

## MINUTES

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

**VIA ZOOM  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025, 6:00PM**

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*Success for ALL Learners Today and Tomorrow*

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Present:	Chairperson	G. Swan
	Vice-Chair	L. Ward (Virtual)
	Trustees	J. Jepsen (Virtual) J. Kent-Laidlaw (Virtual) E. Hoisington (Virtual) J. Chenoweth (Absent) D. Rainer (Virtual)
	Superintendent	C. Lawrance
	Assistant Superintendent	J. Kempston (Absent)
	Interim Secretary Treasurer	H. Cull (Virtual)
	Assistant Secretary Treasurer	L. Rusnjak (Virtual)
	Executive Assistant	K. Buckland
	Executive Assistant	S. Chenoweth
	Manager of IT	E. Park

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES AND METIS COMMUNITY**

### **AUDIT AND FINANCE**

#### **2025-2026 Preliminary Annual Budget – Feedback received**

Chair Swan presented details from the public budget meetings held on April 16th and 17th in Merritt and Princeton. Over the past decade, the District has used reserve accounts to cover costs in an underfunded system. Now, the District must reduce expenses by 4.7% or \$1.5 million.

Chair Swan issued a notice of motion for the Board to consider a school closure process at the Open Public Board Meeting at Princeton Secondary School Learning Commons at 6:00pm.

Superintendent Lawrance shared parents' concerns about reduced bussing to Collettville Elementary School. The District received feedback about the budget, including concerns about French immersion and busing. For students beyond the walk limit to their neighborhood school, the District will continue to provide bus transportation, consolidating students from Lower Nicola, Upper Nicola, and Douglas Lake

onto a single bus at MSS or Central. The final details for the last 1.7 km are still being worked out, but the District believes it can manage transportation for these students.

The District received 13 responses, 12 from outside the district and province, related to proposed cuts in Surrey, Maple Ridge, and Burnaby. The District is considering cutting grade 7 band in Merritt, a halftime position designed for teacher prep. Parents dislike the mandatory nature of the program, and one parent expressed concern about not offering band within the district. Previous meetings with rights holders, partners, the budget working group, and admin contributed to the decision not to pursue some mitigation strategies listed in the memo.

**2025-2026 Preliminary Annual Budget Bylaw – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading**

25/082

It was moved by Trustee Rainer and seconded by Trustee Jepsen

THAT the 2025-2026 Preliminary Annual Budget Bylaw be approved for first reading.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

25/083

Motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Chair Ward and seconded by Trustee Kent-Laidlaw

THAT the Open Board meeting adjourned at 6:23pm



Chairperson

  
Interim Secretary Treasurer