



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division, held August 27, 2024.

Present: S. Heistad
M. Hollman
C. Leyson
D. Lonsdale
K. Pasula
A. Watson, Trustees
K. Finnigan, Superintendent of Schools
L. Latka, Secretary-Treasurer
R. Ledene, Associate Superintendent - System Services
R. Sawula, Associate Superintendent - Curriculum
J. Smith, Associate Superintendent - Human Resources
M. St. Pierre, Executive Assistant

*Board Chair Hollman called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M.
Trustee Leyson read an opening prayer aloud.*

08/27/24-01-Heistad

**THAT THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MOVE IN CAMERA
AT 3:30 P.M.**

CARRIED.

08/27/24-02-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 5:01 P.M.

CARRIED.

Board Chair Hollman called for a recess at 5:01 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 5:35 P.M. Vice-Chair Watson read an opening prayer aloud. Associate Superintendent Sawula read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

08/27/24-03-Lonsdale

THAT THE AGENDA BE ACCEPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

08/27/24-04-Watson

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 18, 2024 BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

08/27/24-05-Heistad

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF JUNE 18, 2024 BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

08/27/24-06-Leyson

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF JUNE 28, 2024 BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

3. DELEGATIONS

- 3.1. Representatives from the Mustard Seed, Scott Tilbury and Michelle Parker, delivered an oral presentation to the Board of Trustees on the Mustard Seed program. They provided a status update on the school lunch program, noting that over 29,000 lunches have been served to students across Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

4. ACTION ITEMS

4.1. APPROVAL OF NEW SOFTWARE CONTRACT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented a written report and outlined reasons why the contract with the Division's current Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Sparkrock, is not meeting the Division's needs. Latka reported that a new request for

proposal was issued to identify a more suitable ERP system. She recommended that the Division proceed with PowerSchool Atrieve, noting that it is a proven ERP solution in Alberta.

Trustees discussed the potential financial impact of terminating the contract with Sparkrock and moving to a new provider. She added that switching to the PowerSchool solution could be implemented within a year, thus reducing the length of time that RDCRS would need to pay additional licensing costs.

08/27/24-07-Pasula

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION FROM ADMINISTRATION THAT THE DIVISION ENGAGE IN A FIVE YEAR CONTRACT WITH POWERSCHOOL ATRIEVE FOR A FIXED FEE TO BE FINALIZED BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2024.

CARRIED.

4.2. ARCHBISHOP DINNER - POLICY 24: ATTENDANCE AT FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Board Chair Hollman presented a report discussing the option of purchasing a table for the event or allowing individuals to purchase their own tickets. Trustees noted that the event is intended for information sharing, not fundraising, and emphasized that it aligns with the Division's strategic plan for stakeholder engagement and recognized as a valuable opportunity to represent the Division and engage with community stakeholders.

08/27/24-08-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPONSOR THE COST OF A TICKET AND MILEAGE FOR UP TO TEN PEOPLE TO ATTEND THE ARCHBISHOP DINNER EVENT HAPPENING ON OCTOBER 4, 2024.

CARRIED.

4.3. DIVISION OPENING WINE AND CHEESE EVENT

Board Chair Hollman presented a report indicating the need for a motion to approve serving wine at a school facility event. It was suggested that the Board consider serving juice or soda instead of wine, and that this alternative be proposed to the administration for future events.

08/27/24-09-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPONSOR AND APPROVE THE WINE AND CHEESE EVENT TO BE HELD FOR DIVISION STAFF AT ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL FOLLOWING THE DIVISION OPENING EVENT HAPPENING ON AUGUST 30, 2024.

CARRIED.

4.4. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBER

Secretary-Treasurer Latka explained that further to the resignation of a public member from the Board of Trustees Audit Committee, there is one vacant position.

08/27/24-10-Pasula

THAT THE BOARD ACCEPT RICHARD MACSWEEN AS A MEMBER OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON THE RED DEER CATHOLIC REGIONAL SCHOOLS AUDIT COMMITTEE EFFECTIVE AUGUST 27, 2024.

CARRIED.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1. SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM - ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Associate Superintendent Smith presented a written School Nutrition Program report detailing the operation of the Division's school nutrition program. Superintendent Finnigan then presented a report on the Division's engagement and advocacy efforts with stakeholders. Trustees raised a question about how the nutrition grant funding amounts are determined for each school, noting that it is not based on school population. Smith explained that a form is sent to all schools, and the amounts are determined based on each school's goals and needs.

A recommendation was made to allocate a portion of the nutrition grant that had been allocated to support the Family Support Counsellor model to the Mustard Seed. The Superintendent recommended that \$30,000 of the \$40,000 allocation be given to the Mustard Seed to support their ongoing efforts to feed students from Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS).

