

Timberlea School Steering Team (SST) Meeting

Meeting Minutes #3: Ridgecliff Middle School

Date: February 25, 2026

Time: 3:00-5:00 PM

Attendees:

Name	Organization/Role
Courtney Betts	Community Member
Krista Ranahan	Director, Education Infrastructure, DPW
Stacey Devoe	Community Member
Kaitlyn McKearney	Community Member
Colin Carrigan	Design Lead, DPW
Paula Fairbarin	Retired school administrator, HRCE
Charmaine Wilkie	Community Member
Muree Ali	Project Manager, DPW
Christina Munroe	Administrative Assistant, HRCE
Geoff Olsson	Coordinator, Property Services (Maintenance), HRCE
Cory Schlivert	Project Director, Capital and Operations, EECD
Catherine Hefler	Architect, Architecture 49
Breanna Curren	Architect, Architecture 49
Daniela Mancipe Surez	Architect, Architecture 49
Raya Hunt	Project Manager, PCL

Regrets:

Erica Royal	Coordinator, Information Technology, HRCE
Katie Sherren	Community Member
Omar Elsherif	Manager, Education Infrastructure, DPW
Kyle MacKenzie	Community Member
Kari Lynn Davidson	Community Member
Gareth Evans	Representative, HRM
Stephanie Eisnor	Community Member
Ian Angus	Community Member
Kavita Khanna	Director, Operations Services, HRCE
Lesley Downs	Community Member
Marie Fagan	Coordinator, Property Services (Custodial), HRCE
Tyler Bell	Project Executive, Capital and Operations, EECD
Amber Rainkie	Community Member

1. Welcome, Attendance and review of the January 21 meeting minutes

- The meeting commenced at 3:10 PM
- Everyone took a moment to introduce themselves, and attendance was taken
- The minutes of the January 21 Timberlea SST were approved as circulated. The minutes will be posted to the HRCE Website

2. Project Update

- DPW provided a Project update:
 - We are moving to the final phases of detail design for construction
 - Site preparation is expected to begin in March
 - Construction is anticipated to begin as early as summer 2026
 - DPWs goal is to complete the school in approximately 3 years, should everything go well

3. Detailed Design & Colour Board Presentation

The recent design presentation offered a comprehensive overview of the architectural direction for the new school, highlighting both exterior considerations and detailed interior planning. The discussion emphasized design intent, safety, accessibility, supervision, and functional spaces that support modern learning environments. While some site elements—such as the play area, athletic field, and welcome plaza—were shown as a depiction only as these components have not been planned yet. Existing natural vegetation already provides buffer zones around much of the site, maintaining separation between the school building and neighbouring homes.

Interior Design and Wayfinding

A major theme of the interior design is intuitive navigation. The school will use colour-coded zones to distinguish key program areas—such as classroom wings, specialized program rooms, and collaboration zones—to help students and visitors orient themselves quickly. This approach supports safety, clarity, and accessibility, particularly for younger students or those with learning needs.

Classrooms that face into corridors are equipped with sliding whiteboards that can be used to cover interior windows when needed, including during lockdown situations. Shared learning spaces in the “collaborative learning corridor” provides a structured area in the hallway for small-group work, supported by visibility from adjacent classrooms through interior windows.

The cafeteria is designed as a multifunctional environment suited for both daily use and schoolwide performances. Acoustic treatments and a stage support this dual purpose, and blackout blinds will be integrated within window frames to maintain a clean appearance while providing the needed

light control. The library includes a mix of open collaboration zones, group work areas, and quieter breakout nooks, with built-in cubbies.

The gymnasium will feature a sprung wood floor and wall-mounted acoustic panels to support physical education, assemblies, and community use.

Safety, Circulation, and Accessibility

Safety and supervision guided several design decisions. Interconnecting classroom doors are typically not done due to security reasons, except for rooms like the learning centre or innovation lab, where connections support staff access. Suggestions were made to improve administrative area security, including potential pocket doors between offices, a dedicated external exit for an administrator, and converting a half-wall at reception into a full-height barrier.

The two learning centres enable younger students to be placed closer to the primary wing and older students closer to the cafeteria. Entry points, and lockers have been relocated closer to the cafeteria to address previously relayed concerns of disrupting primary classrooms.

Pre-primary through grade 5 students will use cubbies, while grades 6–9 will receive double lockers.

Colour-coded stairwells, stainless-steel handrails, and high-visibility stair treads reinforce safety and wayfinding. Acoustic panels and drapes throughout the building will use rated treatments for long-term fire protection.

Site Considerations and Neighbour Impacts

The community raised concerns about visibility into nearby homes where trees have been removed. The project team agreed to consider visibility and impacts of lighting and bells on adjacent homes.

Exterior maintenance considerations include ensuring vehicular access and providing storage for snow-removal equipment. The school name will be displayed above the main entrance canopy, though non-metal materials are preferred to prevent staining and rust.

Operations, After-Hours Use, and Support Spaces

To support community access, after-hours entry will be restricted to the gym and cafeteria, while classroom wings will remain locked. Universal washrooms will feature full-height doors, clear sightlines from corridors for safety, and toilets.

Additional requests included interior windows between tech/production labs and dedicated office space for the custodial team near administration, with room for desks and staff lockers.

4. Any other business

- Today's presentation will be posted to the HRCE Website. Feedback may be emailed to the HRCE Operations hrceoperations@hrce.ca and will be discussed at the next meeting.
- A 3D model of the learning centre and photos of modern learning centres in recently built schools will be shared at the next meeting.

- If there is interest, sub-committees may be formed to guide planning for specific features, such as playground and play structures, landscaping, community art project, etc.

5. Next Meeting

- It was agreed that the next meeting should take place on Wednesday, March 11th (virtually)
- There were requests to have the meeting moved to 3:30 PM so more community members can attend.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM