

**MINUTES  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PUBLIC MEETING  
February 25, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.**

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**TRUSTEES:** Cendra Beaton, Board Chair  
Russ Chipps (online via MS Teams)  
Christine Lervold (online via MS Teams )  
Trudy Spiller  
Allison Watson, Vice Chair  
Amanda Dowhy  
Ebony Logins

**STAFF:** Paul Block, Superintendent  
Brian Jonker, Secretary-Treasurer  
Monica Braniff, Deputy Superintendent  
D’Arcy Deacon, Associate Superintendent  
Fred Hibbs, Executive Director, Human Resources (online via MS Teams)  
Steve Tonnesen, Manager, Digital Solutions - Operations

**REGRETS:** David Strange, Associate Superintendent

**SECRETARY:** Jenny Seal

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**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST NATIONS TERRITORIES**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by the Board Chair, who acknowledged the traditional territories of the First Nations.

**2. AGENDA**

**2.1 Call for amendments and additional items**

56. **MOVED** Ebony Logins/Allison Watson  
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) adopt the public meeting agenda of February 25, 2025, as presented.  
**CARRIED**

**2.2 Report on In Camera Meeting – Cendra Beaton**

This notice is to inform the public that prior to this meeting an “in-camera” meeting of the Board was held where issues of legal, land and personnel were discussed.

**3. MINUTES**



### 3.1 Call for amendments to minutes

57. MOVED Amanda Dowhy/Allison Watson  
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) adopt the public meeting minutes of January 28, 2025, as amended.  
CARRIED

## 4. INFORMATION ITEMS AND ANNOUCEMENTS

### 4.1 Board Chair Update – Cendra Beaton

The Board Chair spoke about Black History month and how it underscores the ongoing fight for equality and diversity. The Little River Pedestrian Crossing Ceremony took place in Sooke on February 7<sup>th</sup>. The School District partnered with the District of Sooke on this project for the benefit of students and families' commute.

Tomorrow is Pink Shirt Day, to spread awareness for anti-bullying.

March 7-8 is the Vancouver Island School Trustee Association (VISTA) conference, which is the regional conference for Trustees. This conference is a collaboration of three school districts, Sooke, Saanich and Victoria. Thanks goes out to the presenters for our district; Dave Strange, Matt Kemshaw, Mike Bobbitt and Patrick Gale.

Due to spring break, the next board meeting is in two weeks, on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

## 5. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 Royal Bay School Trip to Tacoma, Washington, Oct. 24 to Oct. 26, 2025 – Lucas MacNeil/Cody Cook
- 5.2 Royal Bay School Trip to Baltimore, Maryland, Oct. 30 to Nov. 3, 2025
- 5.3 Royal Bay School Trip to Portland, Oregon, Nov. 14 to Nov. 16, 2025
- 5.4 Royal Bay School Trip to Tukwila, Washington, Dec. 5 to Dec. 7, 2025
- 5.5 Royal Bay School Trip to Seattle, Washington, Mar. 2026 (TBD)
- 5.6 Royal Bay School Trip to Oregon, Washington, Apr. 2026 (TBD)
- 5.7 Royal Bay School Trip to Denver, Washington, Jun. 18, 2026 to Jun. 22, 2026

Lucas MacNeil provided an overview of the 7 Lacrosse school trips listed above, spanning October to June 2025. Fundraising to help cover costs will occur.



58. MOVED Amanda Dowhy/Ebony Logins  
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) approve the above noted field trips as outlined in items 5.1-5.7, subject to the oversight and direction of the Superintendent's office for each trip.  
CARRIED

- 5.8 International School Trip to Yukon, Mar. 15 to Mar. 17, 2025 – Robin/Laura  
5.9 International School Trip to Rocky Mountains, Mar. 25 to Mar. 28, 2025 – Robin/Laura

Laura Schwertfeger provided an overview of the school trips being offered to the Yukon and Rocky Mountains, in partnership with Discover Canada Tours. Students participating in these trips will be grades 10-12 and participation is open to semester and full-year students. The travel opportunities are shared when students come for orientation and are featured in the newsletter as well.

