

Willingdon Governing Board Minutes
Monday, April 20, 2026 at 6:30 pm (virtual)

Present: Silvana Crigna (Principal), Jessica Doubt (Vice-Principal), Daniela Colafabio (Vice-Principal), Nick Batzios (Teacher), Felicia Maccio (Teacher), Tina Barbaccia (Teacher), Luminita Paun (Teacher), Kathleen Usher (Teacher), Nadine Thomas (Daycare Technician), Megan Donovan (Parent), Alex Ruaux (Parent), Roxanne Ross (Parent), Richard Bartle-Tubbs (Parent), Amy Hétu (Parent), Nadine Collins (Community Representative).

Regrets: Karyn Moffatt (Parent)

Minutes taken by: Alex Ruaux

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
Read by Roxanne Ross

2. Approval of Agenda
Motion to adopt the agenda moved by Kathleen Usher and seconded by Nick Batzios.

3. Approval of March 26, 2026, Meeting Minutes
Motion to adopt the minutes moved by Roxanne Ross and seconded by Nick Batzios.

4. Business Arising:
No Business arising.

5. New Business:
 - a. School Calendar 2026-2027
Principal Crigna presented the school calendar for 2026-2027.

 - b. Important Dates 2026-2027
Principal Crigna presented the important dates for 2026-2027.

 - c. Approval of B.A.S.E. Daycare Activities
 - i. Mr. Puffs food truck on site May 1
The proposed activity was presented by Nadine Thomas, with an associated cost of \$26. A concern was raised by Amy Hétu regarding whether the presence of the Mr Puffs food truck could be construed as marketing to children. A discussion followed and it was noted that food trucks were sometimes brought in for events such as Graduation. This activity had been previously approved by the School Board, but Principal Crigna will express this concern to the School Board and seek clarification. An e-vote will be held if approval is sought from the Governing Board.

A further question was raised as to whether this concern could also apply to activities such as pizza day, when branded pizza boxes are brought into the school. The consensus was this was thought not to be the case.

d. Approval of Trips

i. Field Trip K4/K5 on Thursday June 18

The date had to be changed from June 17 to June 18 because of a bussing issue. The price remains unchanged.

e. Discussions requested by Ms. Amy Héту

i. **Library Service**

Discussion requested as a follow-up to the Commissioner's email sent in February highlighting diminished literacy engagement, limited access to materials and a widening of the learning gap. Principal Crigna responded that this wasn't an issue at Willingdon, because the library is offered to students by technicians on a bi-weekly basis (2 days at Senior, 3 days at Junior). They also sometimes read to students, can be contacted by teachers as necessary, and have a budget for the purchase of book. A question was asked whether the school accepts donations of books. Principal Crigna responded in the affirmative but stated that they wouldn't necessarily go to the library, as there are many other places in the school where books can be made available to students.

ii. **Technology in the Classroom**

Discussions with other parents raised questions about the use of smart screens, videos, YouTube etc. in school, and it was questioned whether there was a policy in place around the use of technology in the classroom. Principal Crigna responded that individual teachers decide the relevant sites to access to complement lessons, and they are done so with a targeted purpose. The exception to this may be as treats, such as on Halloween. Principal Crigna highlighted their guidelines:

Tech for research – with an emphasis on the methods of conducting research online and its safe usage.

Tech for creativity – e.g. a fun Friday afternoon when all work had been completed.

Tech use by substitute teachers – it is not allowed to be used to fill time and occupy students and must only be used with purpose and to compliment a lesson.

Tech use by BASE – this must also be linked to academics.

Principal Crigna elaborated, stating that all apps in use are vetted by the School Board and laptop access is monitored. Kathleen Usher clarified that teachers and students logged in via their education accounts would not see ads. She noted the importance of students learning how to

evaluate accurate/reliable sources of information. And also, how smart boards are a valuable tool in augmenting teacher's lessons. Nadine Collins spoke about mamanest.ca, created by a local parent, designed to teach healthy tech habits and educate parents as to what is online. Meghan Donovan shared how the use varies with a student's age, and older kids using it for research appreciate having been taught how to critically evaluate online information and use tech appropriately. Nick Batzios shared how it was useful and complimentary to his lessons e.g. showing what an instrument looks and sounds like, allowing students to listen to music etc. Amy Héту questions whether a written policy was needed. Principal Crigna responded that the administrative team offered guidance to staff members, and that she was open to further communication with parents if necessary.

iii. Use of AI Tools

Principal Crigna stressed that this was of concern to all and that the EMSB tech team are working on guidelines. As a first step, only CoPilot is allowed for staff use and educators have been advised to be careful when using AI, such as not entering personal information, not running students' assignments through an AI, being vigilant when work is handed in etc. The School Board is working on developing a policy for all schools. Amy Héту questioned whether the school could develop their own guidelines or policy independent of the school board. Principal Crigna responded that it was too early and complex an issue for the school to develop a local policy. She emphasized that it was of concern, because of the need to guide students in the responsible and appropriate use of AI, and that we don't want to be playing catch-up as we have with general internet usage. A more general overview was then given on the need to be vigilant of all tech usage in and out of school, the way in which usage affects students and the need to educate students and parents on reasonable screen use and understanding the implications of their actions. Kathleen Usher also brought up the environmental impact of AI data centers and how this is a different way for students to view the use of AI.

f. Approval of PACT (Power to Act) initiative on April 24

Principal Crigna presented this anti-bullying initiative. The Impossible Pair Day would invite students to wear 2 different shoes to school, illustrating that even in our differences, it's possible to move forward together. There would also be an opportunity to donate a symbolic \$2 online to support the fight against bullying. If approved, Administration will share with students, parents and staff. Principal Crigna showed a short promotional video, and quoted the stat that "In 2025, 65% of elementary and high school students in Quebec reported experiencing at least

one form of violence, including bullying, racism, sexism, cyberbullying, or homophobia.” Megan Donovan suggested that for the sake of equity and inclusion, the communication to parents could include that if they don’t have 2 pairs of shoes to mix and match, they could decorate one shoe to make it different, so that everyone can participate.

Motion to move forward with this initiative as presented by Principal Crigna moved by Megan Donovan and seconded by Amy Hétu. All voted in favour with one abstention.

6. Question Period

No questions.

7. Reports:

a. Principal

Nothing further to report.

b. Vice-Principal (Junior Campus)

From the written report:

Literacy Week: students across both campuses participated in engaging literacy activities such as contests, costume day, and partner reading. This year’s highlight was the inclusion of Willingdon parent authors, illustrators, animators, and journalists, whose presentations enriched the program and celebrated our community’s talent.

Field Trips

Grade 2 - Cirque Tohu

Ateliers de nutrition K4-K5 PM

Cycle 2 Workshop: Les Algonquiens et les Iroquoiens vers 1500

K4- Musée pour enfants

Grade 4 Holocaust and Inclusion Workshop

c. Vice-Principal (Senior Campus)

From the written report:

- The Senior Campus proudly hosted the West Sector Regional Storytelling Competition, welcoming students and parents from 12 participating schools. The event was a wonderful celebration of student voice and creativity and received added recognition through coverage on CityNews Montréal.
- Students in grades 4 and 5 participated in an explorations workshop where they had the opportunity to design and create their own video games. In the coming weeks, students will be able to view and showcase their completed projects.

- We had a powerful presentation last week from Overture with the Arts entitled “Unpacking the N word”. This anti racism presentation explored the origins of the word and its lasting impact on society.
- Today, Grade 6 students welcomed five parent volunteers who shared insights into their exciting careers. Students were highly engaged and asked thoughtful questions throughout the presentation.
- Students from both campuses will be participating in Earth Day clean up this week.
- We have our Cycle 3 concert taking place this coming Thursday at Royal Vale.

d. Home and School

From the written report:

- **Book Fair:** May 8

e. Teachers/MTA

Kathleen Usher shared

Plans for Earth Day activities: requesting parent volunteers Wednesday, 2:20-3pm. All students will help with sweeping and litter picking in the school yard, in front of the school, YMCA field and surrounding area. Initiatives and education around the issue will be happening at both campuses.

