

At a meeting of the Board of Education of the Regina School Division No. 4 of Saskatchewan, held at 1600 4th Avenue.

Members Present	Mr. Adam Hicks, Chair Ms. Lacey Weekes, Vice-Chair Mrs. Cindy Anderson (virtually) Mr. Ted Jaleta	Mrs. Tracey McMurchy Mr. Brandon-Shea Mutala Mrs. Sarah Cummings Truszkowski
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Administration Present	Mr. Mark Haarmann, Director of Education/CEO Ms. Naomi Mellor, Deputy Director of Division Services/CFO Mr. Rick Steciuk, Deputy Director of Student Achievement/School Services
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Tracey McMurchy acknowledged the location of every Regina Public School and the School Division Office on Treaty 4 land.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to adopt the agenda.

Adoption of Agenda	<u>Motion by Brandon-Shea Mutala:</u> That the agenda be adopted as prepared.
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Motion Carried.

Declaration of Any Conflicts	The Chairperson asked if there were any conflicts of interest to be declared. None were reported.
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Approving of Minutes	The Chairperson then asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on November 27, 2024.
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Motion by Tracey McMurchy:

That the minutes of the Board meeting of November 27, 2024, be approved as distributed.

Motion Carried.

Student-centred Facility Renovations at Glen Elm School	Scott Saxby, Superintendent of Facilities, and Jeremy Black, Principal of Glen Elm School, showcased recent renovations to areas of Glen Elm School in order to make the school more accessible. Mr. Black advised that they learned last spring of a child in the neighbourhood who would start school in the fall, but Glen Elm School was not properly equipped for the student's needs. He outlined accessibility upgrades to the front and interior programming and support spaces. Mr. Black noted that the staff and school community have been very pleased with the renovations and thanked Mr. Saxby and the Facilities team for their assistance in making these changes happen. Mr. Black and Mr. Saxby responded to questions relative to playground accessibility, and input sought
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from the family of the student. Board members expressed appreciation for the care and attention put into these renovations.

Director’s Report

Mark Haarmann, Director of Education/CEO, presented his monthly standing report, first highlighting that the Regina Public Schools’ students and employees will be concluding this year’s United Way campaign and, to date, have raised just under \$40,000. He thanked everyone for their generosity in helping those in our communities who are in need. He advised that, in November, he had the honour of participating in several formal and informal ceremonies and activities for Indigenous Veterans Day and Remembrance Day. He noted that the deep respect shown by our students and staff was remarkable and another source of pride for Regina Public Schools and further noted that both of these important days are reminders of the living history that is all around us and that is shared by our students and families. He advised that, also in November, the Division launched the I Belong Equity and Inclusion Staff and Student Surveys for employees and for students in Grades 6-12, with the purpose of gathering information about staff and student identities, lived experiences in our schools, classrooms, offices and other workspaces. He explained that the information gathered from the surveys will allow the Division to better program for and support all in Regina Public Schools. Staff and student voices are critical to identifying what is working, what barriers exist and what changes can be implemented to create more welcoming learning and working environments for everyone in the Division. He clarified that the confidential survey was administered by the University of Regina following the key strategic priority of “provide inclusive, safe and welcoming environments, informed by trauma-sensitive practices, committed to principles of diversity, equity and inclusion”, and that he plans to share some of the relevant findings relating to employee and student participation and other information that may be pertinent for the Board and the Division direction in the coming months. He thanked Maxine McKenzie-Cox, Coordinator for Equity and Anti-Racism, and Danette Exner, Superintendent of Student Achievement/School Services, and their team for leading this important project. He mentioned that the new STEAM curriculum supports at Kitchener School was launched in November, and plans are in place to introduce this programming and STEAM supportive spaces at Seven Stones and Albert Schools in the coming weeks. He expressed appreciation to Student Achievement Coordinators Cory Antonini, Amanda Brace and Shayne McMillen, and the educators and administrators at Kitchener School for helping to expand student learning opportunities and relevance. He was proud to report that a number of Campbell Collegiate students became certified drone pilots last month and had the opportunity to fly various types of drones, ranging from basic photography drones to state-of-the-art, \$40K search and rescue vehicles. He noted that this group of students is preparing for the upcoming Skills Canada Robotic Competition. He thanked teacher Jason Grayston for his contributions to the Robotics and Drone Club at Campbell Collegiate. November saw schools across the province celebrate Education Week; this year’s theme being Learning is a Journey. Mr. Haarmann reported that many of our schools spent this week doing what they typically do every week, and that is to celebrate and focus on learning and the journey of learning discovery. He advised that he recently learned École Wilfrid Walker School has been selected as a Ministry of Education Early Years visitation site. This recognition is based on the Ministry’s selection criteria, which seek Early Childhood educators who demonstrate exemplary practices, fostering holistic growth and development through engaging and inclusive learning environments. The site visits offer a valuable professional learning opportunity, allowing educators to gain insights from real-world early learning settings. In the area of literacy, he noted that, this fall, over 300 Grade 1, 2 and 3 teachers completed the first phase of training as part of the Division’s Primary Literacy Framework rollout. During this training, teachers explored effective screening tools and instructional strategies in phonological awareness and phonics; this is a significant step towards enhancing literacy instruction, improving achievement for all students, and closing the

