

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES OF THE GRANDE PRAIRIE PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION  
HELD AT CENTRAL OFFICE ON **May 13, 2025**

Board Chair Nellis called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 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, Koch, Martin, Nellis, Ouellette, Superintendent McDonald, Deputy Superintendent Robinson, Associate Superintendent Business Services Oladele, Executive Assistant Business Services SheraLea Crichton, (recorder), and Secretary to the Board Amanda Westwater (minutes).

Virtual: Trustee Johnston

**ADOPTION OF  
AGENDA**

Adoption of Board Agenda

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

- An in-camera session at the end of the meeting to discuss a labour and human resources update.
- Addition of 2025-2026 Budget Development under Associate Superintendent Update, after non-instructional staff.

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

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15746

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

Vice-Chair Koch declared a conflict of interest with the Non-Instructional Benefits item under Associate Superintendent Update (3.j.3) due to her role as an observer to the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan Board, representing the Alberta School Boards Association.

**MINUTES**

Regular Board Meeting of April 22, 2025

The Board reviewed the Regular Board Meeting minutes of April 22, 2025.

**MOTION:** Trustee Martin moved to adopt the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 22, 2025, as circulated.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15747

**BUSINESS ARISING  
FROM THE MINUTES**

None to report.

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**DELEGATIONS,  
PRESENTATIONS  
and SYSTEM  
LEADERSHIP  
REPORTS**

Career Pathways Framework

Deputy Superintendent Robinson introduced the report and Framework. Kimberly Frykas, Director of System Planning, and Dennis Vobeyda, Principal of Grande Prairie Composite High School presented the Career Pathways Framework to the Board, which aims to provide a coordinated approach to career education from kindergarten through grade twelve. The framework supports students in understanding career planning and the world of work, aligning with provincial education goals and recommendations. It focuses on helping students succeed from early learning through high school and beyond. Key strategies include offering multiple pathways, teaching self-reflection and goal setting, and providing opportunities for students and families to explore career options by utilizing the myBlueprint Education Planner software.

There was discussion on:

- The myBlueprint application cost and features.
- Building stronger connections and gaining more exposure for Career Pathways with community, industry, and local businesses by attending Chamber events and upcoming Rotary meetings.
- Bridging Students that provides apprenticeship through trades
- Attendance at Career Fairs and the Youth Discovery Expo to promote the program.
- In the future, hosting lunch and learns with industry to discuss Career Pathways and potential partnerships.

Chair Nellis congratulated Director Frykas for being elected as the Zone 1 Chair for the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) next year.

The Board thanked Director Frykas, Principal Vobeyda, and Deputy Superintendent Robinson for all the hard work and engagement they have done to complete the Career Pathways Framework.

**COMMITTEES AND  
REPORTS**

Board Chair Report

- 2025 04 23 Trustees Engagement Session - TEBA/ATA Mediator's Recommendations  
Chair Nellis noted that ATA voted against accepting the mediator's recommendations.
- 2025 04 23 ASBA: Protection of Privacy Act and Access to Information Act session  
Chair Nellis was unable to attend the session and deferred to Vice-Chair Koch and Deputy Superintendent Robinson. The session provided an overview of the *Protection of Privacy Act* and *Access to*

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*Information Act*, both of which come into force this spring, and their impacts on school boards and trustees.

- Public School Boards' Association of Alberta Update  
Vice-Chair Koch commented on the virtual PSBAA Jordan's Principle Discussion held April 23, 2025. She noted that the elimination of JP funding is affecting rural, northern schools more than larger urban centres.  
  
Vice-Chair Koch commented on the virtual PSBAA Polling Survey Briefing/Webinar on April 25, 2025. The goal of the survey was to understand attitudes towards Public Schools in Alberta. The survey information will be attached to the minutes for information.
- Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee  
Trustees Martin and Johnston commented on the Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee meeting held on May 6, 2025. There was discussion on advocacy priorities and student technology allocation. The minutes will be included in the next Board Meeting package for information.
- Board Spring Governance Retreat  
Chair Nellis commented on the Board Spring Governance Retreat held on May 1, 2025. The Board was provided with updates on:
  - Education Directors workplans.
  - Succession planning and compensation.
  - 2025 – 2026 Division Budget.
  - Year 2 (2025/2026) updates the 3-Year Education Plan.
- Advocacy and Engagement Committee  
Trustee Martin commented on the Advocacy and Engagement Committee meeting held on May 13, 2025. The Committee discussed:
  - Advocacy & Engagement Tracker review.
  - Governance Framework.
  - Governance Minutes. Vice-Chair Koch will do May 27 meeting.
  - Election Planning – Q&A videos as was done in 2021 election. Administration will develop questions and bring back to next meeting for approval then proceed with scheduling.The minutes will be included in the next Board Meeting package for information.
- GPPSD Education Foundation Committee  
Trustee Martin commented on the GPPSD Education Foundation Committee meeting held on May 8, 2025. Working on strategic development, Striving for Excellence, and Strut and Strive events. The

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minutes will be included in the next Board Meeting package for information.

