

The Messenger

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



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Message from the Board Chair Sandra Palazzo

Dear staff, students, and families,

As a Board of Trustees we are a direct witness to all the remarkable work that happens in our schools daily. Our staff and students live out their calling each and every day, loving God and one another fully. And although this year may look a little different, one thing remains: the immeasurable gratitude and love we have for our staff, students, and families. We have watched as you all have worked together to make our schools a safe, welcoming, and loving space to learn and live out God's word. Our deepest gratitude to all!

The Board is committed to making decisions which are responsive to the needs of our schools, families, staff, and students. We continue to advocate for additional funding to support all facets of student learning impacted by the pandemic and are committed to ensuring the safety of all students and staff while mitigating challenges of the new COVID-19 reality. We remain engaged with our school communities by connecting with them in unique ways such as virtual Read In events, school council meetings and most recently at our Parent Evening: Supporting Your Child's Mental Health. The Board also welcomed a new Corporate Secretary, Michelle Collett.

We look forward to connecting with you all this year. Wishing you a safe and blessed 2020-2021 school year!



In the Know

Board Welcomes New Corporate Secretary Michelle Collett

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that Michelle Collett has assumed the role of Corporate Secretary.

Michelle served for many years as Executive Assistant/Financial Officer with the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA). Her role with ACSTA also involved the organization of local and provincial events and maintaining financial records. She brings a wealth of experience in providing administration and governance support to her new position with Edmonton Catholic Schools.

Providing passionate support for Catholic education was a hallmark of the time Michelle spent with ACSTA. She is humbled by the opportunity to continue this important advocacy work through service in her new position with Edmonton Catholic Schools.



Board of Trustees Student Artwork Contest!

Calling all Edmonton Catholic Schools student artists! The Board of Trustees is looking for student artwork to be featured on our greeting cards. Enter your original artwork for a chance to be one of up to ten submission chosen. If chosen, your artwork will not only be used on Division related greeting cards, but also displayed in the Board of Trustees boardroom. For contest details, rules, and to download the entry and consent form, please visit ecsd.net/artcontest. Deadline for submissions is midnight on October 31, 2020.

Celebrating Custodian Appreciation Day and World Teachers' Day!

Each and every one of our staff plays an important role in the beautiful endeavour that is Catholic education, even in the most difficult of times. And as we begin a new school year, we are blessed to be able to recognize both our custodians and teachers in the month of October.

On October 2 we celebrated Custodian Appreciation Day. The important role of our custodial and maintenance staff has become even more evident as we focus on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our schools.

This year, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (the body responsible for World Teachers' Day) chose the theme Teachers: Leading in Crisis, reimagining future. And on October 5 we celebrated all the work our teachers do in and out of the classroom.

We thank all our custodians and teachers for the love and commitment they show each day. Thank you!

Trustees in the Community

Read in Week 2020: Read Around the World



Read in Week 2020 looked a little different this year but the Board of Trustees found a unique way to stay connected with their schools and students! As a founding member, Edmonton Catholic Schools was proud to continue to support the committee's mission to build and enhance both personal and community relationships through literacy and the love of reading. With schools unable to welcome guests into our classrooms, Trustees joined Archbishop Smith, Bishop Motiuk, Chief Superintendent Robert Martin, and Deputy Superintendent Tim Cusack who prepared pre-recorded videos to replace regular in-person Read In events and shared those with their school communities via a secure YouTube playlist. Even though they didn't get the chance to connect in the same way as years previous, Trustees were blessed to be able to share in their love of reading with all our students and look forward to seeing all the faces in person next year!

Ceremonial Gavel Presentation

The Board of Trustees honoured outgoing Board Chair Laura Thibert at the first public meeting of the Board of Trustees on September 23 for her role in the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school year with a ceremonial gavel.

As is customary, new Board Chair Sandra Palazzo presented Trustee Thibert with a ceremonial gavel as a symbol of leadership and service. Thibert served two terms as Chair of the Edmonton Catholic Schools Board of Trustees.

Thank you, Trustee Thibert!



Minister LeGrange Tours St. John XXIII to see Pandemic Preparedness at ECSD

Minister of Education Adriana LaGrange, toured St. John XXIII with Trustees on August 28 to showcase how ECSD's classrooms were safely prepared to welcome our students back in September. This time allowed Trustees to highlight the safety protocols our Division has put in place in our schools and to discuss, one-on-one, with Minister LaGrange the importance of the government's support in keeping our staff, students, and families safe during this pandemic.

Minister LaGrange walked with Trustees throughout St. John XXIII and saw first-hand what back-to-school during a pandemic would look like, with physically-distanced seating among assigned cohorts, floor markers noting where to stand and walk, hand sanitizing stations, and posters detailing proper handwashing techniques displayed throughout the building.



