

Statement of Proceedings of a Special Meeting of Electors of the Board of Education of the Regina School Division No. 4 of Saskatchewan, held at 1600 4th Avenue.

Call to Order and Opening Remarks Katherine Gagne, Chairperson of the Board of Education of the Regina School Division No. 4 of Saskatchewan, called the meeting to order and acknowledged the location of every Regina Public School and the School Division Office on Treaty 4 land. She introduced the Board members and senior administration in attendance and welcomed all assembled. Mrs. Gagne noted that there was no formal agenda and turned over the proceedings to the electors who had requested the meeting.

Election of Chairperson for the Meeting Trish Elliott invited nominations for the election of a Chairperson for the Special Meeting of Electors.

Motion by Terri Sleeva (seconded by Florence Stratton):

That Trish Elliott be elected to serve as Chairperson of the Special Meeting of Electors.

Motion Carried.

Election of Secretary for the Meeting Trish Elliott, Chairperson of the meeting, then called for nominations for the appointment of a Secretary for the Special Meeting of Electors. Board Chairperson Katherine Gagne noted that Suzanne Shuba was available for this position.

Motion by Trish Elliott (seconded by Tria Donaldson):

That Suzanne Shuba be elected to serve as Secretary of the Special Meeting of Electors.

Motion Carried.

Comments and/or Questions from Regina Ratepayers Brittany McDonald arose and submitted the following resolution:

Motion by Brittany McDonald (seconded by Tria Donaldson):

WHEREAS Saskatchewan's children have a right to attend school and receive instruction without discrimination under the Education Act;

AND WHEREAS the Education Act states "no teacher, trustee, director or other school official shall, in any way deprive, or attempt to deprive, a pupil of access to, or the advantage of, the educational services approved and provided by the board of education or the conseil scolaire";

AND WHEREAS lack of access to early intervention programs such as Discovery Preschool effectively limits the right of access to education when children come of school age under the Act;

AND WHEREAS the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, including discrimination based on mental and physical disability;

AND WHEREAS program and staff supports for early learning and school-aged students with intensive needs have been reduced in response to provincial budget cuts;

BE IT RESOLVED that the RBE direct its legal counsel to consider the legal implications of program and staff support reductions for school-aged and preschool children with intensive needs, in regards to the rights guaranteed by the Education Act and Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedom, and make representation to the Ministry of Education on these matters;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, when faced with budgetary decisions, the RBE will prioritize protection of the rights of intensive needs students and preschoolers, and will fulfill its moral and legal obligation to not deprive Regina children of their rightful access to schools and instruction.

Motion by Larry Kowalchuk (seconded by Bob Ivanochko):

That the above resolution be amended to include reference to "the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code."

Motion Carried.

Motion (as Amended) by Brittany McDonald (seconded by Tria Donaldson):

WHEREAS Saskatchewan's children have a right to attend school and receive instruction without discrimination under the Education Act;

AND WHEREAS the Education Act states "no teacher, trustee, director or other school official shall, in any way deprive, or attempt to deprive, a pupil of access to, or the advantage of, the educational services approved and provided by the board of education or the conseil scolaire";

AND WHEREAS lack of access to early intervention programs such as Discovery Preschool effectively limits the right of access to education when children come of school age under the Act;

AND WHEREAS the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, including discrimination based on mental and physical disability;

AND WHEREAS program and staff supports for early learning and school-aged students with intensive needs have been reduced in response to provincial budget cuts;

BE IT RESOLVED that the RBE direct its legal counsel to consider the legal implications of program and staff support reductions for school-aged and preschool children with intensive needs, in regards to the rights guaranteed by the Education Act, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, and Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedom, and make representation to the Ministry of Education on these matters;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, when faced with budgetary decisions, the RBE will prioritize protection of the rights of intensive needs students and preschoolers, and will fulfill its moral and legal obligation to not deprive Regina children of their rightful access to schools and instruction.

Motion Carried.

