



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division, held November 26, 2024.

- Present:
- S. Heistad
 - M. Hollman
 - C. Leyson
 - D. Lonsdale
 - A. Watson, Trustees
 - K. Finnigan, Superintendent of Schools
 - L. Latka, Secretary-Treasurer
 - R. Ledene, Associate Superintendent - System Services
 - J. Smith, Associate Superintendent - Human Resources
 - M. St. Pierre - Executive Assistant
 - Steven Sypkes - Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
- Present via Zoom
- K. Pasula, Trustee
- Not in Attendance:
- R. Sawula, Associate Superintendent - Curriculum

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

11/26/24-01-Lonsdale

THAT THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MOVE IN CAMERA AT 3:31 P.M.

CARRIED.

11/26/24-02-Watson

THAT THE BOARD MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 5:08 P.M.

CARRIED.

*Chair Hollman called for a recess at 5:08 p.m.
Chair Hollman called the meeting back to order at 5:35 p.m.
Trustee Leyson read an opening prayer aloud.*

*Secretary-Treasurer Latka read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.
Chair Hollman acknowledged the Alberta School Councils Association President for being in attendance.*

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

11/26/24-03-Leyson

THAT THE AGENDA BE ACCEPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

11/26/24-04-Watson

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 29, 2024 BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

Trustee Pasula expressed concern regarding a motion that was ruled out of order in the September meeting. He stated that Vice-Chair Watson ruled Trustee Pasula’s motion to roll back trustee compensation as out of order. Trustee Pasula disagreed with the ruling and an objection was later raised to the Secretary-Treasurer requesting a report on the matter. Trustees noted that a report on Parliamentary Procedures was provided to the Board in October. Pasula stated that the decision as to whether the ruling was in order has not been determined.

Chair Hollman stated that this issue is not relevant to the approval of the October Board meeting minutes and that the topic will be an agenda item at the next regular Board meeting.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

Trustee Pasula raised concerns regarding the superintendent’s proposal to discontinue quarterly reports, stating that he felt that, without these reports, the board’s ability to provide proper oversight would be compromised. Trustee Pasula suggested that the board could identify the necessary reports and incorporate them into the annual board work plan

Other trustees shared the view that the quarterly reports are outdated by the time they are reviewed and are an unnecessary duplication of effort. They supported replacing quarterly reports with more timely and relevant monthly updates, emphasizing the need

for greater flexibility in the reporting process. They also noted that this matter had been addressed extensively in the October meeting.

11/26/24-05-Pasula

THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT BE DIRECTED TO DEVELOP A LIST OF REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION THAT THE TRUSTEES WILL RECEIVE ON A SCHEDULED BASIS OVER THE COURSE OF A WORK YEAR, FOR THE BOARD'S CONSIDERATION, TO BE REVIEWED BY THE BOARD AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING.

DEFEATED.

Recorded vote requested by Trustee Pasula

In Favour: Pasula

Opposed: Hollman, Watson, Lonsdale,
Leyson, Heistad

3. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations at the meeting.

4. ACTION ITEMS

4.1. AUDIT REPORT - Audited Financial Statements

Chair Hollman introduced the auditing team; Mitchell Kennedy, Tetiana Nabutovskyi, Auditors with BDO, and Richard Macsween - Community Member.

Mr. Kennedy presented the Final Audit Report and the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended August 31, 2024, stating that the audit was substantially completed. He confirmed the issuance of an unqualified opinion stating the financial statements are free from material misstatements. He provided an overview of the Statement of Financial Position, describing it as a snapshot of the organization's financial status as of August 31, 2024. Mr. Kennedy facilitated the discussion by allowing questions during each segment of the presentation.

During the presentation, Trustee Pasula raised a question regarding whether the absence of control overrides was observed and if the budget is considered an internal control. The auditor responded that no control overrides were identified. They explained that physical tests were conducted, and no anomalies were detected during their testing processes. The auditors confirmed their belief in the accuracy of the numbers. While typically a budget functions as an entity-level control, they acknowledged that

discrepancies in the budget indicated its role as a control mechanism in this instance.

Special acknowledgement was given to Trustee Lonsdale for identifying an issue with the financial statements during the committee review, with praise for her diligence and attention to detail.

