

**MINUTES OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 38 (RICHMOND),
7811 GRANVILLE AVENUE, RICHMOND, BC VIA ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2021
AT 7:00 P.M.**

Present: Chairperson
Trustees

S. Nixon
D. Tablotney
N. Goldstein
K. Hamaguchi
H. Larson
R. Lee
D. Sargent
S. Robinson
R. Ryan
C. Wang
L. Archer
C. Brautigam
F. Geyer
R. Laing
J. MacMillan
M. Ratcliffe*
J. Coronel
H. Shen

Superintendent of Schools
Deputy Superintendent
Secretary Treasurer
Assistant Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent
Executive Director, Facilities Services
Executive Director, Learning & Business Technology
Executive Director, Learning Services
District Administrator, Learning Services
Executive Assistant (Recording Secretary)
Executive Assistant (Recording Secretary)

**Present for a portion of the meeting*

The Richmond Board of Education acknowledged and thanked the First Peoples of the hənq̓əminəm' (hun-ki-meen-um) language group on whose traditional and unceded territories we teach, learn and live.

In accordance with Board Policy the first meeting in November is the Annual Organizational meeting of the Board. The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and the gallery was welcomed to the meeting.

Next, the Superintendent of Schools introduced Luka Cranmer and Autumn Castle, Grade 12 students, who provided a traditional welcome. The District Administrator, Learning Services thanked Luka and Autumn and presented them with traditional blankets.

M. Ratcliffe left the meeting at 7:07pm.

1. Adoption of Agenda

132/2021 MOVED BY H. LARSON AND SECONDED BY R. LEE:

THAT the Board of Education (Richmond) approve the Wednesday, November 24, 2021 Organizational Meeting agenda as circulated.

CARRIED

2. The Year in Review

The Chairperson reported on highlights of the past year.

It is safe to say that this past year has been unlike any other in our school district's history. A year ago, we were into our first full year of providing in-person learning during a worldwide pandemic. Last December saw the board evaluating and opting to extend the Transitional Learning program, along with constantly changing information about the pandemic and its trajectory, and with evolving health orders and guidelines.

At the same time, the Board and the district worked hard to keep the focus on our students' learning and success. After many months of discussion and consultation which began before the pandemic hit, the Board at its meeting last December approved a new 5-year strategic plan, setting clear direction and priorities for the district. And progress on many of our objectives is already well underway.

After the Strategic Plan was approved, in February this year, Trustees engaged in professional learning regarding the district's Indigenous Education programs, in order to be better able to support in particular Goal 3 of our Strategic Priority #1 - Inspired Learners, which directs that Indigenous Peoples' history, perspectives, and learning are embedded within district planning and practices.

Another key goal in the new Strategic Plan is ensuring that our students' voices and perspectives are valued, encouraged, and embedded in the decision making of the district. In February, the Board also met with student leaders from across our high schools in the Jr Board meets Sr Board event, for a good preliminary discussion about how we can better activate student voice in consultation for decision-making about our schools and the work of our district.

The amazing work of our staff, and incredible and innovative learning happening in our schools was then highlighted during our Education Week from Feb 22-26, as the Board took the event to a virtual format for the first time.

Advocacy also continued to be a key priority for the trustees this past year, and in the first two months of 2021, the Board also focused on connecting with stakeholders and engaging with our local MLA's and MP's. Trustees, in partnership with our district stakeholders, have advocated for funding for COVID-related costs and recovery, including issues such as health and safety, remote learning programs and student mental health support.

The Board has also been advocating for continued support and funding for seismic upgrading of our schools, as we still have many seats in our district that still need to be upgraded.

Alongside this advocacy, the Board has also kept its eye on our facilities plan and has been especially keen to explore how the district could take advantage of new provincial funding for childcare to help our families and the city by partnering to build and renovate childcare facilities on school district property. Our Facilities staff have been working hard to incorporate proposals into seismic and other projects and the Board is pleased that we've been able to see projects such as the new Tomsett Childcare facility at Tomsett Elementary being approved and getting into the construction phase.

