



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division, held April 29, 2025.

Present:

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

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

Chair Hollman read an opening prayer aloud.

04/29/25-01-Watson

THAT THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MOVE IN CAMERA AT 3:31 P.M.

CARRIED.

04/29/25-02-Watson

THAT THE BOARD MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 4:59 P.M.

CARRIED.

Chair Hollman called for a recess at 5:00 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 5:31 p.m.

Vice-Chair Watson read an opening prayer aloud. Associate Superintendent Smith read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Pasula requested that item 4.3, Board and Superintendent Evaluations Committee, be moved from an Action item to a Discussion item, noting that a motion will not be ready for today's meeting.

04/29/25-03-Pasula

THAT THE AGENDA BE ACCEPTED AS AMENDED.

CARRIED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. MARCH 25, 2025 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

04/29/25-04-Heistad

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 25, 2025
BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.**

2.2. APRIL 14, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

04/29/25-05-Leyson

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 14, 2025 BE
ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

3. DELEGATIONS

3.1. ATA Local 80 report

Sara Lambert, ATA Local President and Cindie Desaulniers, ATA Local Vice-President, delivered a joint presentation, emphasizing the importance of maintaining visibility and collaboration with the Board of Trustees. They provided a positive report on the committee's progress, noting strong dialogue, constructive conversations, and a clear sense of forward momentum. They publicly acknowledged that the work of the committee is going well.

They also addressed proposed changes to the Education Act, recognizing the potential impact on the Board. They expressed their appreciation for how the Board managed the trustee Code of Conduct situation, stating that the outcome was appropriate and handled with care. They affirmed their support for the Board's actions in this matter.

Additionally, Mrs. Lambert shared that, based on recent discussions, the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) had communicated to the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) that mandated literacy and numeracy testing has not emerged as a major concern among teachers overall. However, she noted that members of Local 80 have expressed concerns that these assessments can reduce meaningful instructional time in the classroom. Mrs. Lambert respectfully requested that the Board continue to advocate for data collection practices that support student learning without compromising classroom instruction.

Trustees noted that discussions with the ATA Liaison Committee have been constructive, with all six representatives at the table expressing satisfaction with the process. Appreciation was expressed for the respectful process and the efforts to build trust and strengthen relationships.

4. ACTION ITEMS

4.1. BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the Budget Assumptions Report, highlighting that enrolment, currently down by approximately 240 students, is one key factor impacting the budget. She noted that this number is subject to change daily. Trustee Pasula inquired whether Program Unit Funding (PUF) has been eliminated or if it has been consolidated into a single area, referencing the combination of two grants into one. Latka confirmed that PUF has been rolled into one grant under the new funding structure.

04/29/25-06-Pasula

**THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVES THE BUDGET REVIEW
AND KEY ASSUMPTIONS REPORT AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

4.2. 2025-2026 SCHOOL FEE SCHEDULE

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the report, highlighting the changes in school fees in yellow. Chair Hollman commended Latka for her work on the fees and her collaboration with school administrators.

04/29/25-07-Pasula

**THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACCEPTS THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL
AND TRANSPORTATION FEES AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

4.3. CUPE AGREEMENT RATIFICATION

Chair Hollman reported that negotiations were successful. He shared that while the process involved mediation, it proceeded smoothly and resulted in an agreement that met the needs of both the Board and the CUPE representative.

04/29/25-08-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES RATIFY THE CUPE LOCAL 417 COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT FOR THE PERIOD OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 - AUGUST 31, 2028.

CARRIED.

Trustee Pasula extended congratulations on the successful ratification of the four-year agreement.

4.4. SIGNING AUTHORITY

04/29/25-09-Lonsdale

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPLACE STEVEN SYPKES WITH TRACY HUYNH AS SIGNING AUTHORITY FOR THE DIVISION ALONG WITH LAUREL LATKA, SECRETARY TREASURER AND DR. KATHLEEN FINNIGAN, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS EFFECTIVE APRIL 29, 2025.

CARRIED.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1. BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT VISITS

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Board and Superintendent Visits report and expressed appreciation to staff for their input into the recent survey regarding potential spring Board and Superintendent visits. She noted that suggestions and feedback have been summarized in the report. Finnigan noted that, while there was appreciation for the initiative, nearly all supporters agreed that visits must be meaningful, respectful of staff time, and include active engagement, or they risk being seen as performative and potentially damaging to trust.

