

MINUTES

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

**MERRITT BOARD OFFICE, BOARD ROOM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026, 6:00PM**

Success for ALL Learners Today and Tomorrow

Present:	Chairperson	G. Swan
	Vice-Chair	L. Ward
	Trustees	J. Jepsen J. Kent-Laidlaw E. Hoisington J. Chenoweth D. Rainer
	Student Trustees	J. Davis
	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

MINUTES

25/196 It was moved by Vice-Chair Ward and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the minutes of the Open Meeting held January 14th, 2026, be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD

Tatiana Mueller, Waste Reduction Coordinator with the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, presented to the Board. She provided pamphlets for school administrators interested in organizing a presentation for their schools.

EDUCATION

Indigenous Education Report

Superintendent Lawrance presented the Indigenous Education report to the Trustees, highlighting the successful winter celebration/PowWow that was held at NVIT.

Inclusive Education, Early Learning and Childcare Report

The Superintendent presented the written report from the Director of Instruction – Inclusive Education and Early Learning/Child Care, Adriane Mouland, highlighting ongoing supports provided by English Language Learning (ELL) teachers to meet the diverse needs of students across the District.

2026-2027, 2027-2028, 2028-2029 School Calendars

Superintendent Lawrance presented the survey results on the two options and a 3-year school calendar, noting that there were two rounds of feedback. In November between teachers and parents, the District received 247 responses, 70% felt that a 3-year calendar would be helpful. Option C was an overwhelming choice. In January, the District sent out another survey, with two versions as choices, which the District received seventy-seven responses between parents and staff, 94% preferred version 2, with 2 weeks spring break and 6% preferred version 1, which was 1 week spring break.

The Lower Nicola Indian Band submitted a letter opposing the inclusion of embedded Pro-D days, citing concerns about negative impacts on literacy, numeracy, and relationships with at-risk Indigenous youth. The letter presented to the Indigenous Education Council, which expressed overall support for Lower Nicola's position. District staff outlined alternative approaches for embedding professional development within the existing calendar while working to meet the needs of teachers.

25/197

It was moved by Trustee Hoisington and seconded by Trustee Jepsen

in support of the recommendation from the Superintendent on the three-year calendar, version 2.

MOTION CARRIED

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 Update

Superintendent Lawrance updated the Trustees on the completion of all sixteen community consultations, noting that minutes from the January and February consultation meetings are posted on the District's "Potential School Closure" website. She further noted that the Board will make decisions regarding school closures and the Strategic Plans and Objectives at the March 11 Board meeting, to be held in Merritt.

Bylaw – Parking Lot Covenant

a. Rescinding Modification of Covenant Bylaw

Secretary Treasurer Mark Friesen advised the Board that the Land Title Office identified an error in the registration of the original covenant relating to the Princeton Skills Centre parking agreement. As a

result, he is requesting that the Board rescind the existing modification of covenant bylaw and consider two new bylaws to ensure correct registration and reflect the intended parking modifications.

25/198 It was moved by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the Board of Education of School District #58 (Nicola-Similkameen) rescind the Modification of Covenant Bylaw No. 2025-26 MCSD58-01 which was passed at its October 8, 2025 meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

b. Release of Covenant Bylaw

Secretary Treasurer Mark Friesen advised the Board that the owner of an adjacent property has requested a reduction in parking spaces at the Princeton Skills Centre to support waste management and access for redevelopment. To accommodate this request, the existing parking covenant with the City of Princeton must be discharged and replaced with a new covenant reflecting the reduced number of parking spaces for the benefit of Lots 2 and 3.

25/199 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the Board of Education of School District #58 (Nicola-Similkameen), 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, release of covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-02, forward for first and second reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/200 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Chenoweth

THAT the Board of Education of School District #58 (Nicola-Similkameen), 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, release of covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-02, forward for third and final reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/201 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the Board of Education of School District #58 (Nicola-Similkameen), 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, release of covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-02, for third and final reading.

