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QUALICUM SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024
6:00 PM
VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCING

ATTENDEES

Trustees

Eve Flynn	Chairperson
Julie Austin	Vice Chairperson
Carol Kellogg	Trustee
Barry Kurland	Trustee
Elaine Young	Trustee

Administration

Peter Jory	Superintendent of Schools
Ron Amos	Secretary Treasurer
Gillian Wilson	Associate Superintendent of Schools
Rudy Terpstra	Director of Instruction
Phil Munro	Director of Operations
Tandy Gunn	District Principal, Learning Support Qualicum District Principals and Vice Principals Association

Education Partners

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3570
Mount Arrowsmith Teachers' Association (MATA)
District Parents Advisory Committee (DPAC)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Flynn called the video-conferencing meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Chair Flynn acknowledged that the Board was meeting on the shared traditional territory of the Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose) First Nations. She thanked them for their stewardship of the land, and for allowing the Board to live, work, play and learn in this beautiful part of the province.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Trustees agreed to revise the ordered of the agenda items action items piece to after our information reports.

24-29R

Moved: Trustee Kellogg *Seconded:* Trustee Austin

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 69 (Qualicum) adopt the agenda as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes: February 27, 2024
- b. Ratification of In Camera Board Meeting Minutes: February 27, 2024
- c. Ratification of Special In Camera Board Meeting Minutes: February 5, 2024
- d. Receipt of Ministry News Releases
 - More funding helps BC families with school expenses

24-30R

Moved: Trustee Kellogg *Seconded:* Trustee Young

THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 69 (Qualicum) approve the consent agenda items of the Regular Board Meeting of March 12, 2024, as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

None

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

7. MOUNT ARROWSMITH TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (MATA)

Matt Woods, MATA President, provided the following comments:

- Recognition of Julie Cloutier, a French-Immersion teacher and MATA In-District Pro-D Chair, and her committee for organizing her first Professional Development Day. Many teachers and administrators that attended were pleased with the variety of options and appreciative of the opportunity to learn and grow professionally.
- On behalf of Taylor Wilson and the Kwalikum Secondary School Athletic department, Mr. Woods shared the contents of a letter regarding revisions being made to Board Policy 705 – *Corporate/Community Sponsorships, Partnerships, and Advertising in Schools*. The letter inquired whether the Board would consider amending the policy to make permanent banners a possibility if they are limited to local small businesses and small companies, while avoiding multinational corporations. This would remove the responsibility and additional time required to put up and take down dozens of removeable banners before and after each game. As the policy is currently at first reading, MATA looks forward to continuing that conversation at the April Policy Committee of the Whole Meeting.
- Mr. Woods urged the Board to vote against the recommendation coming forward regarding the proposed bell shifts for September 2024 as he did not understand the immediacy of the proposal and believed it did not follow a due process with consideration for the effects on lunch times, sports activities, necessary reports and the number of students affected. MATA urged the Board to defeat the upcoming motion and request that information gathered from the survey be summarized and provided to each site; provide site administrators time to discuss the proposed bell shifts with teachers via staff committee meetings and with parents via DPAC meetings to bring recommendations forward; and, that the information gathered at each site be provided to the Curriculum Advisory Implementation Committee (CIAC) to then forward a recommendation to the Board suggesting later start times and a supported shift in the bell schedule. MATA believes there is time for this process to occur and strongly believes that following this process would provide transparency and a better understanding of, and reasons for, the changes for a smooth transition system-wide.

8. CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (CUPE) LOCAL 3570

Ewen Rycroft, CUPE Local 3570 President, provided the following comments:

- Appreciation to Julie Fowler for being a key organizer for the recent CUPE professional development day held on Friday, March 1st. It was a successful day with good facilitation of sessions.
- Appreciation to Sheila Morrison, Principal of Early Learning, who was a keynote speaker on March 1st. She provided information on child care in the district which provided clarity for education assistants on the various aspects of after school operations and the importance of child care to parents.
- He then shared the sad news of the unexpected passing of Paul Clay, one of the district's bus drivers. Mr. Clay was liked by staff and students alike and will be truly missed. Brant Prunkl, Manager of Operations – Safety and Transportation, was thanked for supporting staff in dealing with this sudden loss.