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achievement gap for Indigenous learners. He advised that early results for this year are encouraging, with approximately 10% more Grade 2 students reading at grade level compared to last year, and the number of students significantly below grade level has decreased by approximately 10%. He further advised that this positive trend is also reflected in self-declared Indigenous learners, whose fall assessment results show similar improvements. This success can be attributed to a combination of evidence-based best practices, comprehensive teacher training, and ongoing support from the Division’s Responsive Instructional Coaches, who provide direct, on-the-ground assistance to teachers. He commented that, together, these initiatives are creating momentum in improving Grades 1-3 literacy achievement and are setting the stage for continued success. Lastly, he shone a light on the extra work of staff in our schools during the holiday season, with many schools hosting Santa Stores, collecting items from their own communities to share with students in need in other communities. He encouraged everyone to inquire with their local schools to determine if they are collecting items. He also thanked the many community volunteers and contributors who, every year, collect toys, clothes and other items that brighten the lives of many students and their families. In closing, he expressed appreciation to all who make Regina Public Schools such a special place to work and learn. He advised that he has now visited all 57 schools and is regularly humbled by the great work he sees from support staff, teachers, administrators, and Division Office staff.

Appointment of Auditors

Information regarding the appointment of an external auditor had been distributed. Naomi Mellor, Deputy Director of Division Services/CFO, advised that, with the conclusion of the audit for the 2023-24 fiscal year, the Board may decide to either reappoint MNP LLP for up to two years or to publicly tender for audit services. She noted that, if the Board chooses to re-engage MNP LLP, it can pass a motion to appoint MNP LLP for the 2024-25 and/or 2025-26 fiscal years. If the Board chooses to tender, she recommended that the Audit and Risk Management Committee review and approve the tender package, timing and criteria, that the tender process follow the Division’s Administrative Procedure 540 *Purchasing*, and that the Audit and Risk Management Committee review tender submissions, evaluate them against the tender criteria, and bring a recommendation to the Board in spring 2025. She confirmed that Regina Public’s audit fee is comparable with those of other similarly sized school divisions. Board members discussed the matter and agreed that, with a new Deputy Director/CFO to be starting in early 2025, appointing MNP LLP for the next two years would be favourable.

Motion by Tracey McMurchy:

That, subject to submission of an acceptable audit plan including fee schedule to the Audit and Risk Management Committee, MNP LLP be reappointed auditors for the Regina School Division for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 fiscal years.

Motion Carried.  
(Unanimously)

Quarterly Finance Accountability Report

The First Quarter Financial Report, for the 3-month period ended November 30, 2024, had been distributed. Ashley Kuntz, Superintendent of Business Services, advised that, based on quarter one forecasted results, the Statement of Operations shows an operating deficit on a cash basis of \$1.47M, approximately \$763K higher than the \$709K budgeted cash deficit. She noted that this is due to: planned spending down of reserves for the French Language grant and the Arcola Specialized Classroom Pilot Project grant; additional FTEs for enrolment growth; 2024-25 opening costs for Tawâw School not included in the budget; higher projected costs for Sask Distance Learning courses; additional operating grant funding for full-time students at Adult Campus; and lower than budgeted tuition revenue for international students. She pointed out that the September 30 funding recalculation has not yet been received and, therefore, is not

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incorporated in this forecast, and that it is anticipated the costs associated with the enrolment growth will be covered by additional grant funding. She further noted the Division has identified some risk areas where actuals may differ from budget as it is too early in the year to determine specifics: higher utilities rates with higher carbon tax rate riders as of January 1, 2025; Sask Distance Learning costs are challenging to forecast as the Division does not have solid baseline information about registrations; noon supervision revenue trending lower than the budget estimate due to slower than anticipated collection; the pace of capital projects; minor adjustments to supervision costs to support school operations and student safety; and substitute staff costs. Ms. Kuntz and Rick Steciuk, Deputy Director of Student Achievement/School Services, responded to a question relative to Sask Distance Learning.