There was further discussion. A concern was raised about whether allocating funds to The Mustard Seed would impact the Family School Counsellor model. It was clarified that allocating funds to The Mustard Seed would not impact the work of the Family School Counsellors and that this type of allocation is permitted by Alberta Education since they are considered a stakeholder. There was also a query about the existence of a national

nutrition program at the federal level, but a funding agreement has not yet been reached between the federal and provincial governments.

08/27/24-11-Watson

**THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DONATE \$30,000 FROM THE
2024-2025 NUTRITION GRANT TO SUPPORT THE MUSTARD SEED
SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM.**

CARRIED.

Trustees requested that when the funds are provided to The Mustard Seed, a thank-you be extended for their programs and that an updated report be requested at the end of the 2024-2025 school year, to be presented at the August board meeting.

5.2. ST. JOHN PAUL II GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Trustee Pasula recommended that, at the end of the school year, Trustees support the inclusion of St. John Paul II Catholic Outreach School in graduation planning. It was suggested that Trustees ensure proper representation at this event and that St. John Paul II Outreach School be added to the planning document. The recommendation was made for Administration to incorporate St. John Paul II into the planning process.

5.3. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 458 - DUTY TO REPORT - REVIEW

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the Administrative Procedure (AP) in accordance with the Public Disclosure Act. She stated that this year, all administrators were reminded of this AP and asked to share it with their staff. Latka reported that RDCRS has fulfilled its due diligence.

Trustee Pasula suggested exploring additional ways to communicate this information, such as placing posters in staff locations staff washrooms with messages like, "Do you know about a wrongdoing?" and details on whom to report it to. The Trustee also proposed considering an alternative contact for reporting, such as a retired trustee, to enhance confidence in the whistleblower process, noting that while protection from reprisal is stated, concerns may still exist. However, other trustees felt that the current AP is effective and that the financial cost of hiring an additional person would not be justified.

Latka proposed that some of these concerns could be addressed through the development of a staff code of conduct AP, as there is currently no such AP in place. It was recommended that the issue be sent back to administration to explore how to incorporate a staff code of conduct while still meeting the requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act (PIDA), along with an assessment of the costs, benefits, and risks.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 7:05 pm until 7:15 p.m.

5.4. NEW RESTRICTIONS ON PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Associate Superintendent Sawula presented a written report, noting that policies regarding the new restrictions on personal mobile devices and student access to social media must be in place by January 2025. He explained that overall, standards are already in place in most schools, covering the requirements set by Alberta Education. Sawula stated that the Division currently operates three different networks: student, staff, and guest, with the ability to disable social media access on student and guest networks.

There was concern that the draft Administrative Procedure (AP) presented by Sawula references staff in several sections, which may not be appropriate. It was suggested that more work is needed on the draft AP, potentially resulting in two separate APs, one for students and one for staff. It was emphasized that the only change from the government pertains to student phone use, not staff or parents. It was also suggested to create a separate AP specifically for students to avoid any confusion. As a further step, the idea of developing a student handbook was proposed, to compile all school directives in one place. It was recommended to include a new board policy as a discussion item at the September board meeting.

5.5. EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Associate Superintendent Sawula presented the written report, outlining mandatory literacy and numeracy screening requirements set out by Alberta Education. He explained that school authorities must use an Alberta Education provided or approved English or French literacy assessment and RDCRS has decided to utilize the Alberta Education Assessment as they are grounded in Alberta research and there are no additional costs. He also explained that while the expanded assessment is beneficial, there is a concern about where the funding will come from for any necessary interventions that would accompany the screening.

Trustees raised questions about the allocation of funds, particularly how much funding is tied to the use of this screening process. The need for additional funding was emphasized, as it was stated that no new funds have been allocated for this purpose. Additionally, the time required for screening was highlighted as a significant concern.

It was stressed that this initiative is mandatory, despite the challenges outlined. Finally, it was proposed that this be raised as an advocacy item for Zone 4 ASBA to secure proper funding for the initiative.

5.6. TRUSTEE REMUNERATION

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the written report and stated that as per Policy 19 - Board Operations, the rates of remuneration for trustees shall be adjusted annually in September utilizing specific criteria. Latka recommended that, based on the Consumer Price Index for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, the adjustment to the Trustee remuneration rates be increased by 3% effective September 1, 2024. She stated that a motion is not required as this is covered within the policy.

5.7. TOWN OF INNISFAIL MEETING

The Board discussed potential dates for a joint meeting with the Town of Innisfail. Trustees agreed on October 15, 2024, and decided to discuss potential agenda items during the September board meeting.