11/26/24-06-Lonsdale

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING AUGUST 31, 2024 AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

Recorded vote requested by Trustee Pasula

In Favour: Hollman, Watson, Lonsdale,

Heistad

Opposed: Pasula, Leyson

Trustee Pasula shared that he would not be able to support the motion and requested a recorded vote due to a number of issues like sick leave accrual and possible lack of financial controls.

Secretary-Treasurer Latka stated that she would like the board to consider the approval of transfers to and from the Division's reserves.

11/26/24-06-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS TO AND FROM RESERVES:

TO/FROM CAPITAL RESERVES

\$481,283 FROM CAPITAL RESERVES TO COVER BOARD FUNDED TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSET ADDITIONS

\$207,036 TO CAPITAL RESERVES FOR THE CAPITAL ASSET DISPOSAL

TO/FROM OPERATING RESERVES

\$4,470,181 TO OPERATING RESERVES

\$7,155,477 FROM OPERATING RESERVES

**FROM CAPITAL RESERVES/TO OPERATING RESERVES REQUIRING
MINISTERIAL APPROVAL**

\$800,000 FROM CAPITAL RESERVES TO OPERATING RESERVES

CARRIED.

Secretary-Treasurer Latka expressed gratitude to the auditing team for their hard work and dedication throughout the audit process. She commended them for an excellent presentation and also extended thanks to the Montfort staff for their valuable support.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 6:31 p.m. The auditing team left the meeting at 6:31 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at 6:36 p.m.

**4.2 ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORT (AERR) - AERR EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

Superintendent Finnigan shared that Associate Superintendent Sawula regretted being unable to attend but had collaborated on the report. She highlighted the executive summary, noting the purpose of the report is to analyze data and translate findings into actionable results, informing decisions and resource allocation for the school year. Finnigan reviewed each section of the AERR, emphasizing stakeholder involvement and explaining key components, including PAT results and diploma exam math scores. Additionally, she noted that efforts are being made to review and analyze the language used in math questions to help students better understand what is being asked, thereby improving problem-solving skills and overall performance.

Throughout the presentation, Finnigan addressed Trustees' questions, including concerns about declining performance in internal measures. Trustees expressed disappointment over the decline and emphasized the need for further analysis. The Superintendent explained the challenges teachers face in addressing classroom complexities and foundational gaps, particularly in math and problem-solving skills. She emphasized the need to prioritize foundational skills in areas like math, closely examine assessment practices, and support students in improving their understanding of the questions being asked. She also reviewed detailed findings from stakeholder surveys, literacy and numeracy results, and areas for growth.

Trustees inquired about what the board could do to help advance these initiatives. The Superintendent highlighted the need for ongoing collaboration with administrators to meet requirements and support teachers effectively. At the board level, she urged

continued support and understanding of the complexities within classrooms. She also noted the importance of advocacy for improvements in funding to restore supports to acceptable levels and provide adequate resources. She also reflected on the need to analyze current practices critically, particularly the division's recent focus on expanding access to career pathways.

Associate Superintendent Smith added she is looking at it through a Human Resources perspective, highlighting the importance of addressing cultural issues and finding ways to support staff effectively.

Trustees thanked the superintendent for a comprehensive and thorough report.

11/26/24-07-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE RED DEER CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL DIVISION'S ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORT FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 7:36 pm. Hollman called the meeting back to order at 7:49 pm.

4.3 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDARS

Associate Superintendent Ledene thanked the committee members and Trustee Lonsdale for their contributions and presented the proposed calendar report. Ledene noted initial challenges due to provincial exam schedules, which required adjustments to align student days across both semesters. Ledene explained that this necessitated starting the school year before the September long weekend to maximize meaningful instructional days and that the calendars were developed in collaboration with other school divisions to minimize discrepancies in school days, resulting in three fairly similar calendars. He noted that the calendar for Rocky Mountain House has not yet been completed, as the intention was to finalize it collaboratively before presenting it to the board.

Trustees proposed that the board consider writing a letter to the Minister of Education advocating for earlier approval of provincial exam dates, recognizing the challenges delays create for administration in finalizing the calendar. Ledene supported the suggestion, agreeing that earlier approval would be helpful and noting that the current draft status of exam dates appears to be an unusual circumstance.

Trustees discussed the challenges of shared busing and calendar alignment with Wildrose School Division, noting the importance of minimizing discrepancies. They expressed a willingness to support administration by advocating for a formal agreement to better coordinate shared busing days and set clear timelines for calendar approvals. Trustees emphasized their commitment to assisting in this process and directed the Superintendent to work with Wildrose to establish a written agreement.

