 2025/26-CPSD47-02* adopted by the Board on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of *May 2025*.

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Secretary-Treasurer

**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**

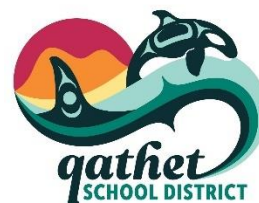
**THAT the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned.**

**STATUS: CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.

SH/attachments

# MEMORANDUM



**Date:** May 14, 2025  
**To:** Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Steve Hopkins, Secretary-Treasurer  
**Action:** Approval of Annual Facility Grant Projects

---

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The Annual Facility Grant (AFG) funding is provided as a lump sum amount annually which a board of education may expend for the purpose of:

- upgrading or replacing existing facility components throughout the expected economic life of an existing capital asset.
- enhancing the service potential of an existing capital asset or a component of an existing capital asset by correcting deficiencies in design, construction, or addressing unsafe conditions.
- significantly lowering the associated operating costs of an existing capital asset; or
- extending the life of an existing capital asset or a component of an existing capital asset beyond its original life expectancy.
- A board of education is responsible for managing its AFG funds to enable planned or emergent health and safety expenditures to be addressed within a fiscal year.

## 2.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are nine main categories of eligible AFG expenditures:

- **Accessibility upgrades** (improvements related to access for persons with mobility issues or physical disabilities).
- **Asbestos Abatement** (mitigation and/or remediation of asbestos affected areas).
- **Electrical upgrades** (improvements or replacements of power supply and distribution systems, fire protection systems, and technological infrastructure upgrades to accommodate computer and telecommunications networks).
- **Exterior Wall System upgrades** (improvements to protect the fabric of the building, including exterior painting, window, and door replacement, building envelope repair and replacement, structural and non-structural seismic mitigation).
- **HVAC upgrades** (improvements, replacements or provision of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems).
- **Interior Construction upgrades** (improvements of school facilities related to flooring, wall partitions, non-structural upgrades, and the provision of educational programming).

- **Plumbing upgrades** (improvements, replacements or provision of washroom and plumbing systems, and safe drinking water).
- **Roofing upgrades** (scheduled roof replacements and major roof repairs).
- **Site upgrades** (site improvements including positive site drainage; repairs to sidewalks, parking lots, site access/egress, paved work areas, paved play areas, and play fields; repairs, upgrading or replacement of playground equipment; perimeter safety fencing; contaminated soil remediation; underground storage tanks removal; sewer or water services; underground irrigation systems; traffic safety).

Expenditures for annual facility projects may include any associated consultant fees.

Examples of ineligible use of AFG include:

- Building expansions resulting in increases to gross facility area or design capacity.
- Building acquisitions.
- Site acquisitions.
- Acquisition of equipment, furnishings, personal computers and peripherals, servers, or vehicles and their accessories.

### **3.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION**

Option 1 – To approve the 2025/2026 proposed list of projects.

Option 2 – Make recommendations for further adjustments to the proposed list of projects.

### **4.0 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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

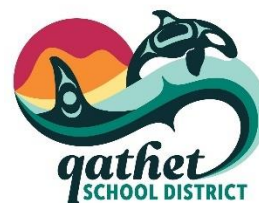
### **5.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix A – 2025/2026 Proposed Annual Facility Grant Plans.