Of course, as we all know, the pandemic continued to evolve through the Spring of last year and in March, the Board voted to extend the Transitional Learning program through to the end of the school year. In April, the Board engaged in further advocacy by writing to the Minister of Education to request clarification on the Federal Return to Class Fund and Richmond's allocation in that. The Board also worked with our stakeholders on a joint advocacy letter which was sent to the Minister regarding post-pandemic recovery funding.

In May, the Board completed its annual budget process in consultation with our stakeholders. Due to the impacts of COVID, trustees were faced with making some difficult decisions, and we sincerely appreciated the honest and collaborative conversations that took place in our Budget Consultation process and the commitment by all to find our way forward together.

In June, for the second year in a row, grad celebrations and valedictory ceremonies were significantly adapted due to COVID-related public health orders, and trustees were impressed with the creativity of our students, staff and schools in crafting beautiful and meaningful ceremonies to make the students' grad experiences memorable for all the right reasons. Trustees were able to record a message of congratulations to the grads, which was sent to all schools.

In June, the Board also honoured our Secretary Treasurer, Roy Uyeno, as he retired from his position with the district. Roy came to the Richmond School District in February 2018, and leaves a lasting legacy, having worked to empower the Board and its decision making on many financial matters, and in particular, developing our new consultative budget process.

I think it's fair to say that the 2020/21 school year ended with high hopes of a "return to normal" in the fall and the end of the pandemic. Throughout the spring, the district saw many students who had been in the TL program return to in person learning and our teachers and school staff did a wonderful job of welcoming students back and helping them through that transition. However, trustees were advised in the spring that some students and families might still benefit from having enhanced remote learning options, and the Board then proceeded to support the development of a new Distributed Learning program for K-7 and Gr.8/9.

Unfortunately, the pandemic did not wane as we were all hoping it would, and this Fall we have all had to continue to grapple with new waves and new variants of Covid, along with more changes to guidelines and health orders. The Board cannot thank our senior staff, school and district-based staff and parents enough for your patience, resilience, and determination to pull together for the benefit of our students, whose wellbeing as the pandemic lingers on is, I know, the absolute top priority for us all.

Some very good news at the start of September was that the district was able to welcome back over 1500 students who returned to school in person after over 18 months of remote learning. We also welcomed our new Secretary-Treasurer, Cindy Wang, and are excited for the experience and expertise Cindy brings to our senior staff team.

Another critically important piece of work the Board has been moving forward with is with respect to our key Strategic Priority of supporting Equity and Inclusion, and in particular, working to actively address unconscious bias and privilege, systemic discrimination and marginalization in our district.

At the Board's direction, the Diversity and Anti-Racism Working group has been working with consultants to gather information and hear voices from across the district, and the Board is looking forward to the report and recommendations which will be coming from this working group in the new year.

This work has felt even more urgent given some of the tragic incidents we have witnessed in our community and beyond this year, stemming from racism in our society. In particular, the discovery of the unmarked graves of children who attended Canada's Indian residential schools has further heightened our awareness of the legacy of colonialism and racism in our communities.

Our schools, which had already been doing very good work in learning about and living into reconciliation, responded in very compassionate ways to honour the victims and reach out to those who were most affected.

Our work towards reconciliation, our anti-racism work, and our work to be a district where equity, inclusion, and diversity in all its forms is celebrated and respected must and will continue to be a top priority for us.

As well as doing our part to save our world, along with COVID and the inequities in our society, the other issue pressing in this past year in unequivocal ways has been climate change.

With the evidence of the severe impacts of climate change already here and around us this year, there is urgency like never before for us all to do what we can to plan for the future and curb global warming. The district Sustainability and Climate Action Plan is another important piece of work that has been in development and is now on the horizon for final approval. This will represent another key piece within the Board's Strategic Plan, and in particular, its goal of being a leader in climate stewardship and sustainability.

I would like to close with a heartfelt thank you to Superintendent Robinson and our senior staff team for your courageous leadership this past year and for your firm support of the Board's work. The Board values our collaborative relationship.

Thank you also to Vice Chair Debbie Tablotney for your leadership and support this year. We have made a good team, and I thank my trustee colleagues for the opportunity to serve as your Board Chair this past year.

