



# Highlights from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

## Meeting highlights, Sept. 22

### 1. School Board Annual Work Plan

Every September the Board reviews the Annual Work plan, which outlines major events and tasks and adjusts accordingly.

The Board received the report as information and provided feedback for revisions.

Plan plan can be found on Page 11 of the [AGENDA](#).

### 2. Transportation Services RFP 021-2020

Lethbridge School Division and Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division are seeking a new transportation services provider to provide school bus and specialized transportation services beginning with the 2021-2022 school year or sooner. RFP 021-2020 was issued on May 28th, 2020 on Alberta Purchasing Connection. The RFP closed on August 27th, 2020 with three proponents responding to the RFP. One proponent subsequently withdrew their proposal.

The two proposals were evaluated by:

- Cheryl Gilmore – Superintendent, Lethbridge School Division
- Ken Sampson – Superintendent, Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division
- Christine Lee – Associate Superintendent, Lethbridge School Division
- Lisa Palmarin – Secretary Treasurer, Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division
- Cheryl Shimbashi – Transportation Coordinator, Lethbridge School Division

The RFP responses were reviewed in two phases. First was Technical and then Pricing. Technical criteria included Qualifications and Transportation Services Experience, Training and Professional Development, Service Delivery, Value Added, References and provision of school buses.

After evaluating both the technical and pricing components of the proposals, Southland Transportation Ltd was chosen as meeting or exceeding the established criteria of the RFP. Southland Transportation was also low bid on the quoted pricing over the 5-year initial term of the proposed contract for transportation services. The pricing has come within current established budgets for both school divisions for transportation services. Total quoted pricing for services for the five (5) year period came in at \$19.2 Million. On average this works out to \$2.1 million per year for Lethbridge School Division and \$1.7 Million per year for Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division.

The review team is please to recommend awarding the contract to Southland Transportation Ltd. and both school divisions are excited to work collaboratively for efficient transportation service delivery in the future. The initial contract will be for five (5) years with an option to extend the agreement for two (2) more subsequent five (5) year terms.

It is recommend that the Board of Trustees authorize entering into a transportation services agreement with Southland Transportation Ltd. for the provision of transportation services commencing with the 2021-2022 school year or sooner if feasible for an initial five (5) year term with renewal options for two (2) subsequent five (5) year terms.

### 3. Bylaw No. 2020-01: A bylaw to establish electoral boundaries for trustee general election and authority for joint election

In accordance with the Education Act, The Board of Trustees must pass a bylaw to establish electoral boundaries for trustee general elections.

### **3. Bylaw No. 2020-01: A bylaw to establish electoral boundaries for trustee general election and authority for joint election**

The required bylaw provides for the nomination and election of trustees by wards or electoral subdivisions, and it determines the boundaries of the wards or provides for the election of trustees by the general vote of the electors. A bylaw must be passed before December 31, 2020 in the year before an election year, and it does not apply to or affect the composition of the school board until the date of the general election.

Under the Education Act, the Minister no longer approves the bylaw; however, school boards must provide a copy of the bylaw to the Minister before December 31, 2020.

A copy of the bylaw is attached. This bylaw affirms the election be for seven (7) trustees to be elected at large within the municipal boundaries of the City of Lethbridge in accordance with section 76 of the Education Act. The bylaw further authorized the Division to hold a joint election with the City of Lethbridge pursuant to Section 2 of the Local Authorities Election Act.

Bylaw No. 2020-01, A bylaw to establish electoral boundaries for trustee general election and authority for joint election, was approved for second reading.

### **4. Committee Reports**

Year-end reports and updates to the terms of reference were delivered for the Board Standing Committees Annual Reports and Terms of Reference Review, Board Audit Committee, Board Budget Committee, Boundary Review Committee, Community Engagement Committee, Division Wellness Committee, Facilities Committee, Indigenous Education Committee, Policy Advisory Committee, Poverty Intervention Committee, Spirit of 51 Committee and the Superintendent Evaluation Committee. The reports begin on Page 17 of the [AGENDA](#).

### **5. October Organizational Meeting**

School Board Annual Organizational Meeting will be held on October 27, 2020. An electronic survey containing the Trustee committee membership will be distributed prior to the meeting for the purpose of Trustees subsequently conveying interest in committee membership for the 2020-2021 school year.

The Board received the report as information.

