



# School District No.59 (Peace River South)

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## BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 59

11600 – 7<sup>TH</sup> Street, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4R8

### Open Board Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: December 20, 2023 – 1:00 PM

PLACE: School Board Office, Dawson Creek, BC

PRESENT: Trustees:  
C. Anderson (Chair)  
C. Hillton (Vice-Chair)  
R. Gulick  
S. Mounsey  
A. Schurmann  
C. Wards  
T. Jones

C. Fennell, Superintendent  
K. Morris, Secretary-Treasurer  
R. Schwartz, Recording Secretary

Called to Order – 1:04 PM

The Board Chair acknowledged that we share this territory with the people of Treaty 8.

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Additions: Nil

Deletions: Nil

Other: Trustee Jones advised the Board that he had updated the motion under R7.2 and that he had emailed same to Trustees and Staff.

(2023-12-004)

MOVED/SECONDED – Hillton/Wards

THAT, the Regular Meeting agenda be approved as printed.

CARRIED

## 1.0 ITEMS FOR ADOPTION

### R1.1 Regular Board Meeting Minutes – November 29, 2023

The Chair asked for any corrections to the minutes.

(2023-12-005)

The Chair declared the minutes of the open meeting November 29, 2023 approved as presented.

### R1.2 Excerpts of Closed Board Meeting – November 29, 2023

(2023-12-006)

The Chair declared the excerpts of the closed board meeting November 29, 2023 approved as presented.

## 2.0 BUSINESS ARISING

### 3.0 ESSENTIAL ITEMS

### 4.0 PRESENTATIONS

## 5.0 REPORTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

### R5.1 School/Student News

The Superintendent reported school/student news:

- Don Titus Montessori students in grades 5,6,7 worked with the Chetwynd Christmas Bureau to make Christmas food hampers for families. Students also had fun making Christmas pull apart cheese bread and other snacks, plus the school hosted a turkey lunch for students and staff.
- Chetwynd Secondary School and Windrem Elementary School have been joining together for team building activities. This is a great opportunity for the older students to be mentors for the younger students. This month they creatively built snowmen without snow!
- Devereaux Elementary students in Ms. Cork's class are looking for Gingerbread men! Through an ADST project, the students are building traps to catch the gingerbread men that ran away!
- Ecole Frank Ross Elementary School has been busy with holiday activities including a door decorating contest and a winter solstice soirée with crafts, outdoor activities, singing, snacks and drinks.
- All French Immersion teachers participated in the continuation of the professional learning series facilitated by SFU's Bureau of Francophone and Francophile Affairs with Shauna Néro.
- Moberly Lake Elementary students travelled to Chetwynd Secondary School to attend a basketball clinic. Chetwynd Secondary School is doing an amazing job of connecting with the younger students at the elementary schools.

- The hallways at Crescent Park Elementary are lined with some amazing artwork. The students were excited to participate in their Christmas concert which was held at Unchagah Hall.
- McLeod Elementary celebrated their hot lunch creators who are in charge of the hot lunch program.
- Tremblay Elementary school hosted a turkey dinner lunch and took advantage of the warm weather to play a soccer game outside.
- At Canalta Elementary School, primary students read the book Métis Christmas Mittens, a story focusing on Métis culture and the tradition of making mittens for loved ones. The students then stitched their own set of mittens. Canalta students participated in a fun activity – “What do we have in common?” The students paired up and interviewed each other to learn more about each other and write about their similarities.
- Dawson Creek Secondary School – Central Campus students in the Outdoor Education Class are enjoying the mild weather - the students have been able to spend a lot of time outside this semester. Other activities at Central Campus include building robots, door decorations, and various fundraising activities to help support Christmas hampers.
- The Dawson Creek Secondary School - South Peace Aquatics team is holding a ‘Sponsor A Swimmer’ fundraiser to raise money for their travel to provincial competition. Other fun activities at the school include a door decorating contest, student talent show, and making Christmas cards for seniors at Rotary Manor. Students in the Skills Exploration class built 3 sheds as part of their program and are now selling the sheds to help pay for some of the materials and supplies.
- DCSS staff and students rose to the challenge of raising money for the Christmas hampers. A total of \$3347 was raised and in conjunction with Dawson Creek charities 34 food hampers will be delivered to families. On top of the staff and student fundraising, Trent Lindberg donated \$7,000 and Lawrence Meats donated 40 turkeys!
- Sam’s Kitchen (a local restaurant in Dawson Creek) invited a group of students to the restaurant for a free lunch.
- Parkland Elementary students learned about Indigenous culture and traditions from Serena Brent. Parkland is also proud of their monthly award to celebrate readers.
- Pouce Coupe Elementary hosted a turkey lunch for staff and students.
- Draft recruitment videos have been completed for the district.