- Council of School Councils Update and Reports

Chair Nellis commented on the Council of School Council's Meeting held on May 8, 2025. Discussion on hosting an Alberta School Councils Association workshop for parents in mid-September to help councils plan and organize their meetings, as well as Jordan's Principle funding changes, and the 2025-2026 Division budget.

Chair Nellis thanked School Council Chairs for their engagement and dedication to the schools in the Division.

Individual Trustee Reports

Trustee Martin commented on the Hillside School Pancake Breakfast on May 30 for Stompede Week.

Chair Nellis noted that a member of the Parkside Montessori School Council (Desiree M.) received an Alberta School Council Association Parents of Distinction Award. Chair Nellis also noted the partnership with APPLE Schools is supporting one division school to lend out bike locks to students for the year to encourage and support more biking/scooter to schools in the warmer months.

Superintendent's Report

**Items for Information**

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

- College Of Alberta School Superintendents (Cass) Zone 1 Meeting  
The Zone 1 College of Alberta School Superintendents meeting was held the morning of Friday, May 2, at the Peace Wapiti Public School Division office. This meeting provided the opportunity for system leaders to meet and discuss specific topics such as recruitment, curriculum, and addressing the impact of changes to Jordan's Principle funding, receiving updates from Alberta Education and the CASS Provincial Board. Members also discussed the impact of recently passed and proposed legislative amendments, elected the zone executive for the 2025-2026 school year, and set the 2025-2026 meeting dates. The Board and Superintendent congratulated Director Frykas, who will be providing system educational leadership to Zone 1 as the Chair of the Zone for next year.

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- **3D Children's Society Charity Tournament**  
The annual 3-on-3 soccer and ball hockey tournament, organized by the 3D Children's Society since 1999, occurred on Friday, May 9. The fundraising tournament supports children in our community who are facing serious illnesses and has raised well over \$1 million and supported more than 500 youth in our region. Appreciation is extended to the many sponsors of the event and to division staff who supervised and coached teams to attend. Recognition is also due to Darren Foley from the Grande Prairie Composite High School, to Dan Bishop from Aspen Grove School, and to their many colleagues on the 3D Children's Society board of the for their significant efforts to organize this event.
- **Elementary Social Studies Report Card Working Group**  
On Tuesday, May 6, a group of 12 volunteer teachers from across the division met with Director of Teaching and Learning Corinne Kruse and Cassie Mercer, Diana Smith, and Tracie Anthony from the division's Teaching and Learning team to review the K-6 Social Studies curriculum. The work of the group was to review the learning outcomes in the new curriculum and prepare descriptors, in parent-friendly language, to be added for social studies to the new elementary report card.
- **Administrator Professional Learning and May Principals Meeting**  
The monthly administrator meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14. Topics on the agenda include upcoming school-based professional learning time and a virtual presentation on Artificial Intelligence (AI) from a representative from the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (AMII).
- **2024-2025 Division Assurance Survey Results**  
The annual Division Assurance Survey was recently completed, and gratitude is extended to all staff, students and parents for completing this important survey. This year's participation rates are notable for having the highest number of parent surveys completed in the past 4 years, the highest number of student surveys completed, and the second highest number of staff surveys. A final report on "*What we Heard*" will be available on the GPPSD website before the end of June.
- **Education Amendment Act, 2024**  
Resources to support the Education Amendment Act, 2024, were released to system leadership on May 6. A technical briefing was held on May 8 to review the resources related to the implementation of Alberta Education's new expectations re: instruction and supporting families and students to navigate complex conversations around gender identity, sexual orientation and human sexuality. New direction from

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Alberta Education was also provided to ensure continuity in student learning during a public health emergency or state of emergency. More information will be shared with school staff and parents as new division Administrative Procedures and processes for next year are developed.

**Items for Discussion or Action**

- **Board Social Planning**  
The Board Social Planning Committee met on May 5 to review potential changes to the event for next year. The 2025 event is scheduled for Saturday, October 4, 2025. Changes being explored include developing a way to extend invitations to casual staff, adding reserved seating, modifying the event name to reflect the celebratory nature of the event, and considering how the layout of the tables might be changed to encourage more interaction between the attendees during the evening. The committee is seeking direction from the board on the following topics:
  - Extending invitations to casual staff.
  - To help manage costs, one option is to move from the Gold Dinner package to Evergreen Park's Silver package.
  - Earlier discussions involved increasing the cost of tickets from \$10 per person to \$15 per person. Does the board wish to extend this ticket price to invited retirees?

The Board provided direction to proceed with developing a process to invite casual staff, to move to the Silver Dinner package, and to increase the ticket price to \$15 per person and charge retirees and their guests for tickets as well.

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:

- **2024/25 School Fees Impact**  
As part of the 2024/25 school year, the Board approved changes to Appendix A of Board Policy 16: Student Fees. The most significant change was at the Composite High school (CHS) where fees were increased for Welding and a new fee added for International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

For the IB program, the new fees were not implemented in the 2024/25 school year even though they were approved last spring. In the 2025/26 school year, the IB fee will only apply to new students entering the

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program. Students already enrolled will continue to be exempt until the 2026/27 school year, at which point the fee will apply to students in Grades 11 and 12. As the IB program formally begins in Grade 11, Grade 10 students are considered “pre-IB” and will not be charged a program fee.