Project Year	Project Name	Project Type	Facility	Funding Source	Budget	Actual	Variance	Status
2025/2026	Line Painting - Parking Lots (Accessibility and play	Grounds	All Sites	AFG	\$	15,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Board Room and Office Area HVAC Replacement	Building	Board Office	AFG	\$	75,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Blacktop Play Area Painting and New Court	Grounds	Brooks	AFG	\$	50,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Home Ec Millwork Partial Upgrades	Building	Brooks	AFG	\$	15,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Outdoor Seating - Concrete Picnic Tables	Grounds	Brooks	AFG	\$	5,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Daycare Blind Upgrades	Building	Brooks	AFG	\$	6,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Gaga Ball Court	Grounds	Edgehill	AFG	\$	5,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Hallway Ceiling Upgrade	Building	Edgehill	AFG	\$	30,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	New Plumbing Upgrade	Building	Edgehill	AFG	\$	100,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Fire Alarm System Upgrade	Building	Edgehill	AFG	\$	75,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Shade Structure - Rear Play Space	Grounds	Edgehill Daycare	AFG	\$	10,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Flooring Replacement - Staff Room, Kindergarten	Building	Henderson	AFG	\$	25,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Playground Sand Building/Digging Area	Grounds	Henderson	AFG	\$	8,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Playground Drainage Upgrades	Grounds	Henderson	AFG	\$	30,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Kindergarten Cubby Storage	Building	James Thomson	AFG	\$	8,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Student Support Services - Breakout Room Space	Building	James Thomson	AFG	\$	10,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Gym AV Upgrade	Building	James Thomson	AFG	\$	5,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Annex Building Exterior Stairs Replacement	Building	James Thomson	AFG	\$	8,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	School Site IT Server UPS Replacement	Building	JT/HEN/WV/KC/TX	AFG	\$	25,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Daycare Blind Upgrades	Building	Kelly Creek	AFG	\$	6,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Parking Lot Expansion and Removal of Front Com	Grounds	Kelly Creek	AFG	\$	55,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Library Outdoor Area Improvements	Grounds	Kelly Creek	AFG	\$	5,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Covered Area Foundation Repair	Building	Kelly Creek	AFG	\$	7,500.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Operations Centre - Upper Floor Asbestos Abater	Building	Operations Centre (Bus	AFG	\$	30,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Boiler Replacement	Building	Operations Centre (Bus	AFG	\$	41,300.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Partial Window Replacement - Mid-level	Building	Operations Centre (Bus	AFG	\$	25,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Accessible Automatic Door Openers (2)	Building	OVEC	AFG	\$	5,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Classroom blinds (2 rooms)	Building	PIE - Courtenay	AFG	\$	5,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Hand Washing Station	Building	PIE - IDLC	AFG	\$	2,500.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Bathroom Renovations	Building	Texada	AFG	\$	90,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Partial Hardie Siding Replacement	Building	Westivew	AFG	\$	60,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Garden Upgrades	Building	Westivew	AFG	\$	5,000.00		Proposed
2025/2026	Shade Structure - Strongstart	Grounds	Westivew	AFG	\$	10,000.00		Proposed
				<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>852,300.00</b>		
					\$	852,300.00	BUDGET	



# MEMORANDUM



**Date:** May 14, 2025  
**To:** Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Steve Hopkins, Secretary-Treasurer

**Action:** Receipt of Maintenance and Transportation Program Report

---

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The role of the Operations Manager was vacated in December 2013, at which time the maintenance-related duties were temporarily absorbed by the Secretary-Treasurer as a short-term cost-saving measure to mitigate a government funding shortfall. The shortfall was created by design under the auspices of an administrative savings initiative, where each district was allocated a reduced amount of funding and expected to offset this by cutting administrative spending.

In 2019, the district planned to reintroduce the role; however, between 2019 and 2023, two different candidates were hired, with neither finding sustained success, resulting in the Secretary-Treasurer once again covering those duties for much of that time.

In March of 2023, the organization finally found a fit with the recruitment of the current Director of Operations. Under his leadership, the department has moved from a reactive, short-term approach to a more stable, proactive, and strategic model. This has included establishing clear maintenance plans, improving project management practices, strengthening contractor oversight, and rebuilding internal operational capacity. As a result, the department is now better equipped to meet the district's daily operational needs while planning effectively for long-term infrastructure and service improvements.

## 2.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

Option 1 – To receive the Maintenance and Transportation Program report.

Option 2 – Make recommendations for further adjustments to the report.

