

MINUTE BOOK**Board Meeting #12**

Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of the Province of Alberta held via Zoom on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.

Present:**Trustees**

Sherry Adams
Shelagh Dunn
Michelle Draper

Trisha Estabrooks
Ken Gibson
Nathan Ip

Michael Janz
Bridget Stirling

Officials

Angela Anderson
Todd Burnstad
Ron McNeil
Karen Mills

Leona Morrison
Kathy Muhlethaler
Kent Pharis
Nancy Petersen

Darrel Robertson
Carrie Rosa
Liz Yule

Board Chair: Trisha Estabrooks

Recording Secretary: Shirley Juneau

The Board Chair called the meeting to order with recognition that we are on Treaty 6 Territory, a traditional meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene and Nakota Sioux. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.

A. Roll Call: (2:00 p.m.)

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

B. Approval of the Agenda

The Board Chair advised that under Section C – Communications from the Board Chair, there would be an election of a new Vice-Chair for the remainder of this Board's term.

MOVED BY Trustee Adams:

**“That the agenda for the March 23, 2021, Board meeting be approved as amended.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

C. Communications from the Board Chair

The Board Chair advised that March 21, 2021, was the annual International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

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On that day in 1960, police killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration protesting apartheid in South Africa. She explained that the first article of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". The Board Chair shared that today stands as a reminder of the impact of systemic racism on Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

The Board Chair stated that violent attacks, anti-Asian racism and recent events in Edmonton and beyond are evidence that we must all work together to not just stand up against racism but be actively anti-racist. She advised that "Youth standing up against racism" is the 2021 theme. The Board Chair reminded everyone that the theme engages the public through the hashtag #FightRacism, which aims to foster a global culture of tolerance, equality and anti-discrimination and calls on each and every one of us to stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes.

The Board Chair stated that COVID-19 continues to impact the Division's classrooms, students and staff. She said that the Division is continuing to see variants of the virus in its schools, which isn't surprising given the increase in variant cases in Edmonton. The Board Chair remarked it is concerning to see case counts, in particular variants of the virus, increase. After weeks of declining positivity rates, we are seeing that positivity rates climbing again. The Board Chair said she was recently reminded that this pandemic is a health crisis, not an education crisis. It is important to remember this, but also important to recognize how schools are microcosms of society.

The Board Chair advised that the Board of Trustees were disappointed that Edmonton Public Schools was not included in the province's capital announcement earlier this month. She said that Edmonton Public Schools will continue to see more students, yet fewer dollars due to a frozen education budget. The Board Chair explained that Edmonton Public Schools is one of the fastest growing school divisions in Alberta and the province's decision not to fund any of its infrastructure projects will impact students, staff and families. Schools and communities will continue to experience spacing issues.

The Board Chair thanked City Councillor Bev Esslinger and the City of Edmonton for recognizing 140 years of the Edmonton Public School Division. She also thanked Ms Cindy Davis from Edmonton Public Schools Archives and Museum for sharing the Division's history on social media platforms.

Nomination for Vice-Chair:

Trustee Ip was elected by acclamation as the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees for the remainder of this Board's term.

D. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent reported that fourteen COVID-19 variants cases were identified in ten schools in the Division. He advised that no variant cases had spread within classrooms to date.

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The Superintendent explained that all COVID cases are being screened for variants by Alberta Health Services (AHS). He said that AHS is conducting additional screening of close contacts for transmission of the variants.

The Superintendent reported that the Division has not been notified by the provincial government whether education workers would be prioritized in any coming stages of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

The Superintendent shared that pre-enrolment is now open for families to choose their school for next year by April 15, 2021.

The Superintendent advised that the Division Feedback Survey has been shared with staff, students, families and community. He explained that the feedback received will help the Division plan for next year. The Superintendent advised that the survey will remain open until April 6, 2021.

The Superintendent announced that Spring Break is from March 29 to April 6, 2021, and wished staff, students and families a safe and energizing break.

E. Minutes

1. Board Meeting #11 – March 9, 2021

MOVED BY Trustee Draper:

**“That the minutes of Board meeting #11 held March 9, 2021, be approved as printed.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

F. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives

There were no registered speakers for this item.

G. Reports

2. Process and Timeline for the 2021-2022 Budget and for the Fall Review of the 2020-2021 Results and the Plans for 2021-2022

MOVED BY Trustee Ip:

“1. That the Process and Timeline for the 2021-2022 Budget as outlined in Attachment I, be approved.”

IN FAVOUR: Trustees Adams, Draper, Estabrooks, Gibson, Ip, Janz and Stirling

OPPOSED: Trustee Dunn

(CARRIED)

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**“2. That the Process and Timeline for Review of the 2020-2021 Results and the 2021-2022 Plans, as outlined in this report be approved.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

The Trustees provided the following feedback:

- It may be helpful for the future Board to ask questions during results review about the Division’s Three-Year Education Plan.
- Given the Board’s commitment to eliminate racism within Edmonton Public Schools, it may be beneficial to ask a question about what the work to dismantle racism in Edmonton Public Schools.
- Suggested that the Strategic Plan include measurable goals that will help inform the results reviews processes. The closest measurable goal in the current Strategic Plan is that more students demonstrate growth and achieve student learning outcomes with a specific focus on literacy and numeracy.
 - This a great goal for the Board and it leaves room to be more specific:
 - what does more mean?
 - does it mean more than last year?
 - is growth as important as outcome?
 - is there a benchmark goal and how does the Board judge success or failure when reviewing the budget?
- That Administration consider conducting results review early in the evenings or via Zoom to increase community participation.

