



# Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) Board of Trustees Additional Meeting MINUTES

September 5, 2023 @ 12:00PM  
Video Conference due to Wildfires

Trustees Present: Barbara Bell, David Wasylciw, Jason Snaggs,  
Michelle Peters (arrived as indicated), Terry Brookes and  
Tina Drew (joined via telephone)

Regrets: Allan Shortt (unable to attend), Michelle Peters (late arrival)

Administration Present: Jameel Aziz, Tram Do, Shirley Zouboules, Landon Kowalzik,  
Jordan Martin, and Pat Thagard

Guests present: none

Meeting Chairperson: Chairperson Wasylciw

1. Meeting called to order at 12:06PM. Six (6) Trustees were present, quorum was met.
2. Chairperson Wasylciw respectfully acknowledged that given the current evacuation we live, work and, learn on Chief Drygeese Territory in the Akaitcho region, the traditional territory of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and on the sacred land of many other First Nations across Canada.
3. Chairperson Wasylciw thanked everyone for being able to join the meeting. He also noted that much has happened since the last meeting and he looks forward to seeing everyone back in Yellowknife.
4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest – none
5. Adoption of Agenda

### **Motion #: 01/09-05/2023**

*I move that the Board of Trustees of Yellowknife Education District No 1 adopt the agenda as presented with the removal of items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.1 and 12 from the agenda.*

Moved by: Trustee Brookes; Seconded by: Trustee Snaggs

**Motion #: 01/09-05/2023**

**Carried**

- ~~6. Delegations and Presentations~~
- ~~7. Review & Approval of Minutes~~
- ~~8. Business Arising from the Minutes~~
- ~~9. Trustee Statements~~
10. Unfinished Business
- ~~10.1. Bussing Update~~

## 10.2. Wildfire & Evacuation Update

Administration reviewed the upcoming re-entry announced by the City scheduled for September 6, 2023 at noon.

All residents are asked to exercise patience and to be kind to each other.

Administration met with the superintendents of CFSTNO and YCS on Saturday to discuss appropriate startup dates for our schools. After that discussion John MacDonald, Deputy Minister of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) joined the superintendent meeting to provide feedback on proposed school start dates. Matthew Miller, President of the NWT Teachers Association (NWTTA), was also engaged to provide feedback. It is understood that the proposed dates would not be ideal for everyone and that was taken into consideration. We will be flexible as much as possible. Collective agreements will also be used to address challenges as they arise.

Return flights will begin tomorrow. We are aware that we will not have full contingent of staff in place on Monday and when schools open on the 14<sup>th</sup> and all families will likely not have returned either. On Monday, September 11th we will assess which staff are present and move forward to create a stable environment for students and families as Yellowknife tries to get back on its feet again.

Director of Operations Martin and some of the Maintenance Department staff were declared essential workers. It was noted that some essential workers are facing barriers to returning.

[Trustee Peters joined the meeting]

The safety and security of families and staff are paramount. We do not want anyone taking any risks to return. There will be hiccups and bumps along the way but, we will work to be patient, flexible and kind. It is important to note that as employers and with the support of the Board, we made sure staff were paid, not because we were required to do so, but because it was the right thing to do.

Staff has been advised not to enter schools until facilities have been cleared by the Maintenance team.

Chairperson Wasylciw called for questions

Is there a possibility that YK1 will be able to provide daycare services for health care workers?

Administration indicated that the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) has not made a request to provide daycare. Without knowing what staff will be in place this is currently not a possibility. Staff that will be back to work on Monday may have childcare needs as well. We may have to look at staff needs before community needs.

Is there any coordination happening with school boards outside Yellowknife?

We continue to work with ECE. The Superintendent of the South Slave has attended the meetings being held. Consistent language and unity are key. Expectations can be different for different systems however there will be cooperation and unity where possible.

Will adjustments be necessary to the school calendars?

If we can get school started by Thursday, September 14th the belief is there will no need to make adjustments to the calendars. Teachers are professionals that know how to make the adjustments necessary to deliver the curriculum. The need for high school students to write exams may be a factor to consider. The Government of Alberta has indicated any of their students affected by evacuations will not be required to write exams. Administration will talk to staff and school leadership about calendars to determine next steps. Collective agreements will also have to be taken into consideration. Care will need to be taken in all communication so as not to raise anxiety or public expectations. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

**What can the Board of Trustees do from a governance standpoint to support District staff with the start of the school year?**

Administration would like to request Board support with the following:

Drafting of a letter from the Board of Trustees to be sent to staff sent early next week that recognizes the hardship and challenges staff have faced, that highlights how vital they are to the startup of the City, and indicates how much they and their efforts are appreciated.

Administration noted that the GNWT and ECE have been very good to work with. Today's statement that they are leaving calendar adjustments up to individual Boards is very helpful.

The Board is asked to help with public messaging to assist with the management of expectations. The reopening will not be perfect however, kindness and patience will be very important. Bussing is still being sorted out. Grocery stores were approached last week to put aside food and beverages aside for schools to help with potential food security needs of students.

Administration thanked the Board of Trustees for their continued support which allowed the work that needed to be done to be accomplished. The care and compassion of YK1 Board and District Office staff shows that we work hard to serve our students, YK1 families and the community as best as possible.

Trustees summarized the tasks as follows:

1. Letter to staff
2. Communication to the families and the public

Administration to draft the letters for Board review and feedback.

In recognition of staff can we purchase a small gift (e.g. coffee and a donut) as a tangible way for the Board to say thank you to staff?

Board Chairperson and Administration will work on this. It was suggested this gesture take place later in the month to allow vendors time to be up and running.

What will can be done to support grade 12 students going forward to help them prepare for the future?

Administration will have discussions with staff and school leadership to develop recommendations that will be shared with the Board. All factors will need to be considered, such as staff, student and family mental health. Information will be provided as it becomes available.

Who oversees changes to exams and exam schedules?

This would be done by the Government of Alberta. If adjustments are proposed they would have to be submitted to the Government of Alberta for approval. Any requests for changes would be submitted via ECE.

Will PD days that were supposed to occur be fit in going forward?

Once the school year is up and running Administration will look to see where the missed PD can be fit into the current calendars.

Trustees indicated appreciation for all the work that has been done.

Chairperson Wasylciw called for further questions – no further questions

## **11. New Business**

### **11.1. New School Year Start Daye**

The current schedule is for YK1 staff will start on September 11<sup>th</sup> and the first day of school will be September 14<sup>th</sup>. School registrations will be accepted starting September 12<sup>th</sup> to allow offices the 11<sup>th</sup> to settle back in.

~~12. Reports~~

13. Announcements

First Day of School scheduled for September 14th

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting – Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 7:00 PM

15. Chairperson's Closing Remarks

Chairperson Wasylciw thanked everyone for a good discussion. It's nice to have dates so that we can start the return process. Everyone was wished safe travels.

16. Adjournment

**Motion #: 03/05-09/2023**

*I move that this board meeting of the Yellowknife Education District No.1 Board of Trustees be adjourned*

Moved by: Trustee Snaggs; Seconded by: Trustee Brookes

The meeting adjourned at 12:53PM

Patrizia Thagard, Secretary

**Signed after update, as required and approval:**

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**Chairperson Wasylciw**

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**Secretary Treasurer Do**