MOTION CARRIED

c. New Covenant Bylaw

Secretary Treasure Mark Friesen advised the Board that to support the redevelopment of the adjacent property (Lot 3), a new parking covenant must be registered with the Land Title Office. Subject to the Board's approval of Release of Bylaw No. 2025-26 MCSD58-02, which discharges the existing covenant with the City of Princeton, a new covenant will be created to reduce the number of parking spaces and designate parking on Lot 1 for the benefit of Lots 2 and 3.

25/202 It was moved by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw and seconded by Vice-Chair Ward

THAT the Board of Education of School District #58 (Nicola-Similkameen), 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, of a new covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-03, forward for first and second reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/203 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the Board of Education of School District #58 (Nicola-Similkameen), 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, of a new covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-03, forward for third and final reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/204 It was moved by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw and seconded by Trustee Rainer

THAT the Board of Education of School District #58 (Nicola-Similkameen), 162 Tapton Avenue, Princeton BC, of a new covenant bylaw 2025-26 MCSD58-03, for third and final reading.

MOTION CARRIED

AUDIT AND FINANCE

2025-2026 Q2 Quarterly Financial Update

Secretary Treasurer Mark Friesen updated the Board on the Q2 Quarterly Financial report.

2025-2026 Amended Budget Bylaw Process

Secretary Treasurer Mark Friesen provided the Board of Education with an overview and detailed breakdown of the 2025–2026 Amended Annual Budget that is required to pass the 25-26 Amended Budget Bylaw.

25/205 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Jepsen

THAT the Board approves the \$42,599,748 Amended Budget Bylaw for first reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/206 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Jepsen

THAT the Board approves the \$42,599,748 Amended Budget Bylaw for second reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/207 It was moved by Trustee Hoisington and seconded by Vice-Chair Ward

THAT the Board approves the \$42,599,748 Amended Budget Bylaw move forward to third and final reading.

MOTION CARRIED

25/208 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw

THAT the Board approves the \$42,599,748 Amended Budget Bylaw for third and final reading.

MOTION CARRIED

2026-2027 Preliminary Annual Budget Process

Secretary Treasurer Mark Friesen presented a memo that outlines the proposed 2026–2027 budget development timeline, beginning with enrollment projections in February and preliminary funding tables in March. Budget assumptions and two public consultations are planned for April, with the annual budget targeted for first reading in May and second and third readings in June 2026.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Administrative Procedures

The Board reviewed the Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth Plans, as well as the Communicable Disease Outbreak Management administrative procedures.

Trustee Reports:

Student Trustee Reports

Assistant Superintendent Sheldon had assigned Merritt Student Trustees to present their perspective on what do you believe students need to develop, experience, or learn throughout their time in school in order to be well prepared for life after graduation?

Student Trustee Jacob emphasized that while students are able to complete their school assignments, many lack practical life skills such as preparing for a job interview, managing personal finances, managing their time, and communicating effectively through email. He noted that many students are uncertain about their future career paths and would benefit from guest speakers providing information about trades, colleges, and universities.

P.A.C. Reports

Trustee Hoisington reported on Nicola Canford Elementary.

Trustee Rainer reported on John Allison Elementary PAC.

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.

Trustee Ward reported that Vermilion Forks Elementary PAC was rescheduled for a later date.

Chair Swan was reported on Bench Elementary and MSS PAC Meeting.

Other Reports:

None.

CORRESPONDENCE:

DPAC request for fund for BCCPAC conference

Trustees discussed the letter from DPAC that was in the Open Package.

25/209 It was moved by Trustee Chenoweth and seconded by Trustee Rainer

THAT the Board approves to increase the financial support up to \$3,000 to help cover expenses related to sending DPAC representatives to the BCCPAC Annual Conference and AGM April 24-26, 2026.

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

None.

ADJOURNMENT

25/210 Motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Jepsen and seconded by Trustee Hoisington

THAT the Open Board meeting be adjourned at 8:05pm





Chairperson

Secretary Treasurer