

MINUTES

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

**MERRITT SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE, BOARD ROOM
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2025, 6:00PM**

Success for ALL Learners Today and Tomorrow

Present:	Chairperson	G. Swan (Absent)
	Vice-Chair	L. Ward
	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

25/176 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw
THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

MINUTES

25/177 It was moved by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw and seconded by Trustee Hoisington
THAT the minutes of the Open Meeting held November 12, 2025, be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

Report of the Closed Meeting held November 12, 2025.

25/178

It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Jepsen

THAT the report of the Closed Meeting held November 12, 2025, be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Report of the Special Closed Meeting held November 17, 2025.

25/179

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

THAT the report of the Closed Meeting held November 17, 2025, be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Presentation – Vince Kanigan – Embedded Professional Development (Calendar)

Merritt District Teachers Union representative Vince Kanigan spoke to the Trustees, advocating for the inclusion of professional development days in the regular school year while maintaining a two-week Spring Break.

The Board of Education requested that the NVDTU share the survey results from both Merritt and Princeton Pro-D committees regarding embedded professional development and Summer Institute with the Board for informed decision making.

EDUCATION

Indigenous Education Update

Superintendent Lawrance spoke to the written report submitted from the District Principal of Indigenous Education, Angela McIvor, highlighting the Grade 9 youth conference that was held on November 6, 2025, at NVIT.

Inclusive Education, Early Learning and Childcare Update

The Director of Instruction of Inclusive Education, Childcare, and Early Learning, Adriane Mouland, presented on sex trafficking prevention & awareness. The Board will share the presentation with their school PACs and admin.

Superintendent's Report

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

OPERATIONS

Potential School Closure Community Consultation Update

Superintendent Lawrance provided the Trustees with an update on the potential school closure community consultation, noting that a second round of consultation meetings is scheduled to take place in January and February.

The Bridge – Location for 2026 – 2027

Superintendent Lawrance mentioned that last year, the Board passed a motion to have The Bridge alternate program in Princeton remain in the old Board Office location for the 2025-2026 school year, where the program was relocated during the construction of the new Childcare Center at Riverside. The Board agreed to review the program's location annually.

25/180

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

THAT The Bridge remain at its current location for the 2026 - 2027 school year.

MOTION CARRIED

AUDIT AND FINANCE

2025-2026 Amended Budget Update

The Secretary Treasurer provided Trustees with an overview of the 2025 – 2026 Budget Cycle, highlighting the key dates.

Trustee Chenoweth inquired whether, in February, the Board would be presented with two budget scenarios: one reflecting the potential school closure and another assuming no school closure.

Secretary Treasurer Friesen responded that the potential school closure will affect next year's school budget.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Administrative Procedures

Superintendent Lawrance informed the Trustees that there was an additional administrative procedure that was not in the package. Trustees were given a copy of the Communicable Disease Outbreak Management Admin Procedure for review.

Trustee Reports:

Student Trustee Reports

Assistant Superintendent Sheldon had assigned the Merritt Student Trustees to reflect on some of the things that MSS does in December to create a festive and welcoming environment during this time of year and if they had suggestions for additional small, meaningful activities or ideas for students at this time of year.

Student Trustees informed the Board that MSS's activities include putting up decorations at the beginning of December, and MSS excels at bringing students together for various activities including the winter dance and winter talent show.

P.A.C. Reports

Trustee Hoisington reported on Nicola Canford Elementary.

Trustee Rainer reported on John Allison Elementary.

Trustee Chenoweth reported on Collettsville Elementary and SCIDES.

Trustee Kent-Laidlaw reported on Princeton Secondary School.

Trustee Jepsen reported on Diamond Vale Elementary and Merritt Central Elementary PAC meeting is moved to next week.

Trustee Ward reported on Vermilion Forks Elementary PAC meeting.

Chair Swan was not present for the Board meeting.

Other Reports:

Vice-Chair Ward reported that all Trustees and Senior Administration attended the BCSTA Academy in the Lower Mainland, where discussions included matters related to governance and naloxone policy.

CORRESPONDENCE:

NONE

PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

25/181

Motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Jepsen and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw

THAT the Open Board meeting be adjourned at 7:34pm



Chairperson



Secretary Treasurer