



MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING, PUBLIC SESSION
Board of Education, School District No. 64 (Gulf Islands)
ZOOM Virtual Meeting
2020 11 18

Present:	Rob Pingle	Chairperson
	Shelley Lawson	Vice Chairperson
	Tisha Boulter	Trustee
	Janelle Lawson	Trustee
	Greg Lucas	Trustee
	Chaya Katrensky	Trustee
	Stefanie Denz	Trustee
	Scott Benwell	Superintendent of Schools
	D'Arcy Deacon	Director of Instruction, Human Resources
	Boe Beardsmore	Director of Instruction, Learning Services
	Jesse Guy	Secretary Treasurer
	Lori Deacon	Executive Assistant
	Ian Mitchell	GITA President
	Angela Thomas	CUPE President
	Shelly Johnson	GIPVPA Representative
	Marie Mullen	GIPVPA Representative
	Caitlin Hertzman	DPAC Representative
	Elizabeth Nolan	Driftwood Representative

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Pingle. He acknowledged the honour and privilege of working together on these traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples - huy ch q'u.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Additions:

Timing of Board Meetings 12(a)

Moved and seconded that the agenda for the Regular Board Meeting, Public Session held 2020 11 18 be adopted as amended.

CARRIED 80/20

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Amend 7(a) to add to DPAC statement "including a request for the Board to pause decision-making to be able to consult on the new information provided after the consultation period ended."

Moved and seconded that the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting, Public Session held 2020 10 14 be approved as amended.

CARRIED 81 /20

3. IN-CAMERA SUMMARY

Moved and seconded that the Board of Education adopt the Regular In-Camera Summary of 2020 10 14 as presented.

CARRIED 82 /20

4. BUSINESS ARISING



5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) **Mayne Island Early Childhood Society**

A letter was shared from the Mayne Island Early Childhood Society. Jesse Guy explained that the *School Act* has been amended to support Districts in offering childcare services. She confirmed that it is not the district's intent to enter into competition with local licensed daycare providers.

Moved and seconded that the Board of Education directs staff to respond with a letter stating the district's current position and Ministry of Education policies.

CARRIED 83/20

6. **DELEGATIONS**

(a) **DPAC**

DPAC representative Caitlin Hertzman read the DPAC letter sent to the Board of Education regarding district configuration and the review process. She requested the Board pause the decision-making process to allow time to further consider feedback, consult with partners, and identify options. Ms. Hertzman thanked trustees for their consideration and expressed her hope to move forward in a collaborative, constructive manner.

Discussion regarding the quarter system at GISS and possible negative impact on student achievement.

7. **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

(a) **Fernwood Elementary Nature Program – Sense of Place**

The Board received a request from Fernwood Elementary Nature Program to support its grant application for the Sense of Place project.

Moved and seconded that the Board provides a letter, supporting Fernwood Elementary's Sense of Place Project, to be included in the school's Foundations of Youth grant application through the Salt Spring Island Foundation.

CARRIED 84/20

(b) **Configuration**

Superintendent Scott Benwell summarized the consultation process of the last 25 months. He acknowledged that the process has been long and difficult and has been delayed twice to support decision making. Staff have responded to requests for more information and provided modeling to further support the process and inform decisions moving forward. He emphasized a right versus right dilemma and the challenges of balancing a financial plan that maintains access and opportunities. Dr. Benwell recommended the Board support configuration scenario 4b.

Moved and seconded that the Board of Education approves the operationalization of Configuration Scenario 4b, effective September 2021, with the following implementation considerations:

1. GISS becomes the catchment school for grade 8 to 12 students on Salt Spring Island. Salt Spring Island elementary schools will be configured as Kindergarten to grade 7.
2. For the 2021/2022 school year only, Salt Spring Island students entering grade 7, currently registered in grade 6 at SIMS, will remain in attendance at the SIMS location for a transitional year.
3. Students from Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna, in grades 8 and 9, will attend Pender Islands School as their catchment school. Students in grades 10 to 12 will have the option to attend GISS for their graduation program.



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4. Access to French Immersion will be granted through to graduation without interruption, for students currently registered in French Immersion.
5. Courtesy ridership on the student water taxi to Salt Spring Island Schools will be provided to all students successfully registered in French Immersion and/or GISPA, and to those students who require Inclusive Education services as indicated in the student's Individual Education Plan.
6. Students from Salt Spring Island, in grades 8 to 12, will have the option to attend Pender Islands School.

Trustee Shelley Lawson stated her opposition to the motion. She stated her support for an enhanced Pender program that it should be optional for all students. Trustee Janelle Lawson also stated her opposition to making Pender a mandatory catchment for Galiano, Mayne, and Saturna students.

Trustees Tisha Boulter and Greg Lucas both stated their support for one year of transition.

Moved and seconded that the motion be amended to include two transition years for Pender enrolment.

DEFEATED

Greg Lucas asked that access to sports programs on Salt Spring Island be considered.

Moved and seconded that the motion be amended to include a transition year and to remove the term 'courtesy' from water taxi ridership for special programs.

