
Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

04-06 Minutes

February 8, 2006

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, February 8, 2006, in the Board Room at Central Office, Truro beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Gordon Anderson	David Myles
Kaaren Barkhouse	Elizabeth Paris
Vivian Farrell	Mackie Ross
Jim Grue	Jamie Stevens
Keith MacKenzie	Marilyn Thompson
Ron Marks	Trudy Thompson
Wendy Matheson-Withrow	Jeff Williams
Marilyn Murray	Bert Young

In Attendance:

Doug Benedict	Herb Steeves
Tim Coates	Linda Campbell, Board Secretary
Valerie Gauthier	David White, Regional Education Officer
Wayne MacGillivray	Bruce MacIntosh, Legal Counsel
Gary Miller	

Regrets:

Alex Cope, with regrets

Board Chair Trudy Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. She extended a special welcome to *Herb Steeves*, newly hired Director of Operational Services, who was attending his first regular Board meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was MOVED by Jamie Stevens, seconded by Vivian Farrell

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

PRESENTATIONS:

Drama Presentation: “A World Without Black People”

Doug Benedict, Director of Education Services, welcomed Glenda Talbot-Richards, Co-ordinator of African-Nova Scotian Cultural Services, who introduced a group of Grades 4/5 students from Temperance Street School. The students, in attendance to entertain the Board in recognition of African Heritage Month, presented a delightful enactment of the drama “*If There Were No Black People*” which focuses on many contributions and achievements of people of African descent and what daily life could be without them. Board Chair Trudy Thompson thanked the students and their teacher Jane Purdy for celebrating African Heritage Month by sharing their enlightening production with the Board. The students were each presented with a token of appreciation on the Board’s behalf by Member Elizabeth Paris, who serves as African-Nova Scotian representative on the Board.

Ms. Richards provided members with a ribbon, a replica of Kente cloth, to wear during African Heritage Month. She also reviewed a number of activities planned to celebrate African heritage throughout the Region and encouraged Board Members to join students in promoting cultural diversity.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association – Ken Meech, Executive Director:

Nova Scotia School Boards Association President *Ron Marks* introduced Executive Director *Ken Meech* who was in attendance to present an overview on the association’s major activities and initiatives.

Mr. Meech, who assumed the position of executive director on November 1st, 2005, provided an update on several key topics including: *Pursuing the Need for Additional “Untargeted” Funding (goal of \$150 Million over 5 years); Expectation Re Hogg Report Implementation; Launching of Lead & Achieve Phase II: Achieving Better Classrooms; Provision of Professional Development Workshops and Modules for Board Members and Administrators; Encouraging Group Purchasing for Goods and Services; Pending Decision on Canadian School Boards Association Membership; and Lobbying Efforts at the Federal Level regarding Copyright and*

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Goods and Services Taxation. He also indicated a recent meeting had been convened with Board Chairs and Superintendents during which discussion centered on *Autonomy of Boards*. A list of top priorities from each Board will be compiled at a future meeting, commonalities determined and subsequently reported to the Province.

Chair Trudy Thompson thanked Mr. Meech for his presentation and wished him well in his new position.

REPORT PRESENTATION:

Trenton Elementary School Closure Study (copy on file):

Celtic Family of Schools Supervisor *Lynn MacLean* introduced *Ken Johnston*, Chair of the Trenton Elementary School Closure Study Committee, who was in attendance to present the Committee's findings and final report. Also in attendance were community representatives *Alec Dove*, *Shannon MacInnis*, *Stacey McKay*, *Walter Smith* and *Chris Boulter* who served with Board Members *Marilyn Murray* and *Jamie Stevens* as members of the Committee.

The Committee, in exploring its mandate, reviewed various statistics including educational progress and social development of students, school board finances, transportation requirements, maintenance and facility requirements, co-curricular activities, traffic concerns, enrollment patterns and population statistics. Mr. Johnston outlined information on the process, highlighted the various appendices and reviewed the belief statements developed by the Committee.

The Study Committee's resulting unanimous recommendation to the Board, which is supported by the Committee's belief statements and the pertinent data accumulated during the fact-finding analysis, was:

- **That Trenton Elementary School remain open as a Primary to Grade 4 facility.**

The Study Committee maintained this option would continue to provide the best educational opportunities available to these students.

During his concluding comments Ken Johnston referred to the other Pictou County towns, which currently have elementary schools, and asked that Trenton be afforded the same courtesy. In response to a request to change the previously approved location for the March 6th meeting to receive public input on the report, Chair Thompson advised the request would be taken into consideration.

Discussion for clarification centered on several issues including the square footage and operational costs associated with the Trenton Middle School. Chair Thompson

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advised these details would be made available prior to Board Members' decision on the report.