59. MOVED Amanda Dowhy/Allison Watson  
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) approve the above noted field trips as outlined in items 5.8 and 5.9, subject to the oversight and direction of the Superintendent's office for each trip.  
CARRIED

## 6. INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL

- 6.1 Indigenous Education Council - Jon Carr  
Tara Jensen sent her regrets, due to illness. The IEC has had 5 meetings. Jon Carr highlighted events in three main areas:
1. IEC in relation to schools and student success  
The IEC's role is to provide the Board with guidance for students' success. There are LEA (Local Education Agreements) in place. A circle forum was held January 22, 2025 and honest conversations contributed to its success.
  2. IEC and District Events  
Part of the role of IEC is to build community with the District. Recently, the very first Lahal Tournament was held. The upcoming community dinner is on April 16, 2025. There are three more events scheduled in May.
  3. IEC and District Engagements  
Four IEC representatives attended the FNEESC (First Nations Education Steering Committee Conference) December 12-14<sup>th</sup>. The IEC has had representation on interview panels. IEC advises the Board in relation to languages, cultures, customs, etc. through advice of the Elder's Advisory Circle. IEC consulted and discussed the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan and the 2025/26 budget development.





The Board expressed appreciation for the refinement of the territorial acknowledgement and other work being done.

## 7. CORRESPONDENCE & DELEGATIONS

### 7.1 Correspondence

a. Email from S. Paradi, dated February 19, 2025 RE Flower Count 2025.

60. MOVED Allison Watson/Amanda Dowhy  
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the email from S. Paradi, dated February 19, 2025.  
CARRIED

### 7.2 Standing Delegations (STA, CUPE, PVP, SPEAC) – 5 minutes each

#### STA – Rita Zeni

Rita Zeni spoke about her parents and their/her heritage, to highlight her understanding of the difficulty maintaining a unique heritage. The STA is working on building positive relationships with everyone they deal with. The STA is seeking an agreement regarding the next two years of school calendars, for which there is currently no signed agreement. She outlined the efforts taken by the STA to work with management on this issue, which protects members who have more precarious employment.

#### CUPE 459 – Amber Leonard & Dana Savage

Amber Leonard sent her regrets, along with a message, shared by Dana Savage. Dana Savage read Calls to Action 33 and 44. CUPE has been extremely busy supporting members and building community. District growth is having an impact, one of which, is a large number of new employees. With growth, comes a change from the familiar to that of an establishment. CUPE is seeking safety, harmony, collaboration, communication, to feel valued, recognized, noticed and appreciated. To feel valued, one must receive gratitude and respect. Members feel a lack of communication and respect. The turnover of staff is challenging. CUPE would like to build better relationships. The Board expressed their gratitude to Amber for sharing and highlighting these challenges.

#### PVP – Tess Vally

Tess Vally introduced herself as principal of Port Renfrew Elementary and École Poirier Elementary. Her presentation highlighted events taking place across the District, including cards & crafts night, fundraising for a new playground, picture day, literacy week events, a band trip to Disneyland and over 25 extra-curricular clubs. Belmont



launched their new logo this month and recognised Elder Henry Chipps and others involved in the design. EMCS hosted NA'TSA'MAHT wellness week. Intramural basketball continues between the four elementary schools in Sooke. On March 12, the four elementary schools in Sooke will be hosting a Lahal tournament. In closing, Tess Vally shared a video of children singing the song, "Somewhere Only We Know" by Keane.

The Board commented about the fantastic art installation at a school and encouraged Trustees to see it.

