

**MINUTE BOOK****Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of Alberta held in the Centre for Education McCauley Chambers on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 2 p.m.

**Present:****Trustees**

Trisha Estabrooks  
Dawn Hancock  
Marcia Hole

Nathan Ip  
Julie Kusiek  
Marsha Nelson

Sherri O'Keefe  
Jan Sawyer  
Saadiq Sumar

**Officials**

Angela Anderson  
Todd Burnstad  
Grace Cooke  
Andrea Cooper

Karen Mills  
Kent Pharis  
Nancy Petersen  
Cliff Richard

Darrel Robertson  
Carrie Rosa  
Ron Thompson  
Liz Yule

**Board Chair:** Trisha Estabrooks

**Recording Secretary:** Catherine Angeles

The Board Chair called the meeting to order with recognition that we are gathered here today on Treaty 6 Territory of which amiskwaciwâskahikan or Edmonton or Beaver Hills House Park is a part of. She said when we do land acknowledgements, it is an important way to reflect on the why. Why we acknowledge community and traditional places that have meant and continue to mean so much to First Nations, Metis and Inuit people. We are showing through a land acknowledgement and an understanding of the long history that has brought us to reside on this land and to seek to understand our place within that history. The Board Chair encouraged everyone to reflect on what Treaty means to them as we walk this journey of Truth and Reconciliation, both as individuals, as a Board of Trustees and as a school division.

**A. O Canada**

Evangel Besong, a Grade 9 student from Johnny Bright School, who is also a Canada's Got Talent contestant, led the singing of O Canada.

**B. Roll Call: 2:00 p.m.**

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

**MINUTE BOOK****C. Approval of the Agenda****MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:**

**“That the agenda for the April 18, 2023, Board meeting be approved as printed.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**D. Communications from the Board Chair**

The Board Chair thanked the Al Rashid Mosque and students and staff from M.E. Lazerte, Eastglen, Ross Sheppard and Queen Elizabeth High Schools for the warm welcome and amazing Iftar dinner on Friday. Trustees Hole, Sumar, Sawyer, Nelson and O’Keefe and the Board Chair attended along with Superintendent Robertson. She really appreciated the way in which they could come together as an EPSB community with students from four high schools to learn more about Ramadan and also celebrate this holy time of year for Muslims.

The Board Chair also wished a happy Eid al-Fitr to all those celebrating later this week.

The Board Chair noted that April 22 is Earth Day, an annual event to highlight the importance of protecting our environment. Earth Day began in 1970 and has since grown into a massive global movement, marked by more than a billion people. Throughout the years, students have and continue to play an important leadership role in this movement.

The Board Chair reported that last week the government announced changes to training requirements for bus drivers. While the Division is still unpacking what this means, the Division is hopeful that it will help alleviate the ongoing shortage of yellow bus drivers in the Division. The Division is aware many families have been impacted by a shortage of drivers and appreciate the work of staff in the transportation department and their ongoing communication and support for parents and families throughout the school year.

The Board Chair thanked the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care (ECELC) for the invitation to attend their event last week in partnership with End Poverty Edmonton and Multicultural Health Brokers. The council presented their research on the experiences of ethnocultural communities in Edmonton in finding childcare in the city. The report highlighted the successes and challenges and barriers families face in finding culturally appropriate childcare. It’s clear there is more work to be done in this area and she appreciates the ECELC for their ongoing advocacy in support of families and children in Edmonton.

**E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent expressed thanks to all the parents and staff who participated in pre-enrolment. The Division understands that it is important for families to decide which school to choose. With the shortage of space in the Division, pre-enrolling was more complex for some families this year. He thanked everyone for

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their patience and understanding. The Division is looking forward to welcoming the over 114,000 new and returning students who are choosing to make their education journey with Edmonton Public.

**F. Approval of the Minutes**

1. Board Meeting – April 4, 2023

**MOVED BY Trustee Sawyer:**

**“That the minutes of Board Meeting held April 4, 2023, be approved as printed.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**G. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives**

The Board of Trustees heard from two registered speakers for this item.

**H. Reports**

2. Report #09 of the Special Caucus Committee (From the meeting held March 21, 2023)

Information was provided regarding actions taken at the March 21, 2023, Special Caucus Committee meeting.

3. Report #10 of the Caucus Committee (From the meeting held April 4, 2023)

Information was provided regarding actions taken at the April 4, 2023, Caucus Committee meeting.