### **6. Division School Council Meetings**

The following are the dates that Division School Council meetings will be held in the Board Room at the Education Centre starting at 6:30 p.m.:

October 5, 2020

November 2, 2020

December 7, 2020

January 11, 2021

February 2, 2021 – Town Hall Meeting

March 1, 2021

April 12, 2021

May 3, 2021

June 7, 2021

The Board received the report as information.

### **7. Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Local Council Meeting Dates**

An excellent relationship exists between the Board of Trustees and its employee groups. Two examples of this collaborative relationship are the attendance by a member of the ATA Local Executive at all Board meetings and the open invitation that the ATA Local Executive to the Board to have a trustee attend Local Council meetings.

The meetings will take place virtually with the dates for the balance of the year shown below:

October 7, 2020

November 4, 2020

December 2, 2020 – Christmas Dinner (location TBD)

January 6, 2021.

## **7. Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Local Council Meeting Dates**

The meetings will take place virtually with the dates for the balance of the year shown below:

February 3, 2021

March 3, 2021

May 5, 2021

June 2, 2021

The Board received the report as information and that a Trustee be identified to attend the future ATA Local Council meetings.

## **8. Associate Superintendent Reports**

Christine Lee, Associate Superintendent, Business Affairs; Mike Nightingale, Associate Superintendent, Human Resources and Morag Asquith, Associate Superintendent, Instructional Services, delivered their respective reports for the Board. To read the reports in full, see Page 57 of the [AGENDA](#).

## **9. Donations and Support**

Lethbridge School Division is fortunate to be in a community that strongly supports programs and services for students. The Division is appreciative of the difference the support makes to the lives of children. These partnerships and support further the efforts of helping children come to school ready to learn, providing opportunities for engagement, and facilitating student growth and well-being. Listed below and attached are the donations and support received by the Division.

- Ready Set Go donators Daytona Homes, Kinsmen Club of Lethbridge, and Sunrise Rotary. This event supported 800 students from Lethbridge School Division and Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division in receiving the supplies they needed to go back to school with confidence. This is significant considering that our donators had the challenge of fundraising during COVID-19.
- Home Depot donated building materials for G.S. Lakie Middle School students to build hand sanitizer stands. The Board received the summary as information.

## **10. Board Priorities Report**

The Division Office Leadership Team is committed to keeping the Board informed regarding progress in Board priority areas. The priority areas as identified by the Board at their spring retreat are attached. The Education Centre Leadership Team is currently working on the development of strategies to address the priorities. An update on progress will be provided in the form of a report each month starting in the October Board meeting. The Board received the report as information.

The Division Priorities can be found on Page 83 of the [AGENDA](#).

## **11. Acknowledgements of Excellence**

The Board has a long-standing practice of acknowledging the efforts of students and staff whose commitment to excellence has resulted in outstanding achievement. Details of accomplishments of note are provided as information. Congratulations to the following Division staff and students:

Congratulations to Lana Van Genderen, a Winston Churchill High School student, for being selected as a member of the 2020/21 Education Minister's Youth Council. Students are selected based on past leadership contributions as well as leadership capacity moving into the future. The members of the Council provide insight to the Minister regarding youth perspective and ideas for the future. The Division is proud to have one of our students selected to participate on this Council

Congratulations to Rhonda Aos for being selected as a finalist for the Human Resource Leader of the Year Awards in the seventh annual Canadian HR Awards. The Canadian HR Awards celebrates the outstanding achievements of HR teams, leaders, employers and service providers across the nation. The list of finalists is a true snapshot of the best and brightest in HR and honours those who have stepped up and put their people first at a time when it mattered most.

## **11. Acknowledgements of Excellence**

Congratulations to Mark DeBoer for being granted the designation of CSBO (Certified School Business Official). The CSBO designation is granted to those applicants who have met both the practice and education requirements outlined in the School Business Officials regulations and in addition demonstrate a high degree of commitment to their jobs, their education and their ongoing professional development.

## **12. World Teachers' Day**

World Teachers' Day is held annually on October 5th since 1994 to celebrate the essential role of teachers in providing quality education at all levels. As outlined on the UNESCO website, the aim of World Teachers' Day is to ensure that the needs of future generations will continue to be met by teachers. It also commemorates the anniversary of the 1966 signature of the UNESCO/ILO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers.

The strength of Lethbridge School Division has historically been its staff members, who are committed to providing outstanding learning opportunities for all students while ensuring that each young person feels valued and supported.