#### R5.2 Kindergarten Registration

The Superintendent announced that Kindergarten registration will open at all elementary schools in the district on January 8, 2024.

#### R5.3 Mental Health Crisis and Suicide Prevention Helpline

There is a new national helpline specific for mental health crisis and suicide prevention. The service is accessible via call or text to 9-8-8 and is available 24/7/365 offering trauma-informed and culturally affirming support to anyone who is thinking of suicide or who is worried about someone they know.

#### R5.4 Volleyball Provincials – Thank-you

The AAA Girls Volleyball Provincial Championship was hosted by Dawson Creek Secondary School – South Peace Campus from November 29<sup>th</sup> to December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The tournament was held in the Memorial Arena where the ice surface was transformed into three volleyball courts with the help of the City of Dawson Creek and School District No. 59 (PRS) maintenance staff. The venue allowed for all teams to compete in one location which created a true championship atmosphere. The Superintendent thanked everyone involved in organizing and hosting the

event, it was a great opportunity for Dawson Creek Secondary School to host the provincial event.

## 6.0 REPORTS FROM THE SECRETARY TREASURER

### R6.1 2023-24 Financial Report for November 2023

The financial report for November 2023 was presented verbally by the Secretary-Treasurer. The District's Finance team is pursuing professional development to implement a self-serve model of school and department budget reporting and monitoring.

### R6.2 Statement of Financial Information Report

The Statement of Financial Information (SOFI) report is complete. The annual report is required by all public institutions and publishes the names, salaries and related expenses of employees earning over \$75,000, vendors paid over \$25,000, and trustee income and expenses. The report is posted on the district website at SOFI Report 2023 | School District 59 (sd59.bc.ca).

### R6.3 New Spaces Child Care Application Update

The Secretary Treasurer informed the Board that the Child ChildCare BC's New Spaces applications submitted last January are moving to the next phase of the approval process with the Ministry. The applications were submitted for childcare centres in Tumbler Ridge and Dawson Creek (Tremblay location) respectively.

### R6.4 2024-2025 Budget Process

The Secretary Treasurer presented a timeline for the 2024-2025 budget process. The timeline includes consultation and engagement opportunities and three readings of the bylaw in three separate meetings.

(2023-12-007)

MOVED/SECONDED – Schurmann/Gulick

THAT, the Board of Education of School District No. 59 (Peace River South) approve the 2024-2025 Budget Process as presented.

CARRIED

### R6.5 Secretary Treasurers Report – December 2023

The Secretary Treasurer's report for December was provided for information.

## 7.0 TRUSTEE ITEMS

### R7.1 BCSTA Update – R. Gulick

Trustee Gulick presented the latest news and events from the BCSTA. The BCSTA Provincial Council meeting will be held virtually on February 24, 2024.

The BCSTA Northern Interior Branch meeting will be held in Prince George on February 2-3, 2024.

There will be a regional BCSTA Leadership series meeting on May 4, 2024 in Prince George.

R7.2 Bill 40-2023 Proposed Motion – T. Jones

Trustee Jones brought forward a motion to oppose Bill 40-2023 due to lack of consultation with other Indigenous groups. Trustee Jones spoke about his rationale for the motion and trustees debated the proposed motion.

