

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE GRANDE PRAIRIE PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION HELD AT CENTRAL OFFICE ON **March 11, 2025**

Board Chair Nellis called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:58 p.m., acknowledged that the Board is on Treaty 8 Land, and reviewed the Division's Universal Guiding Principles, with the following present:

**PRESENT**

Trustees Buziak, Johnston, Koch, Martin, Nellis, Ouellette, Superintendent McDonald, Deputy Superintendent Robinson, Associate Superintendent Business Services Oladele, Director of Student Services Paul Therrien, Executive Assistant Business Services SheraLea Crichton, (recorder), and Secretary to the Board Amanda Westwater (minutes).

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Adoption of Board Agenda

The Board reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda. The Board agreed to the following additions to the agenda:

- Correction to agenda: Section 3B – Vice Chair Koch providing update.
- An in-camera session at the end of the meeting to discuss confidential correspondence and a Human Resources update.

**MOTION:** Trustee Martin moved that the Board adopt the Regular Meeting agenda as amended.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15728

**TRUSTEE SELF-DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No conflicts.

**MINUTES**

Regular Board Meeting of February 25, 2025

The Board reviewed the Regular Board Meeting minutes of February 25, 2025.

**MOTION:** Trustee Koch moved to adopt the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 25, 2025, as circulated.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15729

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

No report.

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**DELEGATIONS, PRESENTATIONS and SYSTEM LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

Annual Indigenous Programming Report

Deputy Superintendent Robinson introduced the report. Director of Student Supports, Paul Therrien, presented the Annual Indigenous Programming Report to the Board. The report highlighted current initiatives coordinated by the Indigenous Programming Coordinator and the eight Indigenous Liaisons within the Grande Prairie Public School Division (GPPSD).

The Board discussed:

- The process for parents to self-identify their children as Indigenous students during registration and the percentage of students that have self-identified since 2021.
- The growing demand for Elders and Knowledge Keepers to be involved in the community.
- The Indigenous Family Circles that occur in the division.
- Strategies that have been implemented to support the Holistic Learning approach.
- Next steps for the program, including the development of an Indigenous Education Companion document for targeted completion in Fall 2025.

The Board thanked Director Therrien and the Indigenous Liaison Team for the informative report and for everything they are doing to further Indigenous Programming at the Division.

**COMMITTEES AND REPORTS**

Board Chair Report

- City of Grande Prairie Night in Edmonton  
Chair Nellis commented on the event in Edmonton on February 27, 2025. Event attendance included elected officials and community leaders from the City Grande Prairie, many Provincial MLA's, Ministers, and potential investors from the Edmonton and Calgary area.

Council of School Councils

- Vice-Chair Koch reported to the Board regarding the Council of School Council's meeting held February 27, 2025. During the meeting they reviewed the workshop presentation from January 2025, discussed the April 26<sup>th</sup> 1-day conference, and provided suggestions to School Council's on managing meetings, advocacy, and review of Bylaws (or Terms of Reference).

Non-Instructional Employee Association Committee

- The minutes from the meeting held February 19, 2025, were included in the Board package as information.

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Advocacy and Engagement Committee

- Trustee Martin reported to the Board regarding the Advocacy and Engagement Committee meeting held March 5, 2025. The minutes of the meeting will be included in the next Board meeting agenda package.

Individual Trustee Reports

No reports.

Superintendent's Report

**Items for Information**

Superintendent McDonald shared the Superintendent's Report to the Board as information, which included the following information:

- **Community Food Security Planning**  
Superintendent McDonald shared an update on the Community Food Security Planning Committee, noting an initial meeting with the City of Grande Prairie and Helping Hands, the organization leading the city's food security strategy. He will represent the Division on the leadership table working to develop a coordinated community approach to enhancing food security in the city.

The Board discussed the recent announcement on Alberta's inclusion in the National School Food Program and how that could affect schools within the division.

- **All Administrators Monthly Virtual Meeting**  
All school and system administration met on February 26 and discussed topics relating to the development of a secure remote printing solution for staff, changes by Alberta Education to support Chromebook use for digital exams, and the upcoming student laptop replacement, which will transition most devices to Chromebooks for improved functionality in shared learning spaces. Administrators were also introduced to the program vision, target student profile, and the practical operations of the CASA mental health classroom program that will be located at I.V. Macklin Public School in September 2025.
- **College Of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) Annual Learning Conference**  
Planning is ongoing for the system educational leadership team to attend the annual CASS Learning Conference March 19-20 in Edmonton. Superintendent McDonald will be presenting and facilitating two sessions at the annual conference.

