



First Session, 38th Parliament

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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
(HANSARD)

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SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON

EDUCATION

**Victoria**

**Thursday, November 24, 2005**

**Issue No. 1**

JOHN NURANEY, MLA, CHAIR

ISSN 1499-4208



**SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION**

Victoria  
Thursday, November 24, 2005

- Chair:* \* John Nuraney (Burnaby-Willingdon L)
- Deputy Chair:* Gregor Robertson (Vancouver-Fairview NDP)
- Members:* Daniel Jarvis (North Vancouver-Seymour L)  
\* Richard T. Lee (Burnaby North L)  
\* Lorne Mayencourt (Vancouver-Burrard L)  
\* Mary Polak (Langley L)  
\* John Rustad (Prince George-Omineca L)  
\* John Horgan (Malahat-Juan de Fuca NDP)  
\* Doug Routley (Cowichan-Ladysmith NDP)  
Diane Thorne (Coquitlam-Maillardville NDP)
- \* denotes member present*
- Clerk:* Kate Ryan-Lloyd
- Committee Staff:* Josie Schofield (Committee Research Analyst)
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MINUTES

# SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION



Thursday, November 24, 2005  
3:30 p.m.  
Douglas Fir Committee Room  
Parliament Buildings, Victoria

**Present:** John Nuraney, MLA (Chair); John Horgan, MLA; Richard T. Lee, MLA; Lorne Mayencourt, MLA; Mary Polak, MLA; Doug Routley, MLA; John Rustad, MLA

**Unavoidably Absent:** Daniel Jarvis, MLA; Gregor Robertson, MLA (Deputy Chair); Diane Thorne, MLA

1. As there was not yet a Chair elected to the Committee, the Clerk Assistant and Committee Clerk called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.
2. **Resolved**, that John Nuraney, MLA, be appointed Chair of the Select Standing Committee on Education. (John Rustad, MLA)
3. **Resolved**, that Gregor Robertson, MLA, be appointed Deputy Chair of the Select Standing Committee on Education. (John Horgan, MLA)
4. The Committee reviewed its terms of reference and discussed its preliminary meeting schedule.
5. The Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair at 3:48 p.m.

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John Nuraney, MLA  
Chair

Kate Ryan-Lloyd  
Clerk Assistant and  
Committee Clerk



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2005

The committee met at 3:36 p.m.

### Election of Chair and Deputy Chair

**K. Ryan-Lloyd (Clerk Assistant and Committee Clerk):** Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the first meeting of the Select Standing Committee on Education for the first session of the 38th parliament.

As there has not yet been a meeting of this committee and not yet a Chair elected to serve the committee, I hereby open the call for nominations for the position of Chair.

**J. Rustad:** I'd like to nominate John Nuraney.

**K. Ryan-Lloyd (Committee Clerk):** Mr. Nuraney, do you accept nomination?

**J. Nuraney:** Yes.

**K. Ryan-Lloyd (Committee Clerk):** Are there any further nominations? Any further nominations? And a third time, any further nominations? Seeing none, I'll put the question to the members.

Motion approved.

[J. Nuraney in the chair.]

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** Thank you, members. It's always been a privilege and an honour to serve on any standing committee of the Legislature, and I'm glad that I've been given the opportunity once again.

As the government has decided, the courtesy of the vice-Chair will be offered to the members of the opposition. Nomination for a vice-Chair?

**J. Horgan:** I would like to nominate the member for Vancouver-Fairview, Gregor Robertson.

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** Any other nominations for vice-Chair? Having heard none, everybody in agreement, all say aye.

Motion approved.

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** I presume that Gregor has accepted the nomination.

### Work of the Committee

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** Members, as you know, a motion was passed today to have the Select Standing Committee on Education constituted today, and I would like to pass to you the mandate that has been given for this committee's proceedings in the coming months. Have you seen it, or have you not yet received it?

As you are going through the mandate, you will see that the thrust of the task that has been given to us is in connection with the literacy skills and development of

literacy capability for British Columbia. This, as you know, is also one of the goals that the government has set in the throne speech — to make British Columbia the most literate province in Canada. This would also be an objective that we will be shooting for.

Apart from this, what I would also like the members to have is some kind of background material that I believe the Clerk's office has prepared. Has that been circulated as well?

**K. Ryan-Lloyd (Committee Clerk):** Yes, we've circulated it.

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** In it you will see the present status of what British Columbia looks like in terms of adult literacy. These are some points for you to ponder on as we break today.

I would suggest that once we've had time to reflect upon what the mandate is and how we would like to proceed, we convene another meeting sometime in January or in the early new year, when we would have enough time, perhaps, to put our minds around what this task is and how we would like to proceed.

