
Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

01-06 Minutes

January 11, 2006

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, January 11, 2006, in the Board Room at Central Office, Truro beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Doug Benedict	Terri Mingo-MacNeill
Tim Coates	Linda Campbell, Board Secretary
Valerie Gauthier	David White, Regional Education Officer
Wayne MacGillivray	Bruce MacIntosh, Legal Counsel
Gary Miller	Elizabeth Van den Eynden, Legal Counsel

Board Chair Trudy Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was MOVED by Jamie Stevens, seconded by Marilyn Thompson
THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

STUDENT PRESENTATION:

Reach for Dalhousie Competition:

Doug Benedict, Director of Education Services, welcomed and introduced the winning members of the ***Reach For Dalhousie Competition*** and their advisor *Nicole Hart*. Cobequid Educational Centre Grade 12 students *Ryan Andrews*, Riversdale; *Bobo Eyrich*, Tatamagouche; and, *Kelsey MacKenzie*, Truro, were in attendance to provide the Board with an overview of their very successful ***Reach for Dalhousie*** experience. On October 14th, 2005 their team earned first place in the competition that involved over forty teams from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. As competition winners the teammates were each awarded full tuition for one year at Dalhousie University.

Board Chair Trudy Thompson congratulated the presenters on their hard work and skill in winning the competition and thanked them for sharing their experience with the Board. The students were each presented with a token of appreciation on the Board's behalf by Board Member Bert Young.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was MOVED by Keith MacKenzie, seconded by Vivian Farrell

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON
OCTOBER 12, 2005 BE APPROVED.**

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Jim Grue, seconded by Gordon Anderson

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL BOARD MEETING
HELD ON NOVEMBER 9, 2005 BE APPROVED.**

MOTION CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

There was no business arising from the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Board Secretary read two items of correspondence.

Minister of Education – Request Re Four New School Facilities:

A letter dated November 9th was received from the Minister of Education acknowledging receipt of correspondence from the Board with regard to its request to have four new school facilities constructed.

Minister Muir advised the Department of Education will be requesting boards to submit school capital needs in 2006 for consideration by the School Capital Construction Committee. He recommended that CCRSB submit the projects at that time. He indicated the 2006 submission will provide government with the time to develop a fiscal plan for project needs beyond the current program.

Minister of Education Re Request For Site Selection Guidelines:

On November 17th, the Minister of Education responded to correspondence concerning the Board's request to ensure appropriate guidelines are developed regarding the site selection process for new school construction.

Dr. Muir advised of the Department of Education's reluctance to set a specific site selection process for school boards. He indicated the minimum requirements outlined in the Regulations Under the Education Act provide boards the flexibility to develop a process that is acceptable within their community.

Minister Muir recommended that CCRSB staff seek assistance from the Facilities Management Division of the Department of Education for best practice information on the issue of site selection and acquisition.

Board Members were provided with a copy of this correspondence in their Board packages.

The Board Chair introduced one additional item of correspondence.

Resignation of Superintendent:

Board Chair Trudy Thompson read a letter of resignation from Superintendent Gary Miller. In it, Mr. Miller indicated he considered it both a privilege and an honour to have served as Superintendent since 2001. He stated, "*While there have been many challenges for us during the past 5 years, I am confident in saying that our achievements together on behalf of our Region's children, youth and adults have also been many.*"

In response to Chair Thompson's call for a motion,

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It was MOVED by Mackie Ross, seconded by Keith MacKenzie

THAT THE BOARD ACCEPT, WITH SINCERE REGRET, THE RESIGNATION OF GARY MILLER, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, TO BE EFFECTIVE JULY 31ST, 2006.

MOTION CARRIED

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE:

Vice-Chair Keith MacKenzie chose to dispense with reading the report from the Committee-of-the-Whole meetings held on **November 2nd and December 7th, 2005**; however, the report content is included as a matter of record.

Presentations:

At the November 2nd meeting, *Professor David Divine*, James R. Johnston Chair in Black Canadian Studies at Dalhousie University, spoke on “*Major Issues of Concern Relating to the Management of Education for Black Learners*”. He stressed a need to address feelings of disengagement and hopelessness among the diverse student population within the school system and emphasized the importance of being willing to connect with these individuals. The Board **agreed** to refer the issues raised by Professor Divine to the Education Services Committee for further discussion and consideration with a subsequent report brought to the Board at a future meeting.

On December 7th, the Board heard a presentation from *Cst. Ken MacDonald*, New Glasgow Police Service, on the “*Police School Resource Officer Program*”. Cst. MacDonald summarized background information and expected outcomes for this pro-active program which was designed to create and maintain a safe, secure and orderly learning environment in schools. Following his presentation, the matter was **referred** to the Education Services Committee for further exploration and subsequent recommendation to the Board.