It was MOVED by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Gordon Anderson

TO RECEIVE THE TRENTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR INFORMATION.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was MOVED by Vivian Farrell, seconded by Keith MacKenzie

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 11, 2006 BE APPROVED.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Elizabeth Paris

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 18, 2006 BE APPROVED.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Gordon Anderson, seconded by Wendy Matheson-Withrow

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 25, 2006 BE APPROVED.

MOTION CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

There was no business arising from the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE:

No items of correspondence were brought forward.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE:

Vice-Chair Keith MacKenzie read a report from a Committee-of-the-Whole meeting held on Thursday, February 2nd.

In-Camera Contractual Issue:

Following an in-camera session regarding a contractual matter, the Board approved a motion presented by Board Chair Trudy Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Thompson, instructing legal counsel to proceed with action as discussed during the in-camera session.

Highlights from Standing Committees:

Education Services:

Committee Chair Gordon Anderson presented highlights from the Minutes of the January 17th Education Services Committee meeting, which included updates on several topics including *French Special Projects*, *Police Resource Officer Program Pilot*, *NSSBA Education Week Partner Award Nomination*, and *Discipline Workshop*. A more detailed report will be brought to the regular Board Meeting on February 8th.

Corporate Services:

Mackie Ross, Committee Chair, reviewed a number of topics from the January 18th Corporate Services Committee minutes, two of which included a request for further discussion in Committee-of-the-Whole session.

Occupational Health and Safety Support Staff Proposal:

Acting Director of Operational Services Tim Coates read a report in which he identified the various responsibilities associated with the “due diligence” management of the Occupational Health and Safety Division of his department. His proposal was discussed by members following which there was agreement to consider a recommendation to hire additional Occupational Health and Safety support staff during 2006-07 budget deliberations.

Excess Square Footage:

Superintendent Gary Miller provided a history of the cost pressures associated with student enrollment and excess square footage. Concern was expressed that there was no explicit directive in writing from the Minister of Education regarding this issue.

Mr. Miller will present further information on this topic in his February 8th administrative report to the Board.

Finance Services:

Committee Vice-Chair David Myles noted the Minutes of the January 25th Finance Services Committee had been circulated for review. Acting Director of Finance Services Valerie Gauthier reviewed information pertaining to the Report of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia. Ms. Gauthier also provided an itemized list associated with a request from the Education Services Committee regarding a budget transfer from the teacher salary line to a school equipment line. The motion will come forward for Board approval at the next regular meeting of the Board.

Discussion / Information / Decision Items:

Draft 2006-2007 Business Plan:

Nova Family of Schools Supervisor Gaye Rawding provided a review of the priorities included in the Board's draft 2006-07 Business Plan. It included proposed changes and additions contributed by Board Members through the Standing Committee level. Suggested additional amendments will be integrated into the draft prior to the regular Board Meeting on February 8th. In order to meet the proposed timeline for submission of the document, it was agreed to bring forward the following motion:

It was MOVED by Keith MacKenzie, seconded by Jamie Stevens

THAT THE DRAFT 2006-2007 BUSINESS PLAN BE APPROVED WITH AMENDMENTS AND SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENT.

MOTION CARRIED

Note: Board Members were provided with a copy of the proposed amendments at the February 8th regular Board Meeting.

It was MOVED by Keith MacKenzie, seconded by David Myles

THAT THE COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE REPORT FROM A MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 2ND, 2006 BE RECEIVED FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

EDUCATION SERVICES:

Gordon Anderson, Committee Chair, provided a report on the Education Services Committee meeting held on January 17th.

Presentation – Proposed French Special Projects:

Ms. Anne Curry, Coordinator of French Programs Services, introduced the proposed French Special Projects Funding for the 2006-2007 school year, which receives 50% of its total funding from the Federal government, 20% from the Department of Education, and 30% from the Board. The funding proposal was reviewed and adopted as presented.

Students to Travel to Campeche, Mexico:

Twenty students from across the Region were selected to take part in an exciting opportunity which will have them traveling to Campeche, Mexico from March 7-20, 2006. The Chignecto-Campeche International Leadership Camp was open to all grade eleven students in CCRSB.

Suspension Summary Update:

Data collected showed a significant drop in the number of suspensions in 2005 compared to 2004. This may be due to the PEBS program, (Positive Effective Behaviour Supports) which has been implemented in a number of schools.

Police Resource Officer Program Pilot:

The Education Services Committee discussed at length the possibility of implementing the Police Resource Officer Program as a pilot project at North Nova Education Centre. Based on this discussion and Committee recommendation,

It was MOVED by Gordon Anderson, seconded by Vivian Farrell

THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICE RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM AS A PILOT PROJECT AT NORTH NOVA EDUCATION CENTRE.