## 3.0 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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

## 4.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A – Maintenance and Transportation Program Report.

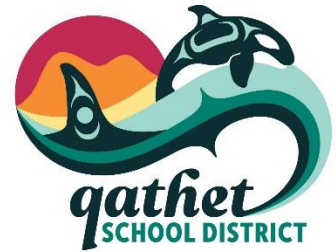
# Maintenance & Transportation Program

qathet School District (July 2024– Present)

Submitted by Jared Formosa, Director of Operations

May 14, 2025

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## 2024/2025 Capital Program

The School District Operations department had a busy summer completing projects in time for school opening, ranging from small upgrades to complete system upgrades throughout schools. A high-level summary for each notable project was shared in September as part of the Superintendents' School Opening Report.

Capital Program Summary:

- Annual Facility Grant (AFG) \$785,853
- School Enhancement Program (SEP) \$2,000,000
  - Henderson HVAC, including removal of three IBC Boilers used for primary heating
- Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP) \$103,000
  - Henderson Energy Upgrades, including LED lighting and 3-phase electrical power
- Bus Acquisition Program (BUS) \$291,386
  - New 80 Passenger Bus

## Edgehill Elementary School Addition

Project planning for the Edgehill Elementary Addition project has been ongoing and detailed design stages are now completed. Unitech Construction Management Services was awarded the management contract as the successful bidder in a process that was advertised provincially through BC Bid. The Construction site has been setup and demolition work was undertaken in March over the Spring Break with some construction work having already started with crews doing excavation and foundation work.

Quarterly project updates have been delivered to trustees since the beginning of the school year with the next update scheduled for June.

## 2025/2026 Capital Program

The Ministry of Education and Childcare recently provided the district its Capital Plan response letter which outlines which projects will be supported.

#### Capital Program Summary:

- Annual Facility Grant (AFG) \$852,300
- School Enhancement Program (SEP) \$1,125,000
  - Edgehill HVAC
- Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP) \$255,000
  - Edgehill & Westview Energy Upgrades, LED Lighting Upgrades
- School Food Infrastructure Program (FIP) \$157,709
  - New Equipment

## **2026/2027 Capital Program Planning**

Submissions under the next funding intake are due in September. Work on these plans are underway with recommendations coming to the Board in September prior to the submission deadline of the 30<sup>th</sup>. It's anticipated that additional HVAC and lighting projects will be explored for other local schools. Also, in the exploratory stages are plans to explore an application under the Playground Equipment Program. We opportunistically added structural capacity to the new Edgehill school addition to accommodate a future large solar array and may explore as a submission in the next cycle planning.

## **Fleet Insurance Renewal**

Vehicle Fleet insurance is renewed effective June 30<sup>th</sup> of each school year. This spring when putting together the renewal documents, staff worked with the insurer to amend the registered vehicle name of all the buses and maintenance vehicles within the fleet to reflect the name change adopted by the organization. Beginning in July, all school district owned vehicles are now registered under the name, Board of Education of School District 47 (qathet). This marks another major milestone in the renaming process.

## **2025/2026 Bus Pass Applications**

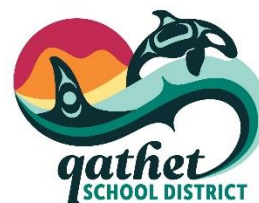
Substantial changes were implemented last school year to improve the internal processes in place governing the annual issuance of student bus passes. With the adoption this year of a new bus routing and management system, additional efficiencies are being explored with one significant change being having been implemented this Spring.

Eligible student bus riders who have actively used their pass throughout the 2024/2025 school year will automatically be registered for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year transportation. Riders who have been automatically registered received an email confirmation of registration in late April.

## **Disposal of Surplus Equipment**

Beginning this Spring the district hopes to launch a web-based platform, created internally by our IT Director, to host online auctions to facilitate the sale of surplus equipment.

# MEMORANDUM



**Date:** May 14, 2025  
**To:** Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Steve Hopkins, Secretary-Treasurer  
**Action:** Receipt of Occupational Health and Safety Report

---

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

District Occupational Health and Safety related services were historically delivered part-time by a long serving support staff member who did it in conjunction with their custodial and maintenance related duties. These services were mostly limited to supporting the various site-based committees required under Worksafe regulations. For many years the district has also contracted with another School District in the form of WorkSafe related claims management services as this type of expertise is not something the district has had available to it in-house. With the retirement of the long serving support staff employee in 2022 the organization was left with a significant hole in its service delivery model.