Trustees noted the Board's initial commitment to staff regarding follow-up visits and suggested that schools be given the opportunity to indicate if they would like a return visit in the spring. It was also shared that, given the depth of engagement throughout the year, visits should only proceed if specifically requested by schools. Trustees also expressed the need to explore creative approaches to visits in the future. One trustee proposed that, in lieu of spring visits, the Board Chair send a message to schools acknowledging the change in plans, explaining the rationale in light of the busy time of year, and offering to accommodate any specific requests for a visit.

Superintendent Finnigan highlighted and commended the Board's extensive engagement efforts throughout the year, which included listening circles, feedback sessions on Associate Superintendent criteria, input on inclusive symbols, joint school council engagement, both fall and spring stakeholder engagement events and Trustee meet and greets. She recognized the Board's commitment and dedication to building meaningful relationships.

Trustee Pasula inquired about planning for the next school year and asked the Superintendent for recommendations. Superintendent Finnigan suggested that future visits be scheduled during times when staff are most receptive, such as September or October. She also noted that in election years, November visits with a new Board are beneficial. Trustee Pasula proposed that this be added to the board work plan and emphasized that such visits should go beyond simple tours, focusing instead on building meaningful relationships with staff.

Chair Hollman added that he will draft a letter to staff explaining that spring visits will not take place, citing the importance of ensuring visits are meaningful and scheduled at a time that is most suitable for all.

5.2. PARISH MEET AND GREETINGS

Superintendent Finnigan presented the Parish Meet and Greet report and explained that RDCRS has begun planning a series of sessions to provide an opportunity for community members to learn about trusteeship ahead of the October 2025 municipal election.

Superintendent Finnigan requested input from trustees on how they would like the evenings to be structured, such as the agenda, format, and program. Chair Hollman emphasized the goal of welcoming individuals who may be interested in running for trustee and providing them with clear information about the role and responsibilities.

Chair Hollman clarified that the intent of the Trustee Meet and Greet events is to emphasize the vocation of Catholic trusteeship, not to serve as campaign opportunities. He noted that, under current regulations, campaigning on school and parish property is not permitted.

However, general discussions about the role of trustees and encouraging others to consider serving in this capacity are allowed.

Trustees discussed the need for supporting materials and planning for the events. Suggestions included utilizing promotional materials from Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association (ACSTA) and existing resources available on the division website. Trustees were encouraged to commit to attending the sessions, and a sign-up will be circulated to ensure at least one trustee is present at each Meet and Greet.

5.3. BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATIONS COMMITTEE

Trustee Pasula provided an update on the current status of the project, noting that the RFP from last year has been revised. He has identified several firms interested in the task and plans to send out requests for quotes within the next week, with a submission deadline set for the end of May. He added that the committee will then review the proposals and present findings at the June Board meeting. Evaluations are scheduled to take place in October, prior to the municipal election. Trustee Pasula also asked trustees to forward the names of any firms they would like to include in the quote process within the next week.

Trustee Pasula left the meeting at 6:10 p.m. Chair Hollman called for a break at 6:10 pm until 6:20 pm.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Finnigan presented a written report.

Vice-Chair Watson expressed appreciation to Superintendent Finnigan for organizing the stakeholder engagement evenings and commended the thoughtful handling of feedback from Faith Day, noting the even split in preference between a full-day and half-day format. Trustees remarked that the day was particularly meaningful for those who were able to utilize the remaining half of the day effectively. Trustees emphasized that a half-day should be considered the minimum offering for staff and underscored the importance of retaining Faith Day as part of future professional development plans.

6.2. SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka highlighted a few key items from the report, noting that this is the time of year when projections are closely reviewed. She noted that the Division is anticipating either a balanced budget or a potential surplus.

Vice-Chair Watson inquired about the Atrieve implementation and whether there were any concerns as key dates approach. Secretary-Treasurer Latka responded that the summer will be busy with significant work ahead. She noted that the team is actively coordinating efforts

to ensure a smooth and successful implementation.

Trustees also raised questions on substitute teacher costs and the variance across different schools. Associate Superintendent Smith noted that each school has unique circumstances and that next year's data will provide valuable comparison and broader insight.

Associate Superintendent Smith was asked to share information about the process of supporting staff returning to work. Smith emphasized that efforts are made out of care and concern to maintain connections between employees and their roles, including offering support and sending follow-up letters.

