

DATE: April 9, 2024

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Vice-Chair Jan Sawyer, PSBAA Director

SUBJECT: Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) Update

REFERENCE [Trustees' Handbook](#), Section 7.2

ISSUE

At their June 20, 2023, Organizational Board Meeting, the Edmonton Public Schools Board appointed Trustee Jan Sawyer as one of their two representatives for the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA). This report provides background on the Association and an overview of its activities.

BACKGROUND

PSBAA is an association of public school boards that represents and advocates for Alberta's public school boards and public school education in Alberta. Board membership fees vary depending on the size of the Division; in 2023, EPSB membership fees were approximately \$71,000. The PSBAA Board meets monthly. The Public School Council Professional Development and Council meetings occur four times a year. There is a spring General Assembly and a fall conference and Annual General Meeting. The professional development sessions are available to any members of PSBAA member Boards. The Council meetings include the Council member (Marsha Nelson) and the Board member (Jan Sawyer). During these meetings, a significant portion of the agenda is an "environmental scan" where a topic is provided and each Board representative shares first at their table and then (with a two minute limit) with the entire council. This is an excellent opportunity to hear about solutions other Divisions have developed to issues common to all Boards throughout the province. Some environmental scans questions have been:

- What types of engagement are you having with your local candidates during the election?
- How do your school divisions engage your community stakeholders?
- With the Standards for Special Education (amended 2004) in mind, at a governance level how is your board responding to the diversity of learning needs?

CURRENT SITUATION

2023 in Review

In the late winter of 2024, the PSBAA released its [2023 Annual Report](#); this is the first annual report since the creation of the Association's [2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#). Some highlights of this report include:

- In total, PSBAA includes 27 boards representing almost 850 schools, ranging in student population from 10 to more than 2,800 students per school.
- PSBAA, in collaboration with education partners and external subject matter experts, developed a 21-module governance education program for member school board trustees—specifically in the Alberta context and for public school boards. These modules are available to all member board trustees. Trustees with Edmonton Public Schools are currently working on a plan to complete these modules together.

- Over 28 separate professional development opportunities took place at the PSBAA meetings in 2023.
- The PSBAA board’s Professional Development committee and PSBAA staff worked with numerous education partners to bring exceptional professional learning opportunities to its members on numerous topics—including finance, politics, Indigenous relations and truth and reconciliation, special standards and curriculum—at PSBC meetings, our Spring General Assembly, and Fall Conference.
- The PSBAA Political Relations committee worked with PSBAA staff and an external consultant to develop a package of advocacy materials specifically to promote the importance of public school education in Alberta, leading up to the May 2023 provincial election.
- During 2023, PSBAA established a charitable society to facilitate opportunities for mentorship, leadership, and scholarships with and for public school students.

In 2024

On March 1, 2024, Dr. Curtis Riep & Katarina Hoeven presented their paper (commissioned by PSBAA) “[Alberta Education - Challenges and Opportunities for Public Education](#)” which reinforced that we must continue, where possible, to provide choice within our public schools, “because it aligns with the principles of equity, efficiency, accountability and inclusivity, while preserving the strength and integrity of the public school system.”

Looking Ahead

- PSBAA will continue its goal to recruit additional member boards
- The PSBAA board is developing a public information/election readiness action plan that will optimize the resources of the Association in achieving two goals related to the upcoming 2025 Municipal/School Trustee election in Alberta. The two goals are:
 - to promote and protect public school education; and
 - educate Albertans on the value of trusteeship

KEY POINTS

- The Edmonton Public Schools Board is a member of the Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta (PSBAA).
- In total, PSBAA includes 27 boards representing almost 850 schools, ranging in student population from 10 to more than 2,800 students per school.
- In the late winter of 2024, the PSBAA released its [2023 Annual Report](#); the first since the creation of the Association’s [2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#).
- On March 1, 2024, [Alberta Education - Challenges and Opportunities for Public Education](#) was released, which reinforced that we must continue, where possible, to provide choice within our public schools, “because it aligns with the principles of equity, efficiency, accountability and inclusivity, while preserving the strength and integrity of the public school system.”
- The PSBAA board is developing an election action plan for Alberta’s upcoming 2025 Municipal/School Trustee election.

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