



**BOARD OF EDUCATION
Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools**

BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING

ACTION SHEET

DATE: April 12, 2017
TO: Business Committee
FROM: Secretary-Treasurer, Carrie McVeigh
SUBJECT: Reducing the Number of Trustees and Potential Ward System

Recommendation:

That the Education Committee recommends the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) receive the report dated April 12, 2017, on reducing the number of trustees and potential ward system.

Background:

By Board motion R16/03/30-13 (motion included at the end, for reference), staff was requested to report on:

- a. the necessary steps to reduce the Board from nine to seven trustees;
- b. estimate the savings by reducing the number of trustees from nine to seven;
- c. trustee stipends; and,
- d. options for a ward system.

Steps to Reduce the Number of Trustees on the Board

The Act stipulates that 3, 5, 7 or 9 trustees will make up a board of education. The Minister, by order, determines the number of trustees for each board. The ministry has published "Trustee Variation Guidelines" which sets out how a board requests a change to the number of trustees and what information must be included with such a request.

In summary, the Board would need to provide a rationale for the change in the number of trustees and then hold some sort of public consultation to seek the views of the public on the proposed change. As well, the Board would need to reach out to municipal governments, the regional district, First Nations and special interest groups to seek their opinions on the proposed change to the number of trustees. Once that is completed, the Board would need to write to the Minister requesting the change, outlining the rationale and a summary of consultations held. While there is no legislated date by which the proposal would need to be submitted; upon enquiry, Ministry staff have advised that the Board would need to receive the letter by October 1, 2017.

Cost Savings of Reducing the Number of Trustees

Each trustee is currently paid an annual stipend of \$16,342 per year. As well as the stipend paid to trustees, other expenses are incurred by the district for each trustee. For the last two years, those costs have averaged out to \$6,950 per year per trustee.

So in total, the cost savings by reducing the number of trustees from nine to seven would be approximately \$46,600 per year.

Trustee Stipends

The subject of trustee stipends was also the subject of a separate resolution passed on August 31, 2016. Response to the trustee stipends request will be presented on an Action Sheet for that resolution rather than duplicating it in this document.

Options for Ward System

One option for establishing a ward system is particularly applicable if it is felt that a geographic area has historically been under-represented on the Board. This option would entail identifying the geographic area and have one trustee to be elected from that area alone. The remainder of the trustees would be elected from the remainder of the district. One pitfall with this approach is that it may create a disproportional representation. For example, if the under-represented area had a population of 5,000 people, there would be one trustee representing them and eight trustees representing the remaining 121,000 people living in the rest of NLPS boundaries, which works out to about 15,000 per trustee. If the number of trustees was reduced to six, it would be about 20,000 people per trustee in the remaining area.

Another option is to divide the district into nine separate wards with about the same number of residents in each ward. Using current populations that would be about 14,000 people per ward and about 18,000 per ward if the number of trustees was reduced to seven. In order to keep the population numbers about the same in each ward, the district should review the ward boundaries periodically to determine whether or not they need to be adjusted.

A third option is to divide the district into fewer than nine wards (or fewer than seven wards if the number of trustees is reduced) and have two trustees elected from wards with the greatest population.

A fourth option is a hybrid between at-large and ward elections for trustees. The district would be divided into fewer than nine wards (or fewer than seven wards if the number of trustees is reduced) and have one trustee elected from each ward. That would mean that one or more trustees would be elected at-large.

The final option is to leave trustees to be elected at-large, as is the current practice.

Process for changing to a ward system

The first step to implement a ward system would be for the Board to articulate the rationale for such a change. In other words, identify the problem and how the proposed changes will address the concerns.

Following that, the Board would need to identify the ward or wards proposed and the number of trustees to represent each ward. A professional surveyor would need to prepare maps and metes and bounds descriptions of the new wards. The Board would also have to estimate the population in each proposed new ward.

Following that, the Board would need to undertake public consultations and reach out to other organizations in the same way as described above for reducing the number of trustees. Logically, the consultations for reducing the number of trustees to be elected and establishing new wards would be combined into one process. Changing the number of trustees and creating or altering wards are both covered in the "Trustee Variation Guidelines." Finally, the Board would need to write to the Minister requesting the change, outlining the rationale and a summary of the nature of the consultations held.

R16/03/30-13	The Board of Education of School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) directs staff to investigate and report back on the following: (a) The necessary steps & ministry response to the possibility of reducing the current SD68 Board from nine members to seven; (b) What are the estimated savings from reducing the number of trustees from nine to seven?; (c) SD68 trustee stipends (how do they compare; stipends of board chair, vice chair & committee chairs versus trustees at large; should stipends increase or be tied to COLA (cost of living allowances)?; (d) options for a ward system (versus the current "at large" system). Report should be delivered for consideration on or before October 26, 2016.
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