In discussion, Mrs. McDonald spoke of her frustration in attempting to secure entry for her daughter, who has been diagnosed with autism, into a PreKindergarten program. She noted experiencing difficulty with home services and inaccessible supports. She asserted that it was the Division's mandate to educate all children, and asked that the Board reinstate the preschool programs that were phased out in last year's budget, provide appropriate funding for Educational Assistants, and provide greater access to school services. Larry Kowalchuk advised that he supported the intent of the motion. He reported that

reductions to preschool programs impacts the ability of people, especially young children, to function as equals in society, and urged an amendment to the motion to include the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

Florence Stratton arose and submitted a resolution relative to changing the name of Davin School.

Motion by Florence Stratton (seconded by Simon Moccasin):

WHEREAS Davin School, in the Crescents neighbourhood in Regina, is named after Nicholas Flood Davin, orator, politician, journalist, and founder of the newspaper that became the *Leader-Post*;

AND WHEREAS these are not Davin's only legacy, as Davin was also the author of the 1879 *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds*, today known as the "Davin Report"—a report that urged the government of John A. Macdonald to establish residential schools in Canada and provided a plan for them;

AND WHEREAS Davin's only contribution to education is the Davin Report;

AND WHEREAS the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) on Canada's Residential Schools highlights the central role of the Davin Report in laying the ground work for the residential school system;

AND WHEREAS the TRC concluded that the residential school system resulted in "cultural genocide" and the deaths of at least 6,000 Indigenous children;

AND WHEREAS the renaming of a school commemorating a man who laid the groundwork for the genocidal residential school system should not be controversial;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, by the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, the Regina Public School Board change the name of Davin School and place a plaque by the front door explaining the reason for the name change—in other words, explaining Davin's other legacy.

Motion Carried.

In discussion, Mr. Moccasin acknowledged the Elders and gave thanks to all creation. He also extended greetings to the elected Board members and to administration and staff of Regina Public Schools. Ms. Stratton shared her experiences as a Davin graduate, and how the students were taught of Davin's many accomplishments. Upon learning of Davin's other legacy a few years ago, she wonders if he should still be honoured by having a school named after him. Mr. Moccasin provided a brief summary of this life as a child involved in the 60s Scoop, and how he lost his ways, his culture and his language. He outlined the effect racism has had on him, and stated that he is speaking for the Indigenous people who perished in residential schools. Board Chairperson Katherine Gagne advised that the Board is currently engaged in a consultation process and will be making a decision regarding the school name by the end of the school year. Board Vice-Chairperson Adam Hicks noted that the Board has heard from the School Community Council as well as from its Indigenous Education Advisory Council, and reminded all in attendance that, in the event the motion passes at the special meeting, it is not binding on the Board. He further noted that all comments made at the meeting and through the consultation will be thoroughly considered by the Board members and that the official decision on the name of the school will be made by the Board at a public meeting.

Catherine Gibson arose and submitted a resolution, on behalf of Sean Tucker, relative to the provision of education for school community councils.

Motion by Catherine Gibson (seconded by Elaine Grass):

WHEREAS anti-Indigenous racism is part of the history of Saskatchewan and remains prevalent today, embedded in every aspect of life in our province: justice, child welfare, education, income, employment, elected representation, even life expectancy;

AND WHEREAS systemic racism constitutes a huge barrier for Indigenous peoples and is also a significant barrier to truth and reconciliation;

AND WHEREAS Senator Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, stated: “It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation”;

AND WHEREAS the materials available on the Regina Board of Education (RBE) website for parents and School Community Councils (SCC) contains no information related to the history of residential schools, Treaties, the TRC’s Calls to Action, and anti-Indigenous racism, or any other resources that encourage growth, understanding, and healing within our school community;

AND WHEREAS the RBE has not followed through on requests from the Davin School Community Council and its Trustee, Adam Hicks, to hold a community public education event related specifically to Nicholas Flood Davin’s life and his pivotal role in creating the residential school system and, more generally, to truth and reconciliation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the RBE annually provide, to parent members of each SCC, appropriate education related to the history of Indigenous peoples, Treaties, the impact of the residential school system, and ongoing discrimination experienced by Indigenous peoples, and that the RBE be supportive of requests from SCCs for school-based community education events that support truth and genuine reconciliation.

Motion Carried.

In discussion, Ms. Gibson noted recent informational improvements on the Board’s website.

Bob Ivanochko arose and, on behalf of Making Peace Vigil, PeaceQuest Regina, and Regina Peace Council, submitted a resolution relative to peace studies.

Motion by Bob Ivanochko (seconded by Evelyn Tischer):

WHEREAS war continues to wrack many places in the world, and for the last twenty-five years Canada has been an active participant in a number of these wars (Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, Latvia), and none of the students in our schools has ever known a time of peace, their entire lives having been lived during active warfare;

AND WHEREAS a growing number of students are refugees from war;

AND WHEREAS the billions of dollars Canada spends annually on war could instead be spent in such areas as education, healthcare, affordable housing, the environment, and the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action;

AND WHEREAS growing tensions with North Korea and between the great powers has dramatically increased the likelihood of nuclear war (the “doomsday

clock” of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists now reads two minutes to midnight—the closest to a nuclear catastrophe since the height of the Cold War);

AND WHEREAS Regina would not survive a nuclear war between the great powers, meaning peace is more than a question of policy or morality—it is a question of survival;

AND WHEREAS the media and popular culture have inundated our students with images of violence, the glorification of war, and propaganda for more war, leaving the schools as one of the few places this barrage of violence can be counter-acted;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Regina Public School Board inform the provincial government it wants a Peace Studies program introduced into the school curriculum which would, at age-appropriate levels, introduce students to a) the real nature of war and violence; b) alternatives to war such as mediation, arbitration and international law; c) the importance of diplomacy and Canada’s diplomatic successes in the past (such as Lester Pearson’s Nobel Prize for mediating the Suez Crisis of 1956); d) the role of the United Nations and other international organizations in preventing war; e) critical media analysis; and f) forms of non-violent conflict resolution.

Motion Carried.

In discussion, Mr. Ivanochko thanked the Board for discontinuing the military training program. He advised that the specifics of how to introduce a peace studies program into the curriculum should be left to the judgment of the professional educators. He further noted resources available from PeaceQuest. Ms. Tischer asserted that peace education in schools is one step on the road to international peace. Florence Stratton commented that we live in world where war is glorified, and suggested that, if students were caught fighting, a teacher would not encourage them to keep fighting but to find a resolution to the conflict. Trish Elliott noted that the Ministry of Education regulates provincial curriculum, but that this motion could serve to exert pressure on the Ministry.

Tria Donaldson arose and submitted the following resolution:

Motion by Tria Donaldson (seconded by Chelsea Flook):

WHEREAS all students have a right to a safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environment, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, ancestry, culture, socio-economic status, religion, family status, and mental and physical disability;

AND WHEREAS the Prairie Valley School Division board of education has adopted a Respect for Human Diversity Policy that outlines institutional responsibilities to uphold the dignity of all students;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Regina Board of Education adopt a Respect for Human Diversity Policy, in consultation with school community councils, equity-based student clubs, and equity-seeking community organizations.

Motion Carried.

In discussion, Ms. Donaldson noted that the Division does considerable work promoting diversity and that adopting a policy to protect all students would be appropriate.

[Chelsea Flook assumed the Chair during presentation of the following motion.]

Trish Elliott arose and submitted a resolution as follows:

Motion by Trish Elliott (seconded by Krystal Lewis):

WHEREAS you cannot have a board of education without the electors who elect them;

AND WHEREAS the justification for the continuing existence of school boards is tied to evidence that they directly represent local voters in concrete ways, such as annual electors' meeting;

AND WHEREAS electors' rights to a voice in decision-making were largely expunged and downgraded under the Education Act in 2017, including moving public involvement in school reviews from the Act to Regulations and deleting Electors' Annual Meetings altogether from both the Act and Regulations;

AND WHEREAS the loss of individual electors' rights is directly proportional to the increase of ministerial power to override local decision-making;

AND WHEREAS electors and the trustees they place in office must support one another in the name of preserving local democracy;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Regina Board of Education will restore the practice of holding an Annual Electors' Meeting according to past practice, preserving the right of taxpaying residents to freely ask questions of their elected trustees and to propose resolutions for the consideration of all assembled in a public meeting;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Regina Board of Education will request the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to issue a statement supporting electors and advocating for a return of electors' lost rights;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Regina Board of Education proactively lobby the provincial government to restore local autonomy under the Education Act, including the restoration and improvement of Electors' rights.