11/26/24-08-Heistad

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDARS OF ST. PATRICK'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL (YEAR ROUND), RED DEER, SYLVAN LAKE, BLACKFALDS, INNISFAIL, AND OLDS AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

- 4.4 POLICY REVIEW - POLICY 16 - ELECTION CAMPAIGNING AND DISTRIBUTION OF CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

11/26/24-09-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND UPDATES TO POLICY 16 - ELECTION CAMPAIGNING AND DISTRIBUTION OF CAMPAIGN MATERIALS, AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

- 4.5 BY-LAW REPORT - BY-LAW FOR THE NOMINATION AND THE ELECTION OF TRUSTEES 1/2025

Chair Hollman explained that an update to the Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division's by-laws is necessary since the establishment of the Garrington and Harmattan subdivisions. Trustees agreed unanimously to proceed with three readings of the revised bylaw.

11/26/24-10-Lonsdale

- 1. THAT THE BOARD APPROVES THE FIRST READING OF BY-LAW 1/2025 FOR THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF TRUSTEES.**

CARRIED.

11/26/24-11-Heistad

2. THAT THE BOARD APPROVES THE SECOND READING OF BY-LAW 1/2025 FOR THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF TRUSTEES.

CARRIED.

11/26/24-12-Watson

3. THAT THE BOARD APPROVES THE THIRD READING OF BY-LAW 1/2025 FOR THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF TRUSTEES.

CARRIED.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Superintendent Finnigan shared the report and provided an update on recent engagement activities. Finnigan explained that notes from those sessions will be compiled and shared. During the discussion, Trustees commended the Superintendent for the excellent and informative budget presentation. Finnigan mentioned that themes and actions for spring will be addressed during the December retreat and later presented at a public meeting. A survey will contribute to this report. The next engagement session, scheduled for spring, will be open to everyone, not just those who missed prior sessions, with a target timeline of April to align with the spring budget presentation.

Chair Hollman emphasized the importance of setting dates promptly due to high interest. Administration was tasked with finalizing and distributing the dates as soon as possible, ensuring both virtual and in-person options are available.

5.2. MLA MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Trustees reviewed the upcoming MLA Meeting Agenda items and contributed additional items for the meeting. It was discussed that time should be taken to determine the best approach for discussing potential questions and Trustees tasked administration to provide Trustees with the relevant data.

5.3. MUNICIPAL ELECTION REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the written report on the Municipal Election and requested further guidance from Trustees on the nomination process. The Chair recommended

that administration provide the City of Red Deer with the ACSTA definition of "Catholic" to be included on the nomination form, along with the Trustee Code of Conduct. They also proposed adding a checkbox to the form for candidates to acknowledge and complete.

Trustees discussed concerns regarding rural polling stations, weighing the cost implications against the potential impact on democratic participation if they were to be removed. Trustees requested a plan to effectively communicate with the electorate regarding the removal of some rural polling stations.

11/26/24-13-Watson

FOR THE 2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTION, THAT RDCRS ELIMINATE THOSE POLLING STATIONS FROM THE RURAL AREAS THAT RECEIVED FEWER THAN 10 VOTES DURING THE 2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION.

DEFEATED.

5.4. ELECTION INTENT FORMS AND CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Secretary-Treasurer Latka addressed the topic, noting that there is no requirement for candidates to undergo a criminal record check to be elected and that information regarding the checks cannot be made public. Trustees raised concerns about how to handle situations where a criminal record is identified, highlighting many unknowns. Trustees acknowledged the need for a clear process or procedure—potentially involving legal counsel—for addressing situations where an elected official has a criminal record.

5.5. TRUSTEE TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

Chair Hollman shared insights from attending the Alberta School Boards Association Annual General Meeting, recommending early preparation for Trustee orientation and training including involving a consultant, providing media training, and organizing sessions well in advance to avoid last-minute arrangements. While there are no immediate issues, financial considerations should guide the planning, focusing on essential training to avoid overwhelming new trustees. The suggestion was to start with an introductory session covering key information, followed by additional courses or workshops tailored to trustees' individual knowledge levels.

An idea was proposed to utilize local parishes as venues to deliver sessions on trusteeship and its responsibilities, during the nomination period, with Trustees leading these sessions. However, concerns were raised about potential conflicts of interest for those running for re-election and whether they should facilitate such events. It was suggested to hold these sessions in the spring to generate interest and excitement about running in the upcoming election.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 9:20 p.m. Trustee Pasula left the meeting at 9:20 pm. Chair Hollman called the meeting back to order at 9:25 p.m.