CARRIED 85/20

Moved and seconded that the Board of Education approves the operationalization of Configuration Scenario 4b, effective September 2021, with a transition year and the following implementation considerations:

1. GISS becomes the catchment school for grade 8 to 12 students on Salt Spring Island. Salt Spring Island elementary schools will be configured as Kindergarten to grade 7.
2. For the 2021/2022 school year only, Salt Spring Island students entering grade 7, currently registered in grade 6 at SIMS, will remain in attendance at the SIMS location for a transitional year.
3. For the 2021/2022 school years only, Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna students in grade 8 may attend either their home island school or Pender Islands School. Students in grades 9 to 12 will have the option to attend either Pender Islands School or GISS.
4. For subsequent years, commencing September 2022, students from Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna, in grades 8 and 9, will attend Pender Islands School as their catchment school. Students in grades 10 to 12 will have the option to attend GISS for their graduation program.
5. Access to French Immersion will be granted through to graduation without interruption, for students currently registered in French Immersion.
6. Ridership on the student water taxi to Salt Spring Island Schools will be provided to all students successfully registered in French Immersion and/or GISPA, and to those students who require Inclusive Education services as indicated in the student's Individual Education Plan.
7. Students from Salt Spring Island, in grades 8 to 12, will have the option to attend Pender Islands School.

CARRIED 86/20

Scott Benwell explained that the motion carried by the Board initiates the need for further action. He presented the following Notice of Motion:

Pursuant to Board Procedure 635 - Permanent School Closure, the Board of Education gives notice of its intent to close Saltspring Island Middle School at the end of the 2020/2021 school year.



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The motion will be considered at the February 10, 2021 Public Board Meeting. The motion will be added to the website along with an online comment forum to allow stakeholders and school community members to share their input regarding the Board's intent to close Saltspring Island Middle School.

Chair Pingle stated that the decisions made by the Board impact current policies and procedures specific to student transportation and catchment.

Moved and seconded that the Board directs staff to draft amendments to Procedure 410 Student Transportation and Policy/Procedure 525 Attendance Areas, for the Policy Committee's consideration, that align with and support Configuration Scenario 4b.

CARRIED 87/20

Chair Pingle thanked Trustees and staff for all of their hard work. Dr. Benwell stated that staff are committed to supporting our learning communities as we work through the changes ahead.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

(a) COVID-19 Response

Superintendent Benwell reported that air filters in our buildings are currently being upgraded. Busing routes are now all operational and additional causal bus drivers are being trained to ensure continuity of service.

Boe Beardsmore stated that COVID-19 processes and guidelines are in place and roles and responsibilities have been established in the event of an exposure in any of our schools. Jesse Guy clarified that there have not been any exposures to staff or students in our district to date.

(b) Recovered Expenditure Plan

Jesse Guy shared a list of planned expenditures of Federal and Provincial funding and accumulated surplus funds related to COVID-19 savings. Items include increased maintenance and cleaning, as well as instructional and program supports for schools.

(c) Reporting Student Achievement

D'Arcy Deacon explained that student achievement will be reported across the district in compliance with Ministry regulations. Parents will receive formal written reports a minimum three times per year that include comments on all subject areas. Letter grades will be provided for students in grades 6 to 9 and upon request for grades 4 and 5.

9. SECRETARY TREASURER'S REPORT

(a) Financial Report

Jesse Guy shared the monthly expenditure report for October. Spending remains consistent and on budget.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) HR Committee Report

The Human Resource Committee Report for October 14, 2020 was received. The November meeting has been postponed until January.

(b) Committee of the Whole Report

The Committee of the Whole Report for October 28, 2020 was received.

(c) Education Committee Report



The Education Committee Report for October 28, 2020 was received.

(d) Finance, Audit, and Facilities Committee Report

The Finance, Audit, and Facilities Committee Report for October 28, 2020 was received.

(e) Policy Committee Report

The Policy Committee Report for October 28, 2020 was received.

i. Policy/Procedure 5700 Flexible Learning Programs

Staff identified that this policy is non-compliant and outdated.

Moved and seconded that the Board repeals Policy/Procedure 5700 Flexible Learning Programs.

CARRIED 88/20

ii. Policy 520 Learning Services

Staff recommended that the policy should reference the BC Special Education Services Manual, specifically as it relates to Hospital Homebound program delivery.

Moved and seconded that Policy 520 Learning Services be amended to reference the BC Special Education Services Manual regarding Hospital Homebound policy and procedures and that the draft amendments be circulated for feedback.

CARRIED 89/20

iii. DRAFT Policy/Procedure 6300 Retention and Destruction of Records.

No current policy regarding the retention or destruction of records which has led to inconsistent practice across the district.

Notice of Motion: that the Board adopt Policy and Procedure 6300 Retention and Destruction of Records.

The motion will be tabled at the Regular Public Board Meeting on April 14, 2021. The draft policy and procedure will be circulated for feedback and brought to the February Policy Committee meeting for consideration.

11. TRUSTEES' SCHOOL REPORTS

Trustee School Reports will resume January 2021.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

Moved and seconded to extend the meeting to 4:30 p.m. if necessary.

