



The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)

Special Board Meeting

MINUTES

August 24, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

Trustees Present: Jordan Watters, Board Chair, Ann Whiteaker, Vice-Chair, Nicole Duncan, Angie Hentze, Elaine Leonard, Diane McNally, Ryan Painter, Rob Paynter

Trustee Regrets: Tom Ferris

Administration: Shelley Green, Superintendent of Schools, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Deb Whitten, Deputy Superintendent, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent, Andy Canty, Director, Information Technology for Learning, Shelly Niemi, District Administrator, Aboriginal Nations Education, Lisa McPhail, Communications and Community Engagement Manager, Vicki Hanley, Recorder

1. Commencement of Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

Chair Watters recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved By Trustee Painter

Seconded By Trustee Hentze

That the August 24, 2020 Special Board meeting agenda be approved.

4. Public Presentations

4.1 Valerie Irvine

Ms. Irvine, a parent of two District students and a Professor at UVIC, attended the meeting to state her concerns with respect to the current return to school plan for September. Ms. Irvine stated that the current plan does not address children's social and emotional well being and urged Trustees to advocate for other choices for parents.

4.2 Adriana Condello

Ms. Condello, a parent of a district student and a pediatrician, attended the Board meeting to voice her concerns for the return to school plan for September. She stated that children need consistency, structure and to be with their peers in their neighbourhood schools. Ms. Condello provided Trustees with a suggested blended model for return to school.

4.3 Kimberley Curry

Ms. Curry, a parent of two District students, attended the Board meeting to voice her concerns about the proposed return to school plan for September. Ms. Curry urged Trustees to advocate for on line learning.

4.4 Omdrea Walker

Ms. Walker, a parent of two children in the public school system, encouraged Trustees to advocate with the Ministry of Education for distributed learning for the remainder of the pandemic. Ms. Walker stated that she feels the return to school plan is unsafe for students and will put added stress on children who struggle with mental health issues.

4.5 Julie McCracken

Ms. McCracken, a parent of two district students, attended the board meeting to express her concerns with the return to school plan for September. Ms. McCracken stated that given how schools in other parts of the world are experiencing the virus spreading quickly when schools re-opened, she urged Trustees to advocate for a better plan for all families.

4.6 Tracy Humphreys

Ms. Humphrey's thanked the Board for facilitating the meeting and shared results of a survey that she conducted with respect to children with

disabilities and their return to school. Ms. Humphrey's stated that a large part of the respondents have indicated that they will home school rather than have their students return to school.

4.7 Jennifer Turnbull

Ms. Turnbull, a parent of three district students, urged Trustees to consider other options for children to return to school in September. Ms. Turnbull stated that children with compromised health issues need to be considered and parents shouldn't have to choose between their students health and their education.

4.8 Myra James

Ms. James, a parent of two children in the District, stated that she was in favour of the proposed return to school plan. Ms. James stated that her child is currently on a waitlist for the kindergarten FRIM program and if the plan goes ahead then her student will likely not make it off the waitlist.

4.9 Shelby Morgan

Ms. Morgan, a parent of a student in the district, urged Trustees to advocate for other options for families to consider for the return to school in September. Ms. Morgan does not feel that schools are properly ventilated and children are not great a social distancing which she feels is unsafe for children.

5. COVID 19 Advocacy

Chair Watters opened the floor for partner groups to provide feedback. GVTA President, Winona Waldron, VCPAC Vice-President, Kristil Hammer, and CUPE 947 President, Jane Massy, provided feedback on behalf of their membership.

Superintendent Green thanked the community and stakeholders for their feedback and provided an overview of recent meetings with the Ministry of Education, along with the plan for a Hybrid plan for return to school. Discussion ensued amongst the Trustees with questions of clarification being asked of Superintendent Green and Associate Superintendent Roberts.

Moved By Trustee McNally

Seconded By Trustee Whiteaker

That the Board of Education of School District No.61 (Greater Victoria) write to the Minister of Education advocating for the full funding and flexibility to create an

online learning option for families which allows students to remain connected to their school community through the COVID 19 pandemic.

Carried Unanimously

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Moved By Trustee McNally

Seconded By Trustee Duncan

That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried Unanimously

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer