

**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, November 7, 2023, at 2 p.m.

**Present:****Trustees**

Trisha Estabrooks  
Dawn Hancock  
Marcia Hole

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:** Julie Kusiek

**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: 2:02 p.m.**

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

**C. Approval of the Agenda**

**MOVED BY Trustee Estabrooks:**

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

**MINUTE BOOK****D. Vimy Ridge Academy Remembrance Ceremony**

A recorded ceremony produced by Vimy Ridge Academy was shared to commemorate Remembrance Day.

**E. Communications from the Board Chair**

The Board Chair shared that November is Hindu Heritage Month. Hinduism is the world's third most practiced religion. At Edmonton Public Schools, 4.9 per cent of students in grades 4-6 and 5 per cent of students in grades 7-12 identify Hinduism as their spiritual affiliation. She said the Division values the rich contributions of students and staff with Hindu heritage and looks forward to celebrating this month.

The Board Chair said November is also a month to take time to remember. Veterans' Week takes place from November 5-11, Indigenous Veterans Day is on November 8 and Remembrance Day is on November 11. She thanked Vice Chair Jan Sawyer and Superintendent Robertson for attending the No Stone Left Alone celebration last week and thanked Trustee Sumar for attending the Muslims for Remembrance and National Indigenous Veterans Day event over the weekend.

The Board Chair shared that November 12 also marks Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas. She expressed best wishes to all who are celebrating.

The Board Chair thanked the Minister of Education for making time to meet. She said the Board appreciated the opportunity to discuss the priorities of Edmonton Public Schools and looks forward to developing a strong, collaborative relationship with the Minister as the Board seeks to serve students.

The Board Chair advised that on November 2, she met with the chairs from Edmonton Catholic, Calgary Public, and Calgary Catholic school boards. She said they have many common challenges and opportunities and she looks forward to their work together.

The Board Chair said it was great to see more than 100 people attend the School Council training session a couple of weeks ago. Many thanks to parents and guardians who dedicate so much passion and time to working in partnership with schools to build great learning environments for kids. She thanked the Alberta School Councils' Association for their expertise in facilitating this event.

The Board Chair shared that during the last week of October, Edmonton Public Schools hosted two social innovation labs and two engagement sessions around the question, "How can we create school communities that feel safe for everyone?" She expressed gratitude to the community members, education partners, school staff and students who made time to share in this important dialogue. This is ongoing work, and the Division is committed to supporting safe and caring schools for everyone.

The Board Chair closed her remarks by sharing that the Board Connection article on the Division website has started up once again. The Board Connection is a way to quickly see what the Board is up to without having to keep up with every Board meeting. In this month's Board Connection, she highlights activities the Board has been engaged in and shares gratitude for everyone who came out to participate in the

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school safety engagement sessions. The Board Connection article can be found at [epsb.ca](https://epsb.ca) under Board of Trustees/[Board Connection](#). The Board Chair invited anyone with particular topics they would like addressed in future posts to contact her or their Trustee

### **F. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent shared some mental health support information for schools and staff. Global conflicts happening in the world today are cause for concern and impact many people in our community. These events are complex and deeply troubling. It's natural for staff and students to feel anxiety; for some, there has been a significant impact on their family, including personal loss (family members, friends, or other loved ones). The Division has a range of support for students, families and staff who may have been impacted by these events. Information regarding the *Mental Health Supports for Schools* was shared with the Board through a Transmittal Memorandum for their reference.

The Superintendent advised that Alberta Health Services (AHS) has an online respiratory virus dashboard available to the public. The dashboard reports on COVID-19, RSV and influenza cases in Alberta. The Division continues to track and share attendance data with the community on a daily basis. The Division also shares school absence information daily with AHS when a school's population has an absence rate of ten per cent or greater due to illness.

The Superintendent said that supply fill rates for teaching staff have been strong throughout September and October with the exception of some Mondays and Fridays. Support supply continues to be a challenge as the Division is using supply staff to fill vacancies, which were created through long-term assignments. The Division continues to experience shortages of educational assistants (EA) daily. The trends for sick time in all staff groups appear to be consistent with last year. The Division is working with the province to support a potential pilot for EA training and the human resources department continues to explore different ways to recruit new EAs.

The Superintendent stated that November 9-14 is Fall Break for the Division. He hopes that everyone is able to get some well-deserved rest.

### **G. Approval of the Minutes**

1. Organizational Board Meeting – October 10, 2023
2. Board Meeting – October 10, 2023

**MOVED BY Vice-Chair Sawyer:**

**“That the minutes of the Organizational Board meeting held October 10, 2023, and the Board meeting held on October 10, 2023, both be approved as printed.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

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The Board of Trustees heard from one registered speaker for this item.

**I. Reports****3. Student Senate 2023-2024 Work Plan**

Student Trustees Chelsea Kwon, Callum La Roi and George Xie presented the 2023-2024 Student Senate Work Plan.

**4. Report #01 of the Caucus Committee (From the meeting held October 10, 2023)**

Information was provided regarding actions taken at the October 10, 2023, Caucus Committee meeting.

**5. Infrastructure Committee 2023-2024 Work Plan****MOVED BY Trustee Hancock:**

**“That the Board approve the Infrastructure Committee 2023-2024 work plan.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**6. Board Chair Discretionary Expense Allowance Report 2022-2023**

A report of the expenses incurred under the Board Chair’s discretionary allowance for the period of September 2022 – August 2023 was provided for information.

**J. Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports - None****K. Trustees and Board Requests for Information**

Trustee Estabrooks submitted a Request for Information regarding Independent Student(s):

- Could Administration please define what is meant by the term “independent student”?
- Please provide a breakdown of the number of independent students who are enrolled with the Division by age, and in which year they are currently enrolled.
- What are some of the challenges that independent students face in accessing education?
- How does the Division help independent students apply for additional government supports?
- What has the provincial government, either through the Education and/or Advanced Education Ministries shared with the Division about the Foundational Learning Assistance Program including total funding available for students to cover basics such as food and rent under this program and number of independent students funded annually? Are we aware of any increased demand for this program or changes in overall funding from previous years?

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- How could a lack of access to funding impact independent students who attend EPSB after September 30?

Trustee Hole submitted a Request for Information regarding Naloxone training for EPSB students:

1. Do any classes offered through EPSB include information or training for students on how to use naloxone as a potentially life saving measure?
2. Are there any opportunities, supported by Edmonton Public schools, for division students who are interested in learning how to administer naloxone to receive that training, apart from what might be offered through a class? If so,
  - Is there a cost for students to receive naloxone training?
  - What is the age requirement for students to participate?
  - Does the training include nasal naloxone, naloxone injections or both?
  - Are students provided with a free naloxone kit as part of their training?
3. Are EPSB students permitted to carry naloxone with them at school?
4. What type of information is shared with EPSB students and staff about where they can receive optional naloxone training in the community?
5. What type of information is shared with division students and staff about where they can pick up a free naloxone kit?

**L. Notices of Motions**

Trustee Sumar made the following motion:

**That the Board of Trustees grant waiver of notice to support the intent of the following positions at the Alberta School Boards Association Fall General Meeting in November:**

Proposed Positions:

1. Access to New Funds for Fully Funded Full-Time Kindergarten
  - New funds for fully funded, full-time (950 hours) Kindergarten to develop the important language, social, motor, literacy, and numeracy skills
2. Recognition of Valid Teaching Certificates
  - Individual Alberta school authorities can temporarily recognize the scope of practice as authorized by a valid teaching certificate from either an Alberta or other Canadian jurisdiction
3. Removal of the Reserve Cap
  - Removal of the maximum limit for operating reserves for school boards
4. Review of Diploma Exams
  - A review be undertaken of the practice of administering high school diploma exams

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5. CEU Funding for Dual Credit
  - Sufficient, sustainable and equitable funding for Dual Credit programming
6. EAL Student Funding
  - EAL Student Funding as needed for pre-K to Grade 12, without the 5-year maximum
7. Cross-Ministerial Support – Community-Based Service Agencies
  - Enhanced funding and access to community-based services that work with schools
8. Infrastructure Allocation, Servicing and Construction Costs of School Sites
  - Collaboration with school boards on reserve land for sites allocated through the Municipal Government Act
  - Collaboration to obtain capital funding to cover all costs of school construction including site servicing

**IN FAVOUR: Trustees Estabrooks, Hole, and Sumar**

**OPPOSED: Trustees Hancock, Kusiek, Nelson, O’Keefe, and Sawyer**

**Notice of motion can only be waived by a unanimous decision of the Board. Therefore, the motion was DEFEATED.**

**M. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 2 p.m.**

**N. Adjournment: 3:33 p.m.**

**The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.**

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Julie Kusiek, Board Chair

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Karen Mills, Director Board and  
Superintendent Relations