During discussion on the motion, several members expressed a request for further information including pertinent details associated with proposed cost-sharing, long-term objectives and the duration of the pilot project. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial to evaluate the existing policing liaison programs in CCRSB schools. Based on this discussion,

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Marilyn Thompson

THAT THE BOARD TABLE THE MOTION PENDING CONSIDERATION OF NEW INITIATIVES DURING 2006-07 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS.

MOTION TO TABLE CARRIED

1 Negative Vote: Gordon Anderson

Board Discipline Workshop:

The date for a Board Discipline Workshop is Saturday, February 11, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Storm date – Saturday, February 18, 2006). *A copy of the draft agenda for the workshop was provided to Board Members for information.*

Superintendent's Report on Student Achievement – Regional Exam Recommendation:

Preliminary discussion was held regarding the Superintendent's recommendation for a Regional examination for the Grade 11 Canadian History course. A draft discussion paper was reviewed. Further discussion will take place at the February meeting of the Education Services Committee.

Teacher In-service Days:

Consensus was reached that "paid" teacher in-service should be held during the summer months providing more instructional time during the school year. Mr. Benedict and Board Member MacKenzie will draft a resolution to the NSSBA for the next Education Services Committee meeting.

Special Programs Inventory 2005-2006:

A revised inventory list of the special programs for this school year was reviewed. It was agreed that more speech language pathologists, as well as school psychologists, are required in this Board to meet the many needs of students requiring these special services.

Request for Transfer of Funds:

The Education Services Committee has recommended to the Finance Services Committee that \$300,000. be transferred from the teacher salary line to a school equipment line.

Draft Business Plan Priorities for 2006-2007:

The proposed business plan priorities for the next school year were reviewed. The Education Services Committee suggested that the need for more speech language

pathologists as well as additional school psychologists should be a priority in the Board's Business Plan.

Request to Corporate Services Committee – New Hires:

The Education Services Committee will request the Corporate Services Committee to include in their monthly Committee reports, a list of new employees along with their title and role within the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board.

It was MOVED by Gordon Anderson, seconded by Wendy Matheson-Withrow

THAT THE BOARD RECEIVE THE EDUCATION SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT FROM A MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 17TH, 2006 FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

CORPORATE SERVICES:

Committee Chair Mackie Ross read a report from the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on January 18th.

Progress of Boundary/Consolidation/Closure/Studies:

▶ **Chignecto Family:**

The River Hebert District High Closure Committee has determined that the preferred option appears to be to make River Hebert High School a P-12 school rather than closing the High School and sending those students to another community. Major renovations would be required to make the High School a P-12 building, and such a request would need to be submitted on a capital construction request list to the Department of Education for consideration.

The Wentworth Consolidated Elementary School Closure Committee has indicated satisfaction with the multi-aged system and expressed concerns about the travel time that would be involved if children were to be bused outside of the community.

The Boundary Study for Amherst Elementary Schools is underway, with the location of each student currently being plotted on a mapping system to determine boundary change possibilities. A main concern is that Spring Street Academy, which just opened last September, is already over-crowded. The Committee will review the Boundary Study Report at its meeting on February 15th, 2006.

▶ **Celtic Family:**

The School Closure Study Committee for Trenton Elementary engaged the services of an engineer to assess the Trenton Middle School for renovation purposes. It was determined that the costs associated with the renovation could be significant and therefore students should remain at Trenton Elementary.

The River John Consolidated Consolidation Study Committee has expressed concerns over the possibility of closing the school and moving students out of the community. Another option being explored is to move the Grade 9's only.

Square Footage:

The Committee discussed a letter received from the Minister of Education in April 2003. Although there was no specific mention regarding reducing square footage, it was felt by several Board Members that the implication was there.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed to refer this matter to Superintendent Gary Miller to bring back any additional information he could find with regard to this topic. The Corporate Services Committee requested that Mr. Miller provide this information at the Committee-of-the-Whole if possible.

Occupational Health & Safety Management:

The Committee received and reviewed a document from Tim Coates, Acting Director of Operations, entitled *Review of Management for Occupational Health & Safety Requirements*.

The Committee agreed to refer the topic, including the possibility of acquiring an Assistant Coordinator of Occupational Health & Safety to the Committee-of-the-Whole for discussion. *This topic was addressed earlier in the meeting under the Committee-of-the-Whole Report to the Board.*

It was MOVED by Mackie Ross, seconded by Jamie Stevens

THAT THE BOARD RECEIVE THE CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT FROM A MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 18TH, 2006 FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

FINANCE SERVICES:

Committee Chair Ron Marks read a report from the January 25th meeting of the Finance Services Committee.