In the Spring of 2024 the Board approved, as part of the annual budget, the creation of the Occupational Health and Safety Manager position which was filled in October 2024.

## 2.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As this was a new position, financial resources had to be allocated in support of its creation. The resources required were incremental as the role of the former support staff employee was not filled and the maintenance related work was redirected to the maintenance foreman role. As this is the first year with the position in place there is still significant work required in setting up associated processes. Over time we will continue to evaluate the role and if an opportunity presents itself we would look to pull the contracted claims management services in-house which would roughly save an additional \$10,000 each year.

## 3.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

Option 1 – To receive the Occupational Health and Safety work plan report.

Option 2 – Make recommendations for further adjustments to the Occupational Health and Safety work plan.

#### **4.0 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT: The Board of Education receive the proposed Occupational Health and Safety work plan report.

#### **5.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Health and Safety Work Plan.

# Health and Safety

qathet School District (October 2024– Present)

Submitted by Lisa McMurray, Health and Safety Manager

May 14, 2025



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The following summarizes the activities I've been working on since starting in my role as the Manager of Health and Safety for the qathet School District in October 2024.

## Compliance:

I have been involved in several health and safety compliance activities, including those associated with new Workers Compensation Board (WCB) First Aid Regulations, commencing with changes that came into force in November 2024. This included the completion of 14 site-specific first aid assessments and the implementation of associated site-specific first aid procedures. In January, I responded to a WCB inspection with policy, procedure and training details related to qathet School District's compliance with legislative requirements for Bullying and Harassment.

## Inspections and Investigations:

I conducted initial inspections at most of the schools in the district and provided reports with recommended improvements.

Under construction safety, I conducted an initial review of health and safety provisions at the start of Edgehill expansion project with Unitech. Informal observations and notice to Director of Operations have occurred for roofing activities as observed at Henderson.

I am working on improving overall contractor safety management.

The accident/incident investigation process has been streamlined, with clarity provided to administrators on reporting and investigating incidents. I have established a monthly trend report that provides qSD incident trends for health and safety committees and administrators. I have been supporting WCB claim reporting and enquiries by liaising with administrators and relaying reports as appropriate to SD23.

## **Assessments**

I have conducted ten formal / informal ergonomic assessments directly, helping staff to optimize existing equipment or recommending and/or obtaining alternatives.

I have also established a process to actively review the recommended equipment that is associated with BCTF Health and Wellness assessments, to ensure cost-effective and suitability for application, having completed a review of six assessments to-date.

I am working towards standardizing equipment options with our vendors. This has proven to be more difficult than initially anticipated due to vendor-imposed limitations for our regional area (primarily associated with logistics).

## **Emergency Response**

The AED equipment at the district is now being actively managed, after a period of hiatus due to the former Safety Officer's retirement. There are 13 units that are deployed across the School District that are being maintained to be in ready state.

I am monitoring compliance with emergency drill requirements for all schools through the JHSC tracker (see below). I have identified a push-to-talk option for evaluation related to emergency communication. The emergency preparedness and response program is under review for updating.

## **Health and Safety Committees**

Upon my initial evaluation of our program, I noted inconsistencies in practices amongst qathet School District's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JHSC). To ensure consistent practices and levels of competence amongst JHSC members, I have developed and introduced an employer-based training course that was delivered to 27 JHSC members in January and February 2025. This training course will be delivered twice a year, being available to new members as they join.

The District Health and Safety Committee has been re-established with the Director of HR and me representing SD47 management, with a view to ensure transparency and a balanced and compliant approach to health and safety issues that arise. I am managing the scheduling and administration of this committee.

I have established an online JHSC tracker for self-reporting, and to allow for oversight of JHSC activities, including meetings, inspections and trends.

