



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division, held January 28, 2025.

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

Present via Zoom K. Pasula, Trustee

Not in Attendance: S. Heistad, Trustee
J. Smith, Associate Superintendent - Human Resources

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

01/28/25-01-Lonsdale

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

CARRIED.

01/28/25-02-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 4:50 P.M.

CARRIED.

*Chair Hollman called for a recess at 4:55 p.m.
Chair Hollman called the meeting back to order at 5:34 p.m.
Trustee Lonsdale read an opening prayer aloud.
Superintendent Finnigan read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.*

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

01/28/25-03-Lonsdale

THAT THE AGENDA BE ACCEPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

01/28/25-04-Watson

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 26, 2024 BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

01/28/25-05-Leyson

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF DECEMBER 31, 2024 BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

3. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations at the meeting.

4. ACTION ITEMS

4.1. POLICY REVIEW:

4.1.1. POLICY 29 - USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOLS

01/28/25-06-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF POLICY 29 - USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOLS, AS AMENDED.

CARRIED.

4.1.2. POLICY REVIEW: POLICY 17 - SCHOOL FACILITIES

01/28/25-07-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND UPDATES TO POLICY 17 - SCHOOL FACILITIES, AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

4.1.3. POLICY REVIEW: POLICY 19 - BOARD OPERATIONS

01/28/25-08-Lonsdale

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND UPDATES TO POLICY 19 - BOARD OPERATIONS, AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

4.1.4. POLICY REVIEW: POLICY 20 - BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

The board discussed adding information about the Rural Caucus Committee to Policy 20. It was agreed to revisit this policy at the next meeting to allow for proper preparation. The matter has been tabled until the next meeting.

4.1.5. POLICY REVIEW: POLICY 27 - ELECTORAL REPRESENTATIONS - WARDS

01/28/25-09-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND UPDATES TO POLICY 27 - ELECTORAL REPRESENTATIONS, AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

4.1.6. POLICY REVIEW: POLICY 7 - COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

01/28/25-10-Lonsdale

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND UPDATES TO POLICY 7 - COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD, AS AMENDED.

CARRIED.

4.2. A NIGHT OF GRATITUDE

Superintendent Finnigan presented a report prepared by Associate Superintendent Smith, emphasizing the importance of honouring staff and retirees for their service. She stated that board approval was being sought for alcohol consumption during the event, which will be held in a school facility. The Board raised questions about attendance and costs, with the superintendent confirming that participation would be voluntary and financial estimates are based on past attendance. She also confirmed that the Division's insurance policy includes a host liability clause.

The Board expressed concern that the timeline might be too short to accommodate a dance, especially with extended speeches. Questions were raised about the necessity of the dance given the additional cost, though the DJ pricing was considered reasonable. Discussion followed on extending the timeline to fit all elements of the event. The superintendent noted that the organizing committee wanted to reintroduce the dance to enhance the overall experience.

01/28/25-11-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE NIGHT OF GRATITUDE EVENT TO BE HELD IN HONOUR OF DIVISION STAFF AT ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL AND THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL WITHIN THE SCHOOL FACILITY ON MAY 30, 2025, PROVIDED ALL RELEVANT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ARE ADHERED TO.

CARRIED.

4.2 KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMMING AT ST. MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Associate Superintendent Sawula presented a report outlining a request for the continuation of full-day Kindergarten at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Catholic School, recommending ongoing support with an additional 0.5 FTE allocation. Trustees raised concerns that provincial funding only covers half-day programming and questioned whether the division should explore charging a fee, given its evolving financial position.

The Board discussed the factors driving interest in full-day kindergarten, considering both the potential educational benefits and the ways in which the program may support families. Some trustees also questioned whether a decision needed to be made immediately or if it could be deferred until the next meeting to allow time to gather more details on a potential fee structure. Additionally, there was interest in assessing whether families would be willing

to contribute financially to help offset costs.