Chair Hollman commended the Secretary-Treasurer on the Division's current financial position, especially in contrast to where things stood in the fall.

6.3. DIVISION FUNDING PROFILE

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the Division Funding Profile for information, noting that it is a document provided by Alberta Education.

6.4. SYSTEM SERVICES REPORT

Associate Superintendent Ledene presented the System Services Report and allowed it to stand as information, inviting questions from trustees.

Trustee Lonsdale requested an update on the new school in Sylvan Lake. Ledene shared that the project is in the pre-planning phase, with a small amount of funding allocated to support this early work. Alberta Education has submitted several requests, including confirmation that the site is construction-ready and the establishment of a third-party partnership. While much of the requested information had already been provided, it may not have reached the appropriate contacts within Alberta Education, but that progress is being made.

Associate Superintendent Ledene encouraged the Board to consider striking a committee, similar to the one formed for St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School, as the process is expected to span a number of years. He noted there is strong positive momentum around the project and that Tracey Millar, Career Pathways Coordinator, has been brought onto the initiative and brings significant experience with collegiate-based school models. Once the pre-planning phase concludes, discussions will take place regarding next steps.

Chair Hollman added that it was exciting to see the modular units being relocated from École Camille J. Lerouge School as part of this process.

6.5. CURRICULUM AND INCLUSION REPORT

Associate Superintendent Sawula provided a written report.

Trustee Leyson complimented the Superintendent and Senior Administration team for their thoughtful contributions to the division, particularly for the prayers and acknowledgment of the recent tragedy in Vancouver. Trustees also shared their excitement about the Skills Alberta student from St. Joseph High School and expressed interest in reaching out to the teachers involved to thank them for encouraging students to explore careers in the trades. Associate Superintendent Sawula responded that Tracey Millar will be heavily involved in the initiative and will be informed of the Trustees' interest in attending the event and meeting the staff and students.

Associate Superintendent Sawula highlighted the importance of aligning industry partners with schools to further support these initiatives.

Vice-Chair Watson inquired about the Fire Cadet Program, specifically how many spots are available. It was noted that there is no limit on the number of spots, although the number of current enrolments is not yet available. Associate Superintendent Sawula indicated that an update with more details about the program will be provided at the May meeting.

Trustee Leyson asked about the selection process for the Student Voice Panel. Associate Superintendent Sawula explained that the selection was done in collaboration with school principals, who helped identify students willing to participate.

6.6. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

No report was submitted. In response to a trustee inquiry, Associate Superintendent Smith confirmed that the transfer rounds will open on May 5.

6.7. TRUSTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

- ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (ASBA)

Trustee Heistad shared that the Zone 4 report had been circulated among trustees for review. Trustee Leyson provided an update on the Edwin Parr Award, noting that a visit with the committee took place on April 10 with the Division's finalist, who effectively showcased the Division and her work. Additionally, Trustee Lonsdale shared that the Division submitted a nominee for the Friends of Education Award, with the winner to be announced at the Zone 4 Awards banquet in May.

- ALBERTA CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION (ACSTA)

Trustee Leyson noted that it's been quiet since January, but activity has resumed following the introduction of Bill 51. She shared that a special meeting is scheduled for May 5, and the Board will be kept informed of any developments. Chair Hollman raised a concern regarding whether the proposed legislation may conflict with the Division's denominational rights to self-governance.

- RURAL CAUCUS OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS

Trustee Heistad provided an update to trustees last week and shared that they are currently compiling data from the Rural Education Symposium.

- CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Superintendent Finnigan noted that proposals opened on April 30 and will close at the end of May, with the committee scheduled to begin reviewing them immediately thereafter. Trustee Lonsdale inquired whether the Foundation would consider a donation to the Toonies for Education campaign, which supports students in provinces without access to Catholic education. It was noted, however, that Foundation funds are intended specifically for RDCRS students.

Chair Hollman also promoted the upcoming Welding Day event.

6.7. CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

No report was provided for this item.

6.8. UPCOMING EVENTS - Trustees reviewed upcoming events as presented.

Chair Hollman read a closing prayer aloud. Called for a break at 7:22 pm.

04/29/24-10-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES GO INTO CAMERA AT 7:22 P.M.

CARRIED.

04/29/24-11-Heistad

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 8:30 P.M.

CARRIED.

04/29/25-12-Watson

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN, THE TIME BEING 8:32 P.M.

CARRIED.

(CHAIR)

(SECRETARY-TREASURER)