## **Training and Communication**

Improvements in health and safety communications has been through monthly email updates to JHSCs, the establishment of a Health and Safety webpage.

Health and safety training is under review, including course offerings, content, assignment, and record retention. In collaboration with the Director of HR and Executive Administrator, I have looked into utilizing existing systems to ensure that we are able to appropriately assign and track completion for employees. These systems have included Desire2Learn and Atrieve, with the latter being the most-likely format for long-term.

I have developed and delivered two new courses: one-day new JHSC member training (see above), and Ergonomic/Chemical Safety Refresher training for Custodians. A review of health and safety orientation training is underway.

## **Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) Management System**

I have established a workplan to develop and adopt a sustainable management system. In my review of the existing system at SD47, I note that most of the elements of a H&S management system appear to be in place, but that improvements in communicating the requirements and ongoing updating are required.



# MEMORANDUM



**Date:** May 14, 2025  
**To:** Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Steve Hopkins, Secretary-Treasurer  
**Action:** Receipt of Information Technology Report

---

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

Information Technology (IT) services have been delivered here in the qathet district through a variety of different service models over the years. Early in the 2023/2024 school year a determination was made that the model was not meeting the needs of the organization, and a decision was made to further restructure the department.

Following that decision the District Principal of Technology and the Information Technology Manager positions were both eliminated, and the Director of Technology position was created and subsequently filled in February of 2024.

## 2.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Following the recruitment of the Director role, the balance of the personnel changes were made resulting in the Help Desk position being moved to the supervision of the education directors. An additional support staff technician position was then created and subsequently filled in September of 2024. Finally, the prior model also utilized a base number of hours for a local contractor to augment services, in the current model those hours have been reduced with related services being delivered in-house. The net savings this school year in salary and benefits to this staffing approach was approximately \$40,000.

## 3.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

Option 1 – To receive the Information Technology Report.

Option 2 – Make recommendations for further adjustments to the Information Technology Report.

## 4.0 STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

THAT: The Board of Education receive the Information Technology Report.

## **5.0 APPENDICES**

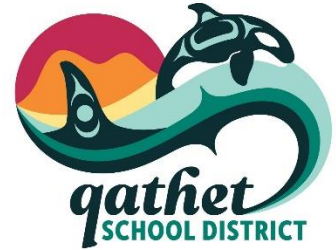
Appendix A – Information Technology Update.

# Information Technology

qathet School District (February 2024 – Present)

Submitted by Ben Grant, Director of Information Technology

May 14, 2025



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## Staffing Plan Adjustments – First 6 Months

- District Principal of Technology re-deployed to fill a vacancy with the Partners in Education program.
- Transitioned the MyEducation Help Desk position away from the IT department to Student Information Specialist (focusing on student data management and support). This aligns with other school districts in BC.
- The Manager of Information Technology position was eliminated as part of a strategic shift in the direction and leadership of the IT department.
- Reduced local contractor scope of work and removed administrative access to prioritize internal capacity and reduce dependency on external contractors.
- Centralized IT operations at the School Board Office to improve communication, cohesion, and support consistency across the district.
- Hired an additional support staff technician, a networking specialist, to strengthen in-house technical expertise.
- Shifted technician duties to a shared responsibility model—each technician now supports network and server infrastructure as well as client devices.

## Required Immediate IT Improvements

- Migrate from SharePoint (on-premises server) to SharePoint Online. This is a significant migration, as it involves transitioning from a legacy system to a modern, cloud-based platform. Key considerations include assessing existing sites to determine what should be migrated, archived, or discarded. This ensures that only relevant and up-to-date content is moved to the new environment.

- Initiated development of an automated system to keep student accounts in sync between MyEd (our student information system) and Active Directory. This includes account creation, grade transitions, and group membership updates.
- Began designing a ‘Zero Trust’ network model for Wi-Fi, incorporating stronger identity verification and access controls to reduce the risk of unauthorized access.
- Conducted a district-wide audit of outdated or unused servers and equipment at the Board Office, Datacentre, Brooks Secondary, and other sites. Equipment was decommissioned or scheduled for disposal.
- Incorporate IT work orders onto the eBase platform—already in use by other departments. This centralized, cloud-based system allows staff to submit and track IT service requests in real time. Goal: Improve response times, improve communication, and increase confidence in IT support.