Associate Superintendent Sawula emphasized the importance of continuing the program, citing research on the benefits of structured play and student well-being in a full-day setting and added that families choose the program for its faith-based education. It was noted that neighbouring school divisions offer similar programs without fees, which could impact both current and future enrollment.

The matter was tabled until the next meeting to allow for further research into potential fees and community interest.

01/28/25-12-Watson

**MOVE THAT WE TABLE THIS ITEM UNTIL THE FEBRUARY 25, 2025
REGULAR BOARD MEETING IN ORDER TO ALLOW ADMINISTRATION
TO BRING FURTHER INFORMATION.**

CARRIED.

4.3 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Board Strategic Plan report, noting that feedback from listening circles and stakeholder engagement sessions resulted in the addition of two new strategic imperatives (Optimize Financial Oversight and Empower Staff to Thrive Personally and Professionally). Finnigan explained that the plan was adjusted to highlight the ongoing actions being taken to achieve lead measures, rather than waiting until the end of the year to evaluate progress. Trustees commended the increased specificity and focus on lag measures, recognizing the improvements in this section of the strategic plan.

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the “Optimize Financial Oversight” imperative. Trustees acknowledged the division’s financial challenges and the plan to increase reserves. They discussed the timeline for achieving this goal and whether the allocated figures were flexible or if alternative options, such as allocating some funds to staffing, should be explored. Latka noted that the proposed target was ambitious and was included to initiate discussion. She emphasized the importance of a Board-wide conversation on the approach and suggested a more gradual timeline, allowing for a portion of the funds to be allocated to operations while still contributing to reserves.

Finnigan presented the “Empower Staff to Thrive Personally and Professionally” imperative, outlining lead measures and highlighting actions taken to date. She explained that the overall goal is to foster a positive workplace culture, restoring the division’s environment to previous levels of engagement and satisfaction. Trustees emphasized the importance of a measured approach in setting targets and cautioned against setting unattainable benchmarks. Finnigan acknowledged the Board’s role in shaping the plan and ensuring

targets align with division priorities. Trustees engaged in further discussion about setting challenging yet achievable goals.

The Board acknowledged the importance of continuous improvement and ongoing evaluation, with plans to revisit key performance measures and financial strategies at future meetings.

01/28/25-13-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ADOPT THE ADJUSTMENTS MADE TO THE BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN AND THE ADDITION OF NEW STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

4.4 ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE 2025-2026 CALENDAR

Associate Superintendent Ledene presented the Rocky Mountain House calendar report and recommended the adoption of the 2025-2026 school year calendar. He noted that Wildrose School Division has not yet approved its calendar, which is disappointing given the significant adjustments made to align discrepant days. He suggested moving forward with the adoption of the calendar, with any discrepancies that may arise with the Wildrose calendar to be addressed as needed later.

01/28/25-14-Lonsdale

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 6:46 pm until 7:00 pm.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the Parliamentary Procedure report and invited questions from Trustees.

Trustee Pasula thanked the administration for the detailed written report but noted that some editorial interpretation had been included. He clarified that at the September 24 meeting, the discussion following the motion to approve the minutes was not out of order,

as time was provided for trustees to discuss business arising from the minutes. He further stated that for the discussion to have been ruled out of order, the Chair would have needed to make that determination at the time.

Vice-Chair Watson agreed that no ruling had been made by the Chair. She proposed rewording the report to indicate that the extended discussion should have been ruled out, rather than stating that the discussion was out of order.

Pasula reiterated that meetings are governed by the assembly, and unless the Chair intervenes, discussions that arise naturally within the meeting are valid. He noted that there is no procedural rule preventing a lengthy discussion following a motion to approve minutes, as it may fall under business arising from the minutes. He suggested updating the report to reflect this clarification.

Chair Hollman acknowledged that the discussion was not ruled out of order at the time but noted that it may have been appropriate to do so.

5.2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

Superintendent Finnigan presented a report summarizing feedback gathered from the stakeholder engagement sessions in November and acknowledged Associate Superintendent Smith for collaborating with the communications department to gather this input. The report included survey results from session participants and outlined key themes that emerged from the discussions.