5.6. LISTENING CIRCLES UPDATE

Chair Hollman explained that the board is reviewing the feedback received from the Listening Circles and will report back on the corresponding actions taken, requesting that the [report](#) be linked into the minutes.

Superintendent Finnigan provided an oral report on the Listening Circles Accomplishments organized into three sections: concerns, actions, and future considerations. She explained that actions taken include addressing Trustee remuneration concerns and providing psychological health and safety professional development, with 47 staff members participating. She stated that additional support and resources have been provided, including the addition of some new staff. She added that discussions with the MS2 team will continue as they work across the division. She stated that Faith Formation concerns have led to changes in the program based on sessions, courses, and ministry. Feedback surveys will guide future considerations for Year 1 and Year 2 programs.

Finnigan also explained that to support ongoing opportunities for collaboration, afternoon collaboration sessions will be offered at Montfort, focusing on various grades and subject areas. She added that senior administration has emphasized classroom engagement, with time spent in schools and opportunities for discussions with administrators. Staff appreciation initiatives include introducing a "RDCRS in the News" section in the Superintendent's weekly updates and sending thank-you emails to staff who organize events. Additionally, two ATA Liaison meetings have taken place and the board was invited to attend CSR meetings, allowing time for open dialogue in a respectful manner.

Superintendent Finnigan shared that listening circle data was reviewed to address concerns while maintaining confidentiality. While not all issues have been resolved, the actions taken to date are detailed in the report. Finnigan also addressed questions about collaboration waitlists and funding. Additionally, it was noted that psychological health manager courses, part of the Human Resources 3-year plan, are now available to senior administration and Montfort-level staff who have completed earlier sessions, emphasizing a commitment to promoting health and safety for all staff.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Superintendent Report as information.

6.2. SECRETARY TREASURER REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the Secretary-Treasurer report as information.

6.3. SYSTEM SERVICES REPORT

Associate Superintendent Ledene presented the System Services report as information. Trustees inquired about the timeline for St. Veronica Catholic School, specifically regarding the P3 process. Ledene indicated that more information is expected to be released in January. Trustees also raised concerns about a gap in transportation eligibility, stressing the importance of maintaining services for eligible families while considering creative solutions for those deemed ineligible. Ledene noted that this issue reflects a gap in the services provided by Alberta Education and Trustee Watson requested that costed solutions to this issue be provided for consideration during budget deliberations in the spring.

6.4. ADVENT MESSAGE

The Trustee Advent Message was presented as information.

6.5. FIRST CHRISTMAS IN CANADA EVENT

The Superintendent shared details about St. Patrick's Community School's upcoming event, "First Christmas in Canada," happening on December 18, 2024. This celebration aims to embrace cultural diversity and make new students feel welcome. The Honourable Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees, will be attending, along with other invited MLAs. The event reflects the division's focus on building community and fostering inclusion.

6.6. TRUSTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

■ ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (ASBA)

Trustee Heistad shared that the meeting highlights were shared earlier and she provided Trustees with a reminder about an AI event happening on November 27, 2024.

■ ALBERTA CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION (ACSTA)

Trustee Leyson provided a written report as information.

■ RURAL CAUCUS OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS

Trustee Heistad shared that a report was provided at the FGM and that a budget was passed. An invoice for last year will be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer.

- CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION
Secretary-Treasurer Latka provided a written report as information.

6.7. CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

- Letter from the Archbishop of Edmonton

The correspondence was presented as information.

6.8. UPCOMING EVENTS:

Trustees reviewed the upcoming events as presented.

- December 9, 2024 - Board Retreat
- December 18, 2024: First Christmas in Canada Event, St. Patrick's Community School
- January 20, 2024 - Board Retreat
- January 27, 2025 - ASBA Zone Meeting (Online)
- January 28, 2025 - Board Meeting

Vice-Chair Watson read a closing prayer aloud.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 9:46 p.m.

11/26/24-14-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES GO INTO CAMERA AT 9:48 P.M.

CARRIED.

11/26/24-15-Lonsdale

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MOVE OUT OF CAMERA.

CARRIED.

11/26/24-16-Leyson

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN, THE TIME BEING 11:30 P.M.

CARRIED.

(CHAIR)

(SECRETARY-TREASURER)