

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, March 7, 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
Kathy Muhlethaler
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 on Treaty 6 Territory, a traditional meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene and Nakota Sioux. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.

A. O Canada

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

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

C. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED BY Vice-Chair Ip:

**“That the agenda for the March 7, 2023, Board meeting be approved as printed.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

MINUTE BOOK**D. Communications from the Board Chair**

The Board Chair thanked the many organizations as well as individuals who invited the Board of Trustees and her personally to Black History Month events. There were incredible events organized, including those that happened in our schools. In particular, she thanked the Edmonton Reggae Festival Society for their warm welcome to the film presentation of the “Post Traumatic Slave Disorder” which most of the Board of Trustees attended, along with some staff members.

The Board Chair thanked the organizers of the recent Night of Music celebration. She said it was truly an amazing and inspiring evening thanks to the hard work, dedication and talent of hundreds of students as well as their music teachers. The Board Chair thanked Mayor Sohi for attending, along with Councillors Rutherford and Tang. She also thanked the Board Chair of Edmonton Catholic Schools, Sandra Palazzo, who attended along with some of her Trustee colleagues. The Board Chair also thanked the members of the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation who also attended the event.

The Board Chair acknowledged that March 8 is International Women’s Day. She said this day was created as an opportunity to recognize women around the world for their political, economic, and social achievements. The 2023 campaign theme is Embrace Equity. The Board Chair stated that one of the Division’s cornerstone values is equity and she’s proud of the work the Division is doing to create equitable learning and working environments for all, but knows that there is much more to be done. She reminded listeners that we can all choose to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality and we can all choose to seek out and celebrate women’s achievements. Collectively, we can all help create an inclusive world.

The Board Chair shared some thoughts about the provincial budget presented last week. She said the Division welcomes the additional funding for education in the province. What it means specifically for Edmonton Public Schools remains to be seen. At the centre of what this budget means for the Division is whether the increase to education funding will cover the cost of inflation and the rising enrolment. The Division is the fastest growing school division in Alberta; but the Division’s funding has not kept pace with the Division’s phenomenal growth. The Division grew by 4,500 students this school year and is expecting similar growth in the coming school year. This is the equivalent of 12 elementary schools worth of students per year. She said that as a Board, Trustees look forward to seeing more details about the provincial education budget and how it will impact the Division as we begin our own budget deliberations.

The Board Chair stated that last week the Division received news about one new school to be built in Edmonton for the community of Edgemont. She advised that the Division’s top funding priority, a 7-12 school in the Glenriding Heights neighbourhood, was not fully funded. She said the Division appreciates that all five of the Division’s projects are now in the queue; however, it is unclear when they will be built.

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

The Superintendent advised that pre-enrolment for the 2023-2024 school year opened March 6. Families can find information about the options on SchoolZone or the Division's website and social media channels. The final day for pre-enrolment is April 14. For questions regarding pre-enrolment, talk to the principal at your child's current school. Families who are new to the Division should contact their preferred school to learn how to register as a new Edmonton Public Schools student before April 14.

F. Approval of the Minutes

1. Board Meeting – February 7, 2023

MOVED BY Trustee Hole:

**"That the minutes of Board Meeting held February 7, 2023, be approved as printed."
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

G. Recognition

2. Edwin Parr Teacher Awards

Ms. Krysta Florence of Rutherford School was selected as the Division's honorary nominee for the 2023 Edwin Parr Award for excellence in first year teaching.

There was a short break in the meeting.

H. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives

There were no registered speakers for this item.

I. Reports

3. Student Senate 2022-2023 Work Plan Update

Student Trustees Akhayla Arulmozhi, Abinash Saravanan and Tia Dobbernack presented the Student Senate Work Plan update.

4. Staff Group Presentations re: 2023-2024 Budget

Ms. Heather Quinn, President of Edmonton Public Teachers, presented the Edmonton Public Teachers' brief.

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Mr. Peder Vinge and Ms. Meghan Sievwright, representatives for the Exempt Staff, presented the Exempt Staffs' brief.

Mr. Jorge Illanes, President of CUPE LOCAL 3550 (Support Staff), presented the Local's brief.

5. Class Size Information

The annual class sizes, along with two years of historical data, was provided to the Board of Trustees.

J. Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports

Trustee O'Keefe shared an Edmonton Public Schools Foundation (Foundation) update:

- She invited everyone to visit the Foundation's website (foundation.epsb.ca) and find out what the Foundation is doing to support students and to learn more about their six funding pillars.
- She thanked the staff across the Division who support the Foundation's Valentine's Day Candy Gram Fundraiser. More than \$3,500 was raised to support the Foundation's mission to level the playing field for students who come to the classroom at a disadvantage. More than 600 personalized were sent to 137 sites across the Division.
- The Foundation is grateful to the JUNO Awards and their Foundation, MusiCounts, for bringing the JUNO experience to Division students. In addition to hosting 70 students at the awards show on the evening of Monday, March 13, they will be providing student and staff learning opportunities over the next two weeks and beyond.
- The third year of the Foundation's virtual Read-A-Thon, Reading for Life, is coming up quickly - May 3-17, 2023. More information will be circulated to schools in the coming weeks.

