



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING, PUBLIC SESSION**  
**Board of Education, School District No. 64 (Gulf Islands)**  
**ZOOM Virtual Meeting**  
**2021 10 13**

**Present:**

Tisha Boulter  
Chaya Katrensky  
Stefanie Denz  
Janelle Lawson  
Shelley Lawson  
Greg Lucas  
Rob Pingle

Chairperson  
Vice Chairperson  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee

Scott Benwell  
Jesse Guy  
D'Arcy Deacon  
Boe Beardsmore  
Lori Deacon

Superintendent of Schools  
Secretary Treasurer  
Director of Instruction, Human Resources  
Director of Instruction, Learning Services  
Executive Assistant

Ian Mitchell  
Angela Thomas  
Janice Shields  
Marie Mullen  
Shelly Johnson  
Lyall Ruehlen  
Adria Kray  
Kate Martinez  
Marcia Jansen

GITA President  
CUPE President  
CUPE Vice-President  
GIPVPA Representative  
GIPVPA Representative  
GIPVPA Representative  
DPAC Representative  
DPAC Representative  
Driftwood Representative

**Regrets:**

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Chair Boulter. Chaya Katrensky acknowledged that this meeting is taking place on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples. She shared the Hul'q'umi'num' word meaning "to care for". Huy tseep q'u.

**1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

No additions

Moved and seconded that the agenda for the Regular Board Meeting, Public Session held 2021 10 13 be adopted as presented.

CARRIED 84/21

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Moved and seconded that the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting, Public Session held 2021 09 15 be approved as presented.

CARRIED 85/21

**3. IN-CAMERA SUMMARY**

Moved and seconded that the Board of Education adopt the Regular In-Camera Summary of 2021 09 15 as presented.

CARRIED 86/21



4. **BUSINESS ARISING**

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

6. **DELEGATIONS**

7. **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

(a) **Strategic Plan Renewal**

Scott Benwell shared a staff report regarding options for renewing the Strategic Plan set to expire this year.

Moved and seconded that the Board of Education extend its current strategic plan until June 2023.

CARRIED 87/21

Moved and seconded that the Board of Education creates a work plan, beginning September 2022, for the consultation and development processes of a new Strategic Plan to be implemented in June 2023.

CARRIED 88/21

Plan development will take place in committee.

(b) **Three-Year Calendar Consultation Schedule**

A draft schedule for school calendar consultation was shared. The Board will be considering a school calendar for a three-consecutive year period in accordance with School Calendar Regulations.

Notice of Motion: *The Board of Education adopt a local three-year school calendar for the 2022/23 to 2024/25 school years.*

*The motion will be presented at the regular Public Board meeting on February 9, 2022.*

*The Notice of Motion will be added to the website along with an online comments form for public input.*

(c) **Board meeting Format**

Due to the limited space of our board meeting room, board meetings will continue virtually until such time as the need to physical distance is no longer a concern for in-person meetings.

8. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

(a) **Enrolment - 1701**

Scott Benwell reported that projected enrolment was consistent with the actual student headcount of 1444 reported to the Ministry on the September 30<sup>th</sup> 1701.

(b) **Staffing**

D'Arcy Deacon reported that staffing is now focused on remedy where classroom composition exceeds provincial and local limits. The district continues to work on creative strategies for recruitment and retention.

(c) **Communications Planning**

Scott Benwell updated the Board on the development of a district communications plan. A draft plan will be presented to the Board in November.

(d) **COVID-19 Response**



Boe Beardsmore reported on the enhanced mask mandate for K to 12 students. She summarized the contact tracing process for school exposures and explained that Island Health makes the determination of risk and provides direction for self-monitoring or self-isolation as deemed necessary by the health authority.

Scott Benwell reported that ventilation systems at all locations are set to allow the maximum of fresh air exchange. Additional air quality testing has been done and initial results are favourable. Following discussions with DPAC, rapid testing is also being considered.

Boards of Education across the province will be considering vaccine mandates and are awaiting direction from BCPSEA.

9. **SECRETARY TREASURER'S REPORT**

(a) **Monthly Financial Report**

Jesse Guy shared the financial report for the months of July, August, and September. The district is on budget. She reported that the first quarter GRE was submitted to the Ministry and has been approved.

10. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(a) **Committee of the Whole**

The Committee of the Whole summary 2021 09 15 was received.

(b) **HR Committee**

Staffing challenges and creative strategies for recruitment and retention were the agenda topics discussed at the morning's HR committee meeting.

