

**MINUTE BOOK****Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of Alberta held in the Centre for Education McCauley Chambers on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, at 2 p.m.

**Present:****Trustees**

Trisha Estabrooks  
Marcia Hole

Julie Kusiek  
Marsha Nelson  
Sherri O'Keefe

Jan Sawyer  
Saadiq Sumar

**Officials**

Angela Anderson  
Todd Burnstad  
Grace Cooke  
Andrea Cooper

Karen Mills  
Kathy Muhlethaler  
Kent Pharis  
Nancy Petersen  
Cliff Richard

Darrel Robertson  
Carrie Rosa  
Ron Thompson  
Liz Yule

**Board Chair:** Julie Kusiek

**Recording Secretary:** Catherine Angeles

The Board Chair called the meeting to order and called upon Trustee Estabrooks to provide a land acknowledgement.

Trustee Estabrooks began the meeting by acknowledging the land on which we live, work, learn and raise our families. We are on Treaty 6 land. In Cree, the word for land is askiy. And on amiskwaciywâskahikan or Beaver Hills House or Edmonton, it's important we acknowledge the history of this land, the people who have called it home for generations, and also the potential of this land.

Trustee Estabrooks acknowledged that land acknowledgements are rooted in land but also are, in many ways, an act of reconciliation. She honoured the legacy of the Honourable Murray Sinclair, who passed away yesterday. He was an Anishinaabe elder, a lawyer, a judge, a senator and he led the process of reconciliation in our country. His contributions will long have ripple effects in Canada. He said many times in his journey listening to survivors' stories that reconciliation will take generations. He also noted that, in reference to residential schools and the work that we do together as part of reconciliation and truth, it is education that got us into this mess, and it's education that will get us out of it.

**A. Roll Call: 2:02 p.m.**

The Superintendent advised that Trustee Hancock was absent. All other Trustees were present.

**MINUTE BOOK****B. Approval of the Agenda****MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:**

**“That the agenda for the November 5, 2024, Board meeting be approved as printed.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**C. O Canada - Vimy Ridge Academy Remembrance Ceremony**

Vimy Ridge Academy conducted a Remembrance ceremony.

**D. Communications from the Board Chair**

The Board Chair shared that yesterday she and Superintendent Darrel Robertson attended the No Stone Left Alone ceremony at Beechmount Cemetery. This moving ceremony was live streamed across the country and is an important way for young people to engage in active remembrance of fallen military personnel. She expressed thanks to students at Centennial School and Riverbend Junior High for taking an active part in the ceremony. Board Chair Kusiek hopes that everyone is able to take time on November 11 and throughout this month to remember the sacrifices made so that we can enjoy the freedoms we have today, and to take this time as a call to action to work for peace.

The Board Chair said that November is Family Violence Prevention Month. November 13-19 is Transgender Awareness Week and November 20 is Transgender Day of Remembrance. Given the discussions today about the recently-tabled Bill 27 and our continued advocacy for the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ students, she wanted to invite all students, staff and families to learn and reflect on how to be a good ally to colleagues, classmates, youth, friends, family and neighbours who are transgender or gender diverse.

The Board Chair advised that last month Edmonton Public Schools participated in a presentation and panel discussion on school infrastructure at the invitation of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta. This was part of the professional learning offered at the recent fall annual general meeting and conference. She thanked Managing Director of Infrastructure Chris Wright for co-presenting with her. With the new School Construction Accelerator Program, there is a lot of talk about school construction. Opportunities to share experiences with other public school divisions across Alberta is appreciated. She also expressed gratitude to Vice-Chair Sawyer, who sits as a Director on the PSBAA Board and to our representative, Trustee Sherri O'Keefe, and all other Trustees who were able to attend.

The Board Chair said that at the last Board meeting it was requested that she would share, on behalf of the Board, information on several reports with various elected officials and education partners. Letters pertaining the Division Environmental Strategy and our Board's advocacy for a carbon tax rebate have been sent to Mayor Sohi, Minister Nicolaides, Minister Freeland and Minister Guilbault. A letter to the

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Alberta School Boards Association regarding increased election costs has also been sent. All letters will be posted to [epsb.ca](https://epsb.ca) shortly.

**E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent thanked everyone attending the meeting in person today, including SCOPE principals Scott Markine and Mike Morisson, and to those watching online.

The Superintendent reflected on the upcoming Results Review, highlighting the conversations about the Division's achievements. He expressed gratitude for the strong public education system in Alberta, particularly Edmonton Public, which has made significant progress in recent years. He emphasized the importance of teamwork in teaching and appreciated the dedication and collaboration of staff in supporting student success. Despite the challenges, including long days, staff continue to achieve remarkable results and improve high school completion rates. Superintendent Robertson also acknowledged the partnership with parents and the hard work of students, celebrating their collective efforts in achieving remarkable results and helping students transition to lives of dignity, empathy, and fulfillment.

The Superintendent congratulated John A. McDougall School, who recently opened a refreshed basketball court honouring the Edmonton Grads. The Edmonton Grads was an amateur women's basketball team that played from 1915 to 1940. Many of the players attended John A. McDougall School, also playing and practicing at the school. The Edmonton Grads, an award-winning team, won 19 national championships, 17 North American championships and 16 World championships, holding the North American record for the women's sports team with the best winning percentage. John A. McDougall School is a happy and deserving recipient of the refurbished court that features the Grads' logo in black and gold and has the name of every Grads player on the poles of the hoop.

The Superintendent said that last month he and Board Chair Kusiek had the great pleasure of attending an event at M.E. LaZerte. Students at the school have been working alongside professionals from Homes by Avi to build a house. Students in the Trades 10, 20 and 30 class constructed the main floor of a beautiful three-bedroom home over the summer. They unveiled the home in early October. Once complete, the house will be sold and the proceeds will go back to M.E. LaZerte School for the continuation of the program. Superintendent Robertson also thanked NAIT, which announced a dedicated bursary for M.E. LaZerte students who advance to the School of Construction and Building Sciences at NAIT.

The Superintendent shared that the Communications team won two BRAVO! Awards from the Canadian Association of Communication in Education (CACE) last month. This national awards program recognizes and honours exemplary work in all aspects of school public relations, communications, marketing and engagement. The awards were handed out on October 26 and the team received awards for their Oilers playoff Instagram reel and for their work on the student demographic survey. He congratulated the team.

The Superintendent congratulated Ida Lucila, who works in the Division Support Services department. She recently won the Artist of the Year Award at the 2024 Rise Awards, hosted by the Newcomer Centre. This award showcases the artistic talents of an immigrant who has enriched Edmonton's cultural landscape through their work, bridging communities with the power of art.

**MINUTE BOOK****F. Approval of the Minutes**1. Board Meeting – October 22, 2024

Trustee Sumar requested that his Land Acknowledgment in the October 22, 2024 minutes, be amended by removing the quotes in the following sentence:

*In the spirit of reconciliation, Trustee Sumar committed to, as Dr Ali Lakhani said, “opening wider the aperture of my own heart so that I may know and that I may get to know more about the original inhabitants of Turtle Island and their descendants.”*

**MOVED BY Trustee O'Keefe:**

**“That the minutes of the Board meeting held October 22, 2024, be approved as amended.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**G. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Items on the Meeting Agenda**

There were no registered speakers for this item.

There was a short break in the meeting.

**H. Reports**2. Student Senate 2024-2025 Work Plan

Student Trustees Bella Jiao, Chloe Ge and Christina Daniel presented the 2024-2025 Student Senate Work Plan.

3. Advocacy for 2SLGBTQIA+ Rights

**MOVED BY Trustee Estabrooks:**

**“That the Board of Trustees urge Alberta School Boards Association and Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta to advocate to Alberta’s Premier and the Minister of Education that sexual education remain an “opt out” option for parents in Alberta and that school boards’ autonomy be respected with regards to their own sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression policies.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

There was a short break in the meeting.

**MINUTE BOOK**4. Governance and Evaluation 2024-2025 Work Plan**MOVED BY Trustee O'Keefe:**

**“That the Board approve the Governance and Evaluation Committee 2024-2025 Work Plan.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

5. Strategic Plan Update Report – Well-being and Mental Health

An update was provided on the ongoing work and efforts made by the Division in the 2023–24 school year to support Priority 3 of the [2022–26 Division Strategic Plan](#): “Promote a comprehensive approach to student and staff well-being and mental health”.

6. Student Accommodation Plan 2024-2025

An update was provided on the Student Accommodation Plan, which is updated annually to provide timely and transparent information to stakeholders and to build an awareness of the intricacies of student accommodation.

7. Board Chair Discretionary Expense Allowance Report 2023-2024

A report of the expenses incurred under the Board Chair’s discretionary allowance for the period of September 2023 – August 2024 was provided for information.

**I. Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports**

Trustee Estabrooks shared that she attended the RISE community awards night hosted by the Newcomer Association. She offered congratulations to all the awards recipients.

Trustee Estabrooks thanked school councils in Ward D for the invitation to attend recent meetings and share the challenges facing the Division, notably growth, as well as the successes of our Division and Board of Trustees.

Trustee Estabrooks thanked the organizers of the trans rights rally held at the Alberta legislature on the weekend. She said it is powerful when people can come together and collectively lift each other up.

**J. Trustees and Board Requests for Information - None****K. Notices of Motion - None****L. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 2 p.m.**

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M. **Adjournment:** 5:44 p.m.

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

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Julie Kusiek, Board Chair

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Karen Mills, Director Board and  
Superintendent Relations