

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, September 24, 2024, at 2 p.m.

Present:**Trustees**

Trisha Estabrooks
Dawn Hancock

Marcia Hole
Julie Kusiek
Marsha Nelson

Jan Sawyer
Saadiq Sumar

Officials

Angela Anderson
Todd Burnstad
Grace Cooke
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 Hole to provide a land acknowledgement.

Trustee Hole shared that it is the time of year many of us here on Treaty 6 lands, and far beyond, are harvesting the gifts of this land. Land that has, since time immemorial, been the homeland, gathering place and traveling route of many Indigenous peoples including the nehiyaw, Saulteaux, Niitsitapi, Dene, Nakota Sioux, Anishnaabe, Inuit and Métis of the North Saskatchewan river territory.

Trustee Hole expressed her gratitude to the First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples, and to their ancestors, who have defended and protected this land for generations, so that we may continue to enjoy the bounty and the beauty of the land here in amiskwacîwâskahikan which we call home.

Trustee Hole offered this land acknowledgement as a treaty person in recognition of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and in the spirit of learning, friendship, collaboration and a commitment to honor the history and voice of First Nation, Metis and Inuit peoples who share their wisdom, knowledge, cultures, languages and truths with us.

Trustee Hole said that in the upcoming days many of our schools will take time to stop, listen and learn as we recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. As we grapple with the truth of the lasting impacts of treaties, colonization, legislation, as one governor of this Board, Trustee Hole commits to actions that will honor lived experience and make decisions that will provide educational opportunities that will allow students to grow, thrive and achieve their dreams.

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A. O Canada

B. Roll Call: 2:05 p.m.

The Superintendent advised that Trustee O’Keefe was absent and all other Trustees were present.

C. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:

**“That the agenda for the September 24, 2024, Board meeting be approved as printed.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

D. Communications from the Board Chair

The Board Chair shared that Edmonton Public Schools needs 50 schools to open in the next 10 years to keep up with unprecedented student enrolment growth. The Board of Trustees have been tireless advocates for provincial school infrastructure investment that will address the almost \$1 billion in deferred maintenance, modernize existing schools, and accelerate the pace of new school construction so that every student has an excellent, modern learning environment. Chair Kusiek said she’s happy to report that last week’s provincial announcement of \$8.6 billion into school infrastructure is good news and a significant step to addressing these urgent needs. The government has shared that new school announcements will take place with spring budget announcements, with the first round happening in spring 2025. Existing projects keep moving forward through the stages of planning, design and construction once the current stage is completed.

The Board Chair shared the following:

- 2 - number of projects already funded for construction. We expect Edgemont and Glenridding to be ready for students by 2027 and 2028 respectively.
- 12 - total number of school projects listed in Year 1 of our capital requests
 - Five of the 12 are already funded planning or design and will continue to move through to design and construction when their current stage is complete. This is a welcome change to the process.

The remaining seven projects in the Division’s Year 1 capital requests are unfunded. The Premier underlined that if the sites are ready, they will fund them to a maximum of 30 new schools per year. The Minister of Education also said this funding commitment will address the needs of fast growing metro regions of Edmonton and Calgary. Given this information from the Premier and Minister, the Division is in a good position to have all seven of these critical projects funded in Spring 2025.

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The Board Chair addressed the question about how Edmonton Public Schools can help things move forward as quickly as possible.

1. Check if there are there any sites in Year 2 or 3 of the Division's capital plan that are ready and can be moved to Year 1 requests.
2. Keep working with the City of Edmonton to ensure sites are ready as quickly as possible.
3. Share opportunities for various build types with government (P3, IPD, design build., etc.). This is a tall order for Alberta's construction industry and the Division must remain nimble in our approaches in working with Alberta Infrastructure to get the job done.

