

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD
February 25, 2026

Present: Anthony Nitti (Chair), Christina Matchett, Andrea Gruia, Stewart Viita, Chelsea Gaul (parents), Scott Thompson, Lucy DePetrillo, Patti Surette (teachers), Namrata Naval (Daycare), Kate Marien (community representative), Ekaterina Valkova-Damova (Librarian), Eugenia Carystios (Interim Principal)

Regrets: Jesse Altenhoff

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that Elizabeth Ballantyne School is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehà:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtià:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

2. Adoption of the Agenda of February 25, 2026

On motion duly made (C Matchett) and seconded (A Gruia), it was unanimously resolved to adopt the agenda of January 29, 2026, with the following addition – 5.3 Pet Therapy.

3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of January 29, 2026:

On motion duly made (C Matchett) and seconded (C Gaul), it was unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 29, 2026, as presented.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

4.1 Base Daycare Handbook

E Carystios highlighted the changes that were made to the Daycare Handbook.

On motion duly made (C Matchett) and seconded (L De Petrillo), it was unanimously resolved to approve the Daycare Handbook as presented.

5. New Business

5.1 Adoption of School Budget 2025-2026

E Carystios presented the budget and gave an overview of the various funds with details regarding Funds 3, 5 and 6 in particular. E Carystios will follow up regarding a question from A Nitti on an item in Fund 5.

On motion duly made (C Matchett) and seconded (L De Petrillo) it was unanimously resolved to adopt the budget as presented.

5.2 Selection Criteria for the Appointment of the Principal

A Nitti explained the process, and shared last year's document. He invited the GB members to send their suggestions to him; he will draft the response to be sent to the school board and distribute it for an electronic vote.

5.3 Pet Therapy

E Carystios reported that Kindergarten students have been participating in Pet Therapy through McGill University. They have enjoyed the visits of a handler and dog every Wednesday – parental permission has been received, and insurance is in place.

On motion duly made (C Gaul) and seconded (S Viita), it was unanimously resolved to expand the program to other grades, pending parental permission.

6.0 Reports

6.1 Principal's Report (E Carystios)

- Thank you to parent volunteers for many treats during Staff Appreciation week.
- Grade 4 students participated in a 'School Climate and Conflict Resolution' workshop, led by Ms. Jag (our Personal Development and Community Involvement Animator) and Mr. Louis from the EMSB School Climate and Violence Prevention Team.
- Grade 6 students participated in a 'Digital Citizenship and Online Safety' workshop, also led by Ms. Jag and the EMSB School Climate and Violence Prevention Team.
- To celebrate Black History Month, we welcomed Fatima Wilson with students from Marymount. Our students enjoyed the performance and learned about the history of the steel pan. Omari Newton from Overture with the Arts presented 'Breaking Barriers'.
- Thank you to Ms. Stefanie for organizing a fund carnival week
- Students participated in 'Hooked on Schools' week.

6.2 Teacher's Report (L DePetrillo)

- Our school nurse visited the Kindergarten classes to speak with students about germs and the importance of proper handwashing.
- Vision screening for all Kindergarten students – this is an early intervention for parents who haven't yet taken their children to the eye doctor. Parents are encouraged to follow up with an optometrist for a comprehensive eye exam if necessary.

- We welcomed Ms. Rhonda and Rizzo, her friendly Labrador retriever, for Pet Therapy. They will be visiting every Wednesday to spend time with our Kindergarten students. The children thoroughly enjoyed their first session and are already looking forward to the next visit.
- Kindergarten celebrated 110 days of school with many fun activities. It was a wonderful day filled with excitement as we marked this special milestone together.
- Ariana, a dietitian from the Board, led a Nutrition Workshop for our Kindergarten students. The children learned about the different food groups and how making healthy food choices gives their bodies the energy they need to learn, play, and grow
- Lunch Buddies takes place every Monday, bringing together a group of Grade 6 and K students. They share lunch and participate in different activities, helping to strengthen the friendships and connections they have already built during their buddy time.
- Kind Kids' SEL program: K4/K5 Our Kind Kids Social-Emotional Learning Program has officially wrapped up. In 8 weeks learned about making friends, being helpful, playing fairly and kindly, problem solving, dealing with frustration, sharing and being cooperative, and offering forgiveness
- Winter Carnival: A week filled with fun and engaging activities that brought our school community together.
- Lunch and Learn: We had our first meeting...called Zen and Colour. A group of students who are having difficulty met with Ms. Jag and Ms. Lucy in a calm space to colour, relax and speak about their concerns. It's a calm and supportive environment designed to help students feel included, valued, and heard.

6.3 Daycare Report (N Raval)

- Miss Alice's students have been cooking, painting and doing research on Black History Month.
- Miss Jackie has been working on nutrition with her students, promoting healthy eating habits.
- The students will participate in a special activity next week, to learn how to make cartoons.
- N Raval has been working on the receipts to be sent out to parents for their tax returns.

6.4 EMSBPC Report

A Nitti distributed a highlight sheet before tonight's meeting, and he elaborated on some of the discussions that were had.

6.5 Library Report

- At this time of year, we organize the traditional Bill Foster Writing Contest. In 2026, we encourage students to submit texts on the theme of ‘Friendship’ - in English or French, illustrated, printed, any genre. The deadline for submissions is April 2nd. Teachers will be informed about the details.
- Canadian award-winning author Heather Camlot made a presentation in front of the three Grade 5 classes of her latest book “One Goal: How Soccer Can Save the Planet”. She explained concepts of climate change and recycling through the lenses of soccer games and infrastructure.
- The library is open during the March break, and activities are offered every day of the week. Information will be sent to the parents.

7.0 Question Period

There were no questions.

8.0 Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Kate Marien, Secretary

Anthony Nitti, Chair

Eugenia Carystios,
Interim Principal

Date