

Present:

Lyn Hall, Chairperson
Lois Boone, Vice-Chairperson
Bill Christie, Trustee
Naomi Manning, Trustee
Michelle Marrelli, Trustee
Roxanne Ricard, Trustee
Sharel Warrington, Trustee

Brian Pepper, Superintendent of Schools
Bryan Mix, Secretary-Treasurer
Wendy De Marsh, Executive Assistant (Recorder)

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved as published; however, it was agreed to deal with Item 5.1, Announcement re: Property Sale, first.

The Board moved to Item 5.1, then returned to Item 3, with Ms. Boone in the chair. The rest of the items on the agenda were dealt with in order.

3. **PUBLIC INPUT**

Trish Bella, parent at Austin Road Elementary School, reported that the school's community garden project had received an award from the Premier of British Columbia for excellence in education, in the category of healthy schools. She spoke about the garden, and about the trip to the B.C. Legislature to accept the award. When Mr. Hall returned to the room, Ms. Bella presented him with the plaque that had been awarded to the school.

Karen MacKay, representing the Prince George District Teachers Association, spoke about an anticipated shortage of teachers and the difficulties the district could expect to encounter in the recruitment and retention of teachers. She also commented that the inclusion in the calendar of a non-instructional day in August would negatively affect some teachers.

Lorraine Prouse, representing CUPE Local 3742, noted that an early decision on the district calendar for the coming school year was appreciated by the union. She also reported that non-instructional days continued to be a concern, particularly for

teacher assistants. She expressed the hope that all TAS would be allowed to work on all of the NIDs.

Dale Laluk, representing the District Parent Advisory Council, spoke about several recent meetings with the Minister of Education, noting that the school district was doing well in implementing Bill 33, but that class composition remained a concern for parents. He also expressed concerns about graduation portfolios and about the effectiveness of Foundation Skills Assessments for small schools. Regarding Draft Policy 1100 (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy), he requested that parents be represented on district and school privacy and security committees.

Mr. Hall resumed the chair.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

4.1 Public Meeting

The minutes of the regular public meeting held February 27, 2007 were adopted as circulated.

4.2 Record of In Camera Meeting Minutes

The report on the items discussed and decisions made at the regular in camera meeting of February 27, 2007 and the special in camera meeting of March 12, 2007 were approved.

5. **PRESENTATIONS**

5.1 Announcement re: Property Sale

Mr. Hall announced that Lakewood Elementary School would be sold to AimHi, which had been leasing the building from the district for a number of years.

Mr. Hall introduced AimHi's chair, Alain LeFebvre, who introduced board members Brenda Peacock, Bill Fildes, Melinda Heidsma, Rory Summers, David Ash, Paul Raines, Judy Kennedy and Carl Anserello.

Mr. LeFebvre commented on how pleased his organization was with the facility at Lakewood Elementary and thanked the Board for agreeing to the sale.

Mr. Hall turned the chair over to Ms. Boone while he and the AimHi board members met with the media. The Board returned to Item 3 and then dealt with the rest of the agenda in order.

5.2 Secondary Apprenticeship Program Scholarships

Rory Summers, District Coordinator, Career Programs and Secondary School Apprenticeships, announced that twelve \$1,000 scholarships were being awarded. He introduced the scholarship winners and he and Mr. Hall presented the students with their cheques.

5.3 Secondary Montessori Program

Tom Paterson, principal of Highglen Montessori Elementary School, and Glenn Monteith, principal of Lakewood Jr. Secondary School, presented a proposal to establish a secondary Montessori program.

MOVED:

That a grade 7 and 8 Montessori program be approved for Lakewood Jr. Secondary School starting in September 2007.

CARRIED.

6. **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

6.1 Proposed 2007/08 District Calendar

The proposed calendar was discussed. Concerns were expressed that there was no educational need for a two-week spring break and that the addition of a few minutes per day did not make up for the loss of several days of instruction. However, it was noted that the proposed calendar had been developed based on the recommendations of the district's School Calendar Committee, that the committee had included representation from all partner groups and that its recommendations had been approved by the Board.