David White, Department of Education Regional Education Officer, and *Lawrence Ryan*, Coordinator of Planning and Leadership Development also provided Board Members with an informative overview of the Nova Scotia School Accreditation process.

Highlights from Standing Committees:

At the November 2nd and December 7th Committee-of-the-Whole meetings, the Chairs of each Standing Committee highlighted items from the minutes of their October and November committee meetings respectively. More detailed reports will be presented at the December 14th Board meeting. (*Note: The December 14th Board Meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather conditions.*)

In-Camera Personnel Issue:

The Board **approved** staff recommended disciplinary action regarding a personnel issue as presented during the in-camera session.

Vice-Chair Keith MacKenzie read a report from the **January 4th, 2006** Committee-of-the-Whole meeting.

Presentations:

Employment Equity:

The Board received a presentation from *Viki Samuels*, Coordinator of the Race Relations and Affirmative Action Division of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. Ms. Samuels, assisted by Human Rights Officer *Linda Nicholl*, provided information relevant to the Human Rights Act and Employment Equity. She outlined particulars associated with both affirmative action and employment equity including details on various forms of discrimination, the key goals of employment equity, as well as the myths and realities associated with affirmative action.

Positive and Effective Behavioural Supports (PEBS):

Coleen Davidson, Coordinator of Community Education and Partnerships, and *David Jones*, Student Services Consultant, provided Board Members with an informative presentation on the PEBS (Positive and Effective Behavioural Supports) program which was designed to meet the needs of middle/junior high school students who are at-risk for dropping out of school. Based on the assumption that desirable behaviour should be taught and reinforced, this intervention program establishes a school-wide behaviour support system which helps to build and maintain a positive learning environment.

Discussion / Information / Decision Items:

Media Coverage:

In light of concerns expressed regarding recent media coverage surrounding the school closure process, it was agreed that the Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Superintendent, in consultation with the Communications Officer, develop an appropriate response to these concerns. (*Note: A copy of this response was provided to Board Members earlier in the evening.*)

It was MOVED by Keith MacKenzie, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE REPORTS FROM MEETINGS HELD ON NOVEMBER 2ND AND DECEMBER 7TH, 2005 AND ON JANUARY 4TH, 2006 BE RECEIVED FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

EDUCATION SERVICES:

Gordon Anderson, Committee Chair, chose not to read the reports of the Education Services Committee meetings held on October 18th and November 15th. Both reports are included as a matter of record.

October 18th Meeting:

Presentations:

Gary Renouf, teacher at South Colchester Academy and *Teresa Kewachuk*, teacher at Hants East Rural High School who were among 30 educators from Canada selected to travel to Normandy, France in August as guests of the Juno Beach Centre Association, gave a joint presentation on their experiences while at Juno Beach.

Reach Team – Cobequid Educational Centre:

Congratulations to the Cobequid Educational Centre *Reach Team* of *Bobo Eyrich*, *Ryan Andrews* and *Kelsey MacKenzie* who won the *Reach for Dalhousie* competition on October 14th. Forty (40) schools from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were represented. As a result of the win, these students will each receive one full year of tuition at Dalhousie University.

Police Resource Officers in School:

The Committee agreed that Cst. Ken MacDonald, New Glasgow Police Service, and the member of the RCMP who is working with Hants East Rural High School be invited to make a presentation to the Board regarding Police Resource Officers in schools.

Discussion - Behaviour in Schools:

Discussion took place on the occasions of violent behaviour towards students and staff in schools. Discussion on this topic will continue at next month's meeting.

November 15th Meeting:

Presentation:

Glenda Talbot-Richards, Coordinator of African-Nova Scotian Cultural Service, and *Steve Carrington*, teacher at Bible Hill Jr. High School and curriculum developer of the *Junior High Social Justice Curriculum Module*, provided an overview of the module – a program supplement aimed at raising awareness of Social Justice issues through positive dialogue. The Junior High Social Justice Module is currently in its pilot phase with the objective of integrating it into the existing social studies curriculum in Grades 8 and 9 during the 2006-2007 school year.

Math Camps:

Letters were received from a number of students expressing their views to the Board regarding Math Camps. The outcome was extremely positive for some and others expressed concerns. Letters of response were sent to each student thanking them for their input.

Student Suspensions:

Concerns were expressed regarding the number of student suspensions this year, particularly in relation to violent behaviour and the effect this may have on the safety of students/staff in schools as well as on buses. A review of suspension data will continue at the December meeting of the Education Services Committee. The Committee suggested that a Board workshop on discipline be held in the near future.

