

Date	October 6, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Trustee Julie Kusiek
Subject	Motion re: Ward Map Review Including Options for Seven Wards or Nine Wards in 2029 Election
Originator	Trustee Julie Kusiek
Reference	<u>Education Act;</u> <u>Trustee Representation Ward H;</u> <u>Anticipated 2025 Election Costs RFI;</u> <u>2026 Response for Request for Information Trustee Election Costs;</u> <u>May 26, 2026 Recommendation Report to the Board of Trustees for 2026-2027 Budget;</u>

This report was originally included as Agenda item 5 at the September 15, 2026 Board meeting. During debate, an amendment to the recommendation was introduced, but not debated or voted on. The following motion to postpone the debate was then carried: “That Agenda Item 5 be tabled, in order to receive more information and clarification, to the October 6, 2026 Board meeting.” Appendix I has been attached to this report by Administration to provide further information, as directed by the motion to postpone.

ISSUE

At the June 16, 2026 Board meeting, Trustee Julie Kusiek provided the following notice of motion:

Given that:

- There has been a 5% cut to Edmonton Public Schools’ System Administration Grant provided by the Province that is used to fund the Board of Trustees, alongside other Division administrative functions,
- The duration of time required to complete a ward boundary review and subsequent bylaw changes is substantial,
- Edmonton has experienced rapid population growth over recent years, and
- Ward boundaries are regularly reviewed and the last changes to boundaries were made in 2021,

I provide notice of motion for Division Administration to prepare a report for the Board of Trustees that outlines updated ward boundary maps for the 2029 election with two options - one with seven wards and one with nine wards.

RECOMMENDATION

That Division Administration prepares a report for the Board of Trustees that outlines updated ward boundary maps for the 2029 election with two options - one with seven wards and one with nine wards - be approved.

BACKGROUND

Ward boundaries are regularly reviewed ahead of the election and no motion from the Board of Trustees is required for this review to take place. However, this motion is being brought forward to allow for discussion among Trustees as to whether the Board of Trustees would like to provide direction to Division Administration to explore two options for a ward boundary review ahead of the 2029 Trustee election - one with nine wards and one with seven wards.

RELATED FACTS

- Ward boundaries for Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustee elections changed for the 2021 municipal election; those boundaries remained in place for the 2025 municipal election.
- In the 2021-2025 Trustee term, three Trustees resigned (one in 2023, two in early 2025) resulting in six Trustees taking on the work of all nine wards for the remainder of the term.
- Under its 2017-2026 cost-sharing agreement, Edmonton Public Schools has been responsible for 29% of the City of Edmonton's joint election costs. These costs have escalated in recent years for a number of reasons (see reference documents, including [2026 Response to Request for Information Trustee Election Costs](#)).
- There has been a 5% reduction to Edmonton Public Schools' System Administration Grant provided by the Province that is used to fund the Board of Trustees, including Trustee elections. This grant is also used to support the Division's several other administrative functions. See page 6 of the [May 26, 2026 Recommendation Report to the Board of Trustees for the 2026-2027 Budget](#) for further details.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

All other Metro Boards in Alberta have seven Trustees. This includes Calgary Board of Education, Edmonton Catholic School Division and Calgary Catholic School Division. Calgary Board of Education is Alberta's largest school division. Edmonton Public Schools is Alberta's second largest school division.

In the previous term, Edmonton Public School Board functioned for most of its term with just eight Trustees and for a portion of the last year with just six Trustees. All work continued to be completed at both the Board and Ward levels. Approving the recommendation allows for Administration to provide Trustees with two options when considering ward boundary reviews - an option with the status quo of nine Trustees and an option with a reduced number of Trustees to seven wards.

Defeating the recommendation means that Administration will still prepare a Ward Boundary Review, but with options pertaining to nine wards only. Trustees will not be provided an opportunity to reduce the system administration costs associated with an additional two Trustees.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of the recommendation, administration will prepare a Ward Boundary Review, including options for seven wards and nine wards. The report will also include information on bylaw update steps, timelines, and impacts to system administration costs due to changes in total Trustee remuneration levels should the number of wards be reduced.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

APPENDIX I Additional Information in Response to Motion to Postpone at September 15, 2026 Board Meeting - Ward Boundary Review Process

JK: jk

Ward Boundary Review Process

The additional information below is being provided by Administration in response to the following motion to postpone, carried at the September 15, 2026 board meeting, during questions on an amendment to Agenda Item 5 - Motion re: Ward Map Review Including Options for Seven Wards or Nine Wards in 2029 Election: **“That Agenda Item 5 be tabled, in order to receive more information and clarification, to the October 6, 2026 Board meeting.”**

Authority

Under Section 76 of the *Education Act*, the board may establish trustee wards and determine ward boundaries by bylaw. To the extent possible, trustee representation is to be proportionate to the population of each ward relative to the population of the school division.

Any change to the ward boundaries bylaw intended to apply to the 2029 general election would need to be passed before December 31st, 2028, with a copy provided to the Minister. Section 78 of the *Education Act* states that the Minister determines the number of Trustees elected to a school board. As a result, any consideration of changing the current number of EPSB trustees would require ministerial approval.

Bylaw 2020-2

Edmonton Public Schools’ current trustee ward boundaries were established through [Bylaw 2020-2](#) for the 2021 municipal and school board election and remained in place for the 2025 election. Bylaw 2020-2 establishes the criteria used by Edmonton Public Schools when reviewing ward boundaries. Each ward is intended to:

- remain within plus or minus 25 per cent of the average ward population,
- account for projected population growth or decline over two election cycles,
- follow school attendance areas where practical,
- use clear and recognizable geographic boundaries, and
- maintain communities of common interest where possible.

In the 2020 review, population balance was the primary consideration, while the numbers of schools and students within each ward were used as supporting information.

Current Processes

A review of the existing ward boundaries typically occurs before each election to ensure trustee representation remains balanced. Ward boundary reviews are conducted in recognition of continued population growth and changes in where residential development is occurring across Edmonton.

Ward boundary reviews require updated population data by neighbourhood to assess different ward boundary options based on the current criteria outlined in Bylaw 2020-2 or others requested by Caucus Committee as the review process is undertaken. Datasets that are to be used include:

- Most recent Federal Census, population and dwelling counts.

- City of Edmonton neighbourhood-level population projections, neighbourhood boundaries, approved growth plans, residential development activity and other information that identifies where future growth is expected.
- Division data including existing ward boundaries and legal descriptions, school locations, current and future school sites, attendance areas, current and projected enrolment by student residence, and any planned changes to attendance boundaries or school accommodation.

Together, these datasets allow ward option scenarios to be assessed based on current and projected population, variance from the average ward population, the number of schools and students, the extent to which neighbourhoods or attendance areas are divided, and the degree of change from the existing ward structure.

Public engagement and communication with the City of Edmonton is also typically conducted as part of the review process and helps to identify local considerations such as community relationships and opportunities for boundary alignment. During the 2020 ward boundary review, the Division presented preliminary ward concepts for public feedback before bringing a preferred option forward to the Board.

Once updated population information is available, preliminary ward options are developed and tested before being presented for final consideration by the Board. Any changes to the current ward boundaries will require approval through a new or amended Board bylaw before December 31, 2028.