**Quarterly Transportation Accountability Report** The First Quarter Transportation Report, for the 3-month period ended November 30, 2024, had been distributed. Ashley Kuntz, Superintendent of Business Services, advised that the number of students using transportation services at the end of the first quarter had increased by 49 from the beginning of September 2024. She noted an increase in the number of bus runs since last year and September due to more students requiring transportation and light vehicle services, with 81 school buses (37 single runs and 44 double runs), 76 light vehicles and six Division-owned minivans currently in use. She commented that 97% of students ride the bus for 35 minutes or less and, of that, 74% of students ride for 15 minutes or less. Ms. Kuntz responded to questions relative to the increase in transported students from last year to this year, the average age of buses, student-centred transportation, bus cancellations, and bus accidents.

**SSBA Fall General Assembly Summary** Adam Hicks advised that, on December 1-3, 2025, the Board members and Director Haarmann attended the Saskatchewan School Boards Association Fall General Assembly in Regina. He noted that, based on feedback received from various sources, Board members decided to withdraw the resolution relative to Director qualifications. Of the Board’s three remaining resolutions, although much advocacy occurred, only one passed relative to the SSBA preparing, publishing, and releasing to all members Public Accounts in the same form as School Division Public Accounts. Brandon-Shea Mutala noted the keynote address by Jody Wilson-Raybould. Mr. Hicks also pointed out the considerable number of MLAs in attendance at the banquet.

**Planned Agenda Items** For Board member information, the Chairperson noted the planned agenda items currently set for the January 14, 2025 Board meeting, including Director’s Report, 2025/26 French Immersion Designations, Major Capital Project Funding Application, Annual Prekindergarten Report, and Biannual Human Resources Accountability Report.

**Agenda Requests** Sarah Cummings Truszkowski requested information on Arts Education in Regina Public Schools.

**Information – Subdivision Reports** Lacey Weekes thanked Mrs. Johnson and the Grade 2/3 class at MacNeill School for the invitation to be their Mystery Reader. She advised that École Centennial’s winter festival on December 5th was a resounding success, and she gave a special mention to the students who participated in the drumming and dance performance, and the Inuit musicians being featured. At the December Plainsview SCC meeting, she was reminded of the incredible support that exists within the school community. She noted that many schools have active and engaged SCCs, but not all school communities have the capacity to have an

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SCC. Plainsview, along with many other schools, stands as a beacon of support for those who do not have a School Community Council within the Division and, this, she commented, is the true spirit of Regina Public Schools.

Ted Jaleta advised that he attended the Jack MacKenzie SCC meeting on December 3rd and noted that Director Haarmann was in attendance. He noted that it is a very engaged SCC and the meeting was informative.

Brandon-Shea Mutala advised that he attended the Ruth Pawson SCC meeting on December 3rd and noted that, when asked how the Board can advocate on their behalf, they indicated their need for more technology and noted they will be holding a fundraiser on December 16th and 17th. He plans to attend a turkey lunch at Coronation Park School on December 11th and their SCC meeting on December 12th. He commented that he had a very informative meeting with Director Haarman and Deputy Directors Mellor and Steciuk on December 6th, giving him a clearer picture of the allocation of funds and how decisions are made.

Tracey McMurchy extended appreciation to the Balfour Arts Collective crew for the invitation to their performance High School Musical, noting the talent and dedication of these students. She noted that school communities are supporting each other and their school families, collecting warm clothing, mitts, toques, and scarves and preparing hampers, and collecting games, toys, puzzles and food to deliver to school families. She reminded Board members that Campbell Collegiate is holding its winter concert this Wednesday and Thursday, and she extended appreciation to CAMPA (Campbell Area Music Parents Association). She visited the Robotics class at Campbell, led by teacher Jason Grayston, and learned about drones, 3D printing and coding. Lastly, she noted that she would be attending the Grade 8 feast with Mme Tara Dryburgh’s class at École Massey on December 13th. She wished everyone happy holidays.

Adam Hicks advised that Board members are always open to invitations from schools to attend events.

On behalf of the Board of Education, Tracey McMurchy acknowledged that every student, staff and community member has equal value as prescribed under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, noting that diversity makes us stronger.

Closed Session Motion by Tracey McMurchy:

That we go into closed session to consider matters identified on the meeting agenda for referral to said session.

Motion Carried.

Motion by Sarah Cummings Truszkowski:

That we rise and report.

Motion Carried.

At the conclusion of closed session, the Committee of the Whole reported progress with respect to consideration of *Priorities, Planning and Policy Committee Planning* and *Collective Commitments*. The progress reports were accepted.

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Adjournment      The Chairperson advised that this concluded the business of the meeting and called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Ted Jaleta:

That the meeting adjourn.

Motion Carried.

Time of meeting: 5:30 to 6:59 p.m.

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Chairperson

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Chief Financial Officer