4. 2023-2024 Distribution of Funds

**MOVED BY Trustee Hole:**

**“That the Distribution of Funds for 2023-2024 Budget be approved.”**

**MOVED BY Trustee Hancock that the motion be amended:**

**“That the Division increase the ongoing allocation for the set up of Division Centres from \$4.2 million to \$6 million, with the additional \$1.8 million being funded out of Operating Surplus for 2023-24 School year and for Administration to build into future year budgets funding for Division Centres out of the Supplemental Enrolment Grant.”**

**The Board Chair called the question on the amendment.**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

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The Board Chair called the question on the amended motion.

**“That the Distribution of Funds for 2023-2024 Budget be approved **as amended.**”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

There was a short break in the meeting.

5. Carbon Tax Relief and Mitigation Options

**MOVED BY Trustee Kusiek:**

**“1. That the Board of Trustees advocates to the federal government for direct relief and mitigation options for school authorities related to the federal carbon tax. Suggested relief and mitigation options for Edmonton Public Schools include a carbon tax rebate payment that would be directed into a restricted reserve for Edmonton Public Schools to then use to take direct actions that will result in future carbon reduction.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**“2. That the Board of Trustees invite the Mayor and City Council to an information session to discuss opportunities for collaboration and joint advocacy regarding options for carbon tax rebates for climate change actions.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**“3. That the Board of Trustees, through our Alberta School Board Association (ASBA) representative, inform ASBA of this advocacy and request that ASBA:**

- a. write a letter to the Alberta provincial government to support this alternative to school authority payment of carbon tax, supported by the ASBA position statement 8.15 (Attachment VII)**
- b. connect with Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) to request direct advocacy by CSBA to the federal government in support of this proposal; and for CSBA to encourage other provincial school boards to do the same.”**

**IN FAVOUR: Trustees Estabrooks, Hancock, Ip, Kusiek, Nelson, O’Keefe, Sawyer, and Sumar**

**OPPOSED: Trustee Hole  
(CARRIED)**

The Board Chair requested that the following be added to “next steps” for the approved motion:

- send a letter to the University of Alberta and MacEwan University
- copy the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas, Sonya Savage, on all letters
- the Infrastructure Committee will be shepherding the motion forward

6. Funding for Displaced Students, Refugee Students and Refugee Claimants

**MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:**

**“1. That the Edmonton Public School Board advocate to the Province of Alberta that students who are identified as ‘refugee students’ or ‘students claiming refugee status’ receive allocations, including the second count date and prorated funding, equal to that of those defined as**

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**‘displaced students’ in addition to continuing to have access to five years of Refugee or English as an Another Language funding.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**“2. That the Edmonton Public School Board advocate to the Province of Alberta that students who are identified as ‘displaced students’ be eligible for five years of funding equal to that of those defined as ‘refugee students’.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**“3. That the Edmonton Public School Board advocate to the Government of Canada for funding and support for all refugee students and students claiming refugee status, regardless of country of origin, equal to that being provided for displaced Ukrainian students.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**MOVED BY Vice-Chair Ip:**

**“That the Board meeting be extended beyond 6 p.m.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

7. Request for Funding for Parent Appreciation Night

**MOVED BY Board Chair Estabrooks:**

**“That the Board of Trustees approve an allocation of up to \$8,500 from the Board Initiative Fund to host a parent/family appreciation evening.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

8. Bereavement

Vice-Chair Ip reported on the passing of Mrs. Christa Svenson.

**I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives – 5 p.m.**

There were no registered speakers for this item.

**J. Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports**

Trustee O’Keefe expressed her appreciation for the invitation to three Iftar events. One event was at Calder School and another event was at Dickinsfield School, who invited Evansdale School families to join them, as well as the dinner with the four high schools on Friday night. Attending the high school event and watching the students, who were organizing and speaking at the event, she felt so hopeful for our future. The students were just amazing. She said it was an honour to attend all of those events.

Trustee O’Keefe shared an Edmonton Public Schools Foundation (Foundation) update. The Foundation is excited to announce that Reading for Life fundraiser is back for its third year. This is the largest and most

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important annual fundraiser for the Foundation. This year, every donation to Reading for Life will be doubled up to a total of \$50,000 through EPCOR's matching donation program. If anyone is interested in signing up for Reading for Life, visit [readingforlife.epsb.ca](http://readingforlife.epsb.ca) or email the Foundation. The Foundation is grateful for the continued support.

Trustee Kusiek thanked the community leagues that have had her out to a meeting. She firmly believes that public education is here for the entire community - whether you have kids in school or not. She encouraged all community members to keep connecting with her on public education - because the collective voice of all residents matters when it comes to advocating for and contributing to strong public education.

