



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Red Deer Catholic Separate School Division, held August 26, 2025.

Present:

- S. Heistad,
- M. Hollman,
- C. Leyson,
- D. Lonsdale,
- K. Pasula,
- A. Watson, Trustees
- I. Hanna, Associate Superintendent, Learning Services
- L. Latka, Secretary-Treasurer
- R. Ledene, Acting Superintendent
- J. Smith, Associate Superintendent - Human Resources
- M. St. Pierre - Executive Assistant
- N. Zimmerman - Associate Superintendent, Student Services

Chair Hollman called the meeting to order at 3:29 P.M. Trustee Leyson read an opening prayer aloud.

08/26/25-01-Heistad

THAT THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MOVE IN CAMERA AT 3:29 P.M.

CARRIED.

08/26/25-02-Lonsdale

THAT THE BOARD MOVE OUT OF CAMERA 5:04 P.M.

CARRIED.

Chair Hollman called for a break at 5:05 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 5:34 p.m.

Vice-Chair Watson read an opening prayer aloud.

Associate Superintendent Smith read a Land Acknowledgement aloud.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

08/26/25-03-Lonsdale

**THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS AS PRESENTED.
CARRIED.**

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. JUNE 17, 2025 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

08/26/25-04-Leyson

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 17, 2025 BE
ADOPTED AS PRESENTED.**

CARRIED.

3. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations present at the meeting.

4. ACTION ITEMS

4.1. OPT OUT OF SCHOOL FOUNDATION FUND - MOTION

Chair Hollman explained the reasoning behind the recommendation and emphasized that this action should be reviewed annually. He noted that the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association has encouraged member Boards to exercise their right to opt out of the Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF) in accordance with Section 164(2) through (5) of the Education Act (2012).

08/26/25-05-Pasula

**THAT THE BOARD OPT OUT OF THE ALBERTA SCHOOL FOUNDATION
FUND (ASFF) AND THAT DIVISION 4 OF PART 6 OF THE EDUCATION ACT
(2012) S.164 (1-5) DOES NOT APPLY TO THIS BOARD.**

CARRIED.

4.2. TRUSTEE REMUNERATION REVIEW

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented a report on trustee remuneration in accordance with Policy 19: Board Operations, outlining the annual CPI adjustment process and options for going forward. Trustees discussed timing and policy considerations. The consensus was to

defer a decision on the remuneration increase until the September meeting, when the Secretary-Treasurer will provide additional information, including comparative data from similar-sized school divisions.

4.3. MUSTARD SEED DONATION

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented the Mustard Seed report, noting that the proposed \$30,000 donation to the Mustard Seed was not included in the budget and would therefore require a motion this year. She reviewed the source of funding, confirming it would come from deferred revenue within the Nutrition Grant. Trustees discussed the impact on school nutrition funding, confirmation that schools would continue to receive adequate support from the grant, and the timing of receiving a comprehensive report from the Mustard Seed. Trustee Pasula opposed the recommendation, citing a preference to receive a comprehensive written report on the Mustard Seed's initiatives as discussed at the June board meeting prior to approving the recommendation.

08/26/25-06-Watson

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE A DONATION OF \$30,000 TO THE MUSTARD SEED PROGRAM.

CARRIED.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 458 - DUTY TO REPORT - REVIEW

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented Administrative Procedure 458 in accordance with the Public Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act, noting that administrators were reminded of the Administrative Procedure this year and were asked to share it with staff. She emphasized that this is a legal obligation, not optional, and that all staff have a duty to report wrongdoing.

Trustees inquired about the applicability of the legislation to Board members, and whether obligations differ from those of staff. Latka indicated that while she was not entirely certain, the expectation remains that wrongdoing should be reported.

Trustees requested that the Secretary-Treasurer and Superintendent explore ways to increase the visibility of the Administrative Procedure for staff. Latka confirmed this would be followed up accordingly.

5.2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

Acting Superintendent Ledene presented the Stakeholder Engagement Review report and invited Trustees to provide input on engagement priorities, timelines, responsibilities, and

effective formats for the upcoming year. Trustees affirmed that previous timing used for budget engagement had been effective, resulting in strong turnout and useful input to inform financial planning.

Trustees asked for a reminder as to why cafeteria operations were included as a suggested topic for engagement. It was noted that the program is currently operating at a financial loss, prompting the need for stakeholder feedback. Trustees discussed the value of engaging parents to better understand cafeteria use and reasons for non-use. It was suggested that this could be facilitated through school councils at the school level and supported by a division-wide parent survey.

Clarification was provided that cafeteria programs and the Nutrition Grant operate independently, with the Nutrition Grant required to support all students at no cost to students or families, while cafeterias operate on a cost-recovery basis. Trustees expressed interest in further exploring these distinctions through stakeholder engagement. The discussion also included a suggestion to engage with the incoming Superintendent, who may bring forward additional ideas or perspectives.

Further engagement topics proposed included both operating and capital budget planning, as well as broader strategic planning. Trustees emphasized the value of engaging stakeholders on how Division resources are aligned with strategic priorities and gathering input to inform future direction. Identified stakeholder groups included parents, students, parishes, schools, the broader community, nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, social service agencies, municipal governments, and local MLAs and MPs.

Trustees also raised the upcoming loss of additional transportation funding tied to eligibility distance changes. It was agreed that early communication with families will be essential to prepare them for changes expected next year. Trustees emphasized the benefit of informing the community in advance, encouraging them to advocate and raise concerns with their MLAs. Input gathered from the discussion will inform the development of the Board's stakeholder engagement plan for the year ahead.

5.3. KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMMING FEES

Acting Superintendent Ledene opened the discussion by asking Trustees what information or analysis they would need from administration to support a more robust discussion and eventual decision regarding any Kindergarten programming changes. He explained that any consideration of changes, such as offering full-day Kindergarten in rural schools, would require Board direction on how such programming should be funded, whether through parent fees or other areas of the Division's budget, particularly as government funding only covers half-time programs.

Trustees discussed the importance of understanding what neighbouring school divisions are currently offering in terms of full-day Kindergarten and what fee structures are in place. It was suggested that administration prepare a comprehensive report, including comparisons with neighbouring divisions, financial implications, and recommendations based on what is in the best interest of students within Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools. Trustees emphasized the need for timely information, particularly from rural schools where there may be parental interest in paying additional fees for expanded programming.

There was consensus that this topic would likely be a priority for the incoming Superintendent and that a full report from administration would provide the necessary foundation for a more robust Board discussion. Trustees also noted that this topic aligns with the broader discussion under Stakeholder Engagement and should be included in future engagement planning.

5.4. PROVINCIAL NEW LEGISLATION COMPLIANCE

Board Chair Hollman initiated the discussion by noting that several new pieces of provincial legislation had been introduced over the summer and requested an update on how the Division is addressing compliance. Acting Superintendent Ledene responded by outlining the Division's plans and timelines related to three key legislative items, which were also detailed in the Superintendent's Report.

Ledene addressed the Education Amendment Act, 2024, noting that the Division is currently developing the required Administrative Procedures to comply with the Act. He shared that this work is being led by the Associate Superintendent of Student Services, with support from the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) and the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA) to help ensure alignment across Catholic school divisions. He added that while the Division anticipates being compliant by the deadline, some Administrative Procedures may still be in progress at that time.

In response to questions about the opt-in requirement for human sexuality instruction, administration explained that a single blanket opt-in form will not be used. Instead, the Division is working on clear, accessible communication to support informed parental consent. It was noted that Rycor will be used for managing opt-in forms, and efforts are being made to ensure ease of access. It was noted that opt-in will likely occur once or twice per year, depending on the nature of instruction and presentations.

Ledene also addressed the Education Amendment Act, 2025. He explained that the Division is currently reviewing the legislation, assessing its potential implications, and considering sample policies and procedures provided by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA). He noted that planning will continue as further details emerge through the legislative process.

and the Division's approach will be guided by ongoing participation in Ministry-led stakeholder consultations as it works toward compliance.

Ledene then provided an update on Ministerial Order #030/2025, which outlines new standards for the selection, availability, and access of school library materials. He shared that the Associate Superintendent of Learning Services is leading this work and that the Division is currently preparing to implement the required changes by reviewing expectations with school administrators and working toward meeting the October 1, 2025 compliance deadline, with a finalized Administrative Procedure to follow by January 1, 2026.

Trustees raised concerns about the complexity of reviewing extensive library collections, and noting that while internal catalogues exist, they are not currently accessible to the public. Ledene noted that the Division is exploring the use of technology to support this work, particularly in the management of classroom libraries.

Trustees supported a recommendation to send a letter to the Ministry, to advocate for additional resources, supports, and an extended timeline to assist with meeting compliance requirements. The Board Chair will draft the letter, with ASBA to be copied.

Additional concerns were raised regarding the requirement for ministry approval of clergy and other guest presenters, particularly given the Division's Catholic identity and the role of clergy as spiritual leaders within the school community. It was noted that advocacy on this matter is ongoing through ACSTA. Trustees also acknowledged the additional workload these new requirements place on staff and emphasized the need for clear communication and strong support for both staff and families.

5.5. BOARD MEETING DATES: SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2025, ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING DATE, OCTOBER 2025

Acting Superintendent Ledene raised the scheduling of the September 2025 Board meeting, noting that the originally scheduled date of September 30, 2025 coincides with the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which is a non-instructional day. Trustees discussed the matter and agreed it would be appropriate to move the meeting out of respect for the day. September 29, 2025 was identified as the most suitable alternative and was agreed upon by consensus.

Ledene raised a potential scheduling challenge with holding both the Organizational Meeting and the regular October Board meeting on the same day, given the minimal time available for new Trustees to prepare for their first meeting. He noted that the municipal election is scheduled for October 20, with official results to be released on October 24, 2025. Trustees discussed the matter and recommended adding a Board orientation session for newly elected Trustees on October 27 to allow time for preparation. They agreed to proceed with the

Organizational Meeting followed by a Regular Board meeting on October 28, 2025. It was also agreed that once the nomination period has closed and a complete list of candidates is available, key dates including the Board orientation, would be communicated to all candidates to ensure they are aware of the commitments and able to hold the necessary dates in their calendars, as attendance is mandatory should they be elected.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Acting Superintendent Ledene presented the Superintendent's Report and invited questions from Trustees. He highlighted the ongoing Atrieve transition, noting it has been a particularly challenging project, and expressed appreciation for the significant work being done over the summer to support its implementation. He extended thanks to all staff involved in getting the system up and running.

Trustees offered a public thank-you to Acting Superintendent Ledene, expressing appreciation for his recent address to Division staff at the opening Mass, which was described as heartfelt and personal. They noted the positive tone and acknowledged the Superintendent's ongoing leadership and support to schools across the Division.

6.2. SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Latka presented a financial update for information, summarizing key highlights from the report shared at the recent Senior Administration Retreat. She noted that as of the end of July, the Division is showing a surplus of approximately \$759,000 and emphasized the significant improvement in financial position compared to the previous year. She also indicated that the projected surplus for year end will be higher than this, but did not share a final projection.

The update included a review of operating reserves, key revenue and expenditure adjustments, and emerging cost pressures. Latka also outlined recent process changes, including the carry-forward of non-earmarked school surpluses and the central tracking of professional development funds. Updates were also provided on School Generated Funds, the International Program, and the introduction of new reporting requirements for external services.

Trustees asked questions related to financial reporting formats, PD fund carryovers, and the classification and management of external services. Appreciation was expressed for the clarity of the report.

Latka concluded by noting upcoming changes to the trustee process for submitting per diems and expense claims, with a demonstration of the new Atrieve system to be provided at the next meeting.

6.3. SYSTEM SERVICES REPORT

Acting Superintendent Ledene presented the System Services Report and invited questions from Trustees. A brief update was provided on the construction progress at St. Veronica Catholic School, with confirmation that the project is proceeding on schedule. Trustees also appreciated the update on the Cormack Armoury property, noting its connection to previous Board advocacy. A general question was raised regarding challenges with P3 school models, with Ledene noting there are no concerns related to Catholicity, but additional costs and limitations do apply for maintenance and repairs once the school is open.

6.4. LEARNING SERVICES REPORT

Associate Superintendent of Learning Services, Ike Hanna, introduced himself to the Board and spoke about his background and portfolio. He shared highlights from his focus areas for the year, which include advancing the Division's faith theme through parables, saints, and Catholic social teachings; supporting implementation of the new curriculum and field testing; strengthening Indigenous education with a focus on belonging; and expanding personalized learning and career pathways to expose students to a wide range of opportunities.

6.5. STUDENT SERVICES REPORT

Associate Superintendent of Student Services, Nicole Zimmerman, introduced herself to the Board, expressing gratitude for the opportunity and reflecting on her 32 years of experience with the Division. She outlined her focus areas for the year, including inclusion across Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12; support for 11 specialized programs; oversight of the MS2 team, alternative programming, and the CASA classroom; and collaboration with school counsellors. Her portfolio also includes responsibility for attendance, discipline, and parent concerns.

6.6. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Associate Superintendent Smith presented the Human Resources Report for information and opened the floor to questions from Trustees.

Trustees inquired about the noticeable differences in resignation and retirement numbers over the past two years. It was noted that participation in exit interviews has been limited, making it difficult to draw conclusions; however, efforts are underway to create an environment that encourages more open feedback from departing staff.

A question was raised regarding the status of the international student program. Smith shared that the Division currently has approximately 75 international students enrolled, from 19 countries.

6.7. TRUSTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

- BOARD EVALUATION REPORT

Chair Hollman informed the Board that he and Trustee Pasula will be preparing a report for the upcoming Board evaluation, which is scheduled for October.

- ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (ASBA)

Trustee Heistad reported that there were no updates from ASBA at this time.

- ALBERTA CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION (ACSTA)

Trustee Leyson reported that ACSTA has appointed a new Governance Manager. She also shared that Vice-Chair Watson will be receiving a Long Service Award in recognition of her 15 years of dedicated service.

- RURAL CAUCUS OF ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS

Trustee Heistad reported that the Rural Caucus has not met recently and there are no updates at this time.

- CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Trustee Pasula reported that grant and scholarship information has been distributed for the 2024-2025 school year. He noted that at the June 25, 2025 meeting, the Foundation revised its policies related to accounting, grant applications, and reporting. A full report will be presented at the Foundation Annual General Meeting in October.

6.7. CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

No report was provided for this item.

6.8. UPCOMING EVENTS

The Board reviewed the upcoming events as presented.

Trustee Pasula read a closing prayer aloud. Board Chair Hollman called for a break at 7:50 pm.

08/26/25-07-Heistad

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES GO INTO CAMERA AT 8:01 P.M.

CARRIED.

08/26/25-08-Pasula

THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MOVE OUT OF CAMERA AT 8:32 P.M.

CARRIED.

08/26/25-09-Lonsdale

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

CARRIED.

(CHAIR)

(SECRETARY-TREASURER)