11. **TRUSTEES' SCHOOL REPORTS**

Trustee reports were received. Chaya Katrensky shared her trustee school report for Saturna Elementary/SEEC.

Topic: What can we do at a district and school level to promote employee wellness? (Objective 2.2 – Build and sustain a vibrant employee community.)

***Fernwood Elementary School***

Fernwood staff were asked by their Principal to respond to the subject of employee wellness and there was an indication that COVID-19 is still an issue that requires us following the Provincial Guidelines in regards to heating and ventilation. There was also a statement that the school year calendar should seek to avoid two-day weekends as often as possible including those that occur due to pro-d days. Staff would also like sick days to be reframed as wellness days to remove the stigma and promote preventative health care. They also feel that being confident that on-call staff are truly available, especially with EAs, to ensure continuity for the students would result in staff taking the appropriate steps to treat themselves in a preventative manner.

***Fulford Community Elementary School***

Strategies to support employee wellness could include encouraging staff to put in boundaries around work to take time for personal health and well-being. The district has recently reminded employees of access to Lifeworks services in counselling, financial planning, health plans, and family matters, as well as legal support. Staff benefits package also has physio, massage, acupuncture. Local GITA and CUPE presidents could continue to remind people of Lifeworks; the repeated reminders would raise awareness of what is available.

Monthly wellness challenges as something fun to motivate and support healthy living, ie; exercise every day, or walks in nature at lunch hour.



There had been a workshop on stress and burnout recognition in the past. Something like that again would be good.

On the positive side, Fulford school has a very cohesive staff with genuine respect and friendship with each other. The team is very supportive of each other and events for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation confirmed the uplifting work situation. It was noted that the employment of Meaghan Cameron as special needs teacher and Amber Thompson as library and literacy prep person has been a great asset for the school and staff.

#### ***Galiano Community School***

Staff at Galiano Community School continue to come to work with enthusiasm and resiliency, despite the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, construction, and the usual school-start-up complexities. School leadership is checking in with staff daily, following up on concerns and issues and offering long-term solutions such as the LifeWorks package. When asked what could be done to promote wellness, suggestions included regular acknowledgements and gestures such as providing healthy snacks for staff meetings. Staff were grateful and feel safer with the additional masks provided for everyone.

#### ***Gulf Islands Secondary School***

In consultation with Lyall at GISS we discussed changes that have already been made to improve wellness. Informal Staff meeting occur every two weeks now for connections, check ins, and provides more opportunities to highlight students that are identified as needing more support. New 'Teams' have been created with staff from mixed curricular areas that will stay together and meet regularly till June 2022 for team building and personal connections. These teams are helping create a feeling of positive work culture. It has been helpful for the staff to learn more about the supports that are available through the district employee assistance program. There has been a noticeable strain on staff during Covid and a desire to get back to face-to face maskless activities in the future. A staff member created a rotating 'inspirational card' idea, where one staff member is picked each week to be highlighted, and everyone writes positive messages in a card that gets delivered to their box. Folks are already articulating how surprising and wonderful it is to receive these surprise cards, and that it 'makes their day'!

#### ***Mayne Elementary/Jr. Secondary School***

At a school level, starting this year staff meetings are beginning with everyone making an entry on Menti to note an epic moment that they can go back to later in the year and reflect on how their work has made a difference. Small, intentional changes such as nicer lighting and a cozy rug in the staff room make breaks more enjoyable. The occasional special treat for staff to acknowledge their work and show appreciation can boost morale. Staff are looking forward to the wellness challenges that the district is initiating through LifeWorks. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we are missing that fun wellness piece such as celebrations, school hosted board meetings where each school is celebrated etc.

#### ***Pender Islands Elementary Secondary School***

- \*Counselling support
- \*Flex counselling position
- \*Trustees and board members can ask staff directly for feedback on how they can help promote wellness
- \*Hold contest for fitness & health goals, mental and body break goals
- \*Post student & teacher achievements SD64 website and perhaps within school
- \*ProD day and or staff meetings; arrange for guest speakers on motivation, wellness etc

Possible topics may include: How we can help w workload, time, project management, Pro Day mentorship for mid career, possibly inviting retired teachers for inspiration and problem solving/sharing



Ensure teachers are well versed in communication taking place with families, especially regarding any student concerns. This allows them to manage the students needs most effectively.