[1540]

There are certain things that... If I may say so, the aspect of the aboriginal mentioned there on the mandate holds a very particular interest for me personally, and I think we may perhaps want to think a little bit more as to how we want to approach that aspect of finding out exactly what the needs of that community are and arrange meetings outside the major cities to meet with those leaders, to meet with the communities.

As we have done in the past on some of the select standing committees, we have conducted certain site visits. As we are meeting in certain centres, we feel that it's important that we go and visit some of the sites to give us a proper understanding of the issues that we are dealing with. This is also a suggestion that I am just throwing out, but we may want to think about convening meetings in certain centres where we can perhaps go off-site of the meetings and visit the communities to really learn what the need is and how best we can serve those communities. That is one suggestion.

As regards the ESL project, we may want to consult with the minority communities, particularly the new immigrants who are not as organized as the major minority groups are. We may want to speak to those leaders as well.

These are some of the suggestions that I'm just putting in front of you as we begin to think and wrap our minds around how best we can serve this committee.

**M. Polak:** During the break, would it be your wish for us to send to you — via e-mail, I would suggest — ideas, thoughts that we might have around how we wish to proceed? Or what's your preference in terms of our input?

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** I think that would be a very good idea, because that would also enable us to formulate the agenda for the following meetings and not

waste too much time waiting for feedback from the members. I would suggest that if you have any ideas, put them on paper, and please send them to Kate, who will then circulate them to all of us so that we can all get an idea of how each one of us thinks we should proceed.

### Committee Meeting Schedule

**J. Rustad:** You're mentioning a meeting time in January. Would it be appropriate to try to set a schedule now, or do you want to leave it at the call of the Chair? I'm only asking that because I know we're all going to be looking at perhaps taking a break over Christmas and perhaps in January in terms of possible holidays. If there is some sort of ability to be able to have agreement while people are here, that would be great. I recognize that we don't have all members here.

The last part about that for me is.... I realize not everyone will need to be here, but my preference would be for it to be in the first two weeks of January.

**L. Mayencourt:** For the information of members of this committee, I have two meetings in January which are scheduled. It may be appropriate for this committee to adopt those meetings. If it's a problem, I would just invite members to attend. Both meetings will happen at the Vancouver Public Library. The first is on January 24, which will be for newly elected school trustees from the Vancouver school district. Two days following, January 26, will be a round-table discussion around ESL programs for what I call the Big Five school districts that have about 80 percent of the ESL students in them. Those would be Surrey, Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby and Coquitlam — along with, hopefully, a couple of Members of Parliament. It depends, of course, on the federal election.

I mean, I've got these underway already. People are already starting to respond to those. It might be most.... I'll leave it to you, Mr. Chair, but if you would like to adopt these, I would be happy to hand them over to you.

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** Just before we get into that, can I just deal with John's problem first? I have no problem doing it in the last two weeks in January.

**J. Rustad:** In the first two.

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** Not in the later two weeks.

**J. Rustad:** Not in the last two.

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** Oh, okay.

[1545]

**J. Horgan:** Our preference, Mr. Chair, is the latter two. We've adopted a plan that would see us taking

any time that we did feel we needed in the earlier part of January and looking at ramping up around the 15th, 16th or 17th of January leading into the session.

I would suggest that the member for Vancouver-Burrard's dates sound fine to me. If the space is rented and the committee is able, that would be an ideal starting point — if not, perhaps into early December or mid-December.

**M. Polak:** I want to endorse Lorne Mayencourt's idea, partly because.... I believe you're speaking about the ESL consortium....

**L. Mayencourt:** That's right.

**M. Polak:** ...which is a group I had the privilege of being a member of, representing Surrey, for a number of years. I know that they would provide us with some quite useful information around what work is ongoing in the public school system, particularly in metro areas, around English as a second language. I think it would be really valuable for the committee.

I know that they've tried for many years — once through you, Mr. Chair — to gain meetings with government officials to try and forward the needs of ESL students. I would really be happy to hear us take advantage of that, if that's possible.

**D. Routley:** I agree. The first two weeks of January would be very difficult for me, and I think we can assume that for the Deputy Chair as well. The January 24 date would be good from my point of view. I think it's an opportunity for us to have a practical application of our first meeting.

**R. Lee:** I second the proposal.

**L. Mayencourt:** For clarification, the meeting regarding ESL programs with the Big Five is for the 26th of January, and that's for those trustees. Up until this week I believe David Emerson was also going to be available for that. The other one with.... Wait a minute. I'm very sorry.

Interjections.

**J. Nuraney (Chair):** Can I leave it to Kate to arrange the timing and the agenda setting and also Lorne's information to be circulated to us?

Could I have a motion to adjourn?

Motion approved.

The committee adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

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