

Board of Education
Organizational Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 22, 2023 – 7:00 pm
1st Floor Boardroom and via Zoom

Present:

Chairperson	D. Tablotney
Vice Chairperson	H. Larson
Trustee	R. Belleza
Trustee	K. Hamaguchi
Trustee	D. Sargent
Trustee	A. Wong
Trustee	D. Yang
Superintendent of Schools	C. Usih
Deputy Superintendent	R. Ryan
Secretary Treasurer	C. Wang
Assistant Superintendent	C. Brautigam
Assistant Superintendent	J. MacMillan
Assistant Superintendent	C. Stanger
Executive Director, Learning and Business Technologies	R. Laing
Executive Assistant (Recording Secretary)	T. Lee

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 7:03 pm and the gallery was welcomed to the meeting.

The Richmond Board of Education acknowledged and thanked the First Peoples of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm language group on whose traditional and unceded territories we teach, learn and live.

The Indigenous Success Teacher, Linda Macholm, then introduced four indigenous students, Galisha, Teoni, Elizabeth, and Augustine, who extended a traditional welcome and land acknowledgement.

1. Adoption of Agenda

123/2023 MOVED BY D. YANG AND SECONDED BY K. HAMAGUCHI:

THAT the Wednesday, November 22, 2023 Organizational Meeting agenda of the Board of Education be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

2. The Year in Review

The Chairperson reported on highlights of the past year.

This current board of trustees began their term with the swearing in last November after a very busy municipal election period that saw Heather Larson, Ken Hamaguchi, David Yang, Donna Sargent, Rod Belleza and Alice Wong elected for a term of four years. We were honored to receive a blessing and words of encouragement from Musqueam Elder Shane Pointe, who performed a blanketing ceremony for the seven of us. The ceremony served to energize and inspire us to look forward to the governance work ahead.

In early December 2023, trustees attended the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Trustee Academy, which provides professional development to boards of education. Also in December, the board received news that Superintendent Scott Robinson had made the difficult decision to leave our district to take up a position with the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association in Victoria. This meant that the board was immediately tasked with deciding on a process to find a replacement, which was no small task. Superintendent Robinson had big shoes to fill. In January, the board appointed PFM Executive Search Firm to conduct the recruitment of the new Superintendent of Schools.

From January to the March spring break in 2023, trustees were provided with orientation sessions and workshops conducted by staff to familiarize themselves with the Strategic Plan and its goals and objectives, including the many initiatives that were already in place from the previous board.

The board also began its governance work by making the following decisions:

- Ratifying the 2022-2025 CUPE 716 Collective Agreement;
- Directing staff to proceed with the recommendations contained in the Equity in Action Project as well as the Aspen Learning Center Program Report;
- Approval of the 2022/23 Amended Budget Bylaw;
- Revisions to Policy Section 700 Facilities;
- Approval of the Capital Bylaw submission to the Ministry for 2023/24;
- The Board also approved a significant new policy 641 and 641R on Enterprise Risk Management; and
- Construction during this time was focused on completing new daycare facilities for James Whiteside, James McKinney, William Bridge and the Mitchell Adult Education Center.

Post spring break, the board met with our MLAs on April 12, 2023. Many of the district's needs were communicated and the MLAs in attendance reinforced their commitment to advocating for our district. The board and senior staff also met with members of the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition to discuss the need for food security, school lunch and breakfast programs that maintain the well-being of students in Richmond. We agreed to advocate to our local MLAs and MPs for ongoing funding for these programs across the province and nationally.

On April 24, 2023, trustees voted to approve the hiring of Mr. Chris Usih, who was a highly qualified and experienced candidate for the position of Superintendent as the positive outcome of the search process.

A renewed Richmond Project Team agreement was signed and work on the mechanical ventilation project approved by the previous board moved forward toward completion in December 2023. The Board also attended a funding announcement by the Ministry of Education for DeBeck Elementary School.

From April 27 to 29, 2023, trustees attended the BCSTA Annual General Meeting, where motions for future advocacy were approved for the coming year.

In May 2023, a successful Student Voice Forum was held. Trustees attended an Education Partner Group strategic planning meeting and dinner; we celebrated the annual 25 years of service with a get together for our staff as well as the annual Indigenous achievement ceremony that recognized the successes of our Indigenous students graduating from elementary and secondary schools.

The Board met over breakfast with Richmond Mayor and Councillors to discuss common areas of interest and concern. We discussed how we can effectively work together in the best interest of the community. The board also shared one of our greatest concerns, which was the need for a city center school site.

After consultation and careful planning by our Secretary Treasurer and her Financial team, the annual budget was approved on May 24, 2023. Policy 101 and 101R Strategic Planning was also approved on the same day.

Decisions made in June 2023 included directing staff to proceed with the recommendations contained in the Alternate Program Review Report, approval of Policy 201 and 201 Bylaw, Board operations as well as 621/621R Financial Planning and Reporting and 631R Accumulated Operating Surplus which our Secretary Treasurer worked diligently to produce.

A meeting was held with local MPs Parm Bains and Wilson Miao to discuss federal programs such as Settlement Workers in Schools as well as universal school food programs and staffing and classroom space challenges. MP Bains and Miao agreed to take our concerns back to share with Cabinet Ministers and other members of parliament.

Also, in June 2023 the Board and its Education Partners made a joint presentation to the Provincial Government's Select Standing Committee on Finance. The presentation contained requests for capital funding to ease city centre enrollment pressures and the Seismic Mitigation Program, as well as sustainable funding for Ministry initiatives such as school food programs, childcare and early learning programs.

In September 2023, with students back in classrooms, the board approved the addition of Minor Capital Projects under the Food Infrastructure Program in the 2024/25 Capital Plan.

Construction of James Whiteside was completed in September 2023, as well as the Rideau Park Resource Center and William Bridge construction was targeted to complete by October 2023. On November 6, 2023, the Minister of Education announced the modular classroom additions for Brighthouse and Cook Elementary Schools to meet the vital need for space in city centre schools.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Superintendent Usih and the senior administrative team for your leadership and support, especially Deputy Superintendent Rick Ryan for leading the

district with his vast knowledge and integrity from March to September 2023 while we awaited the arrival of the new Superintendent.

To my fellow trustees – I want to thank you for allowing me to serve as your Chair for the past year and I am grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow in my role. As trustees, we each bring unique skills and experiences to the table, and I have appreciated the rich discussions and debates we have had.

A special thank you goes to Vice Chair Heather Larson for her wisdom, support and encouragement through this year. I could not have done it without you. Thanks to our executive assistants, for their invaluable support to trustees throughout the year. You never cease to amaze us with your professionalism, organizational skills and kindness.

Looking to the coming year, the Richmond Board of Education and staff are committed to the goals and initiatives embedded in the Strategic Plan. We also remain steadfast in providing quality education and safe, welcoming spaces for all students and staff in the face of budget constraints, staffing shortages and unforeseen events.

Along with our partners in education RASA, RTA, CUPE, RMAPS, and RDPA – we will continue to face the challenges ahead with the same collaborative spirit that has helped us through many obstacles in the past.

*Thank you,
Debbie Tablotney, Board Chair*

3. Appointment of Returning Officer and Scrutineer

At this point, Chairperson Tablotney turned the Chair over to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent assumed the Chair and recommended the Secretary Treasurer be appointed Returning Officer and the Deputy Superintendent be appointed Scrutineer for the election of the four positions.

124/2023 MOVED BY D. YANG AND SECONDED BY H. LARSON:

THAT Secretary Treasurer Wang be appointed Returning Officer and Deputy Superintendent Ryan be appointed as Scrutineer for the election of the Board Chairperson, Board Vice Chairperson, BCSTA Representative and BCPSEA Representative.

CARRIED

4. Election of Officers

(a) Board Chairperson

The Superintendent called for nominations, by ballot, for the Office of Chairperson of the Board.

Ballot forms were distributed. The Scrutineer collected the ballots, and he and the Returning Officer left the Boardroom to examine the ballots.

Upon their return, the Returning Officer announced that Trustee Larson and Trustee Tablotney were nominated for the position of Chairperson. Trustee Larson accepted the nomination and Trustee Tablotney rejected the nomination. The Returning Officer then declared Trustee Larson as Chairperson of the Board by acclamation for a one-year term.

Trustee Larson then assumed the Chair and thanked fellow trustees for their trust and support to serve the Board as Chairperson.

(b) **Board Vice Chairperson**

The Chairperson called for nominations, by ballot, for the office of Vice-Chairperson of the Board.

Ballot forms were distributed. The Scrutineer collected the ballots, and he and the Returning Officer left the Boardroom to examine the ballots.

Upon their return, the Returning Officer announced that Trustees Hamaguchi and Sargent had been nominated for the office of Vice-Chairperson of the Board. Trustees Hamaguchi and Sargent accepted the nomination.

Election ballot forms were distributed. The Scrutineer collected the ballots, and he and the Returning Officer left the Boardroom to examine the ballots.

Upon their return, the Returning Officer declared Trustee Hamaguchi received majority of the votes and was elected as Vice-Chairperson of the Board for a one-year term.

5. Election – BC School Trustees Association Provincial Council Representative (BCSTA Provincial Council Representative)

The Chairperson called for a show of interest for the positions of BCSTA representative to the Provincial Council as well as the alternate representative. Trustee Yang and Wong expressed interest in the position of BCSTA Provincial Council representative.

Election ballot forms were distributed. The Scrutineer collected the ballots, and he and the Returning Officer left the Boardroom to examine the ballots. Upon their return, the Returning Officer declared Trustee Yang received majority of the votes and was elected as BCSTA Provincial Council representative for a one-year term. Trustee Wong will serve as the alternate representative.

6. Election – BC Public Schools Employers' Association Representative (BCPSEA Representative)

The Chairperson called for a show of interest for the positions of BCPSEA representative as well as the alternate representative. Trustee Tablotney expressed interest in the position of BCPSEA representative. There was no show of interest in the position of alternate representative. Trustee Tablotney was declared as BCPSEA representative for a one-year term.

7. Destruction of Ballots

125/2023 MOVED BY K. HAMAGUCHI AND SECONDED BY A. WONG:

THAT the ballots for the offices of Chairperson of the Board, Vice-Chairperson of the Board, BCSTA Provincial Representative and BCPSEA Representative be destroyed.

CARRIED

8. Committee Appointments

Trustees were asked to indicate to the Chairperson by November 30, 2023 as to which committees they would be willing to serve on. The appointments will be announced in December 2023, and the committee members will assume their duties for one year.

9. Authorized Signatories

126/2023 MOVED BY R. BELLEZA AND SECONDED BY D. SARGENT:

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 38 (Richmond) approve the following signing authorities effective immediately and until they are so changed, shall be the Board Chairperson and Secretary Treasurer except for the issuance of cheques when the required signatures shall be:

Any one of:
Board Chairperson
Board Vice-Chairperson
Superintendent

And any one of:
Secretary Treasurer
Assistant Secretary Treasurer
Manager Financial Services

Such signatures may be affixed by hand, or by cheque-writing facsimile machine in accordance with established Board policy.

CARRIED

10. School Liaison Trustee Assignments

The Chairperson will assign each trustee a group of secondary and elementary schools at the first meeting in December. The assignment shall be one year's duration unless otherwise determined by the Board. Discussion then ensued regarding the duration of trustee assignments.

11. Adjournment

127/2023 MOVED BY D. TABLOTNEY AND SECONDED BY A. WONG:

THAT the Wednesday, November 22, 2023 Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education be adjourned at 7:42 pm.

CARRIED

Following adjournment, the choir from James Thompson Elementary School performed the song “Share the Land”.

H. LARSON
Chairperson

C. WANG
Secretary Treasurer