3. Revised 2021–22 School Year Calendar

MOVED BY Trustee Gibson:

**“1. That the attached revised 2021-22 Division Calendar be approved.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)
Trustee Gibson was not present for the vote.**

**“2. That presentation and approval of the 2022-23 Division Calendar be delayed until the fall of 2021.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)
Trustee Gibson was not present for the vote.**

There was a short break in the meeting.

4. Motion re: Establishment of an Independent Auditor

MOVED BY Trustee Janz:

“That, in order to provide greater transparency and objectivity for the Edmonton Public School Division, Administration bring forward a report on costing and considerations of

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establishing an independent Division auditor, who would report directly to the Board of Trustees.”

IN FAVOUR: Trustees Dunn, Janz and Stirling

OPPOSED: Trustees Adams, Ip, Draper, Estabrooks and Gibson
(DEFEATED)

There was a short break in the meeting.

Vice-Chair Ip and Trustee Janz left the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

5. Strategic Plan Update: Literacy and Numeracy

An overview of the Division’s comprehensive approach in support of literacy and numeracy was provided to the Board of Trustees.

The following information was requested:

1. Provide specifics regarding the literacy app that is available to parents.
2. Provide a summary of the literacy resources available to parents.

The Board Chair requested that the Strategic Plan Update Literacy and Numeracy report be shared with the City of Edmonton.

Trustee Draper left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

MOVED BY Trustee Gibson:

“That agenda items 6 and 7 be deferred to the April 13, 2021, Board meeting.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

Trustees Draper, Ip and Janz were not present for the vote.

Trustee Janz rejoined the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

MOVED BY Trustee Gibson:

“That the March 23, 2021, Board meeting proceed past 6:00 p.m. for completion of the agenda.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

Trustees Draper and Ip were not present for the vote.

H. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports

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Trustee Janz reported that the pandemic has *sprouted* an incredible interest in gardening and local food security across the city. More community gardens are taking root for different reasons and values. Trustee Janz submitted the following written report:

On Wednesday, March 10, 2021, approximately 60 community leaders convened around the following questions:

1. How can schools contribute to climate change mitigation, cleaner air (especially along busy roads or high traffic/idling areas), educational opportunities, positive mental health, increased social capital, and helping stop school hunger?
2. The new Edmonton City Plan contemplates planting 2 million new urban trees. How can we ensure that schools and community leagues think creatively about school land as a place to welcome these trees?
3. How can we imagine and co-create new opportunities for schools and communities to grow urban agriculture?

We learned about permaculture opportunities and experience from local leaders in our community who have led projects and overcome barriers or have faced challenges.

We expressed our collective desire to have:

- Clear pathways for action: for permission, for funding, for support.
- Opportunities for partnerships: beyond the local school, how can a champion, a non-profit, or a group of neighbours start an initiative?
- Immediate potential to start planting and creating: Where are the spaces that can be actioned? Which land is city, municipal reserve, school board, and where is there opportunity?
- Equity: to help communities harder-hit by the pandemic, not only with their own food security, but their opportunity to participate in the joy of gardening and nature.

We expressed our collective need for more:

- Clarity on the what: The ability to fast-track approved species or plants into the ground, today, would be helpful.
- Clarity on the where: delineated areas and clarity for planning. For example, if a community (or school, group, apartment, or club) wanted to plant new trees, who should they approach?
- If they wanted to start a garden near a school or community league, what process should they follow?
- Support to help us get started tomorrow: not necessarily financial, but even guidebooks like community gardens from AHS or others would be helpful.
- Documented and accessible support to volunteers and partners to get started, included a dedicated point of contact at the city or school board who is knowledgeable and willing to help volunteers navigate internal processes they can't access themselves.
- Ability for all neighbourhoods to enjoy nature, including rewilding schoolyards, increasing their ability to sequester carbon, support biodiversity, and provide interesting and stimulating places for children to learn and play.

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- Clarity on plants, trees, or bushes that are pre-approved and do not impede sight lines to schools or parks.
- Is there the opportunity for mature trees lost through infill in the community to transplant from private to public property?

Trustee Janz shares these desires on behalf of the collective group, and advises those wishing to convene a gathering or meeting that he would be happy to contact the City on your behalf.

I. Trustee and Board Requests for Information

Trustee Janz noted that on March 10, 2021, the province awarded new school projects; however, Calgary Public Schools and Edmonton Public Schools, the two largest school divisions and among the fastest growing, were absent from receiving support. He requested the following information:

1. Provide the criteria by which the province allocates new schools, modernizations or portables.
2. Of the fourteen divisions who were awarded projects, do any of the recipients have a faster enrolment growth over the last four years (covering the school years ended August 31, 2017 to August 31, 2020), compared to Edmonton Public Schools?

J. Notices of Motion

Trustee Dunn served notice of motion that Administration develop an action plan to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of students for the start of the 2021-2022 school year, with a focus on evidence-based practice, equity for students in the highest social vulnerability indexed schools, students who meet coding requirements for specialized supports and First Nations, Metis and Inuit students.

K. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 13, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.

L. Adjournment: 6:05 p.m.

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Trisha Estabrooks, Board Chair

Karen Mills, Director of Board and
Superintendent Relations