

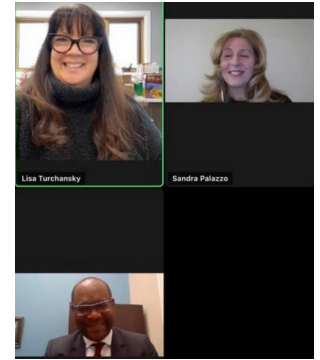
The Messenger

~ 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,

A new year is well underway and we have begun the turn of the calendar with a renewed sense of love, hope, and optimism for 2021. And so far, this year has provided an abundance of promise on so many fronts.

We lovingly welcomed back staff and students to our schools and sites in January. As a Board, we continue our commitment to ensuring the safety of all our staff, students, and families while mitigating the challenges of COVID-19. Our staff never cease to amaze us with how they continue to respond and adapt to an ever changing world and the innovative work they do in our classrooms and beyond. We celebrate their dedication and commitment to our students.

In February, we were proud to announce that ECSD was named one of Alberta's Top 70 Employers for 2021 for the sixth year in a row. And with that, the celebration continued, as we honoured our students' God-given talents by announcing the winners of the Board Artwork Contest.

As we look forward to what the rest of the year has in store, we are hopeful for that which lay ahead.

May you all enjoy a blessed Easter season!



In the Know

ECSD Named One of Alberta's Top 70 Employers for 2021

The Division was proud to announce that Edmonton Catholic Schools was chosen as one of Alberta's Top 70 Employers for 2021 for the sixth year in a row! The yearly competition takes a comprehensive look at various aspects of operations and human resources practices to determine which organizations have the most progressive and forward-thinking programs. Click [here](#) to learn more about why the Division was chosen as one of Alberta's Top 70 Employers for 2021!



Board of Trustees Student Artwork Contest: And the Winners Are....

In the Fall, the Board of Trustees put the call out for ECSD student-artists to submit their original artwork to be featured on our greeting cards. The competition was tough, with over 250 submissions and, after much deliberation, the Board is proud to announce the winners. Congratulations to Isabella MacLean, Olivia Cai, Philip Olumilua, and Isabella Pretty!

Trustees thank all those students who submitted their artwork for sharing their God-given talents with us. Through your creative talents, you have been blessed, and through your creative works, you have blessed us!

The beautiful artwork will also be on display in the Division's public board room at Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre. In addition, you can view the winning artwork [here](#).



...artists of every discipline, are called
to shine beauty especially where darkness
or gray dominates everyday life.

Pope Francis



We Celebrate & Thank all ECSD Staff!

As we recognize Random Acts of Kindness in the month of February, we are reminded to celebrate those that embody and give tangible form to those loving acts of kindness everyday in our schools: our staff. The Board of Trustees is grateful for all the ECSD staff who make our schools a loving, welcoming, and safe space for our students to learn and grow in the light of Jesus each and every day. Our staff continue to amaze us at how they have adapted to the new reality we all face. As Trustees, we are blessed to have such innovative and creative thinkers and we appreciate all you do for our students each and every day! Thank you. ECSD staff!

Trustees in the Community

Trustees Call for Priority Vaccine Access for all School-Based Staff

The Board of Trustees continues to advocate for Edmonton Catholic Schools staff and called on the Province to have all school-based staff be at the top of the list for COVID-19 vaccines in the next phase of vaccination delivery.

The province's current roll-out plan does not include school-based staff and Board Chair Sandra Palazzo, on behalf of our Board of Trustees, invited the Chairs of the other metro school boards in Alberta to write a letter of advocacy to Health Minister Tyler Shandro which emphasizes the need for priority vaccine for all staff that come into contact with students through the course of their work.

"Our staff have shown the utmost resiliency, professionalism, and dedication throughout this pandemic. They do not have the option of working from home and are at risk of COVID-19 exposures. As our Chief Medical Officer of Health has stated repeatedly, as long as community transmission of COVID-19 remains high, we will continue to see confirmed cases of the virus in schools," Palazzo said.

