

Board of Education
Organizational Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 19, 2025 – 7:00 pm
1st Floor Boardroom and via Zoom

Present:

Chairperson	K. Hamaguchi
Vice Chairperson	D. Yang
Trustee	R. Belleza
Trustee	H. Larson
Trustee	D. Sargent
Trustee	D. Tablotney
Trustee	A. Wong
Superintendent of Schools	C. Usih
Secretary Treasurer	C. Wang
Assistant Superintendent	C. Brautigam
Assistant Superintendent	R. Laing
Assistant Superintendent	M. Naser
Executive Director, Human Resources	T. Major
Director, Communications & Marketing	D. Sadler
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 hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ language group on whose traditional and unceded territories we teach, learn and live.

1. Adoption of Agenda

175/2025 MOVED BY H. LARSON AND SECONDED BY D. YANG:

THAT the Wednesday, November 19, 2025 Organizational Meeting agenda of the Board of Education be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

2. The Year in Review

The Chairperson highlighted accomplishments from the past year, noting that the report would be presented in sections throughout the organizational meeting.

2024–2025 Richmond School Board Year in Review

The 2024–2025 school year was an active and productive time for the Richmond School District. Below is a summary of the year's key highlights and updates.

Enrollment

Richmond School District (SD38) reported approximately 23,300 full-time students in 2024–2025, based on the BC Ministry of Education's official September 30 count. For 2025–2026, current enrollment stands at about 23,000 students, reflecting a modest decline of roughly 300 learners. This decrease is not attributed to a single factor but rather to a complex mix of demographics, economics, and system capacity. Families are weighing affordability and perceived levels of support when making schooling decisions, while the district continues to face rising costs and constrained resources.

Seismic Remediation Program

The Richmond School District has made significant progress on its seismic remediation program. Of the 35 schools identified as needing upgrades, 14 have completed seismic improvements, ranging from partial replacements to full upgrades. Currently, three schools are under construction. Howard DeBeck Elementary is undergoing a full seismic upgrade scheduled for completion in Winter 2026. Alfred B. Dixon Elementary's upgrade is expected by May 2025. The largest project is John G. Diefenbaker Elementary, a \$50 million full replacement, projected to finish by August 2028. Looking ahead, the District's Five-Year Capital Plan identifies the next schools prioritized for upgrades. This includes secondary schools like Matthew McNair, Hugh McRoberts, and R.C. Palmer, along with elementary schools such as Blundell, Westwind, Quilchena, and Kathleen McNeely. Additional work is also planned for Steveston London Secondary. The Ministry of Education has confirmed that all schools currently open are safe for students and staff. The District continues to balance risk, enrolment, and funding to ensure every school community benefits from modern, seismically secure facilities.

Child Care

In 2024, Richmond expanded childcare capacity with 220 new licensed spaces, supported by \$8.2 million in provincial and federal funding. The District now operates seven purpose-built childcare centres at Tomsett, Maple Lane, Manoah Steves, Whiteside, McKinney, William Bridge, and the Mitchell Adult Education Centre. These centres provide families with accessible, high-quality childcare integrated into school communities. To meet growing demand, two additional centres have been built: Spul'u'kwuks Elementary on Blanshard Drive and Garden City Elementary on Garden City Road. Together, these initiatives demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting families by expanding affordable childcare options across Richmond.

AED and Naloxone

Between 2024 and 2026, the Richmond School District (SD38) implemented a proactive rollout of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and naloxone kits to strengthen emergency preparedness. Approved by the Board on June 19, 2024, the initiative installed 116 AEDs and 113 naloxone kits (nasal spray format) across schools and district sites. Elementary schools received

one AED and one to two kits, secondary schools three of each, and district offices one to two units. Devices are stored securely and accessible only to trained staff. The \$192,700 project was funded from surplus operating budgets. This rollout aligns with provincial mandates requiring all BC schools to be equipped by December 2025 (secondary) and September 2026 (elementary/middle). Richmond completed installations ahead of schedule, ensuring compliance and community confidence.

Long Range Facility Plan

The Richmond School District's Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) is a board-approved framework that sets a 10–15 year roadmap for managing schools. First adopted in 2019 and updated in 2021, the March 2025 revision reflects new priorities and community input. The plan guides capital project requests to the Ministry of Education, catchment adjustments, and long-term planning for enrolment, demographics, and facility conditions. Key updates include expanded early learning programs such as StrongStart centres, kindergarten readiness, and pre-K offerings. Enrolment projections have been revised to account for housing growth and demographic shifts, while catchment analysis has been refined to balance school use and reduce overcrowding. Facilities planning emphasizes seismic upgrades, modernization, and portable classroom reviews.

Strategic Plan

The Richmond School District (SD38) is developing its 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, a five-year roadmap to guide priorities in student success, equity, facilities, workforce, and community collaboration. Created every cycle in alignment with district policy, the plan serves as a framework for decision-making, resource allocation, and long-term planning. Extensive public engagement throughout 2025 ensures that students, families, staff, and partners all contribute to shaping the district's direction. The process launched January 27, 2025, with surveys, open houses, and virtual meetings continuing through June. The final plan will be presented to the Board of Education in December 2025.

