

MINUTE BOOK**Board Meeting #04**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of the Province of Alberta held via Zoom on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.

Present:**Trustees**

Trisha Estabrooks
Dawn Hancock
Marcia Hole

Nathan Ip
Julie Kusiek
Marsha Nelson

Sherri O'Keefe
Jan Sawyer
Saadiq Sumar

Officials

Angela Anderson
Todd Burnstad
Grace Cooke
Ron MacNeil

Karen Mills
Leona Morrison
Kathy Muhlethaler
Kent Pharis

Nancy Petersen
Darrel Robertson
Carrie Rosa
Liz Yule

Board Chair: Trisha Estabrooks

Recording Secretary: Catherine Angeles

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: 2:01 p.m.

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

B. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED BY Trustee Hancock:

**"That the agenda for the January 18, 2022, Board meeting be approved as printed."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

C. Communications from the Board Chair

The Board Chair thanked parents who continued to navigate this pandemic with the Division, whether children were learning online, in-person or whether they were part of a temporary shift to online

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learning. She also expressed her gratitude to families who notified their child's school when they tested positive for COVID or presented with COVID symptoms.

The Board Chair thanked the Division for being transparent about the data we had and for updating it daily on [epsb.ca](https://www.edmonton.ca/epsb). She also expressed huge gratitude to staff, including supply staff. The unwavering commitment of staff to our kids is truly inspiring.

The Board Chair thanked her colleagues and noted her appreciation for their willingness and flexibility in meeting virtually. As a board, they are following directives from the chief medical officer of health in reducing contacts.

The Board Chair advised that as they await a response to the open letter to the Minister of Education, they have asked that the provincial government do all they can to keep students as safe as possible during in-person learning, which includes timely distribution of masks and rapid test kits. The Board has also included a request to the province to evaluate whether it makes sense to provide N95 masks for students and staff. The Board also continues to await a response on ventilation and asked that provincial standards and resources be put in place.

The Board Chair stated that it continues to be challenging times and in challenging times it's important to reach out if anyone needs help. She reminded everyone that school communities – staff, parents, kids, Division leaders, Board – are in this together.

D. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent expressed his gratitude to the Division's families and students for their flexibility and support through the first weeks of January.

The Superintendent stated that these are challenging times, but the Division's focus on providing quality learning for every student is unwavering. By working together and supporting each other, we will get through this.

The Superintendent advised that many parents contacted the Division about ventilation in schools. He thanked all parents that took time to reach out and thanked the Board for their advocacy with the provincial government about the need for benchmarks and funding related to ventilation. The Board letters to the Minister in October 2021 and again in early January 2022 highlighted the Division's efforts and reinforced the need for a strong partnership with the province in order to support staff and student safety.

The Superintendent stated that the Division has adhered to all the operational recommendations that the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has noted throughout the pandemic:

- Extending the operational times of the ventilation system by two hours before and after normal scheduled operation. This allows for a two-hour building flush before and after staff and students are in the building.

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- Ensuring that ventilation systems are set to allow for maximum fresh air intake.
- Ensuring that the most efficient filter possible is installed in each unique ventilation system.

The Superintendent said the Division continues to look at emerging evidence and information available. The Division will reflect on recently updated ASHRAE recommendations when considering further enhancements to our systems. Specifically, the Administration has focused in on the following areas:

Merv 13 filters

- The Division ordered Merv 13 filters for our schools.
- There are longer delivery timelines for these filters and they are arriving intermittently. Our industry partners are working to get us the filters as soon as possible. As soon as these filters arrive, Division Infrastructure staff are installing them in our systems. We hope to have a more complete idea about which systems can be retro-fit with MERV 13 filters within the next three to four weeks. To date, the Division has MERV 13 filters in about a dozen schools. We anticipate the arrival of more filters this week.
- With more than 212 schools ranging in age and mechanical ventilation infrastructure, we know a one-size fits all approach is not going to be possible. Some of our systems will not be able to take the Merv 13 filters, and so we will be placing stand-alone HEPA air filtration units in classrooms where they are required (more below).

Air filtration systems

- The Division issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the supply of stand-alone air filtration systems based on recommendations from local mechanical engineers familiar with our building systems.
- These systems will have HEPA filters to ensure that virus-sized particulates can be removed from the air.
- These stand-alone systems were specified to ensure that the system can circulate the adequate amount of air the appropriate number of times an hour for a classroom filled with students.
- The RFP just closed, and as final contracts have not yet been awarded, we are not able to share specific information, but can comment that:
 - Delivery times vary, but the Division will work to ensure the quickest possible timeline for having units in the classrooms that need them
 - The pricing also ranges depending on the number of units the Division orders. We asked vendors to provide pricing based on a variety of total number of units ordered to allow vendors to advise us of savings should we order more units. While at this time we cannot publicly disclose any pricing, we note that the pricing ranges from around \$1,000 to \$5,000 per unit.
 - Division Infrastructure and Purchasing staff are reviewing the submissions in detail to determine all of the combinations of order options that the Division has available to them.
- Once the Division has confirmed vendor partners for the supply of the stand-alone units, we will provide school administrators with information and support should parent groups wish to purchase additional units for schools.