The Board Chair responded to two questions she has been hearing:

1. What about more staff? Class sizes are growing and so is classroom complexity.
 - a. The Premier signaled last week that government will be reviewing the funding formula and acknowledged the weighted moving average doesn't work for school divisions experiencing unprecedented growth. The Board will be taking part in consultation on this, and will continue to be solutions focused in advocating for sustainable, adequate, predictable funding for every single student.
 - b. With dozens of new schools opening in the coming years, the Division will need many new staff, including teachers and we need a funding formula that truly takes into account the student needs and number of students the Division actually have in our classrooms.
2. What about the funding going to private and charter schools?
 - a. Public dollars for public education, that is the Board's stance. The Board is proud of the excellent quality regular community programming and 30+ alternative programs the Division offers, and has been offering for decades. There are LOTS of choices within the Division. We accept all students. We are also governed by a Board of Trustees elected by the community. We are accountable to both the government and community.

The Board Chair said she is proud of the advocacy of the Board. Their two major points of advocacy over their term have been for more schools and a change to the funding formula. The Board is making progress and will continue to advocate for the essential role that public education plays for our communities, our province, and the lives of students and their families.

The Board Chair stated that the Superintendent and she would be leaving the meeting no later than 4:15 p.m. to attend another meeting. Chair Kusiek thanked Vice Chair Sawyer in advance for chairing the remainder of the meeting. The Board Chair shared that Trustee O'Keefe was unwell today, which was why she was not in attendance. However, Trustee O'Keefe would be tuning into the livestream to watch the meeting.

E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent thanked everyone attending the meeting in person today, including SCOPE principals Vanessa LeCaine and David Sloan, and to those watching online.

The Superintendent shared that as of this morning, we've welcomed 120,638 students into the Division. Schools are working incredibly hard to form relationships, build routines and get learning off to a great start.

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Throughout the month, the Division has been working diligently to accommodate as many students as possible. There have been a number of appeals and the Superintendent expressed his sincerest appreciation for the patience of students and families who have been waiting on information about where they can attend.

The Superintendent said the Division is grateful for last week's announcement that will support an acceleration of school construction, modernization and replacements. Anything we can do to move projects forward more swiftly is greatly appreciated. While no new construction dollars have been announced right now, we can anticipate the advancement of projects that are in the preliminary stages and hope for more as part of Budget 2025. Superintendent Robertson noted that this year the Division anticipates to be 90 per cent utilized in our school buildings. With increasing student enrolment each year and the lengthy construction process for new schools (three to five years on average), additional space relief is not imminent. He expressed appreciation for the Board's continued advocacy to the province for more space where students can learn and thrive.

The Superintendent shared that Read-In Week will take place October 7-11. The Division is so grateful to everyone who visits schools during this week, and year-round, to share their love of literacy, reading and literature.

The Superintendent congratulated Gerald Chung, a teacher at Old Scona School, who was recently named CyberPatriot XVI Coach of the year for 2023-2024. Gerald was selected from thousands of nominees. Gerald's students nominated him after finishing first in the CyberTitan Canadian National Finals last year. The students also came away as the top-ranked Canadian team in the international CyberPatriot competition. The competitions are in computer programming and cybersecurity, where students are given computer network scenarios where they must locate and resolve issues within a specific timeframe. Old Scona principal Will Deys said, "This is a big honour and significant accomplishment and is great recognition for the time that Gerald commits to our students every year."

F. Approval of the Minutes

1. Board Meeting – September 10, 2024

MOVED BY Trustee Hancock:

**"That the minutes of the Board meeting held September 10, 2024, be approved as printed."
(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.

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A short video presentation was shared acknowledging the new name for Prince Charles School as awâsis waciston (pronounced uh-wahh-sis wuh-chi-ston) School. awâsis waciston is a Cree phrase that means 'child nest'. The new name honours the school community, celebrates the richness of childhood and the school as a nurturing place for children to grow and learn.

Trustee Hole suggested that a note be sent to the Lieutenant Governor to share that the Division has chosen to rename the Prince Charles School to awâsis waciston School. The Board Chair said she would draft and send that letter.

There was a short break in the meeting.

After the break, Lloyd Martin, Cree Language Keeper, shared some words with the Board about how the name awâsis waciston was gifted.

3. 2023-2024 Board Self-Evaluation Summary

The Board of Trustees provided to the public a summary of the annual Board Self-Evaluation survey results from the 2023-2024 school year.

4. Bereavements

Vice-Chair Sawyer reported on the passing of Mr. Manuel (Manny) Cruz, Ms. Beverly Royer and Mrs. Michelle Williams.

J. Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports

Trustee Estabrooks thanked Ivor Dent, Highlands, Forest Heights and Delton schools for inviting her to their back to school events. It was a great opportunity for her to chat with parents, serve some hot dogs and hear what's on parents' minds as the school year gets underway. She appreciated the enthusiasm that many parents shared with her for the year ahead, gratitude for amazing staff that work so hard to ensure kids are well supported but also concern, once again, for just how large some classes are in our Division and a lack of staff, in particular educational assistants, in many of our classrooms.

Trustee Estabrooks expressed congratulations to Hardisty school council and the fundraising committee for the school's playground. About a week ago the newly renovated playground officially opened, it includes an inclusive play space for children with mobility challenges. The school council, working in partnership with Hardisty's principal, have worked so hard to make this newly renovated playground a reality. She thanked Minister Nate Glubish, MLA Marlin Schmidt and City Councillor Ashley Salvador for also attending the event.

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Trustee Estabrooks shared that many of her colleagues attended community league day events across our city on Saturday. It was an amazing opportunity to connect not just with parents but with community members about the value of a strong public education system. Trustee Estabrooks highlighted one community league event that she attended at Wîhkwêntôwin. At that event there was an interactive poster asking people what they thought of when they heard Wîhkwêntôwin or translated from Cree “Circle of Friends”. The themes were coming together, kids sitting in a circle and a community that is strong and connected. Some of those themes reminded her of the beauty of the name Wîhkwêntôwin and how fitting it is for one of our schools.

K. Trustees and Board Requests for Information

Trustee Hole submitted a Request for Information regarding infrastructure needs/Three-Year Capital Plan for 2025-2029:

Can administration please answer the following questions with regards to the Board's current Three-Year Capital Plan for 2025 - 2029.

- 1) For each of the priorities in Year 1 please share which school sites are fully serviced and meet the government's construction readiness criteria.
 - Are there any Year 2 or Year 3 sites which are also ready?
- 2) What is the planning and design status for each of the priorities in Year 1?
 - Please provide a rough estimate of the design completion timeline for each, and any barriers staff might be facing with regards to project design of Year 1, 2 and 3 schools.
- 3) Share a brief overview of the advantages of the following design and construction approaches: IPD, P3 and government-managed builds.
 - Please include information on budget and the average length of time it takes to complete projects using each approach.
- 4) Could administration provide a brief explanation of what each of the different stages - pre-planning, planning, and design and constructions entails and where all of our current projects are in this staged process?
- 5) Please share any efficiencies that could be used by Division staff to expedite the process of designing new schools, including the replication or adaptation of previously designed projects.
- 6) We know families value having childcare located within the school and that with an increasing space crunch the Division has had to reclaim tenant space from childcare operators for classrooms. With the province's infrastructure announcement, is there a mechanism for boards to request that the Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Trade (responsible for childcare spaces) add budget to elementary school builds for dedicated childcare spaces?

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7) What is the fit up cost for a new school once construction is complete? Is there direct funding available from the province to cover the one-time fit up costs for the many new schools we anticipate being constructed in the next few years?

8) What impacts to maintenance, autonomy and asset value might Edmonton Public Schools expect from the change to the province owning new schools constructed under this program?

9) Schools take three to five years to build. What is the Division's plan to manage growth while new schools are under construction?

L. Notices of Motion - None

M. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 2 p.m.

MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:

**"That the Board recess and reconvene at 5 p.m."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

The meeting recessed at 3:04 p.m.

I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Educational Issues – 5 p.m.

Board Chair Kusiek and Superintendent Robertson did not rejoin the meeting. Vice-Chair Sawyer chaired the remainder of the meeting and Assistant Superintendent Muhlethaler acted in Superintendent Robertson's place.

Vice-Chair Sawyer reconvened the meeting at 5 p.m.

The Board of Trustees heard from three registered speakers, all of whom spoke about seclusion rooms.

N. Adjournment: 5:11 p.m.

Vice-Chair Sawyer adjourned the meeting.

Julie Kusiek, Board Chair

Karen Mills, Director Board and
Superintendent Relations