5.8. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION

Superintendent Finnigan reviewed last year's approach to stakeholder engagement, which included both online and in-person sessions as part of Policy 19. A possible date for this year's session was proposed: Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

The Board was asked whether they would like to proceed with this process again and confirm the proposed date. Discussion followed on the topic and format, with concerns raised about the difficulty of hearing online participants in a gym setting. It was suggested that improvements be made to the audio setup.

The idea of holding two town hall sessions, one in the fall and one in the spring, was discussed. It was discussed that the fall session could focus on engaging school councils in the planning process, while the spring session could gather feedback for the following year's planning and budget development. It was also noted that the fall session could be an opportunity to share information about the cell phone policy. Concerns were expressed about conducting the town halls too early in the year, emphasizing the importance of involving these groups to inform the Board's work.

It was proposed to wait until a draft budget and strategic plan are ready before gathering feedback, ensuring that the planning process involves meaningful engagement with the community, staff, parents, and the parish community. The Board decided to revisit the topic in the September meeting with a more detailed plan and suggested dates.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1. SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD EVALUATION UPDATE

Board Chair Hollman and Trustee Pasula informed Trustees that they met with the Superintendent and Board Evaluation consultant, Mr. Terry Gunderson, over the summer. They stated that they are in the process of reviewing a list of stakeholders who could be interviewed.

6.2. REVIEW OF RDCRS BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN

Superintendent Finnigan reviewed the RDCRS Board Strategic Plan with the Trustees and recommended moving into phase 2, suggesting a refresh of the plan. It was recommended that the Board hold a retreat in December to undertake this strategic plan refresh.

6.3. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Superintendent's Report as an information item and invited Trustees to provide feedback. Trustee Leyson offered kudos to the Associates and the Superintendent for their work, noting positive feedback from St. Patrick's staff regarding their successful school opening.

A discussion followed regarding Item No. 6 in the report, which mentioned the expansion of mental health funding. Trustees inquired whether this expansion would result in any changes. Superintendent Finnigan confirmed that the same staff members were rehired to continue their roles from December through June. However, concerns were raised about the reliance on project funding and the uncertainty of what will happen when the grant ends. Trustees discussed the importance of continuing to advocate for ongoing funding in this area.

6.4 SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT

Secretary-Latka presented the Secretary-Treasurer Report as information for Trustees.

6.5 STAFFING UPDATE REPORT

Associate Superintendent Smith presented a Staffing Update report and opened the floor for questions. Trustees noted that while the report provided numbers, it lacked a comparison to previous years, making it difficult to assess whether the figures were higher or lower. It was suggested that the report be brought back to the next meeting with additional context for comparison. Clarification was requested regarding the number of resignations and retirements, particularly whether the number of resignations was unusually high.

The discussion then shifted to voluntary exit interviews, with 30% completed, most responses coming from CUPE resignations. It was noted that the current process involves online surveys, with only four individuals requesting follow-up contact. There was a suggestion to consider conducting in-person interviews for those with unfavorable departures, though it was emphasized that this was merely an idea, not a directive.

A comment was made about the potential value of reviewing exit interview data at a future board retreat. There was also a request for the Human Resources department to conduct face-to-face interviews before December to provide a high-level review of what occurred between June and the present.

6.6 TRUSTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

- ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (ASBA)

- Trustee Heistad reported that the next meeting is scheduled on September 23, 2024.

- ALBERTA CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION (ACSTA)
Trustee Leyson reported that there will be a Directors meeting in September.
- RURAL CAUCUS OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS
Trustee Heistad reported that they are in the process of reviewing their terms of reference and that the minutes will be shared when they become available.
- CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION
Trustee Pasula submitted a written report and provided an update on the Foundation's meetings held since July.

6.7 CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

A written Correspondence was provided as Information.

6.8 UPCOMING EVENTS:

- August 30, 2024 - Division Opening Mass for 2024-2025
- September 12, 2024 - ACSTA Board of Directors Meeting
- September 16-17, 2024 - Superintendent/Board School Visits
- September 23, 2024 - ASBA Zone 4 Meeting

Trustee Pasula read a closing prayer aloud.

Chair Hollman called for a recess at 8:45 p.m.

08/27/24-12- Leyson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES GO INTO CAMERA AT 9:00 P.M.

CARRIED.

08/27/24-13- Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 9:35 P.M.

CARRIED.

08/27/24-14- Lonsdale

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN, THE TIME BEING 9:36 P.M.

CARRIED.

(CHAIR)

(SECRETARY-TREASURER)