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The Superintendent advised that transparency is important to the Division. Administration is building an online public tool for parents and the general public to find ventilation-specific information about schools.

E. Minutes

1. Board Meeting #03 – December 14, 2021

MOVED BY Trustee Hole:

**“That the minutes of Board Meeting #03 held December 14, 2021, be approved as printed.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

F. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives

The Board of Trustees heard from two registered speakers for this item.

G. Reports

2. Report #04 of the Caucus Committee (From the meeting held December 14, 2021)

Information was provided regarding actions taken at the December 14, 2021, Caucus Committee meeting.

3. COVID-19 Impact on the Division Update

An update was provided on the impact of COVID-19 on the Division.

There was a short break in the meeting.

4. Advocacy for Equitable and Greater Access to COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children ages five to 11

MOVED BY Vice-Chair Ip:

“That the Edmonton Public School Board write to the Premier, and the Ministers of Health and Education to advocate for equitable and greater access to COVID-19 vaccinations for children between the ages of five and 11, and call on the province to expand additional access points to families wishing to be vaccinated including:

1. Implementation of mobile vaccination clinics.
2. Offering voluntary in-school COVID-19 vaccination clinics in underserved areas, with the requirement of clear and documented parental consent, that these clinics are run by Alberta Health Services staff.

MINUTE BOOK**3. Making pediatric COVID-19 vaccines available in pharmacies and doctors' offices in addition to Public Health Centers."****(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)****H. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports**

Trustee Kusiek thanked the speakers who presented today on ventilation. She was pleased to hear about the Division's progress regarding ventilation and looked forward to getting more information on ventilation at the next Board meeting.

Trustee Kusiek advised that she has heard from many constituents about the lottery process for Lillian Osborne High School. She understands their frustration and concerns about this. School capital projects are funded by the province and she continues to work with her colleagues to advocate on the issue of high school space for students in the Division.

Trustee Kusiek will be attending, this week, school council meetings for both Strathcona High School and Lillian Osborne High School. Thursday, January 20th, she is hosting the next Ward F Conversation. She thanked approximately 60 people who have already RSVP'd for the event. Anyone is welcome to attend and can RSVP for the link via her website.

Trustee Kusiek expressed thanks to the City of Edmonton for the N95 mask donation to the Division for distribution to staff. This really spoke to her about the spirit of collaboration and working together for the good of all Edmontonians, and she was appreciative of that.

Board Chair Estabrooks thanked Ward D school councils who invited her to their meetings. She also thanked the numerous community leagues who reached out to attend their meetings and shared updates from the Board of Trustees. She noted appreciation for the chance to meet with City Councillors Stevenson and Salvador and to connect with MP Blake Desjarlais. All of those meetings underscored the importance of working together and collaborating to ensure Division's school communities are strong.

I. Trustee and Board Requests for Information

Board Chair Estabrooks requested information regarding insurance premiums:

- Could Administration please provide an overview of the cost of our insurance premiums for the Division in the last five years?
- Why are we seeing an increase in insurance premiums and what trends is the Division noticing? What role has COVID-19 played in increasing insurance premiums?
- How does our division's increase compare to other school divisions in Alberta and broadly in other organizations in Canada/North America?
- As any increase to insurance premiums is a variance from our budget, how might this cost increase be covered?

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- What steps, if any, can the division take to reduce our own insurance premiums? What does the Division anticipate for future insurance premiums?
- How could a backstop insurance program from the Government of Alberta benefit EPSB and other school divisions?

J. Notices of Motion

Trustee Sumar gave notice that he would be making the following motion:

Given the rising number of COVID cases among school staff and students and the high transmissibility of the Omicron variant¹;

Given that a child aged five to nine with no pre-existing health conditions passed away this week from COVID-19²;

Given that the COVID-19 virus is dispersed in both droplet and aerosol forms^{3,4}; and,

Given the higher effectiveness of KN95 and N95 masks in reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus because of their well-fitting nature and their ability to filter smaller-sized particles⁵;

I move that the Edmonton Public School Board of Trustees advocate to the provincial government for an immediate allocation from the surplus reserve not to exceed \$3.5M for all students and staff to obtain a minimum four-week supply of N95 equivalent masks.

References:

¹ <https://www.e-psb.ca/schools/goingtoschool/health/covid-19cases/>

² <https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/child-dies-of-covid-19-as-hospitalizations-soar-past-1000-in-alberta>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/sars-cov-2-transmission.html>

⁴ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/main-modes-transmission.html>

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7724761/>

K. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, February 1, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.

L. Adjournment: 4:18 p.m.

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Trisha Estabrooks, Board Chair

Karen Mills, Director of Board and
Superintendent Relations