

MINUTE BOOK**Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of Alberta held online on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 2 p.m.

Present:**Trustees**

Dawn Hancock
Julie Kusiek

Marsha Nelson

Sherri O’Keefe
Saadiq Sumar

Officials

Todd Burnstad
Grace Cooke
Andrea Cooper
Karen Mills

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 and called upon Trustee Nelson to provide a land acknowledgement.

Trustee Nelson acknowledged 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. As we gather here before Family Day, let us acknowledge the importance of family and community, values that are deeply cherished by Indigenous peoples. May this day be a time for us to strengthen our bonds with one another and to celebrate the rich diversity of cultures that make up our community and our families.

A. Roll Call: 2:05 p.m.

The Superintendent advised that Trustees Estabrooks, Hole and Sawyer were absent and all other Trustees were present.

B. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:

“That the agenda for the February 11, 2025, Board meeting be approved as presented.”

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

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“Whereas the time allotted for speakers on any educational issue at 5 pm is 20 minutes according to the Trustee Handbook, and
Whereas there is a need to balance the opportunity for individuals to address the Board while recognizing that Board meetings are business meetings and thus convened to move forward the work of the Board,
I move that we extend the time allotted to triple the normal amount of time, up to 60 minutes, for speakers at today's meeting. As this is a virtual meeting, should the 18 registered speakers, totaling 54 minutes of speaking time, not be able to speak due to technical difficulties we accommodate as much as reasonably possible.”

MOVED BY Trustee Sumar the motion be amended:

“That the time allotted for registered speakers be extended to accommodate all speakers at 5 p.m.”

The Board Chair called the question to the amendment.

IN FAVOUR: Trustees Hancock, Nelson, O’Keefe, and Sumar

OPPOSED: Trustee Kusiek
(CARRIED)

The Board Chair called the question on the amended motion.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

C. Communications from the Board Chair

The Board Chair shared that on January 20, Trustee Hole went on medical leave; an end date for the leave has not been set. During her absence, Trustee Hancock and Trustee O’Keefe will be providing coverage for Ward C. Schools within Ward C have been split between them and a list is available on SchoolZone under the “Trustee” tab and in the Trustees section on [epsb.ca](https://www.edmontonpublicschools.ca/epsb).

The Board Chair shared that on January 23, Trustee Estabrooks submitted her resignation from the Board of Trustees. Pursuant to Section 80 of the *Education Act*, the Board Chair accepted the resignation of Trustee Estabrook at this meeting. Board Chair Kusiek thanked Trustee Estabrooks for her years of service as a Trustee. The Board Chair’s full statement on behalf of the Board of Trustees is posted on [epsb.ca](https://www.edmontonpublicschools.ca/epsb.ca). At a Special Caucus meeting held on January 28 the Board of Trustees appointed Board Chair Kusiek as the Trustee for Ward D for the remainder of the term. She’s looking forward to getting to know the school communities, families and other constituents of Ward D better over the next eight months.

The Board Chair advised that the Board of Trustees has delegated the authority for all human resources matters, including labour relations, to the Superintendent. Typically all bargaining committees, including CUPE Local 474, CUPE Local 3550, CUPE Local 784 and the ATA committee have Trustee representation. Today, Trustee Sawyer represented the Board at the collective bargaining negotiations with CUPE 3550.

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The role of Trustees on the committee is to ensure that all Trustees are informed about current matters affecting the Board and the Division.

The Board Chair said that the Board of Trustees acknowledged and appreciated that this is a challenging time. In their governance role for the Division, they remain committed to taking a system-wide approach to ensuring the best learning outcomes and environment for all students. They hold the Superintendent accountable and continue to do everything within their role to reach a deal so that learning can get back to normal.

The Board Chair took a moment to reflect on what they are all here for...the students at Edmonton Public Schools and their education. The Board of Trustees believes in the critical importance of public education and the need to collectively invest in it. The Board of Trustees remains committed to advocating for public education and fulfilling the duties entrusted to them throughout the remainder of their term.

The Board Chair stated that the Provincial budget is expected to be announced at the end of February. The Board of Trustees have been steadfast advocates for a change to the funding formula that will meet the needs of the unprecedented student enrolment and rising complexities in our classrooms. The Premier and Minister of Education have stated that they will be making adjustments to the funding formula. While we don't know what those changes will be, we will be watching closely to see how our suggestions and feedback have been reflected in the changes.