***Phoenix Elementary School***

In consultation with Dan Sparanese at Phoenix Elementary, we discussed ways that our whole district system could be aided by improving collaboration with all decision making. Giving staff more of a voice and investing in a more informed process approach with all stakeholders. Connections can also be improved with consistent messaging. There is a role for Trustees to play in advocacy at the Ministry level to speak the needs of our employees and support a collaborative approach. There is room for more inspirational speakers at Pro-D's. More time could be created for employees to meet up and talk about real issues and this would foster connection and a sense of well-being. Investments like the epic grant has inspired educators to dig in deeper to their work and supports a positive sense of purpose.

***Salt Spring Elementary School***

Salt Spring Elementary are continuing to feel the burden of the pandemic on their community and the impacts on everyone's mental health. They believe that improving student mental health is a good way to improve staff mental health and the creation of additional outdoor spaces are critical. They appreciate the healthy challenges being presented and believe that recognizing and celebrating staff is a good way to address their health in the short term. They also believe it's important to encourage staff to have downtime as appreciate the idea of wellness days over sick days.

***Saltspring Island Middle School***

In my meeting with Principal Smith, we discussed Lifeworks as a big resource for staff, with much to offer, but a big plus would be to get one's personal clinical counsellor covered. It made more sense for mental and emotional support to be served by therapists personally chosen.

We discussed the reconfiguration at SIMS and the stress staff has weathered in the process. Principal Smith relayed how a small but vocal minority can rip into the morale of the staff. A small group who is not happy still deeply affects the classroom environments in a negative way. To counter this, we can celebrate the good that the SIMS staff does, and give less platform for the complaints. We can celebrate the staff by spending time with them; visiting them in their classrooms, sharing food and time with them, and very importantly letting the public know what a good school SIMS is.

Principal Smith and I discussed how this latter could be achieved at Public board meetings. A brief (one or two sentences) description from each trustee on what is going on at their school that month could make a big difference. In this way, the public hears bit about what is going on at each school and the wonderful work being done. It would show a flow of communication between trustees, schools and administration. The brief reports could be alongside or instead of the reports to the strategic plan that we are using right now. Regularly showing pride in our schools supports the staff.

Principal Smith noted that simplification of paper work would reduce stress, such as for a whole school outing on the bus, which required field trip and incidence forms. This could be a more streamlined process, in which details of organized days are more clearly communicated. Having office staff that is there at the beginning and end of the day would also be helpful for the principal to be more present to parents that arrive then.



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING, PUBLIC SESSION**  
**Board of Education, School District No. 64 (Gulf Islands)**  
**ZOOM Virtual Meeting**  
**2021 10 13**

In our final words, Principal Smith reiterated what wonderful teachers SIMS has and how well they work together, this being the most important aspect to the wellbeing of everyone working in the school.

***Saturna Elementary School/SEEC***

What does that look like? Happy, motivated, keen, invested, curious, kind, driven, group of individuals?

Mr. Pendergast shared with me that in his experience teachers tend to be driven and motivated by core values that are not self-centered nor recognition driven. Their true joy comes in the success of the students that they impact. For it is the future that we are influencing. How can we be of the greatest service?

I am glad that this question starts our reports off this year as wellbeing is key to a vibrant community. At the district level we have seen some great communication around Lifeworks and the resources that are at hand through this program that is available to all staff. There are also some friendly physical challenges to come which is another opportunity to build cross district relations and comradery.

At a school level, Mr. Pendergast, spoke to the support of the team being important, especially with new employees entering classrooms and programs. Also, that sometimes educators need some boundaries around working time and personal time. Things like answering emails, classroom planning and reviewing assignments can take over personal time and throw off the work/life balance. We then found ourselves talking more about the perks of teaching on the Gulf Islands. The opportunities to be out in nature, physically active and incorporating the outdoors into the curriculum. These activities certainly lend to a heightened wellbeing.

The conclusion of our conversation is that checking-in with individuals, taking the time to engage in what wellbeing means to each of those individuals and building relationships will reap the most benefit to all. Also, putting our own wellbeing as a priority will allow us to support and promote the wellbeing of our peers and colleagues.

**12. OTHER BUSINESS**

**13. QUESTION PERIOD**

Chair Boulter received questions from the public.

**14. NEXT MEETING DATES**

- (a) Committee Day: October 27, 2021
- (b) Regular Board Meeting: November 10, 2021

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved that the meeting be adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

CARRIED /21

Date: November 10, 2021

Tisha Boulter  
Chairperson

Certified Correct:

Jesse Guy  
Secretary Treasurer



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING, PUBLIC SESSION**  
**Board of Education, School District No. 64 (Gulf Islands)**  
**ZOOM Virtual Meeting**  
**2021 10 13**

---

---