Trustees continue to advocate on behalf of all Edmonton Catholic staff, students, and families 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.

Virtual Parent Evening: Supporting Your Child's Mental Health - Increased Screen Time

Although Trustees have been keeping with the recommendations of Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, we've remained engaged in our school communities. On January 19, Trustees virtually joined the Division's Learning Services team, along with Division Chaplain, Father Glenn MacDonald, and Alberta Health Services experts who discussed student mental health and increased screen time during the pandemic for a virtual parent evening: Supporting Your Child & Youths Mental Health: Increased Screen Time - Now What? If you missed the event or are looking for more resources, please click [here](#).



A Voice for our Staff, Students & Families

Our Board remains committed to our call to advocate for the health and safety of all our staff, students, and families during this time and always. We have pivoted our public engagement activities online and have been providing a variety of support and advocacy virtually, working with our school communities via regular school council meetings and through dialogue with our student voice representatives, and maintaining regular meetings with our individual MLAs, stressing the importance of the government's support in keeping our staff, students, and families safe during this pandemic. We continue to make decisions that are responsive to the needs of our schools, staff, students, and families.

Get to Know Your Trustee

TERRY HARRIS | TRUSTEE WARD 71

What joys have you experienced in your capacity as Trustee?

The joys of learning from and about the amazing students and staff of ECSD; contributing meaningfully to our students' futures, as part of the ECSD team; and celebrating the achievements of students and staff.

What is your most prized possession and why?

I don't really have physical prized possessions, as all are replaceable, save one, my wedding band, the symbol of my love and devotion to my life-long partner.

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

An artist, an engineer, a designer, a builder, and a creator of lasting beauty.

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

It is not a single experience, but a series of related experiences, as our Board members toured all schools, meeting our students and staff, and hearing about the amazing learning environment at ECSD.

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

St. Paul. The arc of his story, the strength of his faith, and the power and beauty of his writing. "...now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinthians 13:13

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

To love irrevocably and unconditionally. To serve faithfully, an instrument of justice, hope, and peace. To do my small part, to build a better community and world.

What keeps you motivated?

Our Mission and our progressive realization of that Mission. The pursuit of excellence: in all things, at all times, in every way.

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

To fulfill my responsibilities in such manner as to advance the goals of the Division, to enhance the student learning experience, and to elevate the level of satisfaction expressed by staff and parents.



CARLA SMILEY | TRUSTEE WARD 73

What joys have you experienced in your capacity as Trustee?

The joys have been many, but the first of these is being part of a shared mission to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to our students. I love that I get to live my personal mission in this context.

What is your most prized possession and why?

Only one? I guess it would be my Bible, the word of life that guides and inspires me daily.

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

I was either going to be a singing Sister (religious) in an orphanage or a paleontologist.

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

This sounds weird, but I would re-live all the difficult experiences of these past three years; the long hours and the hard decisions drew us together and brought out the best in each of us.

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

Mary, Jesus' mother. She would be full of remarkable stories, wisdom, and encouragement. Also, as someone who made many meals, she would appreciate the food.

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

I think my calling is the same as every baptized Christian: to know, love, and serve God that I might be happy in my life here and with Him in eternity, right now that service is as a Trustee.

What keeps you motivated?

A challenging mission and the camaraderie, inspiration, and encouragement of those who share in it.

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

I hope that we are successful in advocating for a new Catholic high school in North Edmonton.



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WHAT'S AHEAD

Pink Shirt Day

February 24

Spring into Art

March 14

Easter

April 4

Upcoming Public Board Meeting Dates

February 24, 2021

March 24, 2021

April 28, 2021

May 26, 2021

June 23, 2021

In keeping with the recommendations of Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Board meetings are being held online and viewable via the 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.