## **Ongoing and Current IT Initiatives**

- Classroom Technology Modernization: Introducing BenQ RM7505 interactive panels to replace aging projectors. These 75” 4K UHD displays offer touch functionality, wireless connectivity, and improved audio-visual quality. Feedback from teachers has been highly positive.
- Device Management Consolidation: Transitioning laptops (previously domain-joined) and iPads (previously managed with JAMF and licensed per device) to Microsoft Intune—fully covered under our Microsoft agreement—thereby eliminating extra costs. Intune enhances security and improves software deployment while also integrating devices into our ‘Zero Trust’ network.
- Long-Term Laptop Assignment: Laptops are now assigned to individual teachers instead of classrooms. These will remain with them for the life of the device—moving away from a fixed 4-year replacement cycle. This change improves accountability and extends device lifespan.
- Network Optimization: Only active network ports are now connected to switches, rather than every wall jack. This change reduces power usage, lowers the number of required switches, and declutters network closets.
- UPS Modernization: Replacing aging lead-acid UPS battery backup units with modern lithium-based systems. These newer UPS units offer longer life spans (up to 10 years), faster recharge times, reduced maintenance, and improved reliability.
- Cloud Transition: Reducing our on-premises server footprint by moving systems such as file shares into Microsoft 365 (Teams and OneDrive). This enables secure, cloud-based access to documents and supports improved collaboration and disaster recovery.
- Cybersecurity Enhancement: Rolling out Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for all staff. MFA adds a second layer of identity verification, significantly reducing the risk of unauthorized access and aligning with cybersecurity best practices.

- **License Optimization:** Assigning Microsoft A3 licenses only to staff who require advanced features (e.g., staff with assigned laptops), while others receive free A1 licenses. This needs-based approach has resulted in substantial cost savings.
- **HR & IT Collaboration:** Working closely with HR to align onboarding and offboarding processes. This includes managing Active Directory by removing inactive accounts and unused licenses, and ensuring timely setup of new staff accounts.
- **Automation Development:** Currently developing a tool to automate the entire staff lifecycle process—onboarding, updates, and offboarding—to ensure accounts, permissions, and licenses are consistently managed, reducing manual effort and improving security.

### **Near-Term goals for Elementary and Secondary Schools**

- **Realign iPad Use:** Transition iPads back to primary grades (K–3), where they are developmentally appropriate and most effective as one-to-one learning tools.
- **Expand Laptop Access:** Increase the number of laptops available in grades 4–12, particularly at the secondary level, by deploying additional shared laptop carts to improve student access.
- **Improve Device Alignment:** Shift from a one-size-fits-all model to a more purposeful allocation of devices—iPads for younger learners, laptops for older students—better supporting research, productivity, and integration with our Microsoft 365 environment.
- **Optimize Existing Inventory:** Remove outdated iPads and repurpose functional devices by moving them out of higher grades and into classrooms where they can still be used effectively, helping to reduce unnecessary replacement costs.
- **Support Sustainable Investment:** Recognize this as a significant investment in digital learning, with a focus on maximizing long-term value, improving equity of access, and supporting curriculum delivery with the right tools for each age group.
- **Integrate all staff and student devices** into our secure ‘Zero Trust’ network infrastructure.

### **Mid-and Long-Term Goals -- Network Security**

- **Improve ‘Zero Trust’ network** through improved network VLAN architecture (network segmentation) and improved use of firewall rules (which devices can access which resources).
- **Improve server security** by tightening access rules and using MFA authentication for both the VPN (process used to access district network remotely) and on-prem servers.
- **Enhance Monitoring and Threat Detection:** Expand the use of advanced threat protection tools and real-time monitoring (via Microsoft Defender, Sentinel, or similar platforms) to detect suspicious activity and respond quickly to potential breaches.