Trustees Join in Blessing Site of Future K-9 Keswick School

On September 14, Trustees joined Infrastructure Minister Panda, Archbishop Smith, Chief Superintendent Robert Martin, and Deputy Superintendent Tim Cusack, along with senior administration and members of the Keswick community as they blessed the site of our Division's newest future Kindergarten to Grade 9 school. The school was the first priority on the 2020-2023 Capital Plan.

In a few short years, the site will be the exact spot where hundreds of lifelong friendships will be made and where children from the Keswick community will begin their journey with Christ. The new school provides us an opportunity to create a community that will be a place filled with God's abundant love and where all are welcomed and celebrated for their unique gifts and talents.



Get to Know Your Trustee

SANDRA PALAZZO | TRUSTEE WARD 72

What joys have you experienced in your capacity as Trustee?

Being back in schools and re-living my joys as an educator by celebrating the gifts and talents of our students, staff, and school community whose contributions make us proud.

What is your most prized possession and why?

My family, as they are close to my heart, define who I am, keep me rooted, give me purpose, and remind me about what is important in life. I cannot imagine my life without them.

When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A teacher so I could make a difference in the lives of my students, and be influential in their journey as life-long learners.

If you could go back and re-live one experience during your tenure as Trustee, which experience would that be?

Meeting students in our schools, and learning that I taught their parents and/or relatives and seeing former students who are now staff and/or parents as they were instrumental in my journey.

If you could have dinner with one Saint, who would it be and why?

St. Teresa of Calcutta, as she was a "mother" to so many, the Patron Saint of World Youth Day, and an educator who was so admired even by her former students that they joined her mission.

What do you think God has "called" you for?

To serve as a reminder to live life according to Leo Buscaglia's quote: "Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God."

What keeps you motivated?

Supporting all students, families, and staff by looking at education through a multi-faceted lens that comes from 30-plus years experience as a teacher, administrator, and Senior Manager at Alberta Education.

What is one thing you would like accomplish as a Trustee over the next year?

Continue to govern with integrity, be a voice of reason, and the kind of role model, steward, and ambassador that positively impacts all our students, families, and staff in pursuing excellence.



LISA TURCHANSKY | TRUSTEE WARD 76

What joys have you experienced in your capacity as Trustee?

Visiting all our schools and sites. Seeing the pride, and joy that every member of our ECSD family brings to the schools everyday. Our staff could hardly wait to tell us how incredible their colleagues and students were.

What is your most prized possession and why?

I have a stuffed monkey from my childhood. He was my everything when I was young, and I still have him to this day. He knows all my secrets, and crushes from days gone by.

When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A teacher! I always thought it was remarkable how one person could command the attention of all those kids. I still remember every single one of my teachers, and when Trustees visited all my old schools, the memories came flooding back. I loved the entire school experience, despite being (at best) an average student. I was an excellent networker, however, and this skill was reported on every report card much to my parents dismay.

If you could go back and re-live one experience during your tenure as Trustee, which experience would that be?

There are two: 1. The blessing mass after becoming a Trustee at the Basilica. It was a surreal moment, and I would love to do it again. 2. I would give anything to have back the day that Joan Carr told the Board she would be off for some minor surgery. We had no idea the journey those words would take us on. I would have taken a few extra moments to absorb the world around me.

If you could have dinner with one Saint, who would it be and why?

St. Teresa of Calcutta. She is the embodiment of a Saint and such a practical example for everyone of every faith. My youngest said she was like Jesus, she loved and cared for everyone she met. There was no judgement, simply kindness and understanding.

What do you think God has "called" you for?

I honestly do not know that yet.

What keeps you motivated?

My family. I love being part of something that has such a profound effect on children and their future. Everything I do as a Trustee is guided by my desire to see everyone succeed to the best of their capabilities. Every child, every day, no exceptions.

What is one thing you would like to accomplish as a Trustee over the next year?

I would like to get through these crazy times with our staff, students and families intact. Everyone has given so much, and I want us all to come out of this whole. My greatest accomplishment would be to have every staff member, every student, every family, and my entire community know that I did everything with them in the forefront of all my decision making.



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WHAT'S AHEAD

Catholic Education Sunday

November 8

Alberta School Council
Webinar: The School Council -
Trustee Relationship

November 18

Holodomor Memorial Day

November 28

Upcoming Meeting Dates

November 25, 2020

December 16, 2020

Due to COVID-19, the Division is limiting visitors to Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission and asking those who wish to view the Board meeting to watch via the livestream on our Division YouTube channel. Individuals wishing to speak at a Public Board meeting will be required to do so virtually and will need to register. To register to speak at a Board meeting, please [click here](#) to complete the required form.