

CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees held in the Board Room, Education Centre, 515 Macleod Trail SE, Calgary, Alberta, on Tuesday, April 19, 2005 at 5:02 p.m.

PRESENT

Board of Trustees:

Trustee G. Dirks, Chair
Trustee C. Bazinet
Trustee N. Close
Trustee P. Cochrane
Trustee K. Fawcett
Trustee L. Ferguson
Trustee G. Lane

Administration:

Dr. B. Croskery, Chief Superintendent of Schools
Ms. J. Barkway, Assistant Corporate Secretary
Ms. M. Clark, Superintendent, Human Resources
Mr. D. Dart, Superintendent, Business Operations & Environmental Services – Secretary Treasurer
Mr. J. Drysdale, Superintendent, School Support Services
Mr. J. Jones, Executive Assistant to the Chief Superintendent of Schools
Ms. B. Kuester, Executive Director of Communications
Mr. R. Peden, Assistant General Counsel & Senior Solicitor, Legal & Risk Management Services
Ms. D. Perrier, Recording Secretary

Stakeholder Representatives:

Ms. G. Burger-Martindale, Calgary Association of Parents and School Councils
Ms. C. Evanochko, Calgary Board of Education Staff Association
Mr. K. Hegg, Elementary School Principals' Association
Mr. L. Liffiton, Alberta Teachers' Association, Local No. 38
Ms. N. Lukey, Principals' Association for Adolescent Learners
Ms. S. Smith, Principals' Association for Adolescent Learners
Mr. T. Stensland, Elementary School Principals' Association

Action By

1.0 CALL TO ORDER, NATIONAL ANTHEM AND WELCOME

Chair Dirks called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and Annika, who is a Grade 9 student at Woodman Junior High School, led in the singing of the national anthem. Chair Dirks welcomed representatives from the aforementioned organizations and members of the public. He congratulated Ms. Evanochko on her recent appointment as Vice Chair of the Calgary Board of Education Staff Association.

2.0 CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by Trustee Lane:

THAT the Agenda for the Regular Meeting held April 19, 2005, be approved as submitted.

The motion was
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

3.0 CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Dirks read into the record, correspondence that was received from the Honourable G. Zwozdesky, Minister of Education, which conveyed his appreciation for the fact that the majority of our school boards support the provincial achievement testing at the Grades 3, 6 and 9 levels, and the Grade 12 diploma examinations. The Minister further expressed appreciation for the feedback he received on the Grade 4 provincial testing pilot project, and noted that he has decided not to conduct this pilot test this year. Instead, he will consult with education stakeholders regarding an alternate method to help ensure that these children are on a successful learning track, through discussion of an approach that incorporates practical classroom assessment tools and related learning materials. His department officials will be contacting school board superintendents and other educators very soon to discuss their participation and input in this regard.

4.0 PRESENTATION, HONOURS AND RECOGNITION

4.1 LOUISE DEAN CENTRE

Superintendent Drysdale provided a brief history about the Louise Dean Centre, noting it is a school for pregnant and parenting teens; it has been in operation since 1969 and it was the first alternative program to be offered in the Calgary Board of Education. He called forward Ms. B. English, Principal, to give the presentation.

Ms. English acknowledged a few of the students, parents and staff members of the Centre, who were in the public gallery, and noted that Shawna, a student who is currently enrolled in the program, would share a few words to conclude the presentation. The presentation was given through PowerPoint, along with a narrative by Ms. English. The Louise Dean Centre is located in the Kensington School, with a current enrolment of 132 students. Louise Dean Centre is a partnership between the Calgary Board of Education, Calgary Catholic Family Services and Calgary Health Region. The program provides a multi-disciplinary approach to education, and also provides support in terms of parenting, role modeling and life skills. The life skills program runs for 12 weeks per session, throughout the entire year. This year, eighteen students wrote the English 30 and 33, and Social Studies 30, 33, 30-1 and 30-2 diploma exams and they all were successful in passing those courses; in June of this year, the Centre has thirty-three students writing their diploma exams; there are eight students who will be writing Biology 30 for the first time from Louise Dean Centre. Ms. English stated that they offer the full Career and Technology Studies (CTS) program, as well as all the options, and they are highly focused on Career Pathways to get the students involved in work experience. She shared information about some of the extra-curricular courses that are offered, and noted they have four full-time social workers, as well as an aboriginal liaison worker who comes in twice a week. Unique to the Louise Dean Centre is that it houses a childcare and infant learning centre - the Dr. Clara Christie Learning Centre.

Shawna came forward and shared some of her experiences prior to and since attending the Louise Dean Centre, where she enrolled September 2004. She stated that her teachers are extremely helpful and she was able to complete four core courses and three options in one semester. During her time at the Centre, her marks have gone up, which she attributes to the small class sizes, as well as the fact that she enjoys going to school. She shared information about the parenting and life skills classes that are offered at Louise Dean Centre, and pointed out that the workers in the day care centre specialize in child development and also provide additional support to the students through home visits. Shawna spoke highly of the tremendous assistance and support she is given from Louise Dean Centre resource staff and from other students, noting she has benefited greatly by this in her personal growth. In conclusion, Shawna noted her involvement in the Peer Support Group, which includes many students from the Centre; they write about their individual experiences with pregnancy and

parenting and share their stories with students in other schools in the hopes of preventing teen pregnancy. She stated that she is proud to announce she will be graduating in June 2005, having accomplished the completion of two years of schooling in one year.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Trustee Lane expressed words of thanks to the presenters and stated that it is obvious Louise Dean Centre is a very impressive, innovative and successful program – it is a program which all can be proud of.

5.0 VERBAL UPDATES

5.1 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR AND TRUSTEES

Chair Dirks reported on a meeting between the Minister of Infrastructure and urban School Board Chairs and Chief Superintendents, to reinforce the need for the building of new schools and to hear the Minister's commitment to respond to these needs in urban areas.

The Chair pointed out that Education week is April 24th to 30th this year, and next week this will be celebrated in school districts throughout the province. The first *Alberta School Week*, as it was originally called, was held in 1928. This week of recognition was initiated by the Alberta Teachers' Alliance, which later became the Alberta Teachers' Association, to call attention to the importance of education and to showcase the good things happening in Alberta schools. This year's theme, developed by the Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education is '*Public Education: Proud Legacy - Inspired Future.*' On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Chair Dirks commended the Calgary Board of Education's dedicated teaching staff and acknowledged the important role they have in developing young minds through public education. He stated that today, more than ever, teachers are committed to an inspired future for every child and in Educating Tomorrow's Citizens Today.

Trustee Lane reported on a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Rosedale Elementary School. He noted it was a celebration that involved an assembly for students and their parents, and an open house for the school's alumni. The theme for this celebration was the '50s and '60s.

Trustee Bazinet informed that she attended the groundbreaking celebration for Douglasdale's new core school addition.

Trustee Cochrane stated she was recently at Western Canada High School's Council meeting, and she noted some questions raised included: What is happening with the daily physical activity requirement? How is the second languages initiative going to affect high schools? They have concerns with the diploma examinations, noting that parents have less confidence in the actual results of these exams. Western Canada School Council also noted concern about their major school renovations – they have been waiting since 1999 for final approval to complete these renovations. Another concern that was raised was the potential for an additional five-credit requirement for high school fine arts.

Trustee Close shared information about her recent visit to Nellie McClung Elementary School, noting she missed the evening grand event of their Annual Arts Walk – this year's theme was 'Heroes and Villains'. She stated that the students' success in learning through the arts was evidenced in their displayed artwork and, especially, in their written material that accompanied the artwork.

5.2 REPORT FROM THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

Chief Superintendent Croskery reported on the following items:

- Rosedale School received \$25,000 from an alumna to show her gratitude for the education she received as a student there. She was formally recognized at the school's 50th Anniversary Dinner.
- David D. Oughton Elementary School's corporate sponsor, General Electric, gave them the gift of painting the interior of the school. General Electric provided volunteers to work alongside with volunteer parents and students, and they supplied the food for the volunteers over the weekend event.
- He had a brown bag lunch with the staff of Scenic Acres School, followed by a visit to each of the classrooms. He noted there is an exceptional learning environment in that school, which is under the direction and leadership of Ms. S. Kivi, Principal.
- The new Deputy Minister of Alberta Education, Mr. K. Henke, had a brief visit with Superintendents' Team, and then he and Dr. Croskery went to Viscount Bennett's Chinook Learning Services, where Mr. Henke spent some time with students in a Math 30 class.
- Ms. J. Vincent, teacher librarian of Ernest Morrow Junior High School, has been awarded the Prime Minister's Award for teaching excellence. She spearheaded the Ernest Morrow Literacy Program designed to enhance the reading of all students through an active daily program of instruction.

6.0 PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

There were no public questions.

7.0 STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

7.1 Ms. A. Craig, President, Montessori Alternative Public School Society (MAPSS)

Ms. Craig provided a brief introduction of MAPSS, noting it is a society of parents and educators who strongly believe in and support public Montessori programs. On behalf of MAPSS, she extended thanks to the trustees for their support in the development of this program and for their development of the Quality Control for Program Integrity document, which will be a valuable tool and reference for refining the Montessori program. She noted that the program is approaching its 6th school year, and as the program continues to mature, MAPSS looks forward to working with administrators and area directors to achieve the level of authenticity and to having all vital elements in place.

8.0 GOVERNANCE: POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING

8.1 ACTION ITEMS

8.1.1 Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Directive for Action re: English as a Second Language Funding Cap

Trustee Cochrane noted that it was with dismay that the Board of Trustees received word earlier in the year about a return to capping of English as a Second Language (ESL) funding. She stated that in recognition of the great importance of not limiting the ability of some of our most vulnerable new citizens to acquire the language skills they need to succeed, our Board of Trustees wants to move forward on the removal of this cap and hopes to receive assurances that this will not happen again in the future. Trustee Cochrane pointed out that while the Board of Trustees will advocate at the local level for the removal of this funding cap, it is very beneficial to have the Alberta School Boards Association advocate for issues of this nature.

MOVED by Trustee Cochrane:

THAT the Board of Trustees approves the Directive for Action to be submitted to the Alberta School Boards Association prior to June 1, 2005, in the form as submitted with the Agenda for the Regular Meeting of April 19, 2005.

Trustees gave consideration to the report and posed questions. In response to a question of the intent of the motion, Trustee Cochrane noted that the intent is to have the cap removed in its entirety, and to ensure that Alberta Education realizes that this type of support is a necessity beyond five years for ESL students to be successful. Some discussion took place about the provincial assessment benchmarks that are used to determine the coding levels of ESL students, with Ms. S. Reib, ESL System Principal, noting that the current method of assessment has been in use for two years. She pointed out that many of Calgary Board of Education's ESL students, while they do score the highest among school boards on the provincial achievement tests, are not achieving at the same level as their English-speaking peers.

In response to a question about the impact to our system of this cap, Superintendent Dart noted that he did not have that detailed information on hand. He did note his belief that the reduction in revenues was in the order of \$2.5 million this year, which is a substantial fiscal impact on us. Ms. Reib added that this represents approximately 2300 students.

Chair Dirks called for the vote on the motion.

The motion was
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8.2 TRUSTEE INQUIRIES

There were no Trustee inquiries.

NEW DISCUSSION ITEM – At this point in the meeting, an issue was raised by a trustee regarding discussion about the possibility of mandating high school fine arts. Chair Dirks received unanimous consent of the Board of Trustees to entertain discussion on the item.

Mandatory High School Fine Arts

Chair Dirks pointed out that this matter recently came before the provincial legislature, and a motion was passed to encourage the government to consider implementing some kind of mandatory high school fine arts program.

Chief Superintendent Croskery noted that the Calgary Board of Education probably has the strongest tradition of fine arts and aesthetics of any school board. He stated that in an ideal world it would be good to do more in this respect; however, some adverse issues to this are the enormous pressures it would place on the high school curriculum, as well as the provision of additional staff to these programs. Superintendent Drysdale concurred with these comments, adding that our high school students carry a significant load as it is. He pointed out that the competition at this time to get into post secondary programs is daunting and the absolute energy that our students are putting forward just to cross that bar is very intense. Two other pragmatic observations he noted would be the need for qualified fine arts teachers and, also, the physical facilities – band rooms, art studios, dance studios, etc., which come at a significant cost.

Chair Dirks clarified that a Bill has not been passed on this issue in the legislature; it was only brought forward as an expressed interest to investigate the desirability and feasibility of this concept, and to have collaborative discussions. He noted that trustees might wish to review the matter in more detail and consider putting forward a position on it.

Board

J. Barkway (Agenda)

8.3 TRUSTEE NOTICES OF MOTION

Trustee Dirks gave notice of motion re: Monitoring report for English as a Second Language.

8.4 CONSENT ITEMS

There were no objections to the Consent Agenda and Chair Dirks declared the recommendation adopted as follows:

8.4.1 Liaison Report re: Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)

THAT the report, as submitted with the Agenda for the Regular Meeting held April 19, 2005, be received for information as the liaison report with respect to the Alberta School Boards Association.

9.0 MINUTES

9.1 REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES HELD APRIL 5, 2005

MOVED by Trustee Bazinet:

THAT the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees held April 5, 2005 be approved as submitted.

The motion was
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

9.2 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

10.0 EMERGENT ITEMS FOR NEXT BOARD MEETING

There were no emergent items for the next Board meeting.

6:10 p.m. – Recessed.

6:37 p.m. – Reconvened.

11.0 IN-CAMERA ISSUES

11.1 MOTION TO MOVE IN CAMERA

MOVED by Trustee Fawcett:

THAT the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees moves in camera.

The motion was
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

11.2 MOTION TO REVERT TO PUBLIC MEETING

Action By

MOVED by Trustee Close:

THAT the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees moves out of in camera.

The motion was
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

11.3 MOTIONS TO ACTION IN-CAMERA RECOMMENDATIONS

MOVED by Trustee Cochrane:

THAT the Board of Trustees directs Administration to prepare correspondence for the Minister of Infrastructure, for the Board Chair's signature as per the discussion held in camera.

The motion was
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

12.0 ADJOURNMENT

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

D. Dart/Board Chair