The plan identifies four core priorities: success for all learners, diversity, equity and inclusion, organizational effectiveness, and community and partnership. These priorities emphasize inclusive learning opportunities, strong and efficient systems, attracting and supporting staff, and building meaningful connections with families and community partners. Together, they provide a clear, community-driven framework for the district's future.

New School Purchase

In June 2025, Richmond School District (SD38) purchased the former Pythagoras Academy site at 8671 Odlin Crescent for \$60 million to create a new K–7 public elementary school. The 6.25-acre property, built in 2015, offered a modern facility that could be converted more quickly than constructing a new school. Funding came from \$6 million provided by the BC provincial government and \$54 million from district capital reserves (including \$41 million from the 2013 sale of Steveston Secondary). The school is scheduled to open in September 2026 to relieve significant enrollment pressures in Richmond's City Centre. Over the past four years, enrollment in the area has grown by 42%, adding more than 600 students to four schools already serving over 2,000—well above their 1,641-student design capacity. Centrally located and with scarce land

options in City Centre, the site represents a rare opportunity to expand public education efficiently and strategically.

Board Advocacy

Trustees were very active this year in advocating for the district:

- December 6, 2024 – sent a letter to the Mayor and Council asking to expand school site acquisition charges to include small multi-unit housing projects;
- December 6, 2024 – sent a letter to our local MLAs requesting capital funding for 2 new city centre school, more funding for our seismic mitigation project, and helping us with our recruitment and retention of staff;
- January 16, 2025 + Jan 22, 2025 – met with our MLAs to share our concerns and requests;
- March 3, 2025 – Trustee Hamaguchi, Trustee Yang and Secretary Treasurer Wang travelled to Victoria to meet with Minister of Infrastructure, (Bowen Ma) to ask for funding for 2 city centre schools;
- April 10, 2025 – sent letter to the BC School Trustee Association asking for their support in asking the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to review the School Site Acquisition Charge;
- May 14, 2025 – sent letter to Federal Minister Lina Meteige Diab requesting that the Federal government reinstate the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program; and
- September 22, 2025 – had a Zoom meeting with Education Minister Lisa Beare to update her with what’s going on in our district.

In Closing

As you can see, it was a very busy year – and we achieved a great deal. I want to sincerely thank our Superintendent and staff for their hard work, support and leadership. To my fellow trustees, I am grateful for your hard work, commitment, and for ensuring that our guiding principle remains: “Our focus is on the learner.”

*Thank you,
Ken Hamaguchi, Board Chair*

3. Appointment of Returning Officer and Scrutineer

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

176/2025 MOVED BY D. YANG AND SECONDED BY D. TABLOTNEY:

THAT Secretary Treasurer Wang be appointed Returning Officer and Assistant Superintendent Laing be appointed as Scrutineer for the election of the Board Chairperson, Board Vice Chairperson, BCSTA Provincial Representative and BCPSEA Provincial 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 Belleza and Trustee Hamaguchi were nominated for the position of Chairperson. Trustee Hamaguchi accepted the nomination and Trustee Belleza rejected the nomination. The Returning Officer then declared Trustee Hamaguchi as Chairperson of the Board by acclamation for a one-year term.

Trustee Hamaguchi 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.

The Returning Officer announced that Trustees Larson, Wong, and Yang had been nominated for the office of Vice Chairperson, and all nominees accepted. Election ballot forms were distributed. The Scrutineer collected the ballots, and he and the Returning Officer left the Boardroom to examine the ballots.

The Returning Officer reported that no candidate received a clear majority on the first two ballots. As per Policy 201 Bylaw 1.3, further ballots were conducted. On the third ballot, Trustee Larson received a majority of votes and was elected Vice Chairperson for a one-year term.

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

The Chairperson called for expressions of interest for the positions of BCSTA Provincial Council representative and alternate. Trustee Wong expressed interest and was declared BCSTA Provincial Council representative for a one-year term, with Trustee Sargent serving as the alternate representative.

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

The Chairperson called for expressions of interest for the positions of BCPSEA representative and alternate. Trustee Tablotney expressed interest and was declared BCPSEA representative for a one-year term, with Trustee Wong serving as the alternate representative.

7. Destruction of Ballots

177/2025 MOVED BY D. YANG AND SECONDED BY D. SARGENT:

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, 2025 as to which committees they would be willing to serve on. The appointments will be announced in December 2025, and the committee members will assume their duties for one year.

9. Authorized Signatories

178/2025 MOVED BY D. TABLOTNEY AND SECONDED BY H. LARSON:

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. Adjournment

179/2025 MOVED BY D. YANG AND SECONDED BY D. SARGENT:

THAT the Wednesday, November 19, 2025 Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education be adjourned at 7:34 pm.

CARRIED

K. HAMAGUCHI
Chairperson

C. WANG
Secretary Treasurer