



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division, held February 25, 2025.

Present: S. Heistad,
M. Hollman
C. Leyson
A. Watson, Trustees
K. Finnigan, Superintendent of Schools
L. Latka, Secretary-Treasurer
R. Ledene, Associate Superintendent - System Services
J. Smith, Associate Superintendent - Human Resources
M. St. Pierre - Executive Assistant

Present via Zoom D. Lonsdale
K. Pasula, Trustees

Not in Attendance: R. Sawula, Associate Superintendent - Curriculum

Chair Hollman called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M.

Vice-Chair Watson read an opening prayer aloud.

02/25/25-01-Heistad

THAT THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MOVE IN CAMERA AT 3:32 P.M.

CARRIED.

02/25/25-02-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 4:58 P.M.

CARRIED.

Chair Hollman called for a recess at 4:58 p.m.

Chair Hollman called the meeting back to order at 5:31 p.m.

Trustee Pasula read an opening prayer aloud.

Associate Superintendent Ledene read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

02/25/25-03-Heistad

THAT THE AGENDA BE ACCEPTED AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

02/25/25-04-Pasula

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 24, 2025
BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

02/25/25-05-Lonsdale

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 28,
2025 BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

3. DELEGATIONS: There were no delegations at the meeting.

4. ACTION ITEMS

4.1. POLICY REVIEW - POLICY 20 - BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

02/25/25-06-Watson

**THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND
UPDATES TO POLICY 20 - BOARD REPRESENTATIVES, AS
PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

4.2. POLICY REVIEW - POLICY 5 - THE ROLE OF THE BOARD CHAIR -

02/25/25-07-Watson

**THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND
UPDATES TO POLICY 5 – THE ROLE OF THE BOARD CHAIR, AS
AMENDED.**

CARRIED.

4.3. POLICY REVIEW - POLICY 6 - THE ROLE OF THE VICE-CHAIR

02/25/25-08-Pasula

**THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND
UPDATES TO POLICY 6 – THE ROLE OF THE VICE-CHAIR, AS
AMENDED.**

CARRIED.

4.4. KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMMING AT ST. MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Superintendent Finnigan presented the report incorporating feedback from the St. Marguerite Bourgeoy's Catholic School stakeholders. In response to the trustees' request, Finnigan stated that feedback was gathered from community members through a survey assessing their willingness to pay a \$250 monthly fee for full-day everyday kindergarten programming, along with a few additional questions. Finnigan also provided a budget outline detailing the cost of adding a 0.5 FTE position.

The board discussed the financial feasibility and logistical considerations of continuing the full-day program. Trustee Pasula inquired about alternative ways to structure the program to reduce costs, such as offering childminding in the afternoon instead of hiring an additional 0.5 FTE certified teacher. The discussion also addressed the fee required to achieve cost recovery, considering potential interest from other schools within the Division to offer similar programming and the risk of running a deficit.

Superintendent Finnigan explained that the proposed model provides a higher-quality learning experience with a certified teacher and that the proposed \$250 monthly fee was set to cover costs with a minimum of 21 students. She added that concerns about the stagnant population growth in the Innisfail area are contributing to increased competition for student enrolment, particularly since a neighboring division offers the same program at no cost. Trustee Heistad emphasized the shortage of childcare options in Innisfail and the strong parental support for continuing the full-day kindergarten program.

Trustee Pasula questioned whether the funds should be redirected to other priority areas, given the Division's limited budget and the financial pressures faced by other schools. He also reiterated that the Division is not obligated to provide additional childcare services. Trustees also considered the potential impact on the St. Marguerite community if the program shifts to a half-day model or requires a fee. The board discussed maintaining the program as is for another year while ensuring that future boards would not be obligated to

implement fee increases in subsequent years. Trustees agreed that the topic of a fee in future years would be revisited at the August board meeting.

02/25/25-09-Lonsdale

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SUPPORT AN ADDITIONAL 0.5 TEACHER FTE TO SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF FULL DAY EVERYDAY KINDERGARTEN AT ST. MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS FOR THE 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR.

During the debate over the motion, Trustee Pasula questioned whether, among all the needs within the Red Deer Catholic Regional School Division, the highest priority should be allocating an additional 0.5 FTE teacher to St. Marguerite, specifically to address childcare challenges faced by parents.

CARRIED.

Recorded vote requested by Pasula

In Favour: Watson, Heistad, Lonsdale, Leyson

Opposed: Pasula, Hollman

4.5. ELECTION PROCESS WITH THE CITY OF RED DEER

Secretary-Treasurer Latka explained the board will need to enter into an agreement with the City of Red Deer to run the election in the fall and that the Local Authorities Election Act, the board needs to appoint a returning officer.