MOVED:

That the proposed local school calendar for 2007/08 be adopted.

CARRIED.

6.2 Superintendent's Report on Class Size

Mr. Pepper reviewed his report dated February 28, 2007.

MOVED:

That the Superintendent's report on the organization of classes in School District No. 57, as of February 28, 2007, as required under Section 76 (3) of the *School Act*, be accepted.

CARRIED.

MOVED:

That the Superintendent provide the Board with information on School District No. 57 classroom composition and strategies utilized to address composition issues.

CARRIED.

6.3 Student Conduct Review Committee Annual Report for the 2005/06 School Year

Rob Little, Assistant Superintendent, presented the report and answered questions. He noted that the number of referrals to SCRC had remained fairly consistent over the previous few years, that incidents involving girls had increased more than those involving boys, and that there had been a large drop in incidents involving physical assault and fighting.

The Board requested that future reports include comparisons to previous years and, for context, the number of students enrolled in each school.

7. EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

7.1 Committee Report

Ms. Ricard reported that at the last meeting, in addition to the items being brought forward to the Board, the committee had received updates on fine arts and Aboriginal education.

7.2 Prince George Secondary School – Proposed Attendance Management Program

Principal Sharon Cairns, vice-principals Richard Dougherty, Rob Lewis and Steve Dalla Lana and teacher Lisa Carson presented information on absentee rates at P.G.S.S. and the difficulty of administering Policy 5131.4 (Student Attendance – Secondary Schools) and gave an overview of their proposal to improve student attendance.

MOVED:

That the attendance support program proposed by Prince George Secondary School be approved as a one-year pilot.

CARRIED.

7.3 Summer School Program

Teresa Saunders, principal of the Centre for Learning Alternatives, explained that summer school enrolments had been steadily declining and no longer provided sufficient income from fees to support a classroom-based program. She presented a proposal to offer the program with a combination of distance education courses and learning centre support.

MOVED:
That the proposal by the Centre for Learning Alternatives to change the delivery model for summer school be approved.
CARRIED.

8. MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

8.1 Committee Report

Ms. Warrington reported that the previous meeting's business had included preliminary funding information, financial projections for the year, issues related to the district budget and several property matters.

9. EDUCATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

9.1 Committee Report

Ms. Boone reported that at the last committee meeting, in addition to the items being brought forward to the Board, the committee had received updates on the College Heights Secondary School renovation project, the condition of McLeod Lake and Mountain View Elementary Schools, the implementation of idle-free zones and the annual capital grant plan.

9.2 Westwood Elementary School – Adventure Playground Proposal

MOVED:
That the proposal for the installation of an adventure playground at Westwood Elementary School, as proposed by the school and its parent advisory council, be approved.
CARRIED.

9.3 Bear Lake Elementary School Building

Ms. Boone reported that, following the collapse of the school's gymnasium roof and the resulting damage to the building's support system, this school building was no longer structurally sound and the cost to remediate the damage would be more than the value of the building. She noted that the Ministry of Education had agreed to cover the cost of the demolition and removal of the building.

MOVED:
That the remaining portion of Bear Lake Elementary School be demolished and removed from the site as soon as practically possible.
CARRIED.

10. POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**10.1 Committee Report**

Ms. Marrelli reported that, in addition to the items being brought forward to the Board, the business at the last committee meeting had included discussion of Bill 10 (banning tobacco and smoking in public places and schools), an update on the implementation of the Healthy Choices Committee's recommendations. She noted that representatives from the District Parent Advisory Council had attended the meeting to discuss Draft Policy 5127.1 and the revisions to Policy 6179 and had provided valuable input.

10.2 Draft Policy 5127.1 (B.C. School Completion Certificate)

Ms. Marrelli reported that no written input had been received regarding this draft policy, but that in response to input from the parents who were present at the committee meeting, a change had been made to the wording of Regulation 1 for clarification.

MOVED:

That Draft Policy 5127.1 (British Columbia School Completion Certificate) be approved.

CARRIED.

10.3 Further Revisions to Policy 6179 (Acceptable Use of Networks)

Ms. Marrelli noted that proposed revisions to this policy had been approved by the Board on January 30 for distribution to reference groups for a 60-day input period. She explained that as a result of significant input received from a school technology team and the district's privacy and security committee, the Policy and Governance Committee was recommending that the policy be further revised and re-distributed for another 60-day input period.

Ms. Marrelli reviewed the proposed changes to the policy, the most significant of which was the removal of the requirement for schools to obtain parental consent before giving students access to the Internet. The rationale for this recommendation was as follows:

Since this policy was first written, the Internet has become a common and essential educational tool. There are systems in place to monitor and limit students' access. Most importantly, students are always supervised when accessing the Internet at school and are provided with instruction on the safe and appropriate use of this resource.

The policy and security committee feels that the existing safeguards related to Internet use are entirely adequate. These include:

education of students, informing of parents, control of inappropriate sites, monitoring of student use and follow-up with appropriate consequences for inappropriate online behaviour.

The proposed changes include a provision for parents to inform the school if they do not wish their child(ren) to have access to the Internet.

MOVED:

That the proposed revisions to Draft Policy 6179 (Acceptable Use of Networks) be approved for distribution to reference groups for input.

CARRIED.

10.4 Minor Revisions to Policy 4133.1 (Reimbursement of Travel Expenses)

Ms. Marrelli explained that a change to the administrative procedures was recommended because the current structure of air fares was now such that there were no preferred fares for trips that included a Saturday night layover.

She noted that when this policy was last revised, the reference to private accommodation had been inadvertently omitted and was now being reinserted; in addition, a summary of currently approved rates was being added to the appendix for convenience.

Ms. Marrelli explained that, in accordance with Policy 8310 (Policy and Policy Development), minor revisions that do not change the intent of a policy may be approved by the Board without being distributed to reference groups for input.

MOVED:

That minor revisions to Policy 4133.1 (Reimbursement of Travel Expenses) be approved.
CARRIED.

10.5 Minor Revisions to Policy 6145 (Student Transportation and Travel)

Ms. Marrelli noted that on November 28, 2006, the Board had approved revisions to this policy to require the use of booster seats in private vehicles transporting children who are younger than eight years of age, who weigh 18-36 kg and who are less than 145 cm in height. She explained that the proposed revision would extend this requirement to include taxis.

MOVED:

That the proposed minor revisions to Policy 6144 (Student Transportation and Travel) be approved.

CARRIED.

10.6 Draft Brochure – “Contacting Your School Board”

Ms. Marrelli explained that a brochure had been developed that would provide helpful information to parents and the community regarding communication and problem-solving procedures in the district.

MOVED:

That the brochure entitled “Contacting Your School Board” be approved for publication and distribution to schools.

The matter was discussed and several minor corrections and changes for clarification were suggested.

It was also suggested that publication of the brochure should be postponed because recent provincial legislation, if enacted, would affect district procedures for resolving parent and student concerns.

The motion was POSTPONED until Bill 20 – the *School (Student Achievement Enabling) Amendment Act* is passed by the provincial legislature.

11. **TRUSTEE REPORTS**

11.1 BC School Trustees’ Association

Bill 20 – the *School (Student Achievement Enabling) Amendment Act*, recently introduced in the provincial legislature, was discussed at length. A number of issues were raised, including concerns about the erosion of local autonomy and the accountability of school boards to their communities.

MOVED:

That a letter be sent to the Minister of Education stating our very strong objections to Bill 20 – the *School (Student Achievement Enabling) Amendment Act*.

CARRIED.

11.2 District Parent Advisory Council

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

11.3 District Student Advisory Council

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Chairperson

Secretary Treasurer