

The Messenger

~ Notable News from the Edmonton Catholic Schools Board of Trustees ~



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Message from the Board Chair Sandra Palazzo

Dear Students, Families, and Staff,

This past year has provided us many opportunities to reflect on the gift of Catholic education. As a Board, we've been so inspired by the power of community in our Division. We've come together as a Catholic family, striving in a spirit of love and service to these communities and to each other, and bearing witness to the joy of God in all his glory as he "Calls us....Each By Name." But now, we say goodbye to another school year and look forth to a new one, a new journey with new opportunities, as we strive yet again for another extraordinary year in Edmonton Catholic Schools.

The past few months, Trustees have been excited to be back in our communities and celebrating with them face-to-face. We were delighted to gather to honour our staff in-person once again at the annual Board of Trustees Retirement Gala. We wish all our retirees, graduates, staff and students embarking on a new journey all the best in their future endeavours. Furthermore, advocating for efficient, effective, and healthy schools is always a top priority for our Board and we were blessed over the past few months to be able to celebrate funding for two new schools, a renovation of one of our Division's high schools, and a site blessing for a future high school.

The Board has decided not to hold a by-election to fill the vacancy in Ward 73 due to the significant costs associated with the City of Edmonton conducting the by-election. Since the beginning of the term, Trustees have shared the duties of representing the schools in Ward 73. The Board is honoured and committed to continue serving the students, staff, and families in our assigned schools for the remainder of this four year term.

We wish you all a safe and blessed summer. We look forward to what next year may bring.



In the Know

Funding Announced for New Edmonton Catholic Schools

The Board of Trustees is proud to share that as part of the Alberta government's Budget 2022 announcement on March 4, 2022, Edmonton Catholic Schools is receiving two projects that have been identified as critical infrastructure needs in our Division's [Capital Plan](#).

Construction Funding for the Castle Downs/Dunluce Catholic High School

With previous design funding released in March 2021, this announcement was to provide capital for the construction portion of the project. The new high school will relieve pressure off Archbishop O'Leary Catholic High School, which currently has a utilization rate of 117%. The anticipated opening date is September 2025 and once open, will have a capacity of 1,300 students.

Full Funding for a New Catholic Elementary/Junior High School in Lewis Farms

Our Division also received full funding for a new elementary/junior high school on the city's west side to help relieve pressure in the growing Lewis Farms area in which Bishop David Motiuk Catholic Elementary/Junior High School currently has a 127% utilization rate. The school, once complete, will have a capacity of 950 students.

"We are extremely thankful for these schools, both of which are critically needed to ease significant enrolment pressures in north and west Edmonton. Our current schools in those areas are overcrowded and students will benefit from vibrant new learning spaces to accommodate growing communities. Edmonton Catholic Schools is pleased the Alberta government has responded to our top two needs as outlined in our capital plan," said Board Chair Sandra Palazzo.

As a Board, we continue to advocate for new schools and to build stronger school communities for all our students, families, and staff. We are committed to ensuring our students have the spaces they need to learn and grow fully in God's light.



Reminder to School Councils: Enrol for ASCA Membership Fees

School Councils are reminded to enrol for the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) membership for the upcoming year by visiting the ASCA website and completing the online "[Request for Membership](#)" without payment form.

Your membership will become effective immediately upon completion of the application. You may do this at any time during the year. Schools are no longer automatically enrolled as was the case in previous years.

ASCA member school councils are entitled to:

- Submit a Proposed Advocacy Resolution for policy consideration;
- Vote on agenda items at General Meetings of the Association;
- Speak to any agenda item at General Meetings of the Association;
- Vote for candidates running for President, Vice President, and Director positions;
- Nominate an eligible parent school council member as a candidate for the Board of Directors;
- Participate on Board committees as invited;
- Participate on the School Council Engagement Task Force;
- Pay reduced fees, if any, for attendance at ASCA events; and
- Examine the books and records of the Association.

Trustees Are on the Move to Our Common Home

Trustees held their last official meeting in the beloved Public Board Room at the downtown Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre in April. In the days that followed, crews disassembled the Dais desk and stained glass windows and relocated them to the new central Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre site in Capilano that will be "Our Common Home" moving forward. Trustees look forward to the opportunity to have our central office staff in one location for school start-up in August as we work together and live out our calling to a faith-filled life of service.

Last Spring, the Board was pleased to share the good news that our Division would be consolidating all of its departments, with the exception of our Facilities Services, under one roof at what is formerly known as the 50th Street Atria at 9405 50 Street.



Trustees in the Community

Celebrating the Modernization of Holy Trinity Catholic High School

On February 24, Trustees were joined by Chief Superintendent Robert Martin and Superintendents Bouma, Fiacco, Lang, Gannon, and Naccarato for a ceremony to celebrate the modernization of Holy Trinity Catholic High School which was completed in 2021.