Motion Carried.

In discussion, Board member Jay Kasperski advised that the past year has been difficult for the Board, and that the Board did, through the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, voice concerns with respect to the changes to *The Education Act, 1995*. Of all the changes introduced, Mr. Kasperski noted that, in his opinion, the removal of annual meeting requirements was the least distressing. This being his initial term as a Board member, he referred to his first experience attending an annual meeting of electors, and commented that he found the setting very intimidating, which made people uncomfortable with sharing their views freely. By contrast, from his perspective, the recent Community Engagement Forum fostered much greater input from attendees. He also referenced Board members connecting with the public through phone calls, emails, School Community Council meetings, and forums. Ms. Elliott advised that the sections repealed from the Act and moved to Regulations, limited the electors' rights to have input, and that an annual meeting allows for stakeholders to hold Board members accountable.

[Trish Elliott resumed the Chair.]

Chelsea Flook arose and submitted a resolution regarding the need for traffic calming measures for inner city schools.

Motion by Chelsea Flook (seconded by Brad Olson):

WHEREAS schools in the inner city have inconsistent and inadequate traffic calming measures that are of great concern to parents and students attending Regina Public Schools;

AND WHEREAS the Regina Public School Board would be a strong voice to lend support for communities calling for improvements in traffic calming measures in school zones;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Regina Public School Board supports traffic calming measures in the inner city by advocating to the City of Regina and SGI for a review of existing measures and best practices, and implementing their findings promptly.

Motion Carried.

In discussion, Ms. Flook referenced that the placement of 40 Km school zone signs are inconsistent throughout the City. In particular, she noted that the sign by École Connaught Community School is placed too close to the school grounds, thereby hindering drivers' abilities to slow down to 40 Km in a timely manner. Board member Cindy Anderson expressed appreciation for the motion, and noted that a committee including City of Regina representation is in place and that such signage inconsistency is being discussed. Board member Adam Hicks commented that the motion will support the Board's actions moving forward in these conversations. Joanne Havelock expressed support for the motion, and noted that she has called the City relative to the lack of pedestrian crossings in certain areas in the Cathedral neighbourhood. Brad Olson also supported the motion, and expressed concern relative to signage issues, particularly for inner city schools.

Additional
Comments/
Questions from
Ratepayers

Neil McDonald arose and referenced the first motion of the evening, submitted by his wife, Brittany McDonald, relative to children's right to education. He spoke of the struggles his family went through attempting to get their autistic daughter into a PreKindergarten program in the Division, and the frustration they felt when their application was declined.

Joanne Havelock expressed appreciation to Trish Elliott and everyone else involved in requesting this special meeting of electors.

Chelsea Flook invited everyone to the Legislative Building after the meeting to participate in a Camp Out in support of Justice for Indigenous Children. She also advised that individuals could follow their Facebook group "Colonialism No More."

Trish Elliott thanked all in attendance for supporting local democracy, and expressed appreciation to the Board members who attended and sat amongst the other attendees.

On behalf of the Board of Education, Chairperson Katherine Gagne conveyed gratitude to all who attended the special meeting, and acknowledged that all comments heard during the meeting will continue to inform Board members in their decision-making. She affirmed that each resolution presented during the meeting related to matters currently under consideration by the Board. She

confirmed that Board members are regularly engaged by community members and local ratepayers, and noted that the Board has been contemplating new and creative ways to connect with the public, pointing to the live streaming of Board meetings as one example. She asserted that the Board and its electors are working towards the same goal—success for all students.

Adjournment Trish Elliott thanked everyone for attending and called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Tria Donaldson:

That the meeting adjourn.

Motion Carried.

Time of meeting: 7:00 to 8:29 p.m.