- **Staff Cybersecurity Training:** Provide ongoing security awareness training for all staff to reduce phishing risk and build a security-first culture across the district.
- **Expand Zero Trust security principles** from Wi-Fi to the wired network. This includes applying device authentication and access controls to wired connections, ensuring that only authorized users and devices can access the network.
- **Modernize Network Infrastructure to Support AI-Driven Management:** As HP integrates advanced AI features into Aruba Central—including automated diagnostics, natural language queries, and security insights—leveraging these capabilities will require upgrading older network switches. Over the long term, we plan to phase in newer, AI-compatible switching hardware across the district, enabling predictive analytics, faster troubleshooting, and more secure, efficient network operations.

## **Other Goals**

- **Support TELUS's migration** from copper to fibre lines across schools by assessing current phone, fax, and alarm connections. This includes identifying systems that rely on analog lines and installing adapters to ensure continued operation over fibre. As part of this process, we expect to find and cancel inactive services, resulting in ongoing cost savings.
- **Upgrade backhaul connections** in Brooks Secondary, by increasing bandwidth from network closets to the core Layer 3 switch to 10Gbps fiber. This will reduce network bottlenecks, improve performance for cloud-based tools, and support growing device usage. Upgrades will be scheduled as part of planned summer infrastructure work.
- **We currently use an Avaya VoIP phone system** with a separate controller at each school. Since our schools are networked and servers are already centralized, we plan to consolidate the phone system as well—moving to a single Avaya controller at the district data centre. This will reduce the effort required to maintain and update the system, improve reliability, and result in long-term cost savings by eliminating redundant hardware and streamlining licensing.
- **Transition from district-issued cell phones** and plans to a monthly stipend model. Staff will be responsible for their own devices and service, reducing misuse, replacement costs, lost or broken phone replacements, and administrative overhead. This change will be phased in as existing phone contracts expire to avoid costly cancellation fees.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES

### SCHOOL LIAISONS

School Name	Trustee
Brooks Secondary	Jaclyn Miller
Edgehill Elementary	Dale Lawson
Henderson Elementary	Dale Lawson
James Thomson Elementary	Kirsten Van't Schip
Kelly Creek Community	Maureen Mason
Partners in Education	Jaclyn Miller
Texada Elementary	Kirsten Van't Schip
Westview Elementary	Maureen Mason

### BOARD COMMITTEES

Committee Name	Trustee
Committee of the Whole	All Trustees

### REPRESENTATIVES TO INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

Administrative Committees	Trustee	Alternate
Environmental and Sustainability Committee	Maureen Mason	
Health Committee	Jaclyn Miller	
Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion	Kisten Van't Schip	Jaclyn Miller
SOGI	Maureen Mason	

### REPRESENTATIVES TO EXTERNAL COMMITTEES, ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES

External/Sectoral Committees	Trustee	Alternate
BCPSEA Representative	Dale Lawson	
BCSTA Provincial Council Representative	Jaclyn Miller	
South Coast Branch	All Trustees	
District Parent Advisory Council	All Trustees (rotating)	
Indigenous Education Council (IEC)	Jaclyn Miller	



## School goals

The primary responsibility of the board is to ensure alignment between our strategic plan, school goals, and instruction.

As we move into the second year of implementing the strategic plan, I would like to adopt a more critical lens on school goals. Currently, schools are using two of the three yearly goals to focus on literacy and numeracy. Literacy and numeracy are skills; they are not goals.

As a district, numeracy and literacy are foundational to our work as a mandate of the Ministry. Progress is measured and reported on in compliance with these expectations. As yearly school goals, they are redundant and crowd out the opportunity to concentrate on other aspects of the strategic plan. Unless schools broaden the scope of yearly goals, we will not see the critical aspects of the strategic plan fall into place.

## Motion

The Superintendent encourage schools to move away from establishing literacy and numeracy as school goals. This motion aims to more fully align the strategic plan with practices at both the school and classroom levels within its five-year mandate.