The Trinity modernization project began in 2018 and allowed for a new Learning Commons, a second full-size gym, and a new music room. The modernization also addressed the mechanical and electrical systems within the school, replaced inefficient light fixtures, upgraded the alarm/systems, and included modifications to provide barrier-free access.

In addition, the school's cosmetology lab was completely renovated and now has a storefront presence, with exterior access for the public. The general office was also relocated to the front of the school and the newly renovated chapel now overhangs the school's main entrance on the second floor and comes complete with tinted glass, which takes the shape of a cross. As part of the modernization, solar panels were installed, and the school has a full solar power array on the roof, as well as some panelling on the side of the building envelope.



Trustees Honour World Catholic Education Day at Divine Mercy

Trustees celebrated World Catholic Education Day on May 26 by joining ECSD Senior Administration at our Division's newest school Divine Mercy Catholic Elementary School, for a celebration and tour.



Divine Mercy is one of the many shining examples in our Division of the gift that is Catholic education and it was evident in the ways the amazing staff have brought this school to life over the past two years. From student artwork throughout the halls and stunning murals adorning the walls, Divine Mercy has served its community in faith throughout some challenging times.

The school's state-of-the-art technology is also providing green energy, helping the students and staff care for God's creation while they live and learn in the school. The electrical design of the building included 534 solar panels and special equipment that not only allows for students to learn about solar power, but also generated between 25-30 MW of power from April to August of last year, saving approximately 129,922 in CO2 emissions, which is the equivalent of 4,000 trees planted.

Since the school opened in September of 2020, this was one of the first times Trustees and leadership had an opportunity to tour the state-of-the-art facility.



Father Michael McCaffery Catholic High School Site Blessing

On April 26, our Division celebrated the site blessing of what will be Edmonton Catholic's newest high school, Father Michael McCaffery Catholic High School. Board Chair Palazzo along with Trustees Mutala and Harris were joined by honoured guests the Minister of Infrastructure Prasad Panda and the Minister of Education Adriana LaGrange for the special occasion. Also in attendance were Bishop David Motiuk, Division Chaplains Fathers Glenn McDonald and Julian Bilyj, Chief Superintendent Robert Martin, Deputy Superintendent and emcee for the morning Tim Cusack, and Superintendents Gannon, Bouma, Lang, and Naccarato.

The Provincial government announced funding for the new school last year, and in January, the Board put out the call for students, families, staff, and the greater community for help with a name.

Father Michael McCaffery was a leader in Edmonton's Catholic community for more than five decades. He served in numerous parishes across the province and was honoured with the Alberta Order of Excellence in 2005. He was a shining example of the values Catholic Education instills in students, an ardent supporter of Catholic education and our Catholic schools, and was known for his generosity in serving the community of Edmonton in initiatives that improved the lives of others.

Construction has now begun on the Heritage Valley site with the doors scheduled to welcome more than 1,200 learners in September 2024.



Trustees Celebrate ECSD Staff at the 2022 Retirement Gala



One of the very last Division events that our staff will attend in their careers with Edmonton Catholic Schools is the Board of Trustees Retirement Gala, and on May 19 Trustees and Senior Administration gathered with this year's retirees for a wonderful celebration of their time with our Division. This evening is a special opportunity for our retirees to take centre stage as we honour their time with our Edmonton Catholic schools and say 'thank you' for living out their vocation serving our students in the name of Jesus. It is our way of acknowledging the gifts that they have given us through their life's work. Congratulations and thank you to this year's retirees!



Board Visits Kisiko Awasis Kiskinhamawin School



In early June, Trustees travelled to Kisiko Awasis Kiskinhamawin School at the Mountain Cree Camp to meet with students and staff at the school. The Board was able to connect with the community and engaged in a beautiful day that honoured the land on which the school is located. Established in 1967 by Chief Robert (Bobtail) Smallboy, Edmonton Catholic Schools has provided operational and educational support for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 school since 2009.

Memorable Moments



Get to Know Your Trustee

TERRY HARRIS | TRUSTEE WARD 71

What is one goal you want to accomplish as Trustee over the next four years?

To govern wisely, supporting our excellent ECSD team, as together we meaningfully advance the full potential of all students, particularly those disadvantaged by circumstance.

What biblical person do you relate to most and why?

Thomas - I tend to want to see proof.

What do you look forward to most in your capacity as Trustee over the next four years?

The broad and sustained elevation of the learning and formation experiences (and outcomes) of all students, particularly those disadvantaged by circumstances.

What is one question you get asked about your job when speaking with students and how do you answer it?

It has now been close to two years since I have had an opportunity to visit our students in class answering their questions. I look forward to visiting in person again.

What is your favourite family tradition?

Our family traditions around Christmas, very common to most.

If you could ask Jesus one question, what would that question be?