02/25/25-10-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF RED DEER TO CONDUCT THE UPCOMING ELECTION. THIS AGREEMENT INCLUDES APPOINTING THE CITY'S RETURNING OFFICER AS OUR RETURNING OFFICER AND THE CITY'S SUBSTITUTE RETURNING OFFICER AS OUR SUBSTITUTE RETURNING OFFICER.

CARRIED.

4.6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the report proposing the extension of BDO's contract for an additional year or doing a public Request for Proposal for auditing services for the next three to 5 years. Given the implementation of a new ERP system and the hiring of a new Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Latka recommended a one-year extension of the current contract.

During discussions, trustees emphasized the importance of fairness and suggested calling for public bids. Latka noted that the standard contract duration is three years, with the possibility of a two-year extension, which would help secure favorable pricing.

02/25/25-11-Pasula

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DIRECT MANAGEMENT TO COMPLETE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) IN ORDER TO SECURE OUR AUDITORS FOR THE NEXT 3 YEAR PERIOD, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR 2 YEARS.

CARRIED.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 6:25 p.m. until 6:45 p.m.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1. TARGETED COST PRESSURES INITIATIVE - ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS OF ALBERTA (ASBOA)

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the report, highlighting key findings, which included an overall enrolment growth of 12% across the province, primarily in the metropolitan areas. Key cost increases were noted in areas such as cybersecurity, benefits and WCB costs, transportation, and software licensing, particularly due to fluctuations in the US dollar. Latka also outlined mitigation strategies used by other divisions. Trustees commented on the strength of the report and expressed hope that some of the proposed strategies could be incorporated into the budget.

5.2. ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT AND THE PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the report, noting attendance at a February 5 meeting to discuss upcoming changes to Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, which is being divided into two separate pieces of legislation: the Access to Information Act and the Protection of Privacy Act. She noted that these changes will have significant implications for Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools. She stated that a key issue raised during the meeting was the need for a standardized template to assist school divisions in developing the required policies and procedures. In the discussion, Vice-Chair Watson inquired about the timeline for implementation, to which Latka responded that while the policies have not yet been passed, they are expected this spring. Latka also noted that additional support might be necessary to complete the work efficiently. Trustee Pasula expressed concern about Latka's increasing workload and emphasized the importance of ensuring the Secretary-Treasurer has adequate support or delegated responsibilities so that financial priorities remain the primary focus.

5.3. FAITH DAY AND BOARD RETREAT – MARCH 7

Superintendent Finnigan informed Trustees that Father Gregory Boyle will join the Division for Faith Day, speaking to the Division from 10:30–11:45 a.m. after Mass, with an additional session from 1:00–2:00 p.m. for interested staff. She noted that the invitation to hear Father Boyle in the afternoon is extended to trustees.

Chair Hollman addressed the board's initial plan to hold a board retreat that afternoon to discuss the budget. However, due to the unavailability of necessary information, the board will instead attend the afternoon sessions of Faith Day.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Superintendent report for information, noting that it stands as is and is open for discussion. The board discussed various updates and initiatives. Vice-Chair Watson commended the faith theme and the detailed communications update. She also noted that while trustees from other school divisions attended the Central Alberta Collegiate Institute (CACI) event, RDCRS Trustees were not invited this year and inquired about the reason. Trustees discussed the parent council session and expressed hope for increased participation, with registrations currently at 13.

Trustee Lonsdale requested that trustees visit schools to educate students on trusteeship as part of their curricular learning. Superintendent Finnigan clarified that under Policy 16, with nominations now open, trustees cannot speak in schools during an election year to avoid any perceived conflicts. She added that efforts are underway to connect with parishes and organize meet-and-greet sessions in May to provide further information on trusteeship.

Chair Hollman shared insights from a recent session with the Archbishop, noting the Church's desire to be more engaged with Catholic schools and the impact of new canon law requiring greater involvement and compliance audits. He added that with the Archbishop's upcoming move, these initiatives are currently on hold. Superintendent Finnigan also highlighted the value of the student advisory committee, noting that as a result, GRACE is organizing a student conference/session.

6.2. FINANCIAL REPORTING PROFILE - FINANCIAL PROFILE MASTER 2020-2024

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the Financial Reporting Profile report, highlighting key points on liquidity and capital assets. She noted that while liquidity is below 1.0, it is similar to the provincial average. Capital reserves are below the provincial average, which aligns with the Division's buildings and buses being newer than average, thus enabling the division to defer capital asset replacement in the short term. Latka added that the operating reserve cap increased to 6%, allowing a \$7M reserve.

