

MINUTES

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

**MERRITT BOARD OFFICE, BOARD ROOM
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026, 6:00PM**

Success for ALL Learners Today and Tomorrow

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

Grad Hockey Tournament

Chair Swan mentioned that the MSS Grads are holding a Hockey Tournament fundraiser tonight at the Merritt Arena in support of the Johnson family.

AGENDA

26/050 It was moved by Vice-Chair Ward and seconded by Trustee Chenoweth
THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

MINUTES

26/051 It was moved by Vice-Chair Ward and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw
THAT the minutes of the Open Meeting held March 11th, 2026, be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

EDUCATION

Indigenous Education Report

Superintendent Lawrance presented the written report from the District Principal of Indigenous Education Angela McIvor highlighting upcoming events including an Elders Luncheon on April 9th and traditional games for grade 6 students on April 22nd.

Inclusive Education, Early Learning and Childcare Report

The Superintendent presented a written report from Adriane Mouland, Director of Instruction – Inclusive Education and Early Learning/Child Care, providing Trustees with an update on progress in staffing the Integrated Children and Youth (ICY) team. A candidate is being considered for the Health program lead position, which could support recruitment of a clinician.

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

School Closure Update – Next Steps & French Immersion Relocation

Superintendent Lawrance provided Trustees with an update on the French Immersion relocation process. She advised that a survey had been distributed to parents regarding plans for the coming school year and that approximately 81 students are currently out of catchment. Enrolment is projected to decrease from 112 current students to 107 next year. Lawrance also noted that Brandon Sandbrook will be the new principal of Central School.

AUDIT AND FINANCE

2026-2027 Annual Facilities Grant Program Approval

Secretary Treasurer Friesen presented the 2026-2027 Annual Facilities Grant totaling \$872,000 from an \$896,000 funding allocation.

26/052

It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Chenoweth

THAT the Board approves the list of Annual Facilities Grant (AFG) projects as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

2026-2027 Capital Budget Bylaw

Secretary Treasurer Friesen presented the 2026-2027 Capital Budget Bylaw, mentioning that the District requested \$3.7 million for repairs and upgrades for the District buildings, with the ministry approving approximately \$1.2 million plus an additional \$300,000-400,000 for buses.

- 26/053 It was moved by Vice-Chair Ward and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw
THAT the 2026-2027 Capital Budget Bylaw be approved for first reading. **MOTION CARRIED**
- 26/054 It was moved by Vice-Chair Ward and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw
THAT the 2026-2027 Capital Budget Bylaw be approved for second reading. **MOTION CARRIED**
- 26/055 It was moved by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw
THAT the 2026-2027 Capital Budget Bylaw be approved for second reading. **MOTION CARRIED**
- 26/056 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Jepsen
THAT the 2026-2027 Capital Budget Bylaw go to third reading. **MOTION CARRIED**
- 26/057 It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Chenoweth
THAT the 2026-2027 Capital Budget Bylaw be approved for third and final reading. **MOTION CARRIED**

2026-2027 Preliminary Annual Budget

Secretary Treasurer Friesen informed the Trustees that the Budget Working Group met last month. The Ministry of Education and Child Care has confirmed no increase to base funding rates for 2026/27, with wage increase funding to be announced separately. Due to enrolment decline, the District is receiving funding protection limiting losses to 1.5%, allowing for gradual budget adjustments. Public budget consultations will be held April 22 in Merritt and April 23 in Princeton, with budget readings scheduled for May 13 and June 10, 2026.

POLICY & ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

First Reading

1.31 Role of the Superintendent

- 25/058 It was moved by Vice-Chair Ward and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw
THAT the Board approved Policy 1.31, Role of the Superintendent, forward for first reading. **MOTION CARRIED**

1.32 Role of the Secretary Treasurer

- 25/059 It was moved by Vice-Chair Ward and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw
THAT the Board approved Policy 1.32, Role of the Secretary Treasurer, forward for first reading.

Administrative Procedures

The Board reviewed the following administrative procedures:

- Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting and Response
- Role of the Assistant Superintendent
- Role of the Director of Human Resources
- Role of the Director of Inclusive Education, Childcare and Early Learning
- Role of the District Principal of Indigenous Education
- Role of the Assistant Secretary Treasurer

Trustee Reports:

Student Trustee Reports

Student Trustee Shanny Sterling shared ideas with the Board on how students from Collettsville could be introduced to Central School next year like organizing a grade 6 and 7 meeting.

P.A.C. Reports

Trustee Hoisington was absent for this meeting.

Trustee Rainer reported that John Allison Elementary PAC will meet later this month.

Trustee Chenoweth reported that Collettsville Elementary and SCIDES meet later this month.

Trustee Kent-Laidlaw reported on Princeton Secondary School.

Trustee Jepsen reported that Diamond Vale Elementary and Merritt Central Elementary will meet later this month.

Trustee Ward was absent for this portion of the meeting.

Chair Swan reported on Bench Elementary and MSS PAC Meeting that they will meet next week.

Other Reports:

Chair Swan mention that the annual AGM for Trustees is in Vancouver this weekend.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

None

ADJOURNMENT

26/060

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

THAT the Open Board meeting be adjourned at 6:41pm



Chairperson



Secretary Treasurer