So many questions... if allowed only one, it would be: "How best can I serve you and your message?"

What is your favourite way to relax?

Looking for beauty in all things...most affirming and comforting.

When you were younger, what did you think you would grow up to do as a profession?

On the creative side: Artist, Architect, Inventor.

On the practical side: Banker, Business owner, Entrepreneur..

What is something the COVID-19 pandemic has taught you?

The importance of seeing opportunity in crisis "Never waste a crisis."



DEBBIE ENGEL | TRUSTEE WARD 74

What is one goal you want to accomplish as Trustee over the next four years?

All constituents in Ward 74 will know who their Trustee is, and will be comfortable calling and sharing thoughts, and concerns about Catholic education and our schools.

What biblical person do you relate to most and why?

Mary the Mother of God. I have such adoration for her. Her strength and courage as a mother are overwhelming. I pray to her to watch over my grown children and be with them when I can not.

What do you look forward to most in your capacity as Trustee over the next four years?

I look forward to conversations with students, parents, and all stakeholders to help me make good decisions at the Board table. Attending community/school events is a priority for me - I learn so much!

What is one question you get asked about your job when speaking with students and how do you answer it?

How did you get elected? I use the question as an opportunity to engage in age appropriate discussions about different levels of government and democracy. I weave in the history of Catholic schools..

What is your favourite family tradition?

Every Christmas Eve we after Mass we have a special meal and watch Frank Capra's "It's a wonderful life."

If you could ask Jesus one question, what would that question be?

Why do bad things happen to good people?

What is your favourite way to relax?

To take a long walk/cycle in the Edmonton River Valley.

When you were younger, what did you think you would grow up to do as a profession?

I thought I would be a teacher or a lawyer.

What is something the COVID-19 pandemic has taught you?

The importance of human connection, with everyone from family and close friends to retail workers, doctors, etc.



ALENE MUTALA | TRUSTEE WARD 75

What is one goal you want to accomplish as Trustee over the next four years?

I want to continue to build strong relationships with staff, students, parents, and all stakeholders. I want to continue to be a strong advocate for publicly funded Catholic education.

What biblical person do you relate to most and why?

Martha - as sometimes I worry about getting things done and then I don't relax enough. It is important to spend time each day in gratitude with Jesus, reading scripture, and praying.

What do you look forward to most in your capacity as Trustee over the next four years?

I look forward to visiting our schools and participating in masses and celebrations. I also look forward to building stronger relationships with staff, students, and parents.

What is one question you get asked about your job when speaking with students and how do you answer it?

What does a Trustee do? Trustees represent the voice of their entire community. They make decisions on strategic plans, pass the budget and advocate for education and what's best for our students.

What is your favourite family tradition?

My favourite family tradition is on Christmas Eve when we all get together for a delicious dinner and then go to Christmas Eve Mass. After Mass we come home, have family time, and open gifts.

If you could ask Jesus one question, what would that question be?

Why do so many people have to suffer in life? How can we give people more hope?

What is your favourite way to relax?

I like to go for long walks even in winter time. I also like to read books of different genres and by different authors. I like to learn new things and hang out with my family and grandchildren.

When you were younger, what did you think you would grow up to do as a profession?

I always wanted to be a teacher. When I was younger we used to play school. I was able to fulfill my dream after my two children were in school. I taught for 27 years.

What is something the COVID-19 pandemic has taught you?

Don't take anyone or anything for granted. Life is too short, so enjoy every day to the fullest. Spend as much time in person with your family and friends. Appreciate the small things in life.



LAURA THIBERT | TRUSTEE WARD 77

What is one goal you want to accomplish as Trustee over the next four years?

One of many goals I would like the Board to accomplish is to be recognized for community engagement as a top priority.

What biblical person do you relate to most and why?

The person I relate to the most is Mary - as a mother of four, I am a humble servant who answers the call to serve.

What do you look forward to most in your capacity as Trustee over the next four years?

I look forward to building relationships with schools, parent councils, and community members to support and promote publicly funded Catholic education.

What is one question you get asked about your job when speaking with students and how do you answer it?

How much money does the school board have? I always get a "whooooa" when I answer half a billion dollars.

What is your favourite family tradition?

Each year we do a photo Christmas theme scavenger hunt.

If you could ask Jesus one question, what would that question be?

How do I know if I am good enough to get to heaven?

What is your favourite way to relax?

Spending time in the yard planting gardens and creating a little oasis.

When you were younger, what did you think you would grow up to do as a profession?

I thought I would be a professional traveller exploring the world.

What is something the COVID-19 pandemic has taught you?

COVID has taught me that I do not miss the construction and the morning commute to and from places.



CONTACT YOUR TRUSTEE

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WHAT'S AHEAD

Last Day of Classes

June 29

First Day of School

August 31