

BLT JR & BLT SR Elementary- School Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2026
Virtual Meeting

Attendance:

Present:

1) Katie Sherren	Chair/ Parent	BLT SR
2) Mr. Albert Williams	Principal	BLT JR
3) Ms. Michelle Andrews	Principal	BLT SR
4) Ms. Cali Huczel	Vice Principal	BLT JR
5) Ms. Tracey Quinn	Vice Principal	BLT JR
6) Ms. Christine Compton	Teacher	BLT JR
7) Ian Angus	Community Member	
8) Sarah Warfard	Parent	BLT JR & BLT SR
9) Stephanie Brown	Parent	BLT SR
10) Amy Lowry	Parent	BLT SR

Regrets:

1) Karri Lynn Davidson	Parent	BLT SR
2) Mme. Comeau	Teacher	BLT JR

Call to Order:

6:02 PM, January 12th, 2026
Virtual Meeting

Principal Report from BLT JR (Mr. Williams):

Important date to remember (January & February):

- January 27: International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- January 27: Family Literacy Day
- February is African Heritage and Registration Month
- February 16: Heritage Day
- February 17-20: Cultural Programming from Halifax Regional Arts

Winter Concert: A huge success and truly a joy to attend. A special thank you to Ms. MacDonald for her dedication and hard work in preparing the students, and to all the students for their enthusiasm and talent. Their commitment and effort were evident in every performance, and they did a wonderful job bringing the program to life. Congratulations to everyone involved on an outstanding evening.

Book Fair: A huge success! Thanks to the strong support from our school community, we will be able to purchase new resources for our library, helping to update and enhance our collection for students to enjoy.

Lunch Program:

- A friendly reminder to please watch for ordering dates and submit lunch orders on time. If an ordering deadline is missed, you will need to wait until the next ordering window.
- Our lunch monitors have been very helpful in ensuring that students receive their lunches, and we greatly appreciate their support.
- We are still looking for substitute lunch monitors.
- A special thank you to our kitchen staff for their hard work and dedication in preparing and serving meals to our students each day.
- Any concerns will be shared with the lunch supervisor so they can be addressed in a timely and supportive manner.

Breakfast Bins:

- Students have access to the breakfast bins every morning, filled with a variety of healthy options, and we have added some exciting new items to try!
- A big thank you to our breakfast volunteers and staff for keeping the bins stocked and organized.

School Equity Team Update:

- Equity team members are set to participate in a Level 2 training session with Ottis Day, which will take place within the next month.
- The equity bins continue to be updated with new resources that promote inclusivity and diverse perspectives. These materials will be shared with staff during upcoming staff meetings.
- The theme bulletin boards in the lobby, showcasing students work, have been a huge success.

School Repairs:

- The elevator is back up and running.
- Purchased new pylons for the school.
- Work order was submitted to repair the pulley system and replace the flag.

Literacy Assessment: Grade one students will be assessed again this term and grade primary will be assessed at the end of January.

SSP: Cycle 1 reflection has been completed and looking at setting goals for cycle two of our plan.

General Discussion: A concern was brought forward regarding the separation of pre- primary students. For example, if the weather is cold or wet, grade primary and grade one students are allowed inside the school with supervision at 8:15. *Bussed* pre-primary students are also welcomed in but pre-primary students who walk remain outside until 8:35 when the pre-primary program starts their day. This is due to the separate Educational Act and this is the way it is done at all schools. SAC member will write an email and Mr. Williams will forward it to HRCE to review the process.

Principal Report from BLT SR (Ms. Andrews):

LM3 Assessments:

- Teachers are reviewing effective instructional writing and strategies and creating targeted math groups to support students who are not yet meeting benchmarks.
- A lead team is being established to monitor progress and guide next steps in preparation.

Grade 2 Phonemic Awareness Reassessment: ELST and resource teachers are currently reassessing Grade 2 students in phonemic awareness to monitor progress and plan next steps.

