

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
TRUSTEES OF THE GRANDE PRAIRIE PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION
HELD AT CENTRAL OFFICE ON **September 23, 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, Johnston, Koch, Martin, Nellis, Ouellette, Superintendent McDonald, Associate Superintendent Business Services Oladele, Deputy Superintendent Robinson, 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.

MOTION: Trustee Koch moved that the Board adopt the Regular Meeting agenda as presented.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15790

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

No conflicts.

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole Meeting of September 9, 2025

The Board reviewed the Committee of the Whole Meeting minutes of September 9, 2025.

MOTION: Trustee Johnston moved to adopt the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of September 9, 2025, as circulated.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15791

Regular Board Meeting of September 9, 2025

The Board reviewed the Regular Board Meeting minutes of September 9, 2025.

MOTION: Trustee Ouellette moved to adopt the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of September 9, 2025, as circulated.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15792

**BUSINESS ARISING
FROM THE MINUTES**

None to report.

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**DELEGATIONS,
PRESENTATIONS and
SYSTEM
LEADERSHIP
REPORTS**

Presentation of ASBA Edwin Parr Award Nomination

Board Chair Nellis presented the Division's ASBA Edwin Parr nominee, Ailee Estrada from Hillside Community School, with the Nomination Certificate from ASBA. The Edwin Parr Award is a recognition for outstanding first-year teachers. The Board congratulated Ms. Estrada and extended their gratitude for her dedication to leading young learners, and for creating an atmosphere in her classroom where students feel safe, accepted, and can succeed.

**COMMITTEES AND
REPORTS**

- Board Chair Report
Board Chair Nellis noted that the in person ASBA Board Chair Ministerial Engagement planned for September 29 in Calgary has been postponed. A shorter virtual session with ASBA and the Minister of Education and Childcare will be held instead.
- Alberta School Boards Association Update
Trustee Buziak provided a summary of the ASBA Zone 1 Meeting and Awards Banquet held on September 17, 2025 in Grande Prairie. Hosted by Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools, congratulations were extended to the Division's Edwin Parr nominee and to Cpl. Gavin Ool and the Grande Prairie RCMP School Resource Program for winning the ASBA Zone 1 Friends of Education Award.
- Board Policy Committee
The September 9 meeting minutes were included for information.
- Advocacy and Engagement Committee
Trustee Martin provided a summary of the topics discussed at the meeting, including Advocacy Tracker review, MLA Meeting debrief, planning for the next Advocacy and Engagement Committee. The meeting minutes will be included in the next Regular Meeting Agenda package. The Committee recommended sending a letter to MLA Dyck and MLA Wiebe thanking them for the meeting and providing additional information on items discussed. The Board directed Administration to draft and send the correspondence. There was discussion on the new Mandate Letter from the Premier released on September 22.
- Governance Minute
Trustee Ouellette discussed the topic of Universal Guiding Principles. Developed in the 2006-2007 school year after engagement was done with various stakeholders, the UGP outlines the values and beliefs of the Board. The Board thanked Trustee Ouellette for his informative presentation.

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Next Governance Minute will be completed by Trustee Buziak on
October 14.

Individual Trustee Reports

Trustee Martin noted the Education Foundation has made the decision to postpone the Striving for Excellence Awards until December 3rd due to ongoing labour uncertainty.

Superintendent's Report

Items for Information

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

- **Board Governance Framework**
The Board Governance Framework, developed to inform division stakeholders of the general nature of the Board's governance actions, has been posted online. The Framework will also be an effective resource for candidates in the municipal election who wish to learn more about how the board operates to meet its responsibilities that are identified in provincial legislation and board policy. The Framework describes the board's deliberate engagement with division administration and stakeholders and is available online at:
<https://www.gppsd.ab.ca/our-board/board-governance>.
- **All Administrators Meeting / Principals Meeting**
The morning meeting was focused on professional learning and the implementation of the division's Indigenous Education Guiding Document and the Career Pathways framework. Teams were given the opportunity to work collaboratively to plan for integrating each topic into their school workplans for the year to support their 3-Year Education Plans. In the afternoon, principals reviewed division strategies to support school councils including Administrative Procedure 110 – School Councils, and the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) Code of Ethics. Principals will review AP 110 with their councils later this fall to collect feedback on the procedure in general and on the addition of ASCA's code of ethics. A copy of the Yearly Engagement Guide for School Councils that principals use to support their planning was included for trustee information.
- **Community Food Equity Committee Leadership Table**
On September 15 Superintendent McDonald participated with other organizational leaders from within the community to begin development of a strategic plan for the committee. The strategic planning was led by

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City of Grande Prairie staff to support *Helping Hands*. *Helping Hands* is the organization selected by the City of Grande Prairie to lead development of a community strategy to enhance collaboration among organizations that work to address food inequity and insecurity in Grande Prairie. The feedback provided by community organizations who sit on the leadership table illustrates food inequity is a growing need in the community. Participating on this leadership table will allow the division to connect our families to support that extends beyond the current lunch and snack program.

More information, including background information about the issue and a list of food providers in the community, is available on the City of Grande Prairie's web page at <https://cityofgp.com/foodsecurity>.

- Northwestern Polytechnic (NWP) Academic Showcase 2025
Deputy Superintendent Robinson and Director Kim Frykas, along with representatives from administration and counselling at the Grande Prairie Composite High School and Charles Spencer High School, attended the NWP Academic Showcase on September 15. The agenda included topics to support the transition of students from division schools to NWP, including updates on the supports available for students at NWP and the dual credit opportunities for the year. Participants received presentations from the School of Skilled Trades, School of Applied Science and Technology, School of Business and Education, the School of Health and the School of Applied Research and Innovation. NWP's proposal to offer a Bachelor of Education degree in Secondary Education has been approved by the Minister of Advanced Education. Student registration is beginning this fall, for both new students and students already in the program, to begin in the program at the start of the second semester.
- Alberta School Councils Association Managing Meetings Workshop
Appreciation is extended to all school council members and school administrators who signed up for the *Managing Meetings* workshop. Unfortunately, the interest was not high enough to warrant bringing in a presenter from Edmonton for the workshop and it was cancelled. The value in this workshop expressed at the spring 2025 Council of School Councils meeting was high, and principals will be asked to seek interest from their councils, once all are formed this fall, to reschedule it later in the year.
- Supporting Professional Recruitment in Grande Prairie
On September 18, the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent met with a representative from the city to share how our division can support the City's efforts to recruit professionals into Grande Prairie by sharing

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information about the division. Administration will develop resources that can be shared with the City of Grande Prairie to support professional recruitment.

Items for Action or Discussion

- **O Canada**
Administration is seeking feedback from the Board regarding a potential change in process for the playing of O Canada at public board meetings. The current version, sung by former division students who are now well into adulthood, is not the official version of O Canada. The proposed change is to update the version played at meetings to the official version of the national anthem and to work with schools during the year to develop a new recording of current students singing the official version. The proposal also includes changing the playing of the anthem to play it through the boardroom speakers out of the podium.

The Board was in favour of proceeding with recording a new version of the anthem and to have it played through the board room speakers at Board meetings.

- **Integrated School Support Program (ISSP) Advocacy**
ISSP provides wraparound services at Hillside Community School to address the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, contributing to improved outcomes for children, families, and communities. It is an initiative of Child and Youth Health Services, funded with up to \$10M per year by the Government of Alberta.

Current funding for this program is scheduled to end in June 2026. To help sustain and expand this impactful initiative beyond that, administration asks the board to consider writing a letter of support for the program to the government advocating for continued funding. There was discussion on:

- Satisfaction survey data related to ISSP has been very positive – both student results and parent results/comments.
- Potential expansion to other GPPSD schools.
- Year over year student attendance increase at Hillside School

MOTION: Trustee Martin moved the board direct administration to draft a letter from the Board to the government advocating for the continuation and expansion of ISSP funding.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15793

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- Board Orientation Planning

A report providing an overview of the plan to support the onboarding and orientation of the new board was provided for information. The plan is similar to the plan used for the current board in the fall of 2021 but has been refined based on administration's work to support the board throughout their current term.

There was discussion on:

- Board and Trustee Orientation – Day 1 on October 23
- Welcome Binder for Trustee.
- Onboarding and Orientation for new Trustees that will also be done by ASBA and PSBAA at their Fall General Meetings in November.

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:

- ASEBP Update

The Division has successfully transitioned employee benefit services from Sun Life to the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP) for all support staff and the Board of Trustees. ASEBP welcome packages were distributed to all eligible members in June and July as part of the transition, which included details specific to each group's coverage. Staff enrollment began in August, with onboarding completed for 401 employees. Benefits for permanent non-instructional staff became effective September 1, 2025, while benefits for temporary non-instructional staff, whether new or returning for the school year, became effective August 25, 2025. There was discussion on coverage limits and the runoff period for expenses incurred before September 1.

- Non-Instructional Liaison Meeting

At the September 9 Board Meeting, the Board requested that Administration investigate the possibility of rescheduling the October 22nd Non-Instructional Liaison to an earlier date as opposed to canceling. The meeting has now been rescheduled to October 17 at 4:15pm after consulting with the Executive team.

NEW BUSINESS

Trustee Professional Learning and Sharing

Board Chair Nellis sought input from Trustees on whether this standing agenda item could be addressed within the Individual Trustee Reports section. This will be discussed further at the next Regular Board Meeting.

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Upcoming Dates and Events

- Board Workplan
The Board reviewed the updated Board workplan as information.
Upcoming events include:

Tuesday October 7	Audit Committee Meeting (4:30pm)
Wednesday October 8	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting – Host: High Prairie School Division
Tuesday October 14	Board Policy Committee (3:30pm)
Tuesday October 14	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm)
Tuesday October 14	Regular Board Meeting (6:00pm)
Wednesday October 15	Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee (3:45pm)

There was discussion on:

- The Annual Class Size Report – will be reviewed at the December 9 Regular Board Meeting; and
- Board Orientation Day 2 scheduled for November 20 which conflicts with the PSBAA Fall General Meeting.

Superintendent McDonald will bring back additional information on a rescheduled date for Day 2 of Board Orientation at the next Regular Board Meeting on October 14.

Correspondence

- 2025 09 10 Letter from Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools to Ministers re: Cross-Ministry Collaboration and Joint Advocacy

IN CAMERA SESSION No In Camera Session.

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, October 14 at 6:00pm, to be held at Central Office in the Board Room.

Board Chair Nellis called the Regular Board Meeting closed at 6:53 p.m.

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer