

MINUTES BOARD OF EDUCATION PUBLIC MEETING

August 26, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

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

STAFF: Paul Block, Superintendent
Brian Jonker, Secretary-Treasurer
Monica Braniff, Deputy Superintendent
D'Arcy Deacon, Associate Superintendent
Vanessa White, Acting Associate Superintendent
Fred Hibbs, Executive Director, Human Resources
Steve Tonnesen, Manager, Digital Solutions - Operations

REGRETS: Allison Watson
ABSENT: Ebony Logins

SECRETARY: Jenny Seal

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST NATIONS TERRITORIES

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by the Board Chair who acknowledged the territories of the First Nations.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Call for amendments and additional items

1. **MOVED** Christine Lervold/Cendra Beaton
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) adopt the public meeting agenda of August 26, 2025, as presented.
CARRIED unanimously

2.2 Report on In Camera Meeting – Amanda Dowhy

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

2. MOVED Christine Lervold/Trudy Spiller
That the Board of Education of School District 62 (Sooke) adopt the public meeting minutes of the June 24, 2025, meeting as presented.
CARRIED unanimously

4. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 Board Chair Update – Amanda Dowhy

The Board Chair welcomed everyone back and acknowledged the work done over the summer to prepare schools for students. With a new school year comes excitement and sometimes anxiety. The Chair encouraged everyone to take a moment to care for themselves and others at this time. Adding to the excitement is the opening of two new schools: SĆÍĀNEW_STĒLITKĒĒ Elementary and the John Horgan Campus.

In June, the Board Vice-Chair presented to the BC Legislative Assembly Select Standing Committee to advocate for increased funding for public education. The Budget 2026 Consultation Report is now available on their website [here](#).

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is September 30th. The Chair highlighted some accessible & approachable events happening around the District that offer opportunities to learn about our country's history and truth and reconciliation.

5. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

There were no educational presentations.

6. INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL

There was no Indigenous Education Council update.

7. CORRESPONDENCE & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence – none received

Trustee Beaton asked why correspondence from MLA Block to the Board Chair was not included as public correspondence. The Chair indicated that she is waiting for a response from MLA Block to determine if there is an opportunity for Board engagement.

A point of order was raised by Trustee Lervold for discussion straying from the agenda item of public correspondence. The Chair ruled the point well taken. The correspondence in question is not public correspondence.

The Secretary Treasurer provided procedural clarity around the correspondence flow chart, confirming public correspondence is for correspondence that is addressed to all trustees. Trustee Beaton clarified she is seeking clarity about when an invitation to the Board would go to the Board. The Chair noted that invitations don't typically come to the Board at a public meeting to be received by the Board. The Superintendent suggested the conversation be tabled so information can go to Trustees about how correspondence is determined to be public correspondence.

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

SPVPA – Jen Nixon and Ruchi McArthur

Jen Nixon introduced herself and Ruchi McArthur as Co-Presidents of the Sooke Principals and Vice Principals Association. The SPVPA acknowledged the work done by CUPE staff and expressed appreciation for how good the schools look. Jen Nixon shared an encounter with a student who was very excited to start the school year and expressed her gratitude for being in a role supporting students.

SPEAC – Tom Davis

Parents have communicated some challenges with the student information system, MyEd BC. The new transportation registry is working well with very little problems reported.

BCCPAC held its AGM last week and requested there be a minimum level of involvement at the Board level by District PACS. This demonstrates how our District is already exceeding standards, ahead of other Districts by including SPEAC at committee and board meetings and overall engaging as needed.

The first parent info session is in the works regarding student Individual Education Plans (IEPs). A shout-out to Mark Johnston, District Principal of Inclusive Education Services, for his work over the summer to prepare for the info session.

STA - Rita Zeni:

The Sooke Teachers' Association President thanked CUPE for all of the work done in schools throughout the summer to welcome students back.

Some losses were suffered over the summer, and the STA President sent thoughts and support to those feeling the losses.

The STA President expressed appreciation for the Board calendar being included in the meeting materials, to help with planning. The STA are grateful to the Elders and Guests sharing their stories at the Indigenous Education Learning Day which will be a unifying day for the District.

Teachers are busy preparing their classrooms for students. Trepidation is felt around upcoming bargaining. The president is hopeful but acknowledged it is on everyone's mind.

CUPE 459 – Amber Leonard

Amber Leonard began by reading Calls to Action #56 and #57. Appreciation was expressed for the Indigenous Learning Day on September 22nd and emphasized the value of professional development.

Trustees expressed appreciation for the partner groups and their work. The Superintendent noted the Board is welcome to attend the Indigenous Learning Day. The Superintendent also expressed his appreciation to the partner groups attending the August Board meeting.