BLT SR School Spirit Week (December 15-19): The school celebrated the countdown to the holiday break with a week focused on school spirit. Students had the option to participate in a variety of spirit activities throughout the week.

Holiday Concert Donations: Donations were collected during the holiday concerts and will be used to support and strengthen literacy programming, helping to enhance student learning opportunities.

Grade 5 Ski Trip: Students in Grade 5 will be heading to Martock for a ski trip in January.

Parent-Teacher Committee: A questionnaire is being prepared for families who expressed interest in volunteering to clarify roles and commitment levels.

Student Well Being:

- Equity Team Training with Otis Daye (January 16 & 31): Otis Daye will work with the school team to provide professional learning focused on equity and culturally responsive practices (CRP), building on previous conversations and initiatives.
- The Leadership group is active and engaged.
- Fantastic Moments: Students are recognized for positive accomplishments with certificates presented by the Principal or Vice Principal.
- Monthly Assemblies: Assemblies led by the Leadership Group reinforce the School Matrix and celebrate student success.

SSP: Cycle 1 complete.

- Literacy:
 - Stronger foundational skills: Students show improved phoneme blending/ segmenting, consonant knowledge, and increased ability to decode and encode words using phonics strategies.
 - Emerging transfer to writing: Students attempt phonetic spelling and basic reading strategies, though consistent transfer to independent writing remains a need, especially Grades 4-5.
 - More focused instruction: Established routines (ex: UFLI) support targeted, explicit phonics instruction and allow teachers to adjust teaching based on evidence.
 - Aligned and effective practice: Walk throughs show consistency phonics instruction, strong routines, high engagement, and growing application of skills in reading and writing.
- Math:

- Increased engagement: Students actively participate in math tasks, with flexible grouping and check ins supporting confidence and reducing anxiety.
- Visible learning evidence: Whiteboards, exit tickets, and observations provide immediate insight into student understanding and misconceptions.
- Growing problem-solving skills: Some gains are seen in flexibility and problem-solving, though strategy transfer across concepts remains challenging.
- Responsive instruction: Teachers use ongoing data to differentiate, scaffold learning, and adjust instruction in real time.
- Well-Being:
 - Positive learning environment: High engagement, flexible groupings, and regular check-ins help students feel supported, confident, and willing to share thinking.
 - Students feel heard: Frequent feedback opportunities make student thinking visible and valued.
 - Developing confidence: Students show increased willingness to explain, revise, and reflect on their learning.
 - Supportive teaching practices: Data-informed, flexible instruction helps meet students at their level and supports overall well-being.

Update re: path to BLT Trails (Katie Sherren):

- On November 18, 2025, BLT Rails to Trails Association announced they will return the Letter of Authority to the Province of NS. This will be effective as of March 31, 2026. Therefore, our project has been put on hold. Overall, the school and BLT Rails to Trails Association were supportive of the project.
- I received great ideas from the SAC Conference to help guide the process for funding and design.

Summary of Annual SAC Conference (Katie Sherren):

- Attended by Ms. Michelle Andrews, Mr. Albert Williams, Karri Lynn Davidson and Katie Sherren.

“SAC 101 for Chairs” Session:

- Funding: \$5000 plus \$1 per student (for each school). Use of this funding for BLT has been undecided at this time. SAC members have the opportunity to vote.
- Membership: We continue to need more members in general including more diversity and more teachers and support staff. Infographic has been sent out to families.

“Partnering for School Well-Being” Session:

- “Health Promoting School” (HPS): Partner with Public Health for healthy communities.

“Community Projects 101” Session:

- “Let’s Get Moving NS” - NS Action Plan to create a more active, inclusive, and healthier population.
- “CCTH” - NS Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage.
 - Trail Funding Programs - “The Recreation Trail Expansion Program assists municipalities and not-for-profit organizations in developing new recreational trails, expanding recreational trails, and making capital upgrades to existing infrastructure and connectivity”.

