

MINUTE BOOK**Board Meeting #06**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of the Province of Alberta held via Zoom on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 2 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 a land acknowledgement, recognizing that land acknowledgements are about reconciliation and reflection. When we take a moment to acknowledge this land that we are on, that we share - we acknowledge community and traditional places and we are also taking a moment to show understanding of the longstanding and important history that has brought us to reside on this land and to seek to understand our place within that history. We are on Treaty 6 territory, home to the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Metis, Dene and Nakota Sioux. This land has and will continue to be important for many First Nations, Metis and Inuit and for all Treaty people.

A. **Roll Call:** 2:06 p.m.

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

B. **Approval of the Agenda**

MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:

**"That the agenda for the February 15, 2022, Board meeting be approved as printed."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

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C. Communications from the Board Chair

The Board Chair expressed the Board's concern over the lack of consultation from the provincial government with any school boards in relation to last week's announcement regarding lifting of restrictions in schools. The decision to lift the masking requirement was done without any input from school divisions. The public has yet to see what recommendations the Chief Medical Officer of Health made around the masking of children in schools. With the removal of the public health order and clear direction from the Minister that boards cannot put in place their own restrictions, the Division is left with no course of action but to abide by what has been imposed upon us.

The Board Chair thanked staff, who were working in our schools, for their hard work and dedication to keep each other and students as safe as possible. She also expressed appreciation for students who were choosing to continue to wear masks, knowing that wearing a mask is about protecting those around you.

The Board Chair advised that the Minister of Education approved the Division's request to access \$6 million of the Division's reserve dollars to purchase HEPA filters for all classrooms. She thanked the Minister. HEPA filters will give us another layer of protection as we continue to navigate this global pandemic. She indicated that the units will be in place in our schools in the next two to four weeks.

D. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent congratulated McNally student Jonathan Afowark. Jonathan has been selected as one of 20 high schoolers and undergraduates across Canada for the RBC Future Launch Scholarship for Black Youth. The scholarship provides \$10,000 every year for up to four years (\$40,000 total). Jonathan was chosen for his exemplary efforts and commitment to STEM. Jonathan was nominated for his strong academic record and involvement in community and school leadership. The Superintendent wished him all the best in continuing his studies.

The Superintendent welcomed Principal Christine Simmons from Delton School and Principal Kyril Mueller from Brander Gardens School, who are members of the Superintendent's Community of Practice and Education (SCOPE) Committee, and are attending the meeting to listen into the Board conversation.

The Superintendent stated that Monday, February 21 is Family Day and on February 23 the Division will observe Pink Shirt Day. All these days remind us how important relationships are and how important it is to care for one another. He hoped everyone can take some time this month to connect with people who are important to them and support them. This month is also a good time to reflect on the kind of relationships that we want to build and the example we want to show to others. He hopes everyone has a safe and healthy Family Day weekend and gets a well-deserved rest.

The Superintendent provided an update on the impact of COVID-19 on the Division.

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The Superintendent reported that the vendor the Division has selected to purchase the HEPA filters from has units in stock. The Division received a very competitive price, given the volume that we are purchasing. The Superintendent has contacted Finance and Infrastructure to proceed with the purchase of the HEPA filters and we are expecting to receive the units within a two-week time frame. The units will be distributed and installed as quickly as possible.

The Superintendent confirmed that the Division will continue with the COVID-19 tracker available on epsb.ca. The Division will be monitoring that data very carefully and monitoring for any signs in terms of change in approach, lifting of the masking mandate specifically. Any kind of increase due to COVID will be reported immediately to Health and Education ministries, and the Board.

The Superintendent advised that as of two weeks ago, approximately 86 schools have received the MERV 13 filters for their HVAC systems and are either complete or very near completion of the install of those filters. The Division is expecting ongoing staggered delivery of those filters. The Superintendent said he will contact Infrastructure for more detailed information and will share this with the Board, once received.

E. Minutes

1. Board Meeting #05 – February 1, 2022

Trustee Kusiek requested that her Trustee report, under Item G in the February 1, 2022 minutes, be amended as follows:

Excerpt:

Trustee Kusiek shared that February 17 she ~~was~~ will be hosting with Trustee Ip a joint board ~~Traffic~~ Transportation Forum.

Trustee Kusiek recognized Coach Kirby ~~Peng-Feng~~, all the community members, teacher volunteers and staff who have supported the team and congratulated the student swimmers.

MOVED BY Trustee Sawyer:

**“That the minutes of Board Meeting #05 held February 1, 2022, be approved as amended.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

F. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives

The Board of Trustees heard from 11 registered speakers in the first portion of agenda Item F and one speaker at 4:20 p.m.

There was a short break in the meeting.

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“That the Real Estate Strategy (as captured on pages 1-6 of the Real Estate Booklet, Attachment I) be approved.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

3. Establishment of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Alternative Program**MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:**

“That the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) program as a K-12 Division alternative program, effective September 2022, be approved.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

4. Division Insurance

Information was provided regarding the request for information #004.