The Superintendent also emphasized his support for the partner groups going through bargaining and spoke to the strong relationships, and it was reiterated by the Board.

- 7.3 Other Delegations – 5 minutes each
There were no delegations.

8. FINANCE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

8.1 Transportation Update – Brian Jonker

The Secretary Treasurer outlined steps the District is taking towards continuous improvement to ensure the bus registration and communication rolls out as smoothly as possible. Information will go out to the Board regarding when new riders can expect their bus passes and protocol for un-registered students expecting to board.

Last year there were over a thousand late registrations and this year there were only 267. This was attributed to people being familiar with the system and process, and effective communication.

8.2 Summer Major and Minor Capital Projects Update – Brian Jonker

The Secretary Treasurer spoke to the \$7.1 million of work that comprises 19 projects across the District. The Secretary Treasurer acknowledged the work done by Facilities staff and outlined plans for communication as needed. SCIANEW STELITKEL Elementary occupancy was received which marked a major milestone.

9. EDUCATION PROGRAM – No Report

10. STUDENTS

10.1 2025/26 Enrolment Update – Monica Braniff

The Deputy Superintendent emphasized the information as a preliminary snapshot because student numbers are fluid at this time of year. The components of enrolment tracking were detailed. Projections in February predicted 400 more students, bringing

the active headcount to 13,700 full time students. Summer enrolment was not as large as past years, and we remain cautiously optimistic about the projections. Mitigation measures are being reviewed, should projections fall short.

11. FOUNDATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

11.1 Trustee Liaison Reports – Board of Education

There were no Trustee Liaison reports.

11.2 Update on BCSTA Trustee Leadership Program (per motion #79) – Paul Block

There have been ongoing conversations with leadership at the BCSTA. The first module of the BCSTA Trustee Leadership Governance Workshop for the Board and Executive is secured and occurs on September 11, 2025.

12. ADMINISTRATION

12.1 Board of Education 2025-26 Meeting Calendar – Amanda Dowhy

The Board Chair provided an overview of the BoE meeting calendar. The Calendar will be updated as events are added and posted in an accessible location.

13. PERSONNEL

13.1 Superintendent's Report – Paul Block

The Superintendent introduced the newly printed 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. Acknowledgement goes to Kristen McGillivray, Communications Manager, for the excellent work done in this publication. Paul Block spoke to the inclusive vision of the plan and reinforced the importance of the learning goal around numeracy and literacy. The Strategic Plan is on the SD62 website linked [here](#) in an easy-to-view format. Thanks went to the District partners for their contributions towards the Strategic Plan and the Superintendent called on them now to execute the plan. A summary of the previous strategic plan successes and shortcomings will be shared at the September Board meeting.

Associate Superintendent D'Arcy Deacon celebrated the success of Royal Bay student Avery Fagan who received the Cmolik Foundation Scholarship. She was recognized for her academic excellence and her dual credit work. Congratulations to Avery for receiving this award and to all of her teachers.

Deputy Superintendent Monica Braniff was honoured to work with and now speak about the new territorial acknowledgment, updated to include the MÁLEXEL (pronounced Malahat) Nation.

The Superintendent has worked with Kristen McGillivray to develop a Communication and Community Relations Plan to engage the community around the goals in the strategic plan.

In closing, the Superintendent acknowledged Facilities staff, the IT Team, District Principal of Capital Planning, Mark Kaercher and Acting Director of IT Windy Beadall, who worked over the summer to ensure SCIANEW STELITKEŁ Elementary opened on-time. Acknowledgement also goes to Brian Jonker for his work over the summer ensuring projects got done. District Principal of Early Learning and Child Care Francis Krusekopf also worked over the summer ensuring the four pilot programs were ready to run their before and after school care in four different schools.

The Board looks forward to hearing about the child care pilot program and how it can be expanded across the District. The Board appreciated the thoroughness of the Superintendent's report and all of the people acknowledged within.

14. UPCOMING EVENTS

- Labour Day (STAT) – September 1st
- 1st Day of School – September 2
- Education-Policy Meeting – September 9
- Resources Committee Meeting – September 16
- Audit Committee Meeting – September 17
- Indigenous Learning Day/Non-Instructional Day – September 22
- September Board Meeting – September 23
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (STAT) – September 30
- VISTA Conference (Vancouver Island School Trustee Association) - October 3-4

15. RISE AND REPORT

16. QUESTION PERIOD

Members of the public had the opportunity to ask questions related to agenda items discussed at tonight's meeting. There were no questions.

17. ADJOURNMENT


In closing, the Board Chair thanked the partner groups for attending the August Board meeting and spoke to the importance of the Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Certified Correct on September 23, 2025:



Chairperson of the Board



Secretary-Treasurer