Board Chair Estabrooks provided a Ward D update:

- She thanked Eastglen High school for the warm welcome to the Courage Across Canada Drag Tour. Students from many different schools attended to learn firsthand about the art of drag and the importance of being able to express yourself.
- She thanked Councillor Michael Janz for the invitation to the Love in the Time of Fentanyl film. The film, as well as the discussion afterwards, highlighted to her just how much more information is needed and how many more conversations are needed to understand - and then find solutions to - the current opioid crisis we are witnessing daily in our city.
- She thanked schools that had her visit on Pink Shirt Day. She said it was great to be back in person celebrating the positivity of kindness and how one action can make a big difference.
- And finally, she thanked students from the Nellie McClung program at Oliver School for organizing a successful and inspiring Power of Women conference. She was able to share some of her own personal story about entering politics. One of her highlights serving as a Trustee is speaking with students and also hearing their amazing, insightful questions.

Trustee Sumar highlighted three events that he attended in February:

- The first event was the Anti-Racism Student Summit Series at the Stanley Milner Library. He had the opportunity to engage directly with students from the WP Wagner Catchment and DS Mackenzie. He thanked the student facilitators for their work, as well as City Councillors, MLAs,

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Division staff, and community leaders for taking part in the event and having some difficult and uncomfortable conversations. He thanked the staff from the WP Wagner Catchment and DS Mackenzie for putting this event together. He's looking forward to the next iteration of the series.

- The second event was Wahkohtowin Night at Kate Chegwin School. Wahkohtowin is a Cree word for kinship or being related to each other. It was a great chance to break bread with the community and listen to stories from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. He thanked the staff at Kate Chegwin for hosting and to the staff from that catchment for putting the event together. He also thanked the Elders and Knowledge Keepers for coming out and sharing their powerful stories
- The last event was Wagstock at W.P. Wagner High School. Wagstock is an annual talent show. It was a tremendous show of talent and community from high school students. No matter the talent on display, each student or group of students walked off stage to thunderous applause and tremendous cheers. He was fortunate enough to participate in a dance performance with the staff at the end of the show. Fantastic work by the students, by the W.P. Wagner SWAT Team, by the staff, and his fellow performers.

K. Trustees and Board Requests for Information

Trustee Sumar submitted a Request for Information regarding Digital Literacy:

Given the increasing prevalence of cyber attacks and ransomware attacks,
Given that 6 in 10 Canadian children as young as 10 years old have experienced or are experiencing cyberbullying ([source](#)),
Given that problematic media device use has been linked to low academic outcomes, a reduction in concentration, and mood disturbances ([source](#)),
Given the increasing reliance on the use of technology for educational purposes,
Given that provincial, federal, and international governmental bodies have limited the use of social media applications like TikTok ([source](#)):

What is being done to develop the digital literacy of staff and students?

What cybersecurity training is being provided to staff? What cybersecurity education is being provided to students?

What are schools doing to ensure that students are using smartphones and other devices appropriately? This includes but is not limited to the use of social media and digital well-being.

What measures are being taken to protect student and staff data being stored on Google?

What is being done to ensure equitable access to education for students who do not have a cell phone in the classroom?

What input has the Division given to the provincial government about including digital literacy in the new curriculum?

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What is being done to ensure the applications used in division schools have been vetted for appropriateness, education value, and digital security? Who vets the resources used in division schools, and on what criteria?

Does the division provide educators with a database / resource list of safe-for-school applications? What opportunities is the division engaging in to find efficiencies in vetting educational resources and/or creating a database? Is administration aware of how the process for creating such a database compares across provinces?

What avenue(s) of communication will EPSB, clubs, sport teams, etc use to connect with students that is consistent throughout the Division to ensure all students are included?

When choosing classroom activities or course work for students, what mechanisms are in place to ensure that all students have equitable access to modern electronic devices when they are needed? For example, if students are asked to use their cellphones in class, how are students without a phone accommodated?

L. Notices of Motions

Trustee Sumar gave notice that he would be making the following motion:

That the Board of Trustees advocates to the provincial and federal governments for funding equity for displaced students, refugee students, and refugee claimants, regardless of country of origin.

M. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 2 p.m.**N. Adjournment: 4:50 p.m.**

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Trisha Estabrooks, Board Chair

Karen Mills, Director Board and
Superintendent Relations