- **2025/2026 School Fees**

As required by Board Policy 2, the Board of Trustees must approve school fees on an annual basis. For the 2025/26 school year, several schools have submitted changes to their fee schedules. All schools followed the required process, including consultation with their school councils. The primary rationale for increasing fees is to address the rising costs of delivering these optional programs at schools. These programs are not fully funded through base instructional grants and often require charging fees to cover the cost of running those programs. The Board discussed the proposed changes as presented by Administration at the following schools:

- Alexander Forbes School; Avondale School; Charles Spencer High School; Crystal Park School; Grande Prairie Composite High School; Riverstone Public School; Roy Bickell Public School; Academy Fees.

There was discussion on the process if students (families) are unable to pay the school fees. Superintendent McDonald noted that principals would work with the parents/families to develop a payment schedule or could provide a full waiver of the fees (documented in writing for auditing purposes).

**MOTION:** Trustee Koch move that the Board of Trustees approve the 2025/26 school fees as submitted.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15748

Vice-Chair Koch left the meeting at 7:35pm due to declared conflict of interest.

- **Non-Instructional Staff Benefits**

Associate Superintendent Oladele noted that the Division has experienced steep annual premium increases (25%–106%) for non-instructional staff benefits under Sunlife Canada since switching in 2022, providing additional strain on the division’s operating budget. In contrast, ASEBP, which covers instructional staff benefits, has maintained stable rates. Switching non-instructional staff to ASEBP has the potential to save the Division approximately \$135,000 in 2025/26, which is significant considering the projected budget deficit. There are

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minimal downsides to the switch, as long as benefit coverage remains comparable between the plans.

**MOTION:** Trustee Ouellette move that hat the Board of Trustees approve the transfer of the Division's non-instructional staff benefits from Sunlife Canada to the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP), effective for the 2025/26 school year.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15749

Superintendent McDonald shared for information while a lot of decisions are made by division administration, according to Board Policy 2, one specific responsibility for the Board of Trustees is to approve group health care providers used by the division.

Vice-Chair Koch returned to the meeting at 7:44pm.

- 2025/26 Division Budget Development  
Associate Superintendent Oladele reviewed the process for the Board to approve the 2025/26 Division Budget and provided an overview of the 2025/26 draft budget, including key revenue and expense changes, budget priorities, and proposed adjustments to support informed Board discussion. The final budget will be approved at the May 27 Board meeting for submission to Alberta Education by the end of May.

There was discussion on:

- At this time no contingency for additional staffing is included in the current 2025/26 budget. Work continues to develop a staffing contingency in the final budget to be brought to the board at the May 27 meeting.
- The draft budget represents a reduction in budget allocation for elementary Intervention Programming, which is no longer funded by Alberta Education.
- Administration continues to work towards the Board's goal to balancing future budgets and maintain a \$5 million (approx.. 5%) accumulated surplus from operations to address unanticipated expenses in future years.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Trustee Professional Learning and Sharing  
Nothing to report.

Upcoming Dates and Events

- Board Workplan  
The Board reviewed the Board workplan as information. Trustees were reminded of the following upcoming events:
  - 2025 05 14 ASBA Zone 1 Meeting – Northland School Division



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- Grande Prairie Composite HS Graduation (11:00am) 2025 05 16
- Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 05 27
- Approve Division 3-Year Education Plan 2025 05 27
- Approve Division 2025-26 Budget 2025 05 27
- Approve Locally Developed Courses 2025 05 27
- Non-Instructional Support Staff Committee (4:15 pm) 2025 05 29

Correspondence

- 2025 04 16 Letter from Deputy Minister of Education – re: Harry Balfour School
- 2025 04 22 Response from Minister of Education – re: Non-instructional agreement Ratification
- 2025 04 23 Charter School Proposal Response – GPPSD
- 2025 04 23 Harry Balfour School response – GPPSD
- 2025 04 29 Letter from Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools to Dr. Wong AMA Section of Pediatrics – re: Advocacy for Enhanced Early Intervention Supports for Students with Complex Needs
- 2025 04 30 Charter School Response – GPCSD

Discussion on the proposed letter on behalf of the Board to the Minister of Education regarding funding for students with complex needs. Deputy Superintendent Robinson provided additional background on the DRAFT letter and noted that Administration requires additional direction from the Board prior to completion. The correspondence will be added to an upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting for further discussion.

**IN CAMERA  
SESSION**

**MOTION:** Trustee Koch moved that the Board go in camera to discuss labour and legal at 8:30 p.m.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15750

**MOTION:** Trustee Ouellette moved that the Board come out of camera at 9:01 p.m.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15751

**ACTIONS ARISING  
FROM IN CAMERA**

No actions.

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**NEXT MEETING AND  
ADJOURNMENT**

Next Board Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27, 2025, to be held at Central Office in the Board Room.

Board Chair Nellis called the Regular Board Meeting closed at 9:01 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary-Treasurer