Nick Batzios shared

Excited for Cycle 3 concert on April 23. Our talented solo vocalists and instrumental groups are hard at work and sound incredible. Meanwhile, our Grade 5 and 6 group performers are preparing fresh, inspiring songs that you won’t want to miss. This will be a night of music, energy, and celebration of our amazing students being **Different Together!**

Additional comments from the written reports:

Mme Maccio: This month we explored several themes. In K5, the focus was on le corps with a deeper look at the skeletal system, organs etc, and the environment in connection with Earth Day activities. In K4, the students worked on the theme, Les métiers and went to Le Musée pour enfants. In the preschool cycle, the students will participate in a dramatic arts session with Nicolas Doyon and they will explore the concept of Objet utilitaire ou objet ludique.

f. B.A.S.E. Daycare

From the written report:

Overall, BASE is running smoothly, and there is nothing significant to report at this time.

g. Parent Advisory Committee

Nothing to report.

h. EMSB Parents' Committee Representative

From written report:

Budget priorities presented by the Parent Committee:

1. Significantly increase staffing of Professionals (prioritizing but not limited to Psychologists, Speech & Language Pathologists, and Guidance Counselors) Resource Teachers (English & French), Attendants & Technicians and Special Education Technician taking into consideration services to all students with different learning needs.
2. Continue to invest in, develop, and improve programs, professional services and resources to improve mental health by:
 - reinstating social workers in school and investment in group or single service Therapists to help students with stress and anxiety;
 - implementing programs for anti-bullying (in-person and online);
 - educating students on digital literacy and online safety and device addiction;
 - providing education and access to all forms of physical activity opportunities as part of students' daily lives.
3. Continue investing in and improving the physical learning environment for students by increasing funding for security, health and safety, including:
 - removal of snow and ice in common areas in a timely manner;
 - building maintenance and upgrading projects;
 - building adaptations to ensure accessibility to all levels and facilities for students, staff, parents and the public with mobility impairments;
 - Board wide Administration lead awareness campaigns to promote/advocate for improvements to road safety on streets to and from schools.
4. Ensure food programs are maintained throughout the year without compromise to nutritional guidelines regardless of the socio-economic decile ranking adjustments to the school and create those programs where needed (including fresh produce).

5. Improved AI literacy initiatives for teachers and students to understand ethical use as a tool for educational enhancement and to prepare them for a future with AI integration.
6. Invest in and foster transitional programs for students leaving the youth sector, i.e. work stage, trades, vocational and work orientated programs.
7. Continue to improve new technologies to facilitate the learning environment in all schools as a resource for all students.
8. Request additional funds to reimburse public transportation fares for high school students.

i. School Commissioner

Nothing to report.

j. Community Representatives

Nadine Collins emphasized that Women on the Rise is still displaced, after the January power outage and subsequent flooding, and that there is not yet a timeline to get back into the building.

From the written report:

This month is our Membership Drive which allows us to get a snapshot of the members and for those who want to vote and give an opportunity to have a deeper role within the organization. Tomorrow, is our free tax clinic by the NDG Community Council, Thursday Consumer Protection in Quebec: Knowing Your Rights and Avoiding Common Pitfalls by BCRC In the Know and next week they are back with The Data Act & Digital Safety: Protecting Your Information and Online Identity, next Thursday with Bloom & Release with our Dawson College intern with a STEM activity. Earlier in the month- Jasmine facilitated United in Pink- anti bullying and moving to create belonging and kindness. Tuesday afternoons in the church basement/ Thursdays at Walkley centre. Our PPMH groups are continuing on Fridays, Stronger Together conjugal violence- in person and online, and today was our second session for our conjugal violence peer support group for those with disabilities, and the perinatal loss support group on Tuesdays- closed cohort. Boutique is still closed and donations suspended due to the displacement. Food distribution is once a month. Consultations by phone, and one on one meetings.

8. Varia

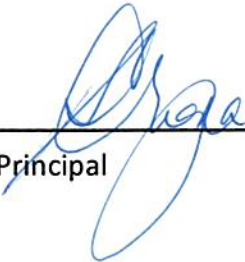
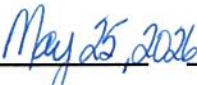
Nothing to report.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm. Moved by Kathleen Usher and seconded by Amy Hétu

10. Next Meeting

Monday, May 25, 2026 at 6:30 pm (virtual)

			
Principal	Date	Chairperson	Date