



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division, held May 27, 2025.

Present: S. Heistad,
M. Hollman,
C. Leyson,
K. Pasula,
A. Watson, Trustees
L. Latka, Secretary-Treasurer
R. Ledene, Acting Superintendent
R. Sawula, Associate Superintendent - Curriculum
J. Smith, Associate Superintendent - Human Resources
M. St. Pierre - Executive Assistant

Not in Attendance: D. Lonsdale, Trustee

*Chair Hollman called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M.
Trustee Heistad read an opening prayer aloud.*

05/27/25-01-Leyson

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

CARRIED.

05/27/25-02-Heistad

THAT THE BOARD MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 5:00 P.M.

CARRIED.

05/27/25-03-Watson

THAT THE BOARD RECESS UNTIL THE REGULAR MEETING IS CALLED BACK TO ORDER.

CARRIED.

Chair Hollman called the meeting back to order at 5:33 p.m. Trustee Leyson read an opening prayer aloud. Secretary-Treasurer Latka read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

05/27/25-04-Leyson

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS AMENDED BY ADDING:

- **4.4 ACTING SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT**

CARRIED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. APRIL 29, 2025 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

05/27/25-05-Watson

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 29, 2025
BE ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

2.2. MAY 4, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

05/27/25-06-Watson

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF MAY 4, 2025 BE
ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

2.3. MAY 15, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

05/27/25-07-Heistad

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF MAY 15, 2025 BE
ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

3. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations present at the meeting.

4. ACTION ITEMS

4.1. 2025 - 2028 RDCRS EDUCATION PLAN

Associate Superintendent Sawula presented the 2025-2028 RDCRS Education Plan highlighting the extensive engagement process involving multiple stakeholder groups, data from the Annual Education Results Report and the Alberta Education Business Plan. He shared that the plan outlines three key outcomes - faith formation, academic achievement and well-being, noting that each is supported by goals, strategies and performance measures to improve student success across the Division.

Sawula added that the plan emphasizes inclusive practices, foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, and future readiness through career exploration and post-secondary pathways. He further added that the plan incorporates local and provincial data, continuous monitoring, and school-based implementation, with professional development and resource alignment supporting ongoing improvement and innovation

Trustees raised questions about how student well-being and staff wellness are defined and measured, and how the board can be assured these are being achieved. Acting Superintendent Ledene noted that measurement tools outlined in the Education Plan provide data for both students and staff, which can be adapted as needed. Sawula emphasized the importance of local measures in demonstrating progress toward goals and providing concrete evidence.

Further discussion included aligning goals, strategies, and evidence with the board's strategic planning framework. Ledene explained that the current plan is intentionally more flexible and school-friendly, allowing for individualized school plans while still aligning with divisional goals. Trustees also inquired about innovative approaches in rural schools. Sawula noted that resources and support are available to pilot new ideas. Trustees expressed appreciation for the direction of the plan, its responsiveness to school-level needs, and Sawula's leadership, particularly in advancing strategic planning and fostering innovation. Chair Hollman suggested a future retreat to review school improvement plans.

05/27/25-08-Heistad

**THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE 2025-2028
DIVISION EDUCATION PLAN AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

4.2. 2024-2025 BUDGET PRESENTATION - BUDGET REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka introduced Tracy Huynh, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, to the Board of Trustees. She then presented the 2025–2026 Budget Report, highlighting that it reflects a balanced budget. She noted that the enrollment-driven budget includes key assumptions and risks and remains a moving target. Latka reviewed transportation funding based on projected student numbers and presented a pie chart showing expenditures by category, with staffing as the largest cost. She highlighted average staffing costs, instructional and maintenance expenses, and noted that amortization revenues will be separated between Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure when the budget is updated in the fall. She added that administrative expenses include significant election-related costs.

Latka emphasized that while the overall budget is balanced, individual program areas vary. External services, which include international programs, facility rentals, and cafeterias, were also reviewed, with strong performance highlighted in the international program in the current year. She noted that these external services must not run at a deficit as these activities fall outside the Division's core mandate. Latka added that a surplus was not budgeted this year, due to an improvement in the current year projected deficit. In addition, unfunded amortization has been added back to operating reserves, to assist us in restoring operating reserves to the minimum requirement. She advised that this is not a long-term strategy, as funds will be required for future capital expenses.

Trustees inquired about enrolment trends, with Latka confirming that enrolment remains flat in the Red Deer area, with provincial growth occurring primarily in metro areas. Questions were raised about the impact of the new funding model with concerns expressed that the new system does not address rising costs. Latka confirmed that election costs cannot be spread over multiple years, as confirmed by auditors.

Questions were also raised about the ILT model and counselling support, with confirmation that each school will have at least one ILT and a designated counsellor. Trustees also discussed staffing changes, including reductions and the possibility of allocating additional educational assistants in the fall to schools with higher needs. Administration noted that similar challenges exist across all schools and emphasized the need to manage staffing within the constraints of a balanced budget. Chair Hollman thanked the administration team, acknowledging the difficulty of balancing the budget given current funding limitations.

05/27/25-09-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE 2025-2026 BUDGET AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 6:48 pm until 7:00 pm.

4.3. POLICY REVIEW: POLICY 28 INSURANCE AND INDEMNITY

05/27/25-10-Pasula

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE CHANGES AND UPDATES TO POLICY 28 - INSURANCE AND INDEMNITY, AS PRESENTED.

CARRIED.

4.4. ACTING SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT

Chair Hollman thanked Secretary-Treasurer Latka for preparing the contract for the new Acting Superintendent and thanked Acting Superintendent Ledene for accepting it.