Division teachers are recognized across the province for their expertise, with a number serving on regional and provincial curriculum and professional learning committees.

The Board received the report as information and take the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the commitment to excellence that teachers, and all staff members, demonstrate for the benefit of students.

## **13. Board Reports**

Reports were delivered for the Facilities Committee, Joint City of Lethbridge/School Boards Committee and the Board Audit Committee. The reports begin on Page 92 of the [AGENDA](#).

## **14. Correspondence - Received**

The Division received a Certificate of Appreciation from the South Region Parents as Teachers organization for the Division's significant contributions to children and families, in partnership with Parents as Teachers, for the past 24 years.

## **15. Public Forum**

The following email submissions were received for the Public Forum portion of the meeting:

Regarding extracurricular activities and the mental health of the students, is there anything you'd recommend I do as a parent and coach to help these teens deal with not having any athletics or other after school activities? Does the school division have any special counselling in place for these athletes? From the kids I have talked to, their mental health is being greatly affected by this. I really believe that may become one of the most important things for them as long as the athletics that they have become so accustomed to isn't in place. As I talk to many of them, I think it would be very beneficial if the school district would be able to communicate with them on what the future may look like, what will need to happen before athletics begin to open up again, and what the school division is doing to reach those goals. It just seems to me like they feel the division is against them right now instead of an ally in this. I am aware of the students planned walk-out and protest this week with regards to extracurricular activities, and I am hoping their voices will be heard and considered.

Thank you for your time,

- **Shawn Heggie**

We would like to add our voice and vote to allow the kids to play extracurricular activities, including sports. There has got to be a way to do this safely. We've got to learn to live with this pandemic and address the many other side effects that it's causing.

Thanks,

- **Jim and Bekah Olsen**

## 15. Public Forum

The following email submissions were received for the Public Forum portion of the meeting:

I have a child attending Gilbert Paterson and one at LCI. I'm very concerned about the mental well-being of both of them if Lethbridge School district 51 doesn't open up their gyms.

Sports and after school activities are pretty much a way of life for them as it was mine and my husband's.

This has been taken from them because the district won't open the gyms like other districts in Alberta. Westwinds school division are up and running their programs.

My husband coaches Girl's basketball at LCI and we both watched helplessly as their season ended abruptly last March. I've seen a decline in my kid's grades, as well as their health.

\* WHY won't the district open up gyms?

\* WHY can't club teams rent the gyms on the weekends? There is no proof that this virus stays on hard surfaces over the weekend.

\* WILL the district be hiring more counsellors to help these kids deal with all this fallout?

The kids news outlets! Especially during this time. Physical activity is so important to mental and physical health and is proven to help with grades.

Thank you for reading my email!

- **Joni Heggie**

I think we can all agree, these past 6 months have sucked, I think one of the reasons COVID has been so challenging is that we have all lost something we love. Hanging out with friends, going to concerts, movies, theatre. Regardless of our interests, COVID has prevented us from doing the things we enjoy in life. For me one of those things is sports, I am a washed up 40 year old has been, but I still miss getting together with my weekly crew for pickup basketball, but I know that one day I will be able to play again.

For our kids though, playing high school sports is such a limited opportunity and it saddens me that COVID has potentially taken this away from us as parents and our kids. It has been challenging for our kids to deal with this shift in their lives and we have all seen articles on what life with COVID has done to our collective mental health. As an educator I am also sure you are aware of the numerous peer reviewed studies that have championed physical activity as a way to aid our mental health.

I know we are all scared, I know there is risk. I have a crown on my front tooth because it was knocked out in the Winston Churchill gym in my grade 12 year. I have seen teammates break bones, we have all been injured while playing. Yet we accept these risks because our love of competing is worth these risks.

As I write this we see that Lethbridge has 4 active COVID cases, we know that surrounding communities are all in the single digits as well. As parents we know that the same physical risks our kids face from playing, crossover to the risk of getting COVID. To me these risks are worth it for an opportunity for our kids to play, an opportunity they will never get again.

My hope is that the division will consider that we are aware of the risks as parents and are willing to do what we can to ensure our kids can play, even if this means I will watch a live stream of the event from my house.

I know this has been a long winded email ( I am aware of my lack of brevity) but I want to end on this note.

There is a growing concern amongst parents that extra-curricular activities are being used as a political football to advance your push back to our provincial government. As educators you have chosen a career that puts the children first, it is my sincere hope that you are not using sports, arts, and drama as a means of playing politics. Our kids deserve more than to be used as pawns in these difficult times.