Trustee Kusiek celebrated the construction class at Vernon Barford Junior High and the passion and enthusiasm that teacher Lloyd Bloomfield shows. Among the many projects students are working on, she got to see a really neat step stool that flips on hinges to become a chair and a robotics project that leads into other STEAM learning at the high school level. Those are just two of the very cool opportunities available.

Trustee Kusiek also celebrated the incredible talents of students at McKernan, displayed at the Noche Cultura. The entire evening of student performances was in Spanish including a play about a goat eating monster, short stories that included some Star Wars references and incredible musical performances. The talent, stage presence and audience engagement of these musicians was jaw dropping and she suspects we could have some future Juno award winners on the way.

Trustee Kusiek thanked the School Council Network in Ward F as well. They held their final meeting for the 2022-2023 school year. Their sincere hearts and helpful hands support one another and our schools demonstrate yet another pillar of strength at Edmonton Public Schools - our school councils.

Trustee Sumar shared that he was fortunate enough to attend a few events over the last couple of weeks:

- He went back to the Stanley Milner Library for another iteration of the Anti-Racism Summit Series. This event focused on student peer-to-peer projects, where students would read and discuss books with other students. Those projects will be completed shortly.
- He was grateful to have been included in the Iftar celebrations organized by four EPSB high schools and the Al Rashid Mosque on Friday. The dinner was delicious but more important was the opportunity to talk and learn from members of the community. He also mentioned that Queen Elizabeth Assistant Principal Modey Amerey received an award for his important contributions to education.
- He was also able to sit down with the Students' Union at J. Percy Page High School. Students talked about their projects and opened up about the challenges they were facing. He's grateful to Ms. Neale and Ms. Depape for hosting him and to the students for their candor.

Trustee Sumar also highlighted a few upcoming important events:

- Thursday, W. P. Wagner High School is hosting Wahkohtowin night from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. This event will allow attendees to "celebrate Indigenous culture, learn new skills, and strengthen relationships with community."
- This Friday will mark Eid al-Fitr or the Festival of Charity, which represents the end of the month of Ramadan. If folks are able to, he encouraged them to attend any Eid festivities.

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K. **Trustees and Board Requests for Information** - None

L. **Notices of Motions**

**MOVED BY Board Chair Estabrooks:**

**“That the Board of Trustees grant waiver of notice to consider the following motion at the April 18, 2023, Board meeting.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**Trustee Ip abstained from voting.**

**“That the Board of Trustees excuse Trustee Ip from voting on the subsequent motions related to his request for an authorized leave.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**Trustee Ip abstained from voting.**

**MOVED BY Board Chair Estabrooks:**

**“That the Board of Trustees grant waiver of notice to consider the following motion at the April 18, 2023, Board meeting.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**Trustee Ip abstained from voting.**

**“That the Board authorizes Trustee Ip to be absent from Board, Caucus and committee meetings, and leave from Trustee tasks and activities from the date the provincial election writ is dropped or May 1, whichever is earlier, to May 30, 2023, inclusive as he will be running as a candidate in the provincial election.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**Trustee Ip abstained from voting.**

The Board Chair advised that Trustee Sawyer has volunteered to be the contact for Ward H during Trustee Ip’s absence.

Trustee Ip thanked the Board Chair and his colleagues for granting him leave and also for this opportunity to offer some brief words of thanks. He expressed his gratitude to his colleagues, Division staff, as well as parents and community volunteers, thanking them for their timeless, tireless efforts every day to help ensure that every child can thrive and flourish. He said it can be thankless and at times difficult work from the custodians to maintenance staff to our exempt staff to our teachers and educational assistants, our Division leaders, support staff, and truly all staff; he thanked them all. He went on to say that public education is a great equalizer and that he truly believes that by helping every child reach their potential, each one of you (in this room) does that every day. He said we contribute to a kinder, fairer, more inclusive and more equitable world. And there isn’t more important work than that. He is proud to have been a small part of that work.

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Trustee Ip shared that he was elected as a Board Trustee almost nine and a half years ago to the day, on October 21, 2013, and he said it has been an incredible honour. He thanked constituents and families of Ward H for the opportunity to represent them. He expressed his deepest gratitude to everyone.

**M. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 2, 2023, at 2 p.m.**

**N. Adjournment: 6:07 p.m.**

**The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.**

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Trisha Estabrooks, Board Chair

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Karen Mills, Director Board and  
Superintendent Relations