Financial Statements to December 31, 2005 and Forecast:

The Committee received the Financial Statements to December 31, 2005 which includes the forecast to March 2006 year-end.

As per the Budget Transfer Guidelines, the Education Services Committee recommended to the Finance Services Committee the budget transfer of \$300,000. from the teacher salary line to a school equipment line. *An itemized list outlining these expenditures was circulated and reviewed at the February 2nd Committee-of-the-Whole meeting.*

Based on recommendation of the Finance Services Committee and subsequent review of the expenditures,

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Mackie Ross

THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE BUDGET TRANSFER OF \$300,000. AS REVIEWED IN THE DETAILED REPORT LISTING ITEMS TO BE PURCHASED.

MOTION CARRIED

Report of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia:

Section 9, “Review of Financial Statements and Management Letters” of the “Report of the Auditor General to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly” for 2005 was reviewed. This section highlights any School Boards with qualified audit opinions on their financial statements and/or weaknesses in their internal control systems as identified by their auditors. It was particularly noteworthy that all Boards, with the exception of Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board and CCRSB, were listed for deficiencies.

The Board’s “*clean audit opinion*” was as a direct result of work done by our Audit Committee, peer reviews and internal control systems implemented by our Business Managers and the consolidation work done by other Finance Services staff.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse

THAT THE BOARD RECEIVE THE FINANCE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT FROM A MEETINGS HELD ON JANUARY 25TH, 2006 FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Gary Miller highlighted items from his administrative report including *Facilities Planning and Utilization*, and *Professional Learning Communities Update*.

Wayne MacGillivray, Acting Director of Human Resources, provided an update on the *Early Hire Job Fairs* and addressed questions for clarification regarding the recruitment process and the variance between the starting salaries for teachers in Nova Scotia and some other Provinces.

Mr. Miller encouraged members to celebrate the history and contributions of people of African descent by partaking of the various student activities happening within CCRSB schools in honour of *African Heritage Month*.

Superintendent Miller introduced and welcomed newly hired Director of Operational Services *Herb Steeves*. A professional engineer with extensive operations experience in the fields of education and health care, he began his employment with the Board on February 6th. Mr. Steeves indicated he is looking forward to working with the school community, Board Members and staff as he carries out his responsibilities to the students of CCRSB.

During discussion on the report, members David Myles and Ron Marks expressed concern with the timing of the *Professional Learning Communities Institute* scheduled for May 24 – 26 in Halifax which conflicts with the May 25 – 27 *NSSBA Annual General Meeting* being held in Baddeck.

Board Member Vivian Farrell complimented Mr. Miller on his directive to staff endorsing the annual completion of a document detailing updated data and reports on the state and utilization of CCRSB facilities. She indicated the information would provide members with the required data on which to base informed decisions.

BOARD CHAIR / VICE-CHAIR REPORT:

Chair Thompson reported she had participated in a number of meetings over the last month including a meeting with Cumberland County parents, sessions with Legal Counsel as well as with the Deputy Minister regarding the Laidlaw/Bus Drivers' strike. She also attending a meeting of Chairs and Superintendents convened by the NSSBA to discuss various issues including governance, funding and educational priorities. Another meeting will be held in the near future.

Chair Thompson expressed particular pleasure in having recently participated in a school "Literacy" project.

Vice-Chair Keith MacKenzie thanked Bruce MacIntosh, Legal Counsel, for the many hours he devoted to negotiating an end to the recent Cumberland County school bus drivers' strike.

NSSBA REPORT:

Board representative to the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, David Myles, reviewed the contents of correspondence from the NSSBA highlighting information on two planned governance modules – one addressing the topic “Financial Literacy” and the other “Governance Improvement Plan”. The letter, copied to Board Members for information, also provided details on the “Insights Program” being offered to educators by the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium. This program explores personality profiles and how one can use an understanding of personality differences to improve and enhance personal and workplace relationships.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business brought forward.

NOTICE OF MOTION:

No notices of motion were presented.

PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD:

There were no questions from the public.

IN-CAMERA SESSION:

It was MOVED by Vivian Farrell, seconded by Marilyn Murray

THAT THE MEETING MOVE TO IN-CAMERA SESSION REGARDING CONTRACTUAL AND FINANCIAL MATTERS.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by David Myles, seconded by Vivian Farrell

THAT THE MEETING RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION.

MOTION CARRIED

Note: During the in-camera session there was agreement to extend the time limit beyond 10:00 p.m.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Board, scheduled for **March 8, 2006**, will be held in the gymnasium at **60 Lorne Street, Truro** beginning at **6:30 p.m.**

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion of Jamie Stevens, the meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

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Trudy Thompson, Board Chair

March 8, 2006
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Date

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Linda Campbell, Board Secretary

March 8, 2006
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Date