- Healthy Students = Healthy Communities
- Active Mode of Transportation:
 - Sidewalks, trails, bike racks.
 - Use for outdoor education with benches along the trail.
 - Incorporate movement with class time.
 - Use for Excel program.
- “Active Smarter Kids” (ASK) – Partnership based project working with schools to support the implementation of physically active learning in schools across NS. Reports show increased pupil engagement with curriculum, increased levels of physical activity, and increased cooperation and compassion amongst students. It is supported by NS Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
 - Professional Development seminars available! Free!
- Funding:
 - Active Communities Fund (Example: Playbox).
 - Recreation Community Development Fund.
 - Community Recreation Capital
 - Connect 2 in Partnership
- Planning:
 - Feedback and consult community. What is the need? Who will benefit? What is the sustainability?
 - The need should be clear! Letters of support. Letter of awareness.
 - Estimate cost.
 - Develop timeline.
 - Design. Accessibility? Risks? (Example: flooding).
 - Get THREE quotes.
 - Government grant programs.
- Funders: Public. Municipal/ Provincial/ Federal. Community Grants. Community Fundraising. Local business.
- Contact: **Andrea Redmond**- Regional Manager for HRM (Community Facilities Improvement Program)

Summary of School Steering Team (SST) Meeting #1 for new BLT School (Katie Sherren):
 Meeting #1- December 10th, 2025

New School announced for Pre-Primary to Grade 9 in Timberlea, NS.

35 classrooms

Elevator available

Gender neutral bathrooms

Sinks in classroom for Pre-Primary to Grade 6.

Capacity: 800 students.

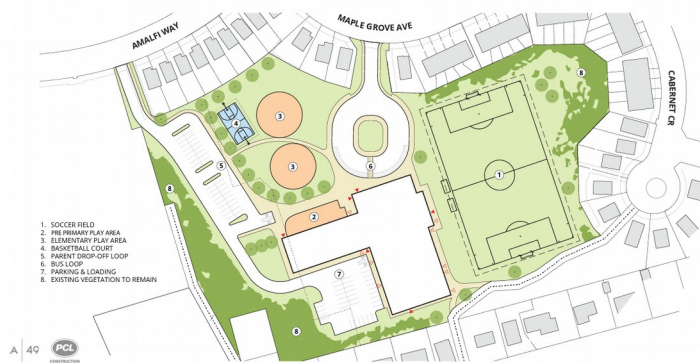
Timeline estimation: 3 years to opening.

School Design (3 floors):

- Lower: Administration offices (with clear view of playground), Pre-primary classrooms, full gym plus half gym, cafeteria, two learning centers
- 2nd Floor: Primary to Grade 3 classrooms, library, elementary music classroom.
- 3rd Floor: Grades 4-9 classrooms, science lab, art room, library.

Site Location:

SITE DESIGN



Bus loop access: Maple Grove Ave.

Student drop off and parking access: Amalfi Way.

Full Sized Soccer field.

General Discussions:

- Originally a day was announced as part of this school. The daycare will be designed and built separately, the location has not been finalized.
- The boundaries have not been decided on at this time. BLT Elementary and Ridgecliff schools will remain active. Concerns were brought forward regarding how the boundaries will be formed. For example, will this new school only serve Brunello residents? How will that affect the BLT Community? They state that noone will have to drive past the new school to get to the older schools.
- Concerns regarding the capacity have been brought forward. A question was asked about where the modular units will be placed, the present responded with “we won’t need them”. Two real estate agents were present and expressed concerns regarding new developments coming to the BLT Community and how this will increase the number of students we have.

Future SST Meetings:

Wednesdays, 3:30 – 5:00 PM

Monthly

Virtual

Next Meeting:

6PM, February 9th, 2026

Virtual Meetings

Meeting Adjourned:

6:55 PM