Finnigan also reviewed next steps, which include a joint school council engagement session and a series of additional engagement sessions in the spring.

Trustees requested refinements to the report to ensure clarity, suggesting that for those who did not attend the sessions, the wording should reflect that the report captures stakeholder input rather than presenting recommendations. They proposed using phrasing such as “what was heard was...” to better convey the nature of the discussions.

A question was raised about the locations for in-person sessions. Superintendent Finnigan stated that she will provide an update to trustees in February.

5.3. JOINT SCHOOL COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Joint School Council Engagement report and recognized the contributions of the Alberta School Councils' Association Director, who was instrumental in planning the session. Finnigan emphasized the importance of establishing a strong foundation for engagement with parents and highlighted the collaboration with

Alberta School Councils' Association, which focused on five key areas outlined in the report. Finnigan encouraged trustees to consider opening the session to all parents, allowing them to gain insight into the role of school councils and the significance of parent involvement alongside trustees and administrators.

Trustees expressed support for the plan, noting that the five key topics were well-structured and likely to be well received. There was agreement that inviting all parents could encourage greater future participation in school councils but also cautioned against the Board appearing to direct school councils.

Superintendent Finnigan stated that she will proceed with providing a backgrounder to ensure clarity on discussion topics, registration details, and session logistics.

5.4. BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION PROCESS

Chair Hollman provided an update on the Board & Superintendent Evaluation Process report, noting that while it is early, planning ahead is important due to the upcoming election in October. He proposed issuing a tender to assess potential costs before making a decision. Chair Hollman and Trustee Pasula agreed to oversee the process and report back to the Board.

5.5. TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY FUNDING CHANGE - GOVERNMENT CHANGES TO MANDATES

Associate Superintendent Ledene presented the Transportation Eligibility Funding Change report, explaining that the Division's decision to implement the new eligibility guidelines in September 2024 was made to proactively enhance service for families, align with fee structure changes, and take advantage of the Ministry's bus purchasing program. He explained that the transition has been well received, with increased ridership and positive feedback. He added that the Senior Administration has reviewed the Ministry's proposed walk distance changes for 2025-2026 and recommends maintaining the current criteria, citing the significant investment, operational adjustments, and potential disruption to families if reversed. He encouraged trustees to advocate for continued flexibility and funding to sustain the 1.0 km distance option long-term.

Trustees expressed frustration over the situation, noting the significant effort invested and the government's lack of responsiveness to previous advocacy. Concerns were raised about the financial feasibility of continuing the changes without additional funding. Associate Superintendent Ledene confirmed that funding is secured for the upcoming year but will need to be reassessed beyond that. Based on this, trustees indicated their support for maintaining the current eligibility criteria for now, with a plan to reevaluate its sustainability next year.

5.6. TRUSTEE SCHOOL TOURS

Chair Hollman noted that school visits are scheduled for the spring and inquired about the approach, suggesting that instead of listening circles, there may be greater interest in spending more time visiting classrooms. Trustees expressed support for revisiting schools to follow up on progress since the start of the year and suggested extending visit durations to make them more meaningful. Superintendent Finnigan noted that longer visits would require additional days to accommodate all schools and stated that she would bring forward a revised plan at the next meeting. Trustees also emphasized the importance of ensuring that participation in tours and classroom visits remains voluntary for schools, avoiding any unnecessary stress.

5.7. POWERSCHOOL PRIVACY BREACH

Associate Superintendent Sawula presented the PowerSchool Privacy Breach report, providing an incident summary. He stated that the division is awaiting further communication from PowerSchool, including a detailed report and forensic audit. He added that PowerSchool representatives will contact affected families directly and that the division will continue working with PowerSchool and provide updates as more information becomes available. Secretary-Treasurer Latka shared that she has reported the incident to the Privacy Commissioner as a courtesy and submitted an insurance claim as a precautionary measure.