The Board Chair said that the Board of Trustees has been a relentless advocate for new school construction, modernization of existing schools and provincial investment to reduce deferred maintenance, which sits at approximately \$1 billion dollars currently for the Division. Board Chair Kusiek discussed the pace of provincial funding for Edmonton Public Schools' capital projects and said the Board will continue to advocate for timely funding to meet the Division's needs. The Board's ongoing advocacy efforts involve engagement with parents, school councils, and elected officials at all levels of government. Board Chair Kusiek encouraged the community to engage with their ward Trustee regarding Board advocacy. At the next Board meeting on March 4, she will bring an update on the impact of the Provincial Budget to Edmonton Public Schools.

The Board Chair reported that the Advocacy Committee met since the last Board meeting to discuss:

- Methods for improving communication of the Board of Trustees' advocacy work;
- Content of joint advocacy with partner organizations; and
- Opportunities to strengthen government relations.

D. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent shared that the Division remains committed to reaching a negotiated settlement with CUPE Local 3550. The Division believes that an agreement is possible, and they are dedicated to working collaboratively to achieve that. The Division values our support staff tremendously; they are essential members of our school communities and central office. The Division recognizes the vital role they play in supporting student success. Superintendent Robertson acknowledged that this strike is particularly difficult

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for families with children who have specialized learning needs. It is not the Division's preference to have any student learning from home and schools are doing everything they can to support teaching and learning for all students within the constraints of the current situation. The Superintendent said he knows this is challenging for families and students. Leading up to the strike, families had conversations with their school community and principals about how learning might look, should valued support staff decide to strike. This open communication and collaboration are essential. Our principals are working tirelessly to be as accommodating as possible. However, the reality is that the Division is operating with limited staff and must prioritize the safety and wellbeing of everyone in school. The Division is asking for everyone's continued patience and understanding as they work towards a resolution.

The Superintendent shared that last week, pre-enrolment and registration for the 2025-2026 school year started. Like last year, the Division has combined dates for new student registration and returning student pre-enrolment. Parents have until Wednesday, March 19 to pre-enrol their children. To help families get ready to choose a school for the 2025-2026 school year, open houses will run throughout February and March, giving families and students a chance to learn a little more about what a school has to offer, from alternative programming to complementary courses, extracurricular activities, sports teams, a taste of school culture and a chance to see the space. Information about these dates will be available on epsb.ca. If families have any questions, reach out to the school principal for more information.

E. Approval of the Minutes

1. Board Meeting – December 10, 2024

MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:

**“That the minutes of the Board meeting held December 10, 2024, be approved as presented.”
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

F. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Items on the Meeting Agenda

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

G. Reports

2. Student Senate 2024-2025 Work Plan Update

Student Trustees Bella Jiao, Chloe Ge and Christina Daniel presented the 2024-2025 Student Senate work plan update.

MINUTE BOOK**3. Report from Caucus (From the meetings held on November 28, December 5 and 10, 2024 and January 28, 2025)**

Information was provided regarding actions taken at the following Caucus Committee meetings:

- November 28, 2024 – Special Caucus
- December 5, 2024 – Special Caucus
- December 10, 2024 – Caucus
- January 28, 2025 – Special Caucus

4. School Resource Officer Program Evaluation Framework

An update was provided on the Evaluation Framework used to guide the evaluation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program, which is currently being reintroduced into six Division high schools.

The Board Chair recognized that Item H on the agenda was scheduled for 5 p.m. and noted the current time as 4 p.m.; therefore, she proceeded to the next agenda item.

I. Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports

Trustee Nelson shared an Edmonton Public Schools Foundation (the Foundation) update:

- The Foundation supports our students with *Top-ups for Tummies*, *Chromebook for Kids* and *Fresh Hoops* programs.
- The Foundation Board would like to challenge everyone to the following:
 - Sign up to all the Foundation’s social media platforms and newsletter
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - “X”
 - LinkedIn
 - foundation.epsb.ca
 - Sign up for their newsletter
 - Invite ten friends to do the same!

J. Trustees and Board Requests for Information - None**K. Notices of Motion**

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

That the Board of Trustees advocate to the Federal Government to provide a timeline to applicants including school boards as to when they can expect to receive funds that have already been

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approved and to clarify procedures and timelines to more expeditiously review existing and future requests submitted under Jordan's Principle.

The Board Chair called a recess at 4:06 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 5 p.m.

H. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Educational Issues – 5 p.m.

The Board of Trustees heard from 15 registered speakers for this item.

L. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 2 p.m.**M. Adjournment: 5:53 p.m.**

The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Julie Kusiek, Board Chair

Karen Mills, Director Board and
Superintendent Relations