CARRIED 90/20

(a) Timings of Meetings

Shelly Lawson stated that, due to our current situation with COVID-19 and holding meetings via ZOOM, there is an opportunity to hold public board meetings in the evening.

Tisha Boulter asked that all partner groups be canvassed regarding support for evening meetings.

Notice of Motion: that the February and May Public Board Meetings be held at 6:30 p.m. This motion will



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be considered at the January 13, 2021 public meeting.

13. QUESTION PERIOD

Chair Pingle accepted questions from the public. Caitlin Hertzman asked that her comments be recorded in the minutes. Chair Pingle requested Ms. Hertzman to submit her statement prior to draft minutes being published.

(Note: Comments submitted by DPAC have been appended to these 2020 11 18 Regular Public Minutes.)

Moved and seconded that the meeting be extended for an additional 10 minutes.

CARRIED 91/20

Moved that the meeting be adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

DEFEATED

14. NEXT MEETING DATES

- (a) Regular Board Meeting – January 13, 2021
- (b) Committee Day – February 24, 2021

15. ADJOURNMENT

Moved that the meeting be adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

CARRIED 92/20

Date: _____

Chairperson

Certified Correct:

Secretary Treasurer

For Inclusion in the November 18, 2020 Board of Education Meeting Minutes DPAC Partner Group Comments

A prepared statement was provided during Delegation portion of Agenda. The following comments were made in response to the passing of the configuration motion at the meeting and therefore were provided ad hoc and without preparation during question period.

As DPAC Co-Chair, to be told that this option presents a reasonable compromise is galling. That attendance at the junior high is mandatory and not optional and thereby doesn't allow for student choice is completely out of keeping with the spirit of equity. Even Greg, who voted against adding choice to the earlier amendment wanted that choice for Pender kids interested in sports (not just French immersion and GISPA and inclusive ed.). Can the trustees not see that they've triaged water taxi capacity based on elitist values?

Obviously choice is **needed** for kids that benefit from **any** aspect of secondary school whether its academic, extracurricular or psychosocial.

Calling Shelley's comment on choice a "letting off of steam" completely undermined the opportunity of introducing an appropriate amendment to support Greg's request. I don't agree that choice focus only on sport, but at least the conversation was happening. Until the chair shut it down in a dismissive manner and threw the process into disarray.

With this motion, outer island kids lose all the opportunities available from SIMS **and** don't get the GISS grade 8 opportunities that Salt Spring Island kids get, and then after one short year, they don't even have access to the grade 9 opportunities either. Rob acknowledged that SIMS offered something kids and parents wanted over their outer island schools at upper grade levels when he said parents look for workarounds to get their kids to that school, in that case French immersion. The same goes for GISS. Greg is also admitting that the physical education program and equipment is not up to snuff for at the very least grade 9 if he sees a need to send kids off island for that program. Doesn't that mean it's not good enough for all kids at that age level and above? Finally, the definition of what results in an IEP is very narrow, so it will not include the desires of a student to participate in sports or physical education programs, although this was a creative workaround that the Trustee suggested.

Yet again you are making your cuts based on using the outer island kids as a funding farm. We could be speaking with the Ministry about changing the definition or terms for unique geographic funding or petitioning for more transportation funding and instead you're throwing every outer island kid under the age of 13 under the bus.

Jesse said that current surplus dollars are better spent on items in the class room rather than getting outer island kids to the same school Salt Spring Island kids get to attend. What is this based on? What is this extra money if this plan is just to get rid of the deficit? Chaya mentioned we should spend this money now to give the district time to invest in the Penders school,

putting **all our eggs in one basket**. What if the junior high school doesn't measure up? Janelle was right to say this doesn't take student success into consideration. In actuality it's inequitable and it's the wrong focus.

The District using this transition time as a chance to prove themselves on Pender just admits that this means our students are guinea pigs. You say you're doing right by your parents but we see the letter from two of your parents just this week that this is not a good choice for all Pender kids, let alone the kids that have to commute to get there.

Greg you see a lack of optimism? This is our kids. It might be a few years of your time with specific students but this is their entire educational lives.

Tisha sees parents paying their own transportation and boarding as an option, how inequitable is that? She sees leaving the district as a "choice", which is such a negative for absolutely everyone involved that I can't believe it wouldn't be in opposition to her decision to speak against the amendment.

The idea that a one year transition is a concession rather than an administrative necessity is appalling - this is just what is a basic need in order to operationalize the new programming. It's not a concession to parents.

Where and how have our concerns been met?

- staffing
- transportation
- academics
- sports
- electives
- social groups
- individual psychological development

The confusion, disarray, misunderstandings and repetitious interactions between Trustees during discussion of configuration only goes to show how unprepared the board was to make this decision. This motion passing is telling us that parent collaboration and input was not respected or wanted. As our representatives it was your responsibility to bring the concerns of your constituents to the forefront and that did not happen. You don't have anywhere near consensus on this motion. You have made the junior high mandatory because we reminded you that students would never choose Pender islands over GISS. This is a failure of democracy, and a failure of the district to meet its mandate to place students at the heart of our work and aspire to the values of trust, responsibility, opportunity, sustainability, collaboration, and diversity.