

MINUTES

**OPEN MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE
NICOLA-SIMILKAMEEN SCHOOL DISTRICT (NO.58)**

**MERRITT SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE, BOARD ROOM
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025, 6:00PM**

Success for ALL Learners Today and Tomorrow

Present:	Chairperson	G. Swan
	Vice-Chair	L. Ward (Absent)
	Trustees	J. Jepsen J. Kent-Laidlaw E. Hoisington J. Chenoweth D. Rainer
	Student Trustees	J. Davis S. Sterling
	Superintendent	C. Lawrance
	Assistant Superintendent	M. Sheldon
	Secretary Treasurer	M. Friesen
	Assistant Secretary Treasurer	L. Rusnjak
	Executive Assistant	K. Buckland

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES AND METIS COMMUNITY

AGENDA

25/146 It was moved by Trustee Hoisington and seconded by Trustee Chenoweth
THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

MINUTES

25/147 It was moved by Trustee Hoisington and seconded by Trustee Chenoweth
THAT the minutes of the Open Meeting held September 10, 2025, be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

Report of the Closed Meeting held October 8, 2025.

EDUCATION

Enrolment Update

Superintendent Lawrance informed the trustees that enrolment has decreased by 49 students compared to last year, although the District's numbers are still close to projected figures. Superintendent Lawrance also noted that the District's budget situation has improved over last year; however, the ongoing decline in enrolment remains a concern.

Blanketing Ceremony – Jane Kempston – Retirement

Dawn-Michelle Williams, Shelley Oppenheim-Lacerte and Paul Joe were welcomed to the Open Board Meeting with a ceremonial brushing and a blanketing ceremony in recognition of retired Assistant Superintendent Jane Kempston, honoring Kempston's 33 years of service to the District.

Indigenous Education Update

District Principal of Indigenous Education Angela McIvor presented an update, noting several accomplishments and reporting that Local Education Agreements (LEA) have now been signed with Upper Nicola Indian Band, Lower Nicola Indian Band, Nooaitch & Shackan Indian Band, and Upper Similkameen Indian Band, making a total of four signed agreements. The LEA for Coldwater Indian Band has been approved, but remains unsigned at this time.

Inclusive Education, Early Learning and Childcare Update

Superintendent Lawrance informed the Trustees that the District team and Student Support Staff successfully completed the Ministry 1701 Inclusive Education data collection. Lawrance noted that Adriane Mouland, Director of Instruction – Inclusive Education and Early Learning/Childcare, has been actively visiting schools to ensure students are placed appropriately and that the necessary supports are in place. Lawrance also reported that the District was able to hire a second English Language Learner (ELL) Teacher.

Collettsville – Quebec Trip Approval

Assistant Superintendent Sheldon provided Trustees with an overview of the proposed Collettsville Elementary French Immersion Trip to Quebec City from April 20 to 24, 2026. A total of 15 Collettsville students, comprising 13 from grade 7 and 2 from grade 6, will have the opportunity to travel.

25/148

It was moved by Trustee Chenoweth and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the Board supports Collettsville Elementary School's proposal for their field trip to Quebec City in April 2026.

MOTION CARRIED

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Lawrance circulated her report and spoke about the events that have taken place across the District over the past month.

Assistant Superintendent Sheldon introduced the new Student Trustee, Shani Sterling, bringing a student's perspective to board discussions.

OPERATIONS

District Website Launch

Superintendent Lawrance expressed appreciation to Kassey Buckland, Executive Assistant to the Secretary Treasurer and HR, for dedicating countless hours to designing the new District website, and highlighted the positive feedback received regarding its improved appearance and user-friendly design.

School Closure Process and Meeting Dates

Superintendent Lawrance provided the Trustees with community engagement meeting dates for all the schools and five bands.

AUDIT AND FINANCE

Bylaw – Modification of Covenant (Parking)

Secretary Treasurer Friesen informed the Trustees that the owner of the property adjacent to the Princeton Skills Centre has requested that the School Board reduce the number of parking spaces to facilitate waste management and access for redevelopment of their property. To accommodate this, the existing covenant agreement with the City of Princeton for the parking lot—owned separately by the School District—must be modified. Once the covenant is updated, the developer will enter a "License to Occupy" and "Maintenance Agreement" with the School District to enable construction and ongoing access.

25/149 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Jepsen

THAT the Board of Education of School District No.58 Nicola Similkameen, 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, modification of covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-01, forward for first reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/150 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw

THAT the Board of Education of School District No.58 Nicola Similkameen, 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, modification of covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-01, forward second reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/151 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the Board of Education of School District No.58 Nicola Similkameen, 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, modification of covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-01, forward third and final reading.

MOTION CARRIED

POLICY

Second Reading

3.42 Selection of Learning Resources

25/152

It was moved by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the Board approve Policy 3.42: Selection of Learning Resources, forward for second reading.

MOTION CARRIED

Third Reading

6.51 Disposal of Land or Improvements

25/153

It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Jepsen

THAT the Board approve Policy 6.51 Disposal of Land or Improvements, forward for third and final reading.

MOTION CARRIED

Policies Recommended for Repeal

None.

Trustee Reports:

Student Trustee Reports

At the beginning of the Board meeting, Assistant Superintendent Sheldon introduced Student Trustee, Shani Sterling, noting that this is Sterling's first year serving in the role. Assistant Superintendent Sheldon also introduced Jacob Davis as a Student Trustee, marking Davis' second year in the position. A discussion was held with the Student Trustees on how their first month of school went.

P.A.C. Reports

Trustee Hoisington reported on Nicola Canford Elementary.

Trustee Rainer reported on John Allison Elementary.

Trustee Chenoweth reported that Superintendent Lawrance and Chair Swan attend the Collettsville Elementary PAC meeting for Trustee Chenoweth and reported on SCIDES.

Trustee Kent-Laidlaw reported on Princeton Secondary School.

Trustee Jepsen reported on Merritt Central Elementary and Diamond Vale Elementary.

Trustee Ward is absent for this meeting therefore cannot report on Vermilion Forks Elementary PAC meeting.

Chair Swan reported on Collettsville on the behalf of Trustee Chenoweth and reported on Bench Elementary and MSS.

Other Reports:

Chair Swan reported that he had a meeting with the Minister of Education reviewing changes to the School Act that will allow expanded childcare services throughout the school year, including on non-instructional days and weekends, and discussed the need for additional funding for regional renovations to support these changes.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Trustee Jepsen informed the Trustees that the Tumbleweed Preschool is asking for a letter of support to apply for a gaming grant. They are a non-profit organization.

25/154

It was moved by Trustee Jepsen and seconded by Trustee Chenoweth

THAT the Board will write a letter of support for Tumbleweed Preschool's gaming grant application.

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

25/155

Motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Jepsen and seconded by Trustee Chenoweth

THAT the Open Board meeting be adjourned at 7:20pm



Chairperson



Secretary Treasurer