(2023-12-008)

MOVED/SECONDED – Jones/Schurmann

WHEREAS the Government of British Columbia has introduced Bill 40 – 2023: School Amendment Act, 2023; and

WHEREAS the School District No. 59 (Peace River South) is committed to the principles of inclusivity, equity, and respect for the diverse cultural heritage of all its students, including Métis, Inuit, and First Nations (status and non-status, on and off reserve) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action; and

WHEREAS the proposed amendments in Bill 40 – 2023 could potentially impact the rights and representation of Indigenous communities and individuals in public education decision-making processes;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the School District No. 59 (Peace River South) Board of Education:

1. Officially opposes the enactment of Bill 40 – 2023: School Amendment Act, 2023, as it stands due to concerns over its implications for Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) inclusion and representation in public education.
2. Urges the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for the Peace River South and official opposition education and Indigenous relations critics, the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA), the Ministers of Education and Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and other individuals and/or organizations designated by the board and/or administration to:
  - a. Advocate for the inclusion and equal say of Métis, Inuit, and First Nations (status and non-status, on and off reserve) in all aspects of public education.
  - b. Ensure that any amendments to education legislation fully respect and promote the rights, cultures, and educational needs of all Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) students and individuals.
3. Recommends the establishment of a consultative framework involving Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) communities and individual representatives of the cultural diversity in the individual and unique districts to review and provide guidance on education policies and practices affecting their students, members, family and friends as per Section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982.
4. Commits to ongoing dialogue and partnership with local Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) communities and individuals to support the educational success and cultural wellbeing of their students within their individual and unique school districts.

**Rationale:**

- **Importance of Indigenous Voices:** The School District No. 59 (Peace River South) recognizes the importance of Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) voices and perspectives in shaping an education system that is inclusive, equitable, and respectful of all cultures. The proposed Bill 40 – 2023 raises concerns about the potential diminishment of these voices in educational governance. This motion reflects our commitment to stand with Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) communities and individuals in ensuring their rightful place in decision-making processes that affect their children's education.
- **Respect for Constitutional Rights:** The School District No. 59 (Peace River South) acknowledges the significance of Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, which recognizes and affirms the existing rights of Indigenous (Aboriginal) peoples. It is imperative that any educational legislation or amendment, including Bill 40 – 2023, aligns with these constitutional commitments and does not undermine the rights and interests of Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) communities and individuals.
- **Alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action:** This motion aligns with the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, particularly those focused on education (Calls to Action 6-12). These calls emphasize the need for equitable educational opportunities, cultural appropriateness in curricula, and the involvement of Indigenous (Aboriginal) communities and individuals in educational legislation. By opposing Bill 40 – 2023 and advocating for Indigenous inclusion, the School District No. 59 (Peace River South) is actively contributing to the fulfillment of these vital calls to action, aimed at bridging educational gaps and honoring the rights and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.
- **Violation of UNDRIP:** Bill 40 – 2023, the School Amendment Act, 2023, potentially conflicts with Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which mandates that states (governments) must consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them. This article emphasizes the necessity of obtaining free, prior, and informed consent from Indigenous communities for decisions impacting their rights and interests. The enactment of Bill 40, without thorough consultation with and the informed consent of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, can be seen as a violation of this principle. It raises concerns about the sufficiency and authenticity of the engagement processes with Indigenous communities, particularly regarding decisions that directly impact their representation and participation in the public education system. Such an approach undermines the spirit of partnership and respect for Indigenous rights as outlined in UNDRIP, which British Columbia has endorsed, and calls into question the commitment to upholding these international standards in domestic policymaking.

DEFEATED (OPPOSED – Hillton, Wards, Anderson, Gulick)  
(ABSTAINED – Mounsey, Schurmann)



## 8.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

### R8.1 Indigenous Councils

Both councils participated in the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results) process for the development of the new strategic plan. Councils held their annual holiday celebration meetings on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

### R8.2 Policy Committee

Trustee Gulick provided an update from the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee is asking for trustees to forward any input on 'trustee code of conduct' to be considered in the revision of Policy 2150.

## 9.0 DIARY

## 10.0 NOTICE OF MOTION

## 11.0 QUESTION PERIOD

A question and answer period was provided.

## 12.0 FUTURE BUSINESS

R12.1 - Regular Board Meeting – January 24, 2024

## ADJOURNMENT

(2023-12-009)

MOVED – Schurmann

THAT, the Regular Meeting be terminated. (2:26 PM)

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:



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C. Anderson, Board Chair



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K. Morris, Secretary Treasurer