

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

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

MINUTES

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

Also in attendance: Paul McKenzie (Superintendent), Steve Hopkins (Secretary-Treasurer)

Regrets: Kirsten Van't Schip (Trustee)

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by Chairperson Miller.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PRESENTATIONS:

Mental Health in Schools – M. Brooks, L. Gaudreau and E. Maxwell

Brooks student representatives M. Brooks and L. Gaudreau, supported by E. Maxwell, provided an overview of the Mental Health Advocacy Group's work. This student-led group, now in its fourth year, includes 15 students from Grades 9 to 12 who meet weekly to promote mental health awareness and foster a more supportive school environment.

The group conducted a schoolwide survey that received 500 responses. Results showed that 75% of students felt they had a good understanding of mental health, and 71% reported regularly experiencing stress or anxiety at school. Identified causes included academic workload, social pressures, and family-related challenges. In response, the group developed and distributed rack cards and posters featuring mental health resources, including mobile apps, school counsellor information, and local support services.

Additional initiatives included a "Kindness Wall" campaign and active engagement through social media. The group secured three grants to support their efforts and organized a Grade 7 Wellness Conference, which included sessions and a gallery walk highlighting community services. Feedback from the 137 student participants was overwhelmingly positive, with over 60% indicating they felt better informed about where to access supports both at school and in the community.

The student representatives, along with fellow student L. Carlos, attended the Mental Health in Schools conference, where they shared ideas and built connections with students from other districts. Trustees expressed appreciation for the group's thoughtful and impactful contributions. The group plans to

continue its initiatives in the coming year, with a final student-led contest scheduled for the upcoming Friday.

James Thomson Elementary School Growth Plan – M. Hull & C. Leigh

Principal Matthew Hull and Vice-Principal Courtney Leigh shared an update on the 2024–2025 School Growth Plan for James Thomson Elementary. The school is deeply committed to outdoor learning, Indigenous education, and fostering community connection. Their three key goals are: improving literacy outcomes as measured by the DIBELS assessment; fostering a culture of respect and integrity through social-emotional learning and character education; and enhancing Indigenous student success by embedding Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum.

The school has implemented a range of initiatives to support these goals, including a monthly character building committee, a school-wide positive behaviour ticket system (yixmet tickets), and weekly Youth Restorative Action circles in intermediate grades. The presence of a therapy dog, Jaxon, supports student regulation and empathy. Positive student data indicates that students feel supported and connected—nearly all surveyed students could identify at least two adults at school who believe in their success, and office referrals have dropped significantly. Looking ahead, the school plans to consolidate its goals into two focus areas aligned with Indigenous ways of knowing, expand character development programming, implement a formal referral system, and develop a school-wide inquiry question to build resiliency.

QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

“It’s hard to believe we are gathering with only 5 weeks of the school year remaining. We are so pleased to have Paul McKenzie, our new Superintendent, here now and we know he has made it a priority to get out and meet as many of the staff and students as possible. We are so thrilled to have Paul on board and look forward to some exciting new momentum ahead.

At the end of last month, our Board of Trustees attended the B.C. School Trustees Association’s 2025 AGM. We came together with other Trustees from around the province, education leaders, partners, and policymakers across BC to discuss critical issues facing our system. Topics discussed covered student success, data & evidence, communications, Indigenous Education as well as opportunities for us to connect with our counterparts to share learning.

May is such a busy and exciting month in our schools – and outside. Our Indigenous Education team led a variety of events including the “Story 2 Song” retreat that students get to attend at the Outdoor Learning Centre where they cultivate connection and cultural learning through storytelling, music, and arts. As well, all Grade 7 students from across the district get to experience an overnight camp at the OLC as a way to celebrate their hard work in elementary school and mark their exciting transition to secondary. Camps kicked off this month and will continue into June.

It was Mental Health Awareness Week this month, and I was so proud to hear about three members of the Mental Health and Advocacy Group at Brooks Secondary (whom we just heard from) who had the opportunity to represent their group and present at the Mental Health in Schools conference in Vancouver. They also spoke at our own 3rd annual Health & Wellness Conference on May 14th, where Grade 7 students were brought together to engage in interactive sessions related to wellbeing. We are so impressed by the courage and leadership demonstrated by our students on this topic and a huge thank you to staff who helped make these experiences possible.

You may have noticed the improved decor in this room which is entirely thanks to our students across the district. School Board staff put out a call for student art and thankfully, the students answered! We recognized those who participated with a small celebration here at the Board office. I'm sure everyone would agree that the space feels improved!

Looking ahead to June, a lot is happening. As a Board, we will be reviewing our strategic initiatives as well as the annual budget. June is Pride month and we will also recognize National Indigenous Peoples Day. We are also excited to celebrate staff who are retiring with a special dinner and of course the Brooks graduating class of 2025. The graduation Ceremony is on June 7th and we look forward to seeing many proud family members at Hap Parker Arena.

Big thank you to the staff who are already planning and prepping for the next school year. We know it is a busy time and we appreciate all that you are doing to ensure student success.”

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOVED: M. MASON

SECONDED: D. LAWSON

THAT the Regular meeting agenda of May 28, 2025, be adopted as circulated.

STATUS: CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED: D. LAWSON

SECONDED: G. CONTI

THAT the Regular meeting minutes of April 23, 2025, be adopted as circulated.

STATUS: CARRIED

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

Superintendent McKenzie provided an update on the implementation of limitations to cell phone usage during instructional hours. He noted that the transition is progressing well, with no significant concerns beyond typical first-year growing pains. The change reflects ongoing efforts to shift practices and behaviours in line with BC's provincial guidelines and the school's code of conduct.

