

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR OPEN BOARD MEETING  
OF THE NEW WESTMINSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Tuesday, March 12, 2024, 7:00 PM  
In-Person and Via Zoom Link**

PRESENT Maya Russell, Chair  
Cheryl Sluis, Vice-Chair  
Gurveen Dhaliwal, Trustee  
Danielle Connelly, Trustee  
Elliott Slinn, Trustee  
Cheryl Sluis, Trustee  
Kathleen Carlsen, Trustee

Karim Hachlaf, Superintendent  
Julie Pearce, Interim Associate Superintendent  
Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer  
Robert Weston, Executive Director, HR  
Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects  
Amy Grey, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer  
Laura Goodman, Recording Secretary

Members of the Public  
Laura Kwong, DPAC Chair  
Dave Bollen, CUPE 409 President  
The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.



5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Nil.

6. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. The next EPPC & OPPC Meetings will be held on April 16, 2024.

7. **REPORTS FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

- a. Extracurricular Athletics Audit Update (S. Rai)

Sukh Rai, Vice-Principal at QMS provided a report on the Extracurricular Athletics Audit that he conducted at New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS) and three middle schools. In December 2023, a motion was passed at the Open Board meeting to review the District's approach to providing and supporting extra-curricular physical activities. The Board expressed that athletics opportunities should be offered "Equitably" by removing barriers to student participation which may include socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, disability, and gender. The main goal of this audit was to explore if the District's extracurricular athletics were being offered in an equitable and meaningful way to all their students. Rai also spoke about the next steps, timeline, and plans, and reiterated the importance of extracurricular athletics as learning opportunities for students as they can have a huge impact on creating a strong school culture, and building strong connections between students and staff. *Questions and discussions ensued.*

*Rai to provide a summary report of findings to the Board of Education at the Open Board meeting on April 30, 2024.*

*To view the report in its entirety please refer to the meeting video at [\[7:18 p.m.\]](#).*

- b. Short Term Capacity Update for New Westminster Schools (B. Ketcham)

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham provided a comprehensive Short Term Capacity Update, regarding the ongoing enrollment challenges in New Westminster Schools, and stated that the District continues to experience a rapid rate of enrolment growth. The registration process for the 2024-25 school year is now complete; 350 new students will join our schools in the fall.

*Highlights include:*

- **Fraser River Zone:** Anticipated growth in this zone will be supported by portables that will continue to be installed as enrolment projections increase. The immense capacity pressures will continue to grow between now and the tentative construction completion of the new Simcoe Elementary School in September 2027.
- **Mainland Middle Schools:** projected Middle School Enrolment vs. Operating Capacity which includes approved Capital Projects as of December 2023, Middle School Projections vs. Operating Capacity, and the expected growth projections in mainland middle schools as the City continues to grow. Ketcham noted that approval for the middle site acquisition and building is currently pending.
- **Options Under Consideration:** Ketcham stated the following options under consideration to alleviate the enrolment projections are Option 1). Portable Placement Strategy, and



*Chair Russell thanked Trustees Sluis and Connelly for agreeing to Co-Chair this committee, and to the partner groups for their continued participation in this process.*

- e. 2024-2025 District Calendar (J. Pearce)

*Interim Associate Superintendent brought forward the following motion for consideration.*

**2024-020**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approve the 2024-2025 District Calendar as presented.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

- f. Terms of Engagement with Auditor (B. Ketcham) (Verbal).

Secretary-Treasurer, Ketcham put forward a request to the Board for one additional year of engagement services with KPMG LLP for the 2023-2024 year, as the District had concluded its 5-year term engagement with KPMG last year. Ketcham noted that their fees are in alignment with the marketplace and similar districts. An audit rotation was also completed two years ago which helps with any questions as it relates to independence between the engagement with KPMG and the District. The District seeks the Board's approval to have KPMG LLP services for one more year to complete the year-end audit services with the intent of going to an RFP in the fall.

**2024-021**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) confirm and continue the engagement of KPMG LLP for the year-end audit services for 2023-24.***

***CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY***

*Chair Russell announced that this would be Superintendent Hachlaf's last Board meeting with New Westminster schools, before he takes on his new role as Superintendent at Burnaby Schools. She thanked him for his hard work, dedication, and contributions over the past 7 years to the District, New West Schools staff, students, and families within the community.*

- g. Superintendent Update

- Indigenous education and school development in BC: Board invests in new school openings and renovations, despite pandemic and flooding challenges.
- School nutrition program and student involvement. Westminster schools implemented a district-wide school nutrition program, student voice verification committee, and childcare and early learning initiatives.
- The Board of Education invested in significant land acquisition over the years to secure future school development, the complete seismic update and renovation of Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary School and the beginning of the new 3-story expansion at Queen Elizabeth School.
- Toonies for Tum mies demonstrates their commitment to ensuring students have access to healthy food. And the implementation of a district-wide school nourishment program without barriers to handle the budget cycle that now has robust district input.

*Superintendent Hachlaf acknowledged the tremendous community, and expressed his gratitude for support and growth in New Westminster School, and looks forward to his future in Burnaby Schools.*

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

Nil.

9. **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Board Advocacy Draft Plan (M. Russell) (Verbal).

Chair Russell spoke to the Board Advocacy Draft Plan and noted that it had not been included in this evening's Board Agenda package as the latest version was circulated today.

The updated changes to this document are as follows:

- Removed the 2024 date as it has been determined this is more than a one-year plan.
- Added a Purpose header at the top of the first page.
- A reference was added to denote that the plan may evolve which warrants updates.
- Added that advocacy activities should be in support of the plan and be coordinated.
- The Engagement / Information Gathering language was placed in its section.
- Added a reference to the Memorial Site at NWSS under Capital Projects.
- Added a reference to schools as gathering places as part of wider emergency response planning in the context of climate resilience.

Chair Russell noted that the Board Advocacy *Draft* Plan will be brought forward to the next Open Board meeting for final adoption. In the interim, the latest Draft Plan will be available for review on their website under [Board News Bulletins](#).

*To review the Board's 2024 Draft Advocacy Plan discussion, refer to the video at [\[9:24 p.m.\]](#)*

*At 9:27 p.m. Trustee Andres put forward the motion to extend the meeting past 9:30 p.m.*

*Trustee Gurveen Dhaliwal left the meeting at 9:28 p.m. and did not return.*