9. DISTRICT PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (DPAC)

Angel Delange, DPAC Secretary, reported on the following DPAC activities:

- With the \$2500 received from BC Gaming Grant DPAC has collaborated with the Qualicum School District to co-host the following information sessions:
 - Safer Schools either May 8th or 9th
 - Mischa Oak with LGBTQ Corporate Training (Date TBD)
- Springwood and École Oceanside Elementary Schools are hosting the district grade 6/7's volleyball tournament with 22 teams participating on March 12 and 13th at École Oceanside Elementary School and on March 14 at Springwood Elementary School. Thanks to the Springwood Elementary PAC for organizing the fun activities planned at that site for the participants when they are not on the court.
- DPAC will be supporting the *Pete the Cat* event as, thanks to the work of Jessica Threlfall and other volunteers, DPAC will have an information table at the event.
- The March DPAC Meeting has been cancelled with the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 17th. At that meeting, nominations will be accepted for the positions of DPAC President and Vice President for the 2024/2025 school year. Elections for the remaining Executive positions are held in the fall of each year.

10. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS)

None

12. INFORMATION ITEMS**a. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Jory provided an update on several key areas as follows:

- Dr. Jory commended Trustees on the Vancouver Island School Trustees Association Spring Conference hosted by the District, highlighting its positive impact on supporting student success.
- One major focus of the district is on addressing student attendance issues, with discussions emphasizing a unified response at the local level. Particularly noteworthy were breakout discussions with secondary school administrators, where thresholds for teacher contact, administrative letters, and the addition of auto-dialing were deliberated upon. The aim is to ensure effective communication with parents/caregivers and foster a positive and supportive environment, all in line with the District Strategic Plan's emphasis on student success through community building and enhanced support structures.

- Additionally, Superintendent Jory highlighted the district's ongoing response to adult absenteeism, following comments from the MATA president at the previous Board meeting. Principals and managers are now tasked with meeting staff to address emerging absence patterns, ensuring employees receive necessary support. Jory stressed the importance of vigilance and respectful conversations to mitigate the impact of absenteeism on the district's budget.

To illustrate the impact of absenteeism, Superintendent Jory shared three charts depicting employee absenteeism trends over the past decade. These trends have contributed to cost pressures exceeding 1.2 million dollars during this period. While there is support for the positive change in culture regarding illness reporting, there is still a need for ongoing monitoring to ensure resources are utilized wisely.

- Another significant development highlighted was the ongoing conversation between senior leadership staff and secondary school administrators regarding the alignment of timetables. The proposal aims to streamline scheduling and enhance access to partnerships such as WEX, trades, and dual-credit programs. By adopting static and aligned timetables, the district seeks to reduce confusion for students and staff and facilitate access to work opportunities outside of school.

Timetable Builder training for the Principal and Vice Principal teams has already commenced, with conversations with staff and Student Voice groups scheduled to follow. Superintendent Jory also commended the successful hosting of the Vancouver Island School Trustees Association (VISTA) Conference by the district. The event received positive feedback, with significant student participation contributing to discussions about supporting student success across the island.

- Regarding operational decisions, Superintendent Jory addressed the upcoming five-minute bell time shift at three schools. While acknowledging the need for clearer communication with trustees and affected families, Jory emphasized that the adjustments aim to address busing issues and ensure student safety. Specifically, the adjustments seek to provide relief to bus drivers who have faced challenges supervising students during gaps in bus schedules.

The decision also addressed concerns raised by the Transportation Department regarding the alignment of school start times with bus schedules. Superintendent Jory clarified that adjustments were made to correct discrepancies caused by unapproved changes to bell schedules at three schools. These adjustments were communicated to principals, who agreed to implement them with minimal impact on staff and families.