MOVED: M. MASON

SECONDED: G. CONTI

THAT the correspondence in items 5.a) to 5.b) be received.

STATUS: CARRIED

6. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS' REPORT

6.a) Superintendent of Schools – Early Days (presentation)

Superintendent McKenzie shared reflections on his first weeks in the district, outlining his initial goals and approach. He expressed gratitude to former Superintendent Vianne Kintzinger for her support during the transition and emphasized his commitment to listening, learning, and engaging with staff and stakeholders. His early focus has been on reviewing the district's strategic and operational plans, as well as ministry reports, while actively visiting schools and meeting with the principal and vice-principal team.

Intentional conversations have begun with senior leadership, guided by three key questions: What is working? What isn't? What's next? A 360-degree review is underway to inform future directions, with a report to be shared with the Board following interviews with key groups. Superintendent McKenzie spoke to the strong foundation already in place across the district and expressed enthusiasm for building on this success through thoughtful alignment with reporting practices and next steps.

6.b) Community Connections Report (presentation)

Director of Communications Kristy Payne presented the Community Connections Report, highlighting key achievements and strategic priorities from the 2024–25 school year. The communications team has focused on enhancing awareness of the district's strategic plan while building strong internal and external relationships. Over the year, the department collaborated with approximately 50 staff members, supporting initiatives such as career program videos, literacy campaigns, Indigenous education features, school visioning exercises, and branded content like the district logo and guidelines.

The report also emphasized growth in community engagement, including a 27% increase in social media followers, over 19,000 content interactions, and a 71% newsletter open rate among staff. Website traffic reached approximately 74,000 visits, with consistent updates averaging three posts per week. Additional efforts included developing a staff portal, refining branding, and promoting student voice through digital storytelling. Looking ahead, future opportunities include proactive issues management, change

communication, addressing misinformation, and positioning the district as a thought leader in public education.

- 6.c) Suspension, Exclusion, and Seclusion Report – September 3, 2024, to April 30, 2025
The report was provided for information.

MOVED: D. LAWSON

SECONDED: G. CONTI

THAT the Superintendent of Schools' Report be received as presented.

STATUS: CARRIED

7. SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

- 7.a) Capital Plan Response Letter – Amended

- 7.b) Capital Plan Bylaw – Amended

Secretary-Treasurer Hopkins presented an amendment to the previously approved Capital Plan Bylaw, noting that the Ministry of Education and Child Care has approved the addition of a smaller, wheelchair-accessible bus to the plan. While the new bus is not electric, the district is exploring future electrification options, which would require upgrades to power infrastructure.

MOVED: D. LAWSON

SECONDED: M. MASON

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

STATUS: CARRIED

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

MOVED: M. MASON

SECONDED: G. CONTI

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

STATUS: CARRIED

Maintenance and Transportation, Occupational Health & Safety, and Information Technology Reports

MOVED: D. LAWSON

SECONDED: M. MASON

THAT the Board of Education receive the Maintenance and Transportation Program Report, Occupational Health and Safety Report, and the Information Technology Report.

STATUS: CARRIED

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.a) Amended Committee Appointments

Trustee Conti was appointed as trustee liaison for James Thomson and Texada Elementary PACs, as well as the trustee representative to the JEDI and SOGI committees.

9.b) Meeting with Minister of Education and Childcare (Oral)

Chairperson Miller provided an oral report on the recent virtual meeting between the Board and Minister Beare. Trustees had the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion. The Chair reviewed the questions that were presented to the Minister during the meeting and noted that it was a positive and open exchange. Trustees appreciated the opportunity and expressed hope for continued dialogue. The Minister also alluded to upcoming childcare-related announcements expected in September.

9.c) BCSTA AGM (Oral)

Chairperson Miller provided an oral report on the recent BCSTA Annual General Meeting. Executive elections were held, resulting in a newly elected provincial board. The South Coast Branch also held its executive elections, with all positions now held by trustees from SD48. Trustees highlighted the strength of the keynote presentation, which focused on developing strategies for clear communication with school communities. All motions were completed, and the event provided valuable opportunities for networking and learning about current priorities in provincial advocacy.

9.d) School Goals - M. Mason

A motion was introduced by Vice-chairperson Mason recommending that schools move away from using literacy and numeracy as annual school goals, to better align school-level practices with the broader scope of the District's five-year Strategic Plan.

Trustees discussed the importance of maintaining accountability for literacy and numeracy while encouraging a more comprehensive and strategic approach to school goal-setting. Emphasis was placed on using clear inquiry questions, aligning with strategic priorities, and adapting to what is learned over time about students and schools.

The motion was amended to reflect this broader perspective.

MOVED: M. MASON

SECONDED: G. CONTI

MOTION: "THAT 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."

AMENDMENT:

MOVED: J. MILLER

SECONDED: D. LAWSON

MOTION: "THAT the Board direct the Superintendent to ensure all school goals are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART), and that they align with the District's entire Strategic Plan, in order to facilitate meaningful progress within the five-year mandate of the plan."

STATUS: CARRIED AS AMENDED

QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions.

MEDIA QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED: D. LAWSON

SECONDED: M. MASON

THAT the Regular Meeting of May 28, 2025 be adjourned.

STATUS: CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.



J. Miller
Chairperson



S. Hopkins
Secretary-Treasurer

SH/attachments