SPEAC – Tom Davis

The SPEAC President spoke about the parent presentation that happened Feb 24, 2025, in partnership with MAR (Mothers Against Racism), titled 'Interrupting Unconscious Bias'. After the presentation, two school names were drawn to receive a basket of books. The new PAC is being formed at QELEÑSEN Á, LEN.

7.3 Other Delegations – no reports

8. **FINANCE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

8.1 Resources Committee Meeting of February 11, 2025 – Allison Watson

Trustee Watson read the following motions as recommended at the Resource Committee meeting on February 11, 2025.

61. MOVED Allison Watson/Ebony Logins

That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) approve the District and School Fees for 2025/2026 and the International Program Fees for 2026/2027 school year as presented at the Resources Committee meeting of February 11, 2025.

CARRIED

62. MOVED Allison Watson/Ebony Logins

That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) approve Option C Revised Rental Fees and Custodial Fees as presented at the Resources Committee Meeting of February 11, 2025.

CARRIED

It was noted that the Minor Capital Plan is being renamed the Asset Rehabilitation Program. The Board expressed appreciation for the thorough look at the cost recovery process.





63. MOVED Allison Watson/Christine Lervold  
That the Board of Education of School District #62 (Sooke) give first, second, and third readings to the 24/25 Amended Annual Budget Bylaw specifying a total budget of \$233,309,566.  
CARRIED (UNANIMOUSLY)

64. MOVED Allison Watson/Christine Lervold  
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the Quarterly Minor Capital Report as presented at the Resources Committee Meeting of February 11, 2025.  
CARRIED

65. MOVED Allison Watson/Christine Lervold  
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the report from the Resources Committee Meeting of February 11, 2025.  
CARRIED

8.2 2024/25 February 1701 Enrolment Update – Monica Braniff

The Deputy Superintendent spoke to the summary of the February 1701 enrolment count. The data has gone to the Ministry and is being reconciled. A new system, called Education Data Exchange (EDX) is now being used to collect the data which is a more modern and secure way of handling the data. She explained the categories in the report and the difference between headcount and FTE.

The board congratulated Monica Braniff and her team for learning the new system and for the huge amount of work done around the February 1701 count. Kudos to Digital Solutions and the school teams for their work.

9. **EDUCATION PROGRAM**

9.1 Education-Policy Committee Meeting of February 4, 2025 – Ebony Logins

Trustee Logins provided an overview of the Education-Policy Committee Meeting of February 4, 2025. The 2025-2029 Strategic Plan was reviewed, and concerns were addressed. The school calendars were discussed since the Notice of Motion was put forth in December. There was some discussion around specifics in the Code of Conduct. No formal feedback was received from CUPE or STA on the Strategic Plan.



66. MOVED Ebony Logins/Amanda Dowhy  
That the Board of Education for School District 62 (Sooke) approve the District's 2025-29 Strategic Plan.  
CARRIED
67. MOVED Ebony Logins/Amanda Dowhy  
That the Board of Education for School District 62 (Sooke) approve the 2025-26 school calendar and 2026-27 school calendar (as revised).  
CARRIED
68. MOVED Ebony Logins/Amanda Dowhy  
That the Board of Education for School District 62 (Sooke) give Notice of Motion to draft revised Policy and Regulations C-309 "District and School Codes of Conduct".  
CARRIED
69. MOVED Ebony Logins/Amanda Dowhy  
That the Board of Education for School District 62 (Sooke) give Notice of Motion to draft revised Policy and Regulations C-311 "Student Attendance".  
CARRIED
70. MOVED Ebony Logins/Amanda Dowhy  
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) receive the report from the Education-Policy Committee Meeting of February 4, 2025.  
CARRIED

10. STUDENTS

11. FOUNDATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

11.1 Trustee Liaison Reports – Board of Education – no report

- BCSTA Provincial Council meeting February 22, 2025 – Christine Lervold  
BCSTA Provincial Council meetings occur quarterly. Highlights include community reports, BCSTA budget, economic uncertainty in K-12 education, the mandate Letters, increasing cyber attacks, transparent budgeting and the AGM coming up April 24-26, 2025. Trustee Watson also attended in her role as Director. She added that feedback is coming re: the 9 substantive motions and she stressed their importance, given that BCSTA is the provincial voice for all Trustees.





- BCPSEA AGM January 30-31, 2025 – Christine Lervold  
Christine Lervold provided a brief summary of what BCPSEA does. Presentations took place regarding conflicts of interest for trustees and communication strategies. The business meeting took place, along with break-out sessions with other districts.
- EMCS Society Meeting Feb 20, 2025 – Amanda Dowhy  
Trustee Dowhy provided a brief overview of the work of the Society connecting the Edward Milne Community School with the residents of Sooke through access to opportunities for healthy food, literacy, recreation, and life-long learning. Upcoming events include free parenting workshops being held in partnership with Sea to Tree Wellness, drop in sports programs, a variety of classes for learners of all ages, and the development of a new set of workshops hosted by a Nutritionist. The Society also operates the Play and Learn summer camp aimed to help vulnerable learners in the early elementary years address concerns of learning deficits during the summer break. The camp is run by 3 teachers that offer collaborative programming in literacy, numeracy, and physical health and education alongside youth support staff. Information and event listings can be found on the EMCS Society website and the EMCS Society Facebook page. Bannock and Books is a free family friendly Indigenous cultural experience that includes readings by local author Karen Wetung, sharing of bannock, drumming, and a free book for participants. There is a Langford event to be held at the Hulitan Family & Community Centre on March 15 with two sessions at 11am and 1pm. A Sooke event will be happening on April 13 at the EMCS Community Theatre with 2 sessions at 11am and 1pm.

## 12. ADMINISTRATION

### 12.1 Board of Education 90 Day Work Plan – Board Chair

The Board Chair provided an overview of the 90 Day Work Plan.

## 13. PERSONNEL

### 13.1 Superintendent's Report – Paul Block

The Superintendent provided some updates on Learning happening across the District. He congratulated Katie Gates, along with Brother Peters, for realizing their vision of the Lahal Tournament. Recognition went to John Lyall and Jon Carr for their work around organizing this event. In EMCS basketball, Senior Boys and Senior Girls both won championships this year. Congratulations to Trevor Smith for all the work supporting these teams. Tom Grainger has been a long-standing teacher in our District and contributed to the success of his student James Stanto, who placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in a national stock market competition. The Mountie Cup is a basketball tournament held annually for the last 15 years, hosted by RBSS and Belmont. It was a very well attended tournament by players, parents and community.





To highlight a few areas of growth across the District the Superintendent spoke about the upgrades at John Muir that are underway. All the windows have been replaced, improving energy efficiency. Paul Block congratulated several staff on their new leadership positions. Camille MacFarlane will be Principal of SCIANEW STELITKE and Ceilidh Deichmann will replace Camille as Acting Principal of Sangster. John Mennie will be the next Principal at Journey with Darren Russell continuing to support through the transition. Mike Huck will be the new District Principal of Pathways and Choice. Adult programming at the new Westshore Campus is being developed and will be unveiled this spring.

**14. UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Education Policy Committee - March 4
- Resources Committee - March 5
- Meeting of Board Chairs & Partner Liaison - March 6 & 7\*
- VISTA Tri-District Conference March 7 & 8
- International Women's Day - March 8
- March is Irish Heritage Month
- Bannock & Books – March 15

\*Representative only

**15. RISE AND REPORT**


**16. QUESTION PERIOD**

Members of the public have the opportunity to ask questions related to agenda items discussed at tonight's meeting using the QA function in MS Teams. Individuals must identify themselves and ask questions directed to the Chair. Members of the media can direct their questions to the Manager, Strategic Communications for response following the meeting.


**17. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Certified Correct:



Chairperson of the Board



Secretary-Treasurer

