



MSS PAC Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2026

Attendees

Principal Dave Andersen

School Trustee Gordon Swan

PAC Executive

- Kristina Desmond (President)
- Quinn Rooke (Treasurer)

Parents & Guests

- Diane Walker
- Chandra Bonthoux

Call to order – 6:04 PM

Adoption of minutes - February minutes will be reviewed and approved with March minutes next month.

Trustee Report – Gordan Swan

The Provincial Government presented its budget: <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2026/> Although it talks about protecting Education through careful choices I believe it is more of a we did not cut as deep into Education as we did other core services. The increase you see will cover the BCTF collective Agreement. Mental Health is still not a priority and the ratio in the contract is still above neighbouring provinces. Alberta is 1:250 students; Ontario 1:385; BC is 1:693 . Services that were previously not subject to PST will now be subject to PST. We do not know if increases to School Principals will be covered or if Districts are expected to find those dollars internally.

BC school districts are facing growing financial pressures because the cost of delivering K-12 programs is rising faster than provincial funding.

This report highlights the drivers of financial pressure, the implications for programs, and the need for proactive planning and communication.

Unfunded Inflationary Costs: Funding rate adjustments do not cover all inflationary pressures, including rising costs for employee benefits, technology, facility maintenance, equipment, and services and supplies. As an example, Nicola Similkameen has over 9.55 million in deferred maintenance. This year we put in for ~ 3 million in capital funding and are receiving 1 million. This means our deferred maintenance continues to grow. We have



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had 3 water line breaches at Merritt Central that we have patched. We need to replace the aging infrastructure under the building - the cost is about 1.2 million. If you recall at the time of the flood we recommended putting the dollars to rehabilitate DiamondVale and Merritt Central would be better spent in building a combined school. That proposal was rejected as new construction would have pushed the costs up compared to repairing damage. Repairing damage got us back to pre flood conditions.

We will be spending more on maintaining our facilities as they continue to age and maintenance projects are deferred due to lack of funding. I expect our 9.55 Million to exceed 10 million next year. Numbers from January 2025 for deferred maintenance breakdown as follows:

Merritt Central Elementary \$2.3 million

Colletville Elementary \$1.1 million

Bench Elementary \$577,000

Nicola Canford Elementary \$630,500

Diamond Vale Elementary \$695,000

Merritt Secondary School \$2.1 million

John Allison Elementary School \$870,000

Vermillion Forks Elementary School \$689,000

Princeton Secondary School \$591,000

Our capital plan childcare proposal has been rejected.

In meetings with Minister of Infrastructure and meeting with Board Chairs we cannot expect any major capital projects to be approved until our nominal capacity exceeds 90%. We are currently under 70%.

In meetings with the Minister of Education and Childcare some of the 15,000 position cuts across the broader public sector are expected to come from Education. To quote, "You need to sharpen your pencils."

Our early estimate is 71 less students next year. That equates to about \$837,000 less in funding for 2026/2027

We are not alone in this Surrey is estimating 890 less students each year for at least 3 year. Put another way they will shed more students than we have in our entire school district in 3 years.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/vancouver/article/surrey-school-board-facing-an-unfamiliar-dilemmadeclining-enrolment/>

The District will be crafting three new policies before June 30 concerning Role of Superintendent; Role of Assistant Superintendent; Role of Secretary Treasurer. Ministry has request all Board to have these policies in place prior to the Local Elections in the Fall On happier news the Board did fund up to \$3,000 for DPAC to send to two representatives to the BCCPAC conference in the Lower Mainland.



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Principal's Report – Dave Andersen

Semester 2 Start:

- February marked the start of Semester 2 at Merritt Secondary School. With new schedules in place, classrooms quickly filled with fresh learning opportunities as students began new courses and continued working toward their graduation goals.

Winter Athletics Season Wrap-Up

- The winter athletics season concluded during February, with the remaining MSS teams completing their seasons. We thank our student-athletes for their dedication and sportsmanship, and extend appreciation to the staff and community coaches who support these programs and help create positive experiences for students.

Guest Speaker: Jeff Martin

- Students had the opportunity to hear from guest speaker Jeff Martin, who spoke about inclusion, self-worth, and the importance of belonging. His message reinforced our ongoing efforts to foster a supportive and inclusive school community.

Grad Class Celebration

- Our graduating students celebrated the start of their final semester with a class trip to Fun Factor in Kamloops. While the annual tubing trip to Harper Mountain was not possible this year due to low snow conditions, the alternate activity provided a fun opportunity for the graduating class to connect and celebrate together.

Course Planning & Post-Secondary Exploration

- Course selection for the 2026–2027 school year is now underway. MSS hosted a family information evening and student sessions to review course options and graduation requirements. Grade 12 students also attended a post-secondary information session at NVIT, where they heard from representatives and two recent MSS graduates about transitioning to post-secondary education.

Band Outreach & Grade 7 Transition



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- Our MSS Band students helped support transitions for incoming students by travelling to local elementary schools to perform and introduce the program. MSS is also hosting a Grade 7 Band Night, giving future students an opportunity to visit the school and learn more about the music program.

Treasurer's Report – Quinn Rooke

Category	Amount
Gaming	\$5,571.14
Operating	\$515.52

Moved by Kristina Desmond seconded by Diane Walker to accept the Treasurer's Report as written

New Business

- Request for funding – presented by Dave Andersen obo Shannon Dunn
Permanent Art Collection \$450 ***Motion made to approve made by Kristina Desmond and seconded by Quinn**

Next meeting Tuesday, April 13th in light of Easter Monday Apr.6

Meeting Adjourned – 6:26pm