

Ashley St. Pierre, Chair

Craig Myles, Director of Education

Finance Committee
Tuesday June 17th, 2025 at 11:00AM
Zoom Meeting

Committee Members Present

Shane Hall, Committee Chair
Chantal Phillips, Trustee
Howard Wesley, Trustee
Seija Van Haesendonck, Superintendent of Business

Staff Present

Wende Proulx, Manager of Finance
Maureen Egan, Executive Assistant to the Director
Stephanie Courchesne, Executive Assistant to the SBO
Deb Bartlett, Communications Officer

Guests Present

Louise Sargent, Trustee

Absent

Julie Bertram, Trustee
Craig Myles, Director of Education

1. Call to Order

Chair Hall called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM. Following the roll call, it was noted that the meeting had quorum.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The Chair called for declarations of conflict of interest with none noted.

3. Approval of Agenda

3.1. *Motion: Moved by Trustee Wesley and seconded by SBO Van Haesendonck that the agenda for the meeting of June 17th, 2025 be approved. CARRIED*

4. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

4.1. Motion: Moved by Trustee Wesley and seconded by Trustee Phillips, that the minutes of the meeting held on March 24, 2025 be approved. CARRIED

5. Business Arising

5.1. 2025-2026 Budget Update

The committee was informed that the Ministry's funding memo for the 2025–2026 fiscal year had been received later than anticipated, which delayed the start of budget preparation. Despite the delay, several key updates were highlighted. The Ministry applied a 2% increase to the non-staff portion of the school operations allocation. This increase is intended to support rising costs in areas such as utilities, insurance, and general maintenance. Trustees were advised that while this adjustment provides some relief, the increase does not fully align with inflationary pressures and actual operating cost increases across the system.

Additional updates included salary increases for education worker, teacher and principal/vice-principal salary benchmarks, in accordance with centrally negotiated compensation increases, as well as increases to non-union salary benchmarks.

A detailed update was provided on funding changes related to Special Education and Student Transportation. The Education Community Partnership Program (ECP) has been revised and restructured into two distinct components: the Education and Community Partnership (ECP) programs and Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP). This restructuring is designed to streamline funding allocations and better support students receiving education in specialized care or treatment settings.

In the area of student transportation, there was a modest benchmark increase by the Ministry to reflect higher operational costs, and bus procurement costs, and the funding formula was revised to reflect the non-rebatable portion of HST charged by operators. However, it was noted that the benchmark increase remains significantly below actual expenses incurred by the board through the transportation consortium. The transportation deficit, while slightly reduced from the previous year, remains substantial - declining from \$2.4 million to approximately \$2 million deficit. Trustees raised questions regarding the cost-sharing arrangement within the transportation consortium and how decisions are made about route planning and allocation. There was agreement that continued advocacy for more realistic funding in this area is necessary.

Projections for the upcoming school year show a decline in elementary enrollment, with a decrease of approximately 391 students since the preparation of the 2024-25 Estimates. As a result, the board anticipates the reduction of 16 elementary classrooms, including a reduction of seven kindergarten classes, resulting in a decrease of elementary classroom teacher Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions and Early Childhood Educators FTE.

Despite enrolment decline, due to attrition from retirements, resignations and full-year leaves, it was confirmed that there were no teaching staff layoffs/-redundancies for 2025-

26. Trustees reviewed a draft staffing chart, which detailed tentative changes across various staff categories and outlined FTE allocations, although staffing was still in draft. Trustees requested clarification about the board's process for managing surplus staffing and ensuring that all staff are accommodated appropriately within the collective agreement language.

The committee discussed the financial and operational impacts of international student enrollment. Trustees inquired about the tuition fees charged to international students and whether these fees are adjusted regularly to reflect inflation and program costs. It was confirmed that the tuition fees are set through the budget process as part of a formula in the EFIS forms.

6. Review of Quarterly Report

A summary of the third-quarter financial report was provided to the committee. As of the reporting period, approximately 78.5% of the board's Revised Estimates expenditures had been incurred. The report highlighted that spending is generally in line with expectations, with no major concerns flagged in any departmental budget. It was noted that the Trustee Initiative Fund has been distributed according to the motion approved at the May 2025 board meeting.

Motion: Moved by Trustee Wesley and seconded by Trustee Phillips that the Finance Committee recommends the Quarterly Report as at May 31, 2025 be presented to the Board of Trustees for review. CARRIED

7. New Business

7.1. Review Budget Recommendations from SEAC

The committee received and reviewed formal budget recommendations submitted by the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to the Board and shared with the Finance Committee.

Motion: Moved by Trustee Wesley and seconded by Trustee Phillips that, in reviewing and recommending the 2025-26 estimates to the Board of Trustees for approval, the Finance Committee of the Near North District School Board receives and considers the SEAC budget recommendations as forwarded by the Board of Trustees. CARRIED.

8. Next Meeting Date: To be determined.

9. Adjournment

With no further business to note, Committee Chair tabled the following motion:

Motion: Moved by SBO Van Haesendonck and seconded by Trustee Phillips that there being no further business to discuss, on June 17th, 2025, the Finance Committee stands adjourned at 12:00pm. CARRIED.