Ultimately, the adjustments result in a five-minute shift to bell times at two elementary schools and Ballenas Secondary, reducing lunchtime to 48 minutes. Superintendent Jory noted that students requiring early dismissal due to time constraints could be accommodated, further alleviating pressure on bus drivers and ensuring student supervision.

b. Educational Programs Update

Rudy Terpstra, Director of Instruction, reviewed the information contained in his report on the district-wide assessments carried out by most classes in all schools as per the Calendar of Assessments contained in the *Assessment and Communicating Student Learning Guide*. The District Assessment Committee and Curriculum Implementation Advisory Committee (CIAC) have received copies of the document and the Early Learning Team also presented a report on the Kindergarten Snapshot to attendees of the recent Vancouver Island School Trustees Association Spring Conference. Mr. Terpstra noted that a powerful piece of this reporting is that, at a glance, a teacher can determine what areas need a second look. Another powerful piece is that the data is available to the students' next year's teacher by the end of September and also inform school-wide initiatives.

Gillian Wilson, Associate Superintendent, reported on the following:

- The district is piloting Preventure, which is a drug and alcohol harm reduction program. Two staff are now fully trained in that program through the Island Health Grant received to support that. Next year the hope is to become part of the Virtual Foundry process of Preventure where they will provide training to our staff from the facilitators of the program to the counsellors, and coach and guide us through it. If we are selected as a district to be part of that, we would target out Grade 8's who would do a quick assessment to see if that is something that they are part of and then those groups are selected, based on their tendencies, to learn different strategies of harm reduction. Virtual Foundry made a presentation to secondary counselors and administrators so there was support from them around this initiative. If chosen, then it will mean a lot of work the first year as it is a learning curve for the district and that is where they guide and shepherd staff.
- Registration and enrolment continue, which is connected to staffing and how it is allocated in schools.
- The District is working on two initiatives: The Playful Pathways, which is part of the district's Ready, Set, Learn Program alongside involvement with Pete the Cat Welcome to Kindergarten event, and the Welcome to Kindergarten sessions that usually happens at elementary schools in May. Playful Pathways is an opportunity to have some kind of preschool activity at each one of the elementary schools that will likely take place in the library. A flyer will be shared after the spring break to all of the pre-registered Kindergarten students for next year who might show an expression of interest to be part of the pre-Kindergarten transition program that was piloted last year at Arrowview and Nanoose Bay Elementary Schools.
- School reviews have been taking place throughout February and March where Associate Superintendent Wilson and Tandy Gunn, Principal of Learning Support, meet with school teams to talk about individual cohort and individual student needs and how is the progress of the students who may have needs in other ways.
- Alongside the school reviews we are receiving information on how the district is supporting professional learning with teaching staff as well as support staff and what are some of the areas of growth that are still needed in schools, and how does that align to their school plans and what are you doing with Needs Response Teams (NRTs).
- Conversations have occurred both at the elementary and the secondary levels meetings held earlier in the day which focussed on how to support

attendance for students. It starts early and discussion centred on when to step in to make sure to influence some patterns before they become entrenched by the time the student is in secondary schools. There was good conversation at both levels with some thoughts and supports in how to contact families, how to make connections and support families if their child is truly anxious, how to get to root cause of that anxiousness and how best to support that so we do get engagement back in the schools.

- The District is also mindful that for some students two weeks away from school is a long time so supports are provided for some of the district's more vulnerable families. For some students, school is a safe place for a variety of reasons and spring break can be a stressful time for those kids as well. She acknowledged the work of Sheila Morrison and the community volunteers of the District Backpack Program who will be packing and delivering food to 80 families prior to the break.

11. ACTION ITEMS

a. Proposed Bell Time Shifts for September 2024

Superintendent Jory provided the background to the process introducing the proposed shift in bell times for September. There have been a number of conversations in schools with the initial concept launched in the fall and continued through to February, both in public and internal monthly meetings, with the impetus outlined on the district website with a survey which generated 2000 responses. Responses were mixed with there generally being more support for those schools that started earlier with those that started later with less support. The intention, in the manner of improved equity and outcomes, is to get to the issue of those schools that have the earliest start time.

The hope had been to do something more specific and broader; however, despite the purchase of the new routing software, the district is not ready to do something that can get at the problem in a specific way. However, there are some actions that could be done first aside from mastering the routing software. Those are to obtain an accurate count of actual riders, undertake a full review of the busing system, and determine what kind of rules, standards and expectations are involved. Dr. Jory suggested that a Transportation Committee, which would review any potential change requests, as well as an administrative procedure or handbook are ultimately what would come out of the Transportation Review.