There was a short break in the meeting.

H. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports

Trustee Nelson shared the Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta (PSBAA) recently held PD sessions and the Public School Boards’ Council (PSBC) held a virtual and in-person meeting. The PD sessions included the following:

- A presentation from Charlene Bearhead: How the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action are Related to Education. The presentation had an emphasis on how the curriculum and teacher training need to reflect the calls to action, specifically numbers 62-65.
- Review of the PSBAA work plan, which included creating partnerships with local city councils, advocacy work, and recruiting other public school boards not currently involved.
- Sessions on understanding policy and procedures and the board’s roles. There were two presentations on the role of a board and working partnerships with superintendents. Both of those sessions were from existing trustees and superintendents who had successful relationships with each other for the purpose of serving the students and families in their regions.

Trustee Nelson shared that she is continuing to attend parent council meetings and getting to know the school communities.

Trustee Nelson will be attending City Hall School with the Grade 6 class from McLeod School.

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Trustee Nelson thanked Dr. Donald Massey Grade 9 teacher, Ms. MacLean and her students for their wonderful persuasive letters. Ms. McLean's Social Studies class had an assignment to write persuasive letters; each student had to pick a cause and write a letter to an elected official. Trustee Nelson received five letters and she is looking forward to answering their letters this week.

Trustee Kusiek thanked the speakers, and particularly those sharing those very heartfelt comments around concerns about removing masks in schools at this time.

Trustee Kusiek expressed her appreciation in getting to know the larger community and the people of Ward F:

- She met with the Riverbend Community League.
- She met with Esther Starkman and McKernan School Councils.
- Tonight, she was looking forward to the Greenfield School Council meeting.
- She had the opportunity to visit Lendrum School and was provided a great tour led by young students!

Trustee Kusiek shared a good news story. This good news story really illustrates to her the idea of schools as community hubs, and relationships. It also shines a light on positivity and community building. This project is called "Love Lendrum." The local community league is inviting students at Lendrum School to provide artwork in a variety of mediums to show what they love about Lendrum. Artwork will be displayed for community members to see.

I. Trustee and Board Requests for Information - none

J. Notices of Motion

MOVED BY Trustee Hole:

**"That the Board of Trustees grant waiver of notice to consider the following motion at the February 15, 2022, Board meeting.
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

Given that the Government of Alberta has lifted masking mandates without consulting school divisions or releasing the recommendations and data on which that decision was made.

Given that the Board of Trustees is committed to making sound, evidence-based decisions.

And given that Health Care Workers and immunologists are warning that it's too soon to lift masking, and that the Chief Medical Officer of Health has warned that hospitals and the acute care system are under strain, and has asked Albertans to take actions to protect the Health Care system and our communities.

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I move that the Board of Trustees advocate to the Government of Alberta to reinstate masking mandates, and tie the use of masking to hospitalization rates.”

MOVED BY Chair Estabrooks that the motion be amended:

“Given that the Government of Alberta has lifted masking mandates without consulting school divisions or releasing the recommendations and data on which that decision was made.

Given that the Board of Trustees is committed to making sound, evidence-based decisions.

Given that Edmonton Public Schools has taken a layered approach to COVID throughout the pandemic.

And given that Health Care Workers and immunologists are warning that it’s too soon to lift masking, and that the Chief Medical Officer of Health has warned that hospitals and the acute care system are under strain, and has asked Albertans to take actions to protect the Health Care system and our communities.

~~“I move that the Board of Trustees advocate to the Government of Alberta to reinstate masking mandates, and tie the use of masking to hospitalization rates.”~~

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees advocate to the Minister of Education to allow school boards, working with Alberta Health Services, the autonomy to put measures and resources, such as masking, in place based on our local context.”

The Vice-Chair called the question on the amendment.

IN FAVOUR: Trustees Estabrooks, Hancock, Hole, Ip, Kusiek, Nelson, O’Keefe, and Sawyer

OPPOSED: Trustee Sumar

(CARRIED)

MOVED BY Vice-Chair Ip:

“That the Board meeting be extended beyond 6 p.m.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

The Board Chair called the question on the amended motion.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

MOVED BY Trustee Kusiek:

“That the Board of Trustees grant waiver of notice to consider the following motion at the February 15, 2022, Board meeting.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

Be it resolved, that the Board of Trustees request the Chief Medical Officer of Health provide the data and rationale on which the decision to remove masking in schools was based.

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Be it further resolved that the Board of Trustees request the provincial government closely monitor the impact of lifting the mask mandate for all schools by publicly sharing data daily about in-school transmission rates of COVID-19, and movement of classes, grades, and schools to online learning.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

K. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 2 p.m.

L. **Adjournment:** 6:21 p.m.

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Trisha Estabrooks, Board Chair

Karen Mills, Director of Board and
Superintendent Relations