05/27/25-11-Leyson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE RED DEER CATHOLIC REGIONAL SCHOOLS' ACTING SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT AS PRESENTED, EFFECTIVE MAY 9, 2025.

CARRIED.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1. BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

Chair Hollman shared that the Board will no longer proceed with an external superintendent evaluation due to recent changes and the short-term appointment of the new Acting Superintendent. The Board agreed to conduct an internal Board self-evaluation, to be led by Trustee Pasula and Chair Hollman. The evaluation will take place as previously scheduled on October 9, 2025.

5.2. GRADUATION EVENTS

Chair Hollman asked Trustees to review the graduation events list and indicate which events they are able to attend and assist with. He thanked Executive Assistant St. Pierre for compiling the list.

5.3. FAREWELL - ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT OF CURRICULUM AND INCLUSION

Chair Hollman acknowledged that this was Associate Superintendent Sawula's final Board meeting and on behalf of the Board, expressed appreciation for his 24 years of dedicated service to the Division. He recognized Dr. Sawula's time, commitment, and contributions, and extended best wishes for his future endeavors.

Associate Superintendent Sawula thanked the Trustees for their support and mentorship during his time in the role.

5.4. TOWN OF BLACKFALDS MEETING REQUEST

Chair Hollman informed the Board that the Town of Blackfalds has requested a meeting in June. Given the busy schedule for the month, he recommended postponing the meeting until the fall. Administration will follow up to determine if there are any pressing matters that require an earlier meeting, otherwise, it will be deferred to the fall.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Acting Superintendent Ledene presented the Superintendent Report, noting a few key updates. He opened the floor for questions, no questions were raised by Trustees. Acting Superintendent Ledene thanked the Trustees for their support of the senior administration structural changes currently underway.

6.2. SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the report and invited questions from the Board. She highlighted that a Request For Proposal for purchasing cards was issued, but only one response was received. As a result, the Division will remain with the current provider.

Chair Hollman inquired about the possibility of bringing in an actuary. Latka responded that she is waiting to confirm who the Division's auditors will be, as there are varying opinions on the matter and she would like to seek their guidance.

Trustee Pasula asked what similar organizations are doing in this area, emphasizing the need to consider the Division's limited resources and to ensure any decision is supported with a clear rationale. Latka noted that the process does not need to be undertaken all at once and could be phased in over the next two to three years.

6.3. PURCHASING CARD AGREEMENT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented a draft agreement for staff who are issued purchasing cards. She shared the document for information and awareness, noting that it is part of developing a more robust process for managing purchasing cards.

Chair Hollman asked if this agreement would become an Administrative Procedure. Latka responded that this is still under consideration and may instead form part of an internal process, possibly coordinated through Human Resources.

6.4. SYSTEM SERVICES REPORT

Acting Superintendent Ledene presented the System Services Report. He noted that he met with the JUPA Committee in Blackfalds regarding St. Veronica School, and all parties were pleased with the progress, as outlined in the report.

Trustee Pasula inquired about the high cost of roofing. Ledene acknowledged that roofing projects are expensive, particularly as buildings age.

Chair Hollman asked about the recent letter from the Minister regarding the Collegiate School. Acting Superintendent Ledene explained that the government is seeking the identification of potential partnerships that could support the facility and collegiate programming. Associate Superintendent Sawula added that the collegiate grant for year 5 is now classified as operational funding rather than capital.

6.5. CURRICULUM AND INCLUSION REPORT

No report was provided for this item.

6.6. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Associate Superintendent Smith presented the Human Resources Report as information. There were no questions from Trustees.

6.7. TRUSTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

- ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (ASBA)

Trustee Heistad reported that the Zone 4 meeting minutes had been circulated. She noted that the Edwin Parr Awards event took place the previous evening and was a successful and well-attended evening. RDCRS Edwin Parr nominee, Jillian Klevyer, was the Zone 4 Edwin Parr winner.

- ALBERTA CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION (ACSTA)

Trustee Leyson reported that an emergency ACSTA meeting was held earlier in the day. Concerns were raised regarding the cost of the Blueprints and SPICE conferences; while acknowledged as expensive, it was agreed that the value of the events justifies the cost. Trustee Leyson also shared that a concern related to Bill 13 and land donation, specifically regarding ownership if a school is built on donated land, was brought forward and tabled until September. Discussions included questions around land ownership, denominational rights, and the potential model of leasing the land or building back to school divisions.

It was also noted that fee increases were approved, with further updates expected in September.

- RURAL CAUCUS OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS

Trustee Heistad reported that the next meeting of the Rural Caucus of Alberta School Boards is scheduled for Sunday afternoon.

- CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Trustee Pasula provided an update on the upcoming Catholic Education Foundation meeting scheduled for June 9. He shared that the primary purpose of the meeting is to review the applications and approve grant dispersal applications. All proposed projects are intended to advance the educational mission of Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

6.7. CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

No report was provided for this item.

6.8. UPCOMING EVENTS

Trustees reviewed upcoming events as presented.

Vice-Chair Watson read a closing prayer aloud. Board Chair Hollman called for a break at 7:36 pm.

05/27/25-12-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES GO INTO CAMERA AT 7:40 P.M.

CARRIED.

05/27/25-13-Heistad

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 9:30 P.M.

CARRIED.

05/27/25-14-Leyson

THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN, THE TIME BEING 9:30 P.M.

CARRIED.

(CHAIR)

(SECRETARY-TREASURER)