In the interim, Superintendent Jory did not want to delay addressing the schools which have earlier start times. Looking at the start times, and recognizing that close to a 9:00 start time is reasonable, he proposed a 10 minute shift to the start and end times across all schools in the district.

Trustees then considered the information provided and, while being in general agreement with the concept of having the earlier schools start later, there was some hesitancy in making a decision prior to undertaking the Transportation Review. The review could provide more specific data on ridership and an opportunity to look at schools on an individual basis, which might result in there not being a requirement for a district-wide shift in bell times. Delaying would also provide more time to address some of the questions and concerns coming forward from staff and parents/caregivers.

Superintendent Jory noted that while he believed that 10 minutes is a current compromise to what might be a larger shift in the future, he also understood the

complexity of the issue. Should the Board not pass the recommended motion and considering the timeline required for a Transportation Review, the concept could be reintroduced to the Board in spring of 2025; however, it would be regrettable that relief could not be provided to the 2 earliest schools and 2 high schools at this time.

24-31R

Moved: Trustee Flynn *Seconded:* Trustee Austin

THAT the Board of Education of School District 69 (Qualicum) support a ten-minute shift to later bell times across the District, effective September 2024.

DEFEATED

Trustees Flynn and Kurland voted in favour of the motion

Trustees Austin and Kellogg voted against the motion

Trustee Young abstained

b. Addition to 2024-2025 Minor Capital Submission

Secretary Treasurer Amos noted that this request for an addition to the original 2024-2025 Minor Capital Submission was due to previously unforeseen structural engineering costs required for the weight of the new HVAC unit. The Ministry is receptive to the request and has asked for a resolution from the Board to support the additional \$282,000, so that when the new submissions are open on April 1st, the motion could be added to support the district's request. The letter the Board normally receives in March would then be revised in April once submitted and appropriately approved by the Ministry.

24-32R

Moved: Trustee Flynn *Seconded:* Trustee Young

THAT the Board of Education of School District 69 (Qualicum) approve the addition of a 2024-2025 CNCP request for an HVAC project at Ballenas Secondary School in the amount of \$282,000.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

13. FINANCE & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 15th at 10:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams.

14. POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 15th at 1:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.

15. EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 16th at 2:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.

16. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

None

17. TRUSTEE ITEMS

- a. **Vancouver Island School Trustees Association (VISTA) Spring Conference Report**

Chair Flynn reported that 75 participants, which included trustees, superintendents and secretary treasurers from across the island, attended the VISTA Spring Conference held on March 8 and 9th in Parksville. Chief Michael Recalma of the Qualicum First Nation welcomed attendees after which students from Vancouver Island North shared their Indigenous learnings; sharing songs, dance and treasures. After the business meeting Qualicum School District showcased some of the district's initiatives. First was Student Voice with students from Kwalikum Secondary speaking about climate action and Ballenas Secondary students speaking to a variety of initiatives they are involved with and topics of importance to them. The students received a standing ovation.

This was followed by a presentation by the district's early learning team, who shared the district's strategies on Early Learning, and the evening ended with a presentation by Superintendent Jory on the district's strategic plan.

The following day's presentations were made by Jason Reid, Director of the BC Association of School Business Officials (BCASBO) as well as Bruce Anderson, CEO, and Leanne Bowes, Executive Director, of the BC Public School Employers Association (BCPSEA).

Trustee Young added that some beautiful masks that were showcased by Vancouver Island North, one of which the group was debuting for the first time, which was an honour to witness. She also expressed thanks to the Kwalikum and Ballenas students for their presentations, which were the highlight of the event.

18. NEW OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

19. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE AND MEDIA

None

20. PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

Trustees and Senior Staff received comments and answered questions on the following topics:

- Lack of consultation with parents and more consideration of other factors that would be affected by the bell shifts beginning in April (which was an operational decision in order to correct school start and end times and coordinate those more closely with timing of bus routes) as well as the proposed bell shifts for September (the motion to which was defeated).

21. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Kellogg moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Original signed copy on file

CHAIRPERSON

SECRETARY TREASURER