Last year, past Chair Hamaguchi mentioned that it had been an "unprecedented" year. On a zoom meeting earlier today, the same term was used to describe this past year, and our current reality here in this province right now.

I want to say that the energy and resilience and commitment of everyone in the district, to getting through all of this together and keeping our focus on the important work, can also be said to be unprecedented, and the Board looks forward to supporting us all in moving forward together, to a bright and hopeful future.

*Thank you,
Sandra Nixon, Board Chair*

3. Appointment of Returning Officer and Scrutineer

At this point, Chairperson Nixon turned the Chair over to the Superintendent of Schools. Chairperson Robinson assumed the Chair and recommended Secretary Treasurer Cindy Wang be appointed Returning Officer and Executive Director, Learning and Business Technologies Rob Laing be appointed Scrutineer.

133/2021 MOVED BY N. GOLDSTEIN AND SECONDED BY D. TABLOTNEY:

THAT Secretary Treasurer Wang be appointed Returning Officer and Executive Director, Learning and Business Technology Laing be appointed as Scrutineer for the election of the Board Chairperson, Board Vice Chairperson, BCSTA Representative and BCPSEA Representative.

CARRIED

Prior to the election procedure, Returning Officer Wang noted the process for the electronic nominations for the Election of Officers. For this year, the Board had open nominations for the Officer and Representative positions. To date the following nominations were received:

Board Chairperson:	Sandra Nixon
Board Vice-Chairperson:	Heather Larson
BCSTA Representative:	Norman Goldstein
BCPSEA Representative:	Debbie Tablotney

4. Election of Officers

(a) Board Chairperson

Returning Officer Wang announced the Election of Officers would begin with the position of Board Chairperson, and that there was one nominee, Trustee Sandra Nixon who has accepted the nomination. At this time, Returning Officer Wang asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. Seeing none, Returning Officer Wang announced that an election by ballot would not be required and was pleased to announce that Trustee Nixon is 2021-2022 Board Chairperson by Acclamation.

The Superintendent congratulated newly elected Chairperson Nixon and turned over the Chair position.

Trustee Nixon assumed the Chair for the election of the Board Vice Chairperson and thanked fellow trustees for the honour to serve the Board as Chairperson.

(b) Board Vice Chairperson

Chairperson Nixon announced that Trustee Heather Larson had been unanimously nominated for the position of Vice Chairperson. The Chairperson asked Trustee Larson if she accepts the nomination, to which Trustee Larson replied in the affirmative. As there were no other nominations from the floor, an election by ballot would not be required and it was announced that Trustee Larson was declared by acclamation as Vice Chairperson of the Board for 2021-2022.

5. Election - BC School Trustees Association Provincial Council Representative

Chairperson Nixon announced that Trustee Goldstein had been unanimously nominated for the position as BCSTA representative. The Chairperson asked Trustee Goldstein if he accepts the nomination, to which Trustee Goldstein replied in the affirmative. As there were no other nominations from the floor, Trustee Goldstein was declared by acclamation as BCSTA Provincial Council Representative for 2021-2022. Trustee Larson is the alternate.

6. Election - BC Public Schools Employers' Association Representative

Chairperson Nixon announced that Trustee Tablotney had been unanimously nominated for the position as BCPSEA representative. The Chairperson asked Trustee Tablotney if she accepts the nomination, to which Trustee Tablotney replied in the affirmative. As there were no other nominations from the floor, Trustee Tablotney was declared by acclamation as BCPSEA Representative for 2021-2022.

7. Destruction of Ballots – *there were no ballots*

8. Committee Appointments

The Chairperson asked trustees to return their requests for specific committees to the Chairperson via email by Monday, November 29th. These appointments will be provided to the December 15, 2021 meeting of the Board.

9. School Liaison Trustee Assignments

The current Trustee liaison assignment list was included with the agenda package. These assignments will remain in place for 2021-22.

10. Adjournment

134/2021 MOVED BY H. LARSON AND SECONDED BY K. HAMAGUCHI:

THAT the Wednesday, November 24, 2021 Organizational meeting of the Board of Education (Richmond) be adjourned at 7:27 pm.

CARRIED

S. NIXON
CHAIRPERSON

C. WANG
SECRETARY-TREASURER