Trustee Pasula acknowledged the report's value and emphasized the goal of rebuilding reserves, noting it will take time. He asked how many years it might take to return to an equity position. Latka noted that while she has taken a conservative approach with the budget, various factors can impact it, but she expects this approach to strengthen the Division's financial position. She added that schools are mindful of their budgets, prioritizing current funds for current students.

6.3. RYCOR UPDATE

Secretary-Treasurer Latka provided the Rycor Update report to inform trustees about its rollout and fee collection process. Trustees provided feedback on the Rycor update, noting there was considerable workload created by field trip forms and a need for a more standardized approach. Trustees also appreciated the system's improvements in reducing other administrative burdens.

6.4. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING DATE

Secretary-Treasurer Latka proposed setting the date for the next organizational meeting as this is an election year, with October 28 as the chosen date.

02/25/25-12-Watson

THAT THE NEXT ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING BE HELD ON OCTOBER 28, 2025.

CARRIED.

6.5. SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the report, recommending a focus on year-to-date percentage comparisons rather than just the bottom line. She noted that the projected \$1M deficit is a worst-case scenario and is expected to improve. Latka also provided trustees with an update on the Atrieve implementation.

Vice-Chair Watson asked if the estimated go-live date of June 20 was a concern. Latka acknowledged the risk but noted that staff are confident in meeting the deadline and that the lead handling the conversion is highly experienced. She added that a parallel system is in place as a backup.

6.6. SYSTEM SERVICES REPORT

Associate Superintendent Ledene presented the report and opened the floor for questions. Trustee Leyson acknowledged the previous month's efforts in responding to the flood at St. Thomas Aquinas school and praised the Maintenance Department for promptly addressing an issue at Maryview school. Associate Superintendent Ledene thanked Trustees for their

feedback and noted that the shift to a response model with a dayperson, rather than scheduled school visits, has been highly effective.

6.7. CURRICULUM AND INCLUSION REPORT

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Curriculum and Inclusion report as information. Chair Hollman expressed support for work the Division is doing with the collegiates.

6.8. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Associate Superintendent Smith presented the Human Resources report, highlighting the number of student teachers and educational assistants being placed in the classrooms, noting their positive impact on schools. She emphasized the Division's strong relationships with post-secondary institutions.

Trustee Leyson inquired about agreements with post-secondary institutions. Associate Superintendent Smith explained that some placements are based on formal agreements, while others result from direct requests. Trustee Lonsdale asked about connections with the University of Calgary. Smith noted that building a relationship with the University of Calgary is a goal, as current partnerships are primarily with northern institutions.

6.9. Trustee Reports and Updates

- Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)
 - Trustee Heistad noted that a report was provided to trustees on Monday and asked for clarification on whether all near-miss incidents are reported. Associate Superintendent Ledene indicated that he will follow up on this. Trustee Heistad highlighted that other divisions track near misses as a best practice for occupational health and safety.
- Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association (ACSTA) - [Report](#)
 - Trustee Leyson provided a written report and noted ACSTA's concern regarding the retention of Catholic teachers. Superintendent Finnigan added that she attended a CCSSA presentation on the retention of Catholic teachers, which provided extensive information on the topic.
- Rural Caucus of Alberta School Boards
 - Trustee Heistad noted that the meeting has not occurred and is scheduled for spring.
- Catholic Education Foundation
 - Chair Hollman reported that the committee has not met.

6.10 Correspondence Report - The report was presented as information.

6.11 Upcoming Events:

- February 26, 2025 - Joint School Councils Engagement

- March 2-4, 2025 - Rural Education Symposium
- March 7, 2025 - Division Faith Day, half-day
- March 7, 2025 - Board Retreat, half-day, Montfort
- March 21, 2025 - ACSTA Board of Directors Meeting (virtual)
- March 24, 2025 - ASBA Zone 4 Meeting @ Chinook's Edge (hybrid)

Trustee Heistad read a closing prayer aloud.

Chair Hollman called for a 10 minute break at 7:34 p.m.

102/25/24-12- Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES GO INTO CAMERA AT 7:43 P.M.

CARRIED.

02/25/24-13-Heistad

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 8:43 P.M.

CARRIED.

02/25/25-14-Leyson

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN, THE TIME BEING 8:43 P.M.

CARRIED.

(CHAIR)

(SECRETARY-TREASURER)