Breakfast Program:

Provincial funding was directed to purchase small appliances and furniture for the Breakfast Program in our schools. Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of funding for food supplies. Contact will be made with the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board to gather information on the operation of their highly regarded Breakfast Program.

Skilled Trades Exploration Program (STEP):

As a part of the Board's ongoing discussion of extending "hands-on" learning opportunities for students, the Committee discussed the South Shore Regional School Board program called *Skilled Trades Exploration Program* (STEP). This program, exclusive to Park View Education Center, is a combination of regular PSP courses

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and exploration of trades available at the NSCC campus in Bridgewater. The discussion progressed to the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Program and how it intersects with high school. Information will be sought from the Department of Education on possible Apprenticeship Program options.

It was MOVED by Gordon Anderson, seconded by Vivian Farrell

THAT THE BOARD RECEIVE THE EDUCATION SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORTS FROM MEETINGS HELD ON OCTOBER 18TH AND NOVEMBER 15TH, 2005 FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

CORPORATE SERVICES:

Mackie Ross, Committee Chair, opted not to read the Corporate Services Committee report from the October 19th meeting. The report is included as a matter of record.

Closure/Consolidation /Boundary Studies:

Gary Miller, Superintendent, reviewed the Regulations under the Education Act in detail with regard to the Board's obligations under the School Closure process. Mr. Miller also circulated a proposal on timelines for the consolidation studies at River John Consolidated and Thorburn Consolidated. The Committee accepted the proposal on timelines for consolidation studies as presented. The timelines are attached to the Committee minutes.

The Committee agreed that Trudy Thompson, Board Chair, Mackie Ross, Corporate Services Committee Chair, and Gary Miller, Superintendent, would meet to finalize Board representation on each of the Closure Committees, once the community representation is established.

The Committee also asked staff to table a report on the Amherst area elementary schools Boundary Review Study at the January 2006 Committee meeting.

Westville Road Office:

The Committee determined that discussions on the future of the Westville Road Office would be deferred until the Celtic Closure and Consolidation Studies are complete.

Substitute Statistics/Call Out System:

The Committee was advised that it is increasingly difficult and time consuming for principals to find substitute teachers. The Committee requested that Wayne

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MacGillivray, Acting Director of Human Resources, investigate automated substitute call out systems and report his findings to the Committee.

Chair Mackie Ross read the following report from the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on **November 16th, 2005**.

Town of Truro – Curtis Drive:

Correspondence was received from the Town of Truro with respect to the future status of Board-owned property on Curtis Drive. The Committee requested that Tim Coates, Acting Director of Operations, respond to the Town of Truro indicating that the Board has yet to determine if the property will be declared surplus to Board needs.

In response to a question from Jim Grue, Acting Director of Finance Services Valerie Gauthier confirmed that the Board owns the Curtis Drive property in question.

Board Member Bert Young referred to the increased enrollment for the two new Truro and area schools and suggested the Board consider retaining the Curtis Drive property for possible future use. The Corporate Services Committee will discuss this matter further.

Busing for French Immersion:

The Committee received a request from parents in the Elmsdale area for busing services for French Immersion students.

The Committee had reviewed a similar request in January 2005 and at that time determined that costs associated with providing the bus service were prohibitive. The Committee agreed that busing services would not be provided for French Immersion students and requested that Mr. Coates send a letter to the parents indicating same.

It was MOVED by Mackie Ross, seconded by Jamie Stevens

THAT THE BOARD RECEIVE THE CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORTS FROM MEETINGS HELD ON OCTOBER 19TH AND NOVEMBER 16TH, 2005 FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

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FINANCE SERVICES:

Committee Chair Ron Marks read reports from the October 26th and November 30th, 2005 meetings of the Finance Services Committee.

October 26th Meeting:

Financial Statements to September 30, 2005:

The Committee received the Financial Statements to September 30, 2005 as presented.

Analysis of Accumulated Surplus:

Ms. Gauthier explained that while there was a \$9.6 million accumulated surplus, \$2.6 million is internally restricted for schools and \$2.2 million has been earmarked to balance the 2005-06 Budget. Much of the remaining \$4.8 million is required for cash flow purposes due to items such as inventories, TCA (Tangible Capital Assets) and Band Council receivable balances.

Budget Transfers:

Based on recommendation of the Finance Services Committee,

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE BUDGET TRANSFERS WHICH ARE IN EXCESS OF \$125,000., AS PER BOARD POLICY, AND AS DESCRIBED IN THE SPREADSHEET ATTACHED TO THE OCTOBER 26TH FINANCE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES.

MOTION CARRIED

November 30th Meeting:

Financial Statements to October 31, 2005 and Forecast:

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

Fuel Costs:

The Committee **agreed** that the Board would continue to take a “wait and see” approach until the actual fuel costs during the peak utilization period of January through March 2006 has been determined.

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Computerized Committee and Board Meetings:

Based on Finance Services Committee discussion and subsequent recommendation,

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Marilyn Thompson

THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF LAPTOPS AND RELATED EQUIPMENT TO BE UTILIZED BY MEMBERS DURING STANDING COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEETINGS; THE EXPENDITURE TO BE INCLUDED AS PART OF THE 2006-2007 BUDGET.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse

THAT THE BOARD RECEIVE THE FINANCE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORTS FROM MEETINGS HELD ON OCTOBER 26TH AND NOVEMBER 30TH, 2005 FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Gary Miller highlighted items from his administrative report including *Student Enrollment Data, Occupational Health and Safety Audit, Draft 2006-07 Business Plan, Lead and Achieve Initiative, and the Automated Educational Substitute Operator System.*

In addition to his written report Mr. Miller referred to a number of upcoming events as follows:

- Jan. 26-28 Atlantic School Boards Conference 2006, Corner Brook, NF
- January 30 Administration of First Semester Regional Math 10 Examination
- February 1 Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting, Central Office Board Room
- February 3 First Semester Ends
- February 8 Regular Board Meeting, Central Office Board Room
- February African Heritage Month

Mr. Miller also advised of a musical production being presented at 8:00 p.m. on January 14, 2006 by the Eastern Front Theatre and the Nova Scotia Mass Choir. The production entitled "*Share the Dream*" is a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and showcases a talented local actor, Walter Borden, a native of New Glasgow.

BOARD CHAIR / VICE-CHAIR REPORT:

Chair Thompson reported she had recently participated in a number of Committee meetings including the Search Committees for the Directors of Operational Services and Human Resources as well as the ad hoc Communications Committee.

Board Member Wendy Matheson-Withrow, who also serves as a member of the ad hoc Communications Committee, presented a Report from the Communications Committee meeting held on December 19th, 2005. The report highlighted discussion on the *Lead and Achieve public consultations, the Board's submission to the Minister of Education's Report to Parents, an appropriate strategy regarding the sharing of information on School Reviews, etc.* A copy of the report is on file.

It was moved by Wendy Matheson-Withrow, seconded by Jamie Stevens

THAT THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT FROM A MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 19, 2005 BE RECEIVED FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

Communications Officer Terri Mingo-MacNeill addressed questions associated with the Lead and Achieve public forums including queries regarding *advertising, the appropriate forum venue, and the proposed survey.*

NSSBA REPORT:

Board representative to the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, David Myles, highlighted information regarding the Minister of Education's response to the NSSBA Resolutions approved at the 2005 AGM. Documents provided for information in the December 14th and January 11th Board meeting packages included:

- NSSBA Month in Review – December 2005
- NSSBA Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes – December 1-2, 2005
- NSSBA Special Meeting Board of Directors – October 6, 2005 Minutes
- NSSBA Special Meeting Board of Directors – October 28, 2005 Minutes
- NSSBA Month in Review – October 2005
- NSSBA Month in Review – November 2005
- NSSBA Board of Directors' Meeting Highlights – December 1-2, 2005
- Correspondence from Minister of Education to NSSBA President Re Responses to the NSSBA Resolutions

Mr. Myles advised a meeting involving the NSSBA Board of Directors and the Halifax Regional School Board is scheduled for January 19th from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

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Member Myles indicated the NSSBA is requesting Boards to submit nominations for a member to be considered for receipt of the *NSSBA Education Week Partner Award*. Following a review of the criteria, there was consensus with his suggestion that the request be referred, as it was last year, to the Education Services Committee for consideration.

Doug Benedict, Director of Education Services, reminded Board Members to forward potential nominations by e-mail to his attention.

NEW BUSINESS:

Board Member Jeff Williams, on behalf of the *Wentworth Consolidated Elementary School Closure Study Committee*, extended an invitation to members to visit the school on Tuesday, January 24th from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. to observe a multi-aged classroom in session. He advised a written invitation would follow.

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 Gordon Anderson, seconded by Elizabeth Paris

THAT THE MEETING MOVE TO IN-CAMERA SESSION TO RECEIVE LEGAL INTERPRETATIONS REGARDING A STUDENT-RELATED MATTER AND A CONTRACTUAL ISSUE.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Jim Grue, seconded by Keith MacKenzie

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.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Board, scheduled for **February 8, 2006**, will be held in the Central Office Board Room at **60 Lorne Street, Truro** beginning at **7:00 p.m.**

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion of Keith MacKenzie and Gordon Anderson, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

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Trudy Thompson, Board Chair

February 8, 2006

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Date

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Linda Campbell, Board Secretary

February 8, 2006

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Date