

Board Meeting Minutes

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, May 26, 2026, at 2 p.m.

Present

Trustees	Nickela Anderson, Sarah Doll, Melanie Hoffman, Julie Kusiek, Linda Lindsay, Holly Nichol, Sherri O’Keefe, Jan Sawyer, Saadiq Sumar		
Officials	Angela Anderson, Todd Burnstad, Grace Cooke, Andrea Cooper, Kelsey Duebel, Martin Fechner, Kathy Muhlethaler, Kent Pharis, Nancy Petersen, Cliff Richard, Carrie Rosa, Ron Thompson, Liz Yule		
Board Chair	Saadiq Sumar	Recording Secretary	Catherine Angeles

A. Land Acknowledgement

The Board Chair called the meeting to order and shared the treaty acknowledgement that students from Elder Dr. Whiskeyjack School co-created with Elder Whiskeyjack.

Here on Treaty Six territory.

A meeting place of the many Indigenous people who came before us.

A place where we as students can learn to be proud of ourselves and to be gentle with others.

We are here to honour those who walked before us, the many of us who walk together now and those who will walk after.

As students at Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack, we proudly thank you for walking this journey of truth and reconciliation with us.

B. O Canada

The Old Scona video version of O Canada was played.

C. Roll Call

2:08 p.m. – The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

D. Approval of Agenda

Board Chair Sumar requested that the 'Recognition - Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence' agenda item be moved to immediately follow the approval of the agenda.

MOVED BY Vice-Chair Lindsay:

That the agenda for the May 26, 2026, Board meeting be approved as amended.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

H. Recognition

2. Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence (Information)

The Board Chair announced the following students as recipients of the Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence:

- Gold Medal – Elizabeth Wolde, Eastglen School
- Silver Medal – Chloe Ge, Dr. Anne Anderson School
- Bronze Medal – Alyx Goddard, Victoria School

There was a short break in the meeting at 2:24 p.m., and it resumed at 2:31 p.m.

E. Communications from the Board Chair

The Board Chair shared that with less than a month away from the end of the school year, schools are busy with a flurry of activities, including provincial achievement tests and year-end celebrations. For high school students, this means graduation, which officially kicked off last week. Chair Sumar congratulated all students crossing the stage this spring, whether they achieved high honours and awards as part of their high school journey or are just managing to scrape by. He shared, as one high school principal put so eloquently last week, “Public education is unique in that students with different interests, backgrounds, and skills sat together shoulder to shoulder in the auditorium and celebrated together and celebrated one another. Congratulations to all graduates, whatever their path may have been to getting to graduation. And for those who may be continuing their studies at Center High or at Argyll, we applaud your commitment to continuing your education.”

The Board Chair shared that a couple of weeks ago, approximately 150 students came to the Center for Education to attend Diversity Day, One Vision, Many Voices. The theme of the event was Students-Unmuted. Chair Sumar thanked Councillor Aaron Paquette for opening the event in a good way with a Land Welcome and to the hoop dancer, Dallas Arcand, for an incredible performance. He also thanked Lieutenant Governor Salma Lakhani for her powerful address, where she talked about her own experience as a stateless person and stressed diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a choice, and that is something that we should all strive for. Chair Sumar had the privilege of moderating a student panel, where they discussed themes of fitting in versus belonging and how we can create safe spaces for everyone. He expressed thanks to the Division staff who organized the event and to the Phoenix Society for their partnership.

The Board Chair advised that earlier this year, the Board of Trustees nominated the Alliance of Black Employee Experience and Leadership or ABEEL Foundation (ABEEL) for the Alberta School Boards Association Friends of Education Award, which recognizes individuals or organizations that have shown an outstanding commitment to improving education, student success, and community engagement. ABEEL is an organization dedicated to combatting Anti-Black Racism through youth engagement and voice for a more beautiful future. This award was included in the Edwin Parr Awards banquet, where Cokee Schmidt from L.Y. Cairns officially received her Edwin Parr Award as the Division's representative. Unfortunately, ABEEL did not receive the Friends of Education Award. They did, however, host their regional gala last week and highlighted the incredible work of students and staff champions. Chair Sumar thanked the ABEEL Foundation and Samuel Ajobo for empowering students and staff to share their spark with the community.

The Board Chair advised that on May 13, 2026, the Provincial Government announced a \$200 million grant, targeted to reducing K-9 class sizes across the Province. He expressed gratitude, on behalf of the Board, for the province's recognition that additional staff will help to maintain and enhance high-quality learning environments for students.

The Board Chair shared that alongside Division staff, he attended the Palix Foundation's Edmonton Symposium to explore brain story science and the resilience scale framework, all aimed to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. He thanked the Palix Foundation for hosting this informative event and for working to better serve the community.

F. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent thanked everyone in attendance and those tuning in online. He also welcomed principals from the Superintendent's Community of Practice in Education (SCOPE), who also joined today's Board meeting: Sheelagh Brown from Wihkwentôwin and Kirstin Johns Bell from Minchau schools.

The Superintendent reported that the province recently announced \$200 million that's being allocated to school divisions as a class size reduction grant. The provincial funding will help hire 1,400 teachers into the education system across the province. This announcement builds on the complexity team funding that was announced earlier this year. The funding is to be used to reduce class sizes in Kindergarten to Grade 9 classrooms. As part of this announcement, the Division will receive almost \$40 million to hire close to 300 teachers. The Division is working through the details, in consultation with schools and will have more to share in the fall.

The Superintendent provided the Board with additional details about the Division's Educational Assistant (EA) Internship program for the 2025-2026 school year. This program allows EAs to earn and learn at the same time, combining module-based learning with hands-on experience in the classroom under the mentorship of an EA. He was honoured to bring greetings and congratulations to the spring cohort last week, which was just completing their program. He shared that in the fall cohort, 59 graduates completed the program; last week, 65 grads completed the spring cohort, and the Division is on track to have 144 graduates in June. That's 268 new EAs added to the system to support students. He said, "We're so happy to have them as part of our team!"

The Superintendent said that May brings on commencement season. May and June is also exam season across schools. He wished everyone good luck on their upcoming final exams, Provincial Achievement Tests, and Diploma Exams.

The Superintendent shared that the Division's Communications team received an award for their communications work to support the reintroduction of the School Resource Officer program. The award was presented by the Canadian Public Relations Society, which is the national organization for public relations and communications across Canada. The award demonstrates the Division's commitment to best practices in communications. Superintendent Thompson extended his congratulations to the entire Communications team on the award.

The Superintendent said that it's a short week in the Division. He wished Division staff an excellent professional learning day on Wednesday, a restful teachers' day in lieu on Thursday and a non-instructional day on Friday.

G. Approval of the Minutes

1. Board Meeting - May 12, 2026

MOVED BY Trustee Sawyer:

That the minutes of the Board meeting held May 12, 2026, be approved as presented.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on items on the Meeting Agenda

There were no registered speakers for this item.

J. Reports

3. 2026-30 Division Strategic Plan
(Recommendation)

Trustee Nichol left the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

The Board Chair advised that, in accordance with the Board Policy: Framework for Policy Development and Review, a unanimous agreement by the Board is required for more than two readings to occur in one meeting. Seeking Board agreement is procedural in nature, considered an incidental motion, and not subject to debate.

MOVED BY Board Chair Sumar:

That the Board of Trustees authorize all three readings of the Board Policy AD.BP Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities take place during the May 26, 2026, Board meeting.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

Trustee Nichol was absent for the vote.

MOVED BY Trustee O’Keefe:

That Board Policy AD.BP Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities be read for the first, second, and third time and be approved.

Trustee Nichol returned to the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

Trustee Hoffman requested clarity on the process to potentially move, that Attachment II be amended to include only the first two slides.

There was a short break in the meeting at 2:49 p.m., and it resumed at 2:51 p.m.

Board Chair Sumar explained Trustee Hoffman’s motion would be out of order, as it does not pertain to the question being debated.

The Board Chair called the question on the motion.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

4. Four-Year Education Plan
(Recommendation)

MOVED BY Trustee Kusiek:

That the Edmonton Public Schools’ 2026-30 Four-Year Education Plan: Year One be approved.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

There was a short break in the meeting at 3:58 p.m., and it resumed at 4:11 p.m.

5. 2026-27 School Year Budget
(Recommendation)

MOVED BY Trustee Nichol:

That the 2026–2027 Edmonton Public Schools budget, as outlined in Attachment IX, be approved.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

6. Waivers to Support the Policy Framework Review Project
(Recommendation)

MOVED BY Trustee Anderson:

That, for the 2026–2027 school year only, the Board of Trustees waive the requirement in Section 6.1 of the Trustees Handbook for the Policy Review Committee to present annual work plans to Caucus Committee and for public board approval by December 31; and that the Policy Review

Committee bring its 2026–2027 work plan directly to the Board of Trustees at the June 9, 2026 public board meeting.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

MOVED BY Trustee Anderson:

That, for the current review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review, the Board of Trustees waive the requirement to make the policy available on the Division website for a minimum of four weeks for public input.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

7. Response to RFI to Follow-up on Seclusion Reporting in the 2025 AERR
(Response to Request for Information #002)

Information was provided in response to the Request for Information #002.

8. Caucus Committee Report
(Information)

Information was provided regarding the actions taken at the Caucus Committee meetings.

K. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports

No reports were submitted.

L. Trustees and Board Requests for Information

Trustee Anderson submitted a Request for Information regarding **Ministerial Order 34/2025, Education Act Amendments, and Bills 27/29 Impacts:**

This information request is to better understand the division’s implementation, ongoing systems/processes, oversight, and potential impacts on students, families, and staff of Ministerial Order 34/2025, Education Act Amendments, and Bills 27 and 29. The questions below are intended to support transparency, identify emerging trends, clarify processes, and understand how standards, professional learning, and advisory structures are being considered or applied.

Ministerial Order 34/2025 Standards for the Selection, Availability and Access of School Literary Materials:

1. 1. Is guidance provided to principals on how to implement the Government of Alberta’s Standards for Selection, Availability and Access of School Literary Materials, in addition to Administrative regulation, including the ongoing review of library collections? Is guidance provided around the use of Artificial Intelligence for the ongoing review?
2. How many review request forms have been submitted? Has this resulted in changes to what library materials are available?

For Alberta Education Act Amendment:

(Instruction dealing primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, and human sexuality)

1. Have community partners, including those who provide resources used by the division, been impacted? If so, how? Have we changed the number or nature of community partnerships that support this instruction?
2. What trend analysis could be conducted comparing participation rates under the new opt-in consent process with the previous opt-out model? Is the division monitoring for impacts on participation rates?

Bill 27 – Gender Identity-Related Chosen Name and/or Pronouns:

1. Regarding changes from previous practice, what are the major procedural/operational changes from previous practice? Is the Parental Notification and Consent Protocol publicly available? How were these changes communicated to schools and families?
2. In terms of consent forms, are parent/guardian consent forms being marked up or returned with comments? If so, what themes are emerging?
3. Concerning harm reduction, what mental health resources are available to support students who indicate concerns about parental notification? How are staff actively supported to minimize harm?

Bill 29 – Fairness in Sports:

1. Have any unique or innovative approaches to intramurals or clubs emerged in response to implementation that support diverse student participation?
2. Regarding parent confirmation form, how many refusals to complete the form have occurred? How many were marked up or returned with comments? What is the general nature of those comments? What does “maintaining forms” mean in practice (storage, retention)?
3. How many challenges have been received to date? What have been the results?
4. Is the Division or are schools tracking impacts on tryouts, team formation, or participation rates? Are there early trends or areas of concern?
5. How are staff actively supported to minimize harm?

For all orders, amendments, and bills noted above please answer these questions:

1. Standards and Best Practices:
 - a. In addition to the administrative regulations, are standards of practice/support or guidance for implementation developed and shared with schools?
 - b. Are staff provided with guiding principles (“green flags” positive ways to frame discussions) or decision-making flow charts?
2. Is intentional PL/PD planned or underway?
3. Is there an advisory board or committee or working group supporting implementation?
4. Does it represent a cross-section of interested and affected parties?

M. Notices of Motion

Trustee Anderson gave notice that she would be making the following motion:

That the response to my request for information regarding Ministerial Order 34/2025, Education Act Amendments, and Bills 27/29 Impacts, be brought forward as an information report and placed on the agenda for discussion at the public board meeting following the completion of the report.

N. Meeting Dates

Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 2 p.m.

O. Adjournment

5:54 p.m. – The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Saadq Sumar, Board Chair

Kelsey Duebel, Director Board and
Superintendent Relations