Trustees commended the IT department for staying up to date with the latest developments and implementing cloud-based PowerSchool, which helped reduce exposure. Appreciation was also extended to the ATA President for promptly reaching out with staff concerns, enabling a swift response and communication to members, as well as to CUPE for ensuring their members were informed.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Superintendent Report. Trustees commended school staff, families, and students for their significant Advent projects, noting their positive impact on the community. It was also highlighted that, in partnership with Westerner Days, the division will be present and actively participating in the Westerner Days parade. Trustees also expressed enthusiasm about attending the Flying Fathers event.

6.2. SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the Secretary-Treasurer report as information. Latka provided financial highlights and in response to a question about revenues, she stated that the division received an estimated funding profile earlier than expected, upon request, allowing for an adjustment update next month. She added that overall, financial figures are tracking well compared to last year.

Trustees inquired about the Division's financial position, expressing reassurance regarding teacher salaries being under budget but acknowledging that financial flexibility remains limited.

Latka also provided an update on the Atrieve software implementation, with Human Resources leading the transition and expressing enthusiasm for anticipated efficiencies. While the aggressive go-live date was noted, she expressed confidence for a smooth rollout and optimism about the improvements but recognized the potential for increased workload, emphasizing the need for adequate support during the transition.

6.3. SYSTEM SERVICES REPORT

Associate Superintendent Ledene presented the System Services Report. Trustees inquired about the mini-modernization pilot, asking about the parameters that classify a project under this category. Ledene stated that additional information has been requested from Alberta Education and suggested submitting proposals through multiple avenues. He noted that if school divisions can increase utilization without requiring a full capital project, they may be able to align projects within this model. He added that further discussion on the capital plan will take place during the April retreat.

Trustees commended Ledene and the facilities team for their support during the St. Thomas Aquinas flood over Christmas, noting that school administration felt well-supported. Senior administration also expressed appreciation for the principal's contributions during the incident.

6.4. CURRICULUM AND INCLUSION REPORT

Associate Superintendent Sawula presented the Curriculum and Inclusion Report. Trustees commended the Inclusion Department for achieving 100% compliance with Program Unit Funding student verifications and expressed appreciation for the recognition of this accomplishment.

Chair Hollman welcomed the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in education, noting its potential to support teaching. Sawula added that the AI tools currently being utilized are aimed at addressing teacher workload, reporting that initial feedback has been positive.

6.5. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Human Resources Report, acknowledging Associate Superintendent Smith for preparing the report. Finnigan shared that the focus was on the Edwin Parr Award nominations, with a February deadline for administrators to submit nominations and a March deadline for submission to the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA). Trustees noted that the updated ASBA nomination package will be available by the end of the week.

6.6. TRUSTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

- ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (ASBA) - Vice-Chair Watson shared that the Zone 4 meeting occurred on January 27 and that the Edwin Parr nomination package will be available by the end of the week. Trustee Lonsdale added that March 18 is the deadline for the Friends of Education Award and it was agreed that she will look after the nomination this year.
- ALBERTA CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION (ACSTA) - Trustee Leyson shared that the ACSTA Board of Directors' meeting will occur virtually on February 3-4. She added that the Election Handbook was released on January 28. Trustees requested that the handbook be shared with parishes within RDCRS for their websites and bulletins, and also shared on our website. Additionally, Trustees requested that a one page document be created with election information for distribution to potential candidates and that it be available for distribution at the parent joint school council engagement.
- RURAL CAUCUS OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS - Trustee Lonsdale shared that the Alberta Rural Education Symposium is happening on March 2-4 in Edmonton, and that currently Trustee Heistad and Trustee Lonsdale are registered to attend.
- CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION - Trustee Pasula provided a brief written report.

6.7. CORRESPONDENCE REPORT - The correspondence was presented as information.

6.8. UPCOMING EVENTS - Trustees reviewed the upcoming events as presented.

Trustee Leyson read a closing prayer aloud.

01/28/25-18- Lonsdale

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN, THE TIME BEING 8:16 P.M.

CARRIED.

(CHAIR)

(SECRETARY-TREASURER)