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- CASS Webinar – Accommodations for Students With Special Needs  
On February 27, Superintendent McDonald, Deputy Superintendent Robinson, and Director Nancy Gorgichuk, participated in a CASS webinar on the topic of application of the duty to accommodate expectation that exists in Alberta Human Rights legislation. The webinar shared relevant legislation and explored case law on the topic related to making accommodations in schools for students with complex learning needs.
- Training For Administrative Assistants and Library Technicians  
In response to feedback and requests from our administrative assistants and library techs, training sessions were organized to take place on Thursday, March 6, coinciding with the Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention and the regional Educational Assistants Convention. The Board extended appreciation to Tammie Maurer, Director of Human Resources, and Sudhesh Pillay, Director of Information Technology, and their staff for their support developing and facilitating these training opportunities.
- 2025-2026 Administrator Announcements  
Congratulations to the following individuals who have signed contracts for the 2025-2026 School Year: Tracey Thiemann, principal of Avondale Elementary School, Gitte Rushton, Vice Principal of Avondale Elementary School, and to Amanda Morris, Vice Principal of Swanavon Elementary School.
- Artificial Intelligence in GPPSD  
On March 5, the Directors of Schools Paul Therrien, Kim Frykas, Corinne Kruse and Nancy Gorgichuk met to refine the strategic project plan to enhance administrators' understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and align AI initiatives with Board Policy 1 and the 3-year education plan.
- 2025 Election Planning  
Planning for the October 2025 Board of Trustee Election is underway. Administration has begun coordinating with the City of Grande Prairie on shared resources and communication strategies. The plan includes website messaging and cross-posted social media content to engage the community, with a focus on election awareness, voter registration, and recent legislative changes. The Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent met with Trumpeter Local 26 of the ATA to discuss their plans to interview candidates, including videos, and host a community open house.

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Associate Superintendent of Business Services

Associate Superintendent Oladele shared the Associate Superintendent of Business Services' Report to the Board as information, which included the following information:

- **Provincial Budget Update**  
Associate Superintendent Oladele presented the Board an update on the 2025-2026 Provincial Budget that was tabled on February 27 and discussed high-level information regarding K-12 education funding and priorities. Key highlights include the government's investment in Education and the Capital Investment in School Infrastructure. The Ministry has indicated that funding profiles for the 2025/26 school year will be available in mid-March.
- **Transportation Update**  
The application period for next school year's bus passes opened on March 10. Families are required to apply or reapply for a bus pass each year by June 30 of the current school year. On the first day of registration, approximately 50 applications were received, and parents are encouraged to apply as soon as possible, to support planning and organization necessary for a smooth start to the 2025-2026 school year. There are now 558 students eligible for transportation, with no expected additional costs to families.
- **Division Budget Development and Board Budget Guiding Principles**  
The Board of Trustees are responsible for providing direction to school division administration and ensuring that Division funds are used in a responsible and sustainable manner. The Board reviewed the Budget Development Guiding Principles and the 2025-26 Budget Development schedule.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Koch move that the Board of Trustees adopt the Division's 2025/26 Budget Development Guiding Principles.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15730

Superintendent McDonald asked that Trustees share the process with their School Councils.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Trustee Professional Learning and Sharing

- **ASBA Speaker's Corner – Municipal Election Campaign Session**  
Chair Nellis reported to the Board regarding the virtual Election Campaign session held March 10, 2025. It will be posted on the ASBA website for viewing.

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Upcoming Dates and Events

- Board Workplan  
The Board reviewed the Board workplan as information. Trustees were reminded of the following upcoming events:
  - Board Policy Committee (11:00 am) 2025 03 25
  - Approve Annual Division 3-Year Capital Plan 2025 03 25
  - Board Professional Learning Retreat 2025 03 27

**IN CAMERA SESSION**

**MOTION:** Trustee Oulette moved that the Board go in camera to discuss confidential correspondence, and a Human Resources update at 7:16 p.m.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15731

**MOTION:** Trustee Buziak moved that the Board come out of camera at 7:26 p.m.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15732

**ACTIONS ARISING FROM IN CAMERA**

No actions.

**NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT**

Next Board Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2025, to be held at Central Office in the Board Room.

Board Chair Nellis called the Regular Board Meeting closed at 7:27 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary-Treasurer