Thanks for your consideration,

- **Jeff Hill**

## 15. Public Forum

The following email submissions were received for the Public Forum portion of the meeting:

Why does the school district have more stringent COVID/pandemic policy than Alberta Health Services?

Who's the expert that came up with this policy?

Thanks

- **Tyler Tanner**

My question is about the athletics programs.

AHS, The Government of Alberta, Alberta Education and ASAA have ALL deemed it safe to participate in athletics as long as protocols are followed. Why is the school division not allowing it?

The mental health of these athletes is being completely disregarded.

- **Iona Price**

First of all thank you for putting the safety of our kids first and foremost, I appreciate your efforts and diligence during this trying time of COVID-19.

The question I would like to ask is:

With AHS and ASAA regulations allowing for the return of extracurricular activities in Alberta schools what thresholds or events specifically would you need to see for our school district following their lead and allow the return of extracurricular activities?

An open ended pandemic plan gives students and parents anxiety wondering what needs to happen to return to some form of normality especially when other neighbouring school districts (for example Medicine Hat) have made announcements they will be allowing extracurricular activities.

Thanks

- **Ryan Tanner**

Good afternoon,

I am a mother of a five-year-old child attending school in Lethbridge School Division. My mother was born in India and my father was born in Tanzania and I identify as South-Asian.

I have been concerned over the last year by the presence of the School Resource Officers in Lethbridge schools. I had believed that the program was suspended due to budget cuts, but I became aware yesterday that the program started again.

I am asking for Lethbridge School Division to suspend the SRO program pending the completion of a community consultation and the completion and presentation of findings.

1) The Lethbridge Police Service has been under significant national and international scrutiny and criticism over multiple high-profile incidents over the last year. These include:

a. The May 4, 2020 handling of an incident involving a 19-year-old woman in a storm trooper costume with a toy blaster currently under ASIRT investigation ;

b. The February 9, 2020 alleged assault of an individual in custody by a Lethbridge Police Service Officer resulting in criminal charges ;

c. The January 5, 2019 incident involving a Lethbridge Police Service officer running over a deer repeatedly using his service vehicle ;

d. Ongoing problems at Lethbridge Police Service according to a December 2018 survey involving bullying and intimidation from leadership ;

e. The 2017 surveillance of MLA Shannon Phillips currently under ASIRT investigation;

f. And ongoing issues with individual Lethbridge Police Service members and their use of social media to spread hate and intolerance.

The issues in this short list involve concerns about workplace bullying, violence to animals, possibly criminal actions taken against a sitting MLA, transphobia, and racism.

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## 15. Public Forum

The following email submissions were received for the Public Forum portion of the meeting:

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Prior to the placement of Lethbridge Police Officers in Lethbridge schools, it seems appropriate for the two pending ASIRT investigations to finish, and for Lethbridge Police Service to advise the public as to what they have done to address these significant concerns and rebuild public trust.

2) School Resource Programs have been a source of significant criticism in recent years. It is difficult to find any information about what community consultation, if any, occurred before these programs were placed in Lethbridge schools, or about why certain schools are selected for School Resource Officers.

Other Canadian communities have either removed these programs or suspended them pending reviews and community consultation.

a. Edmonton Public School Division replaced their SRO program for 2020-2021, choosing to not place officers in schools until a formal review of the SRO program is conducted.

b. Peel School Division has suspended their SRO program and went through a community consultation process this summer.

c. Toronto District School Board, the largest school board in Canada, removed their SRO program in 2017.

3) There is increasing criticism regarding the continued presence of School Resource Officers as being inconsistent with important goals of promoting equality, safety and comfort for students, particularly Black, Brown and Indigenous students and students who are undocumented.

Farzeen Ather, a former student trustee from Edmonton School Division, said she has witnessed many incidents at her school where racialized students were “aggravated and marginalized by discriminatory stereotypes upheld by the SRO program.”

“This may be uncomfortable to hear, but white supremacy, anti-Blackness and settler colonialism shape our school systems. Everything from the content of curriculum to systems for disciplining students to the distribution of resources and much more result in a system that seeks to marginalize racialized youth and ultimately disproportionately push them out of schools and into systems of incarceration,” Ather said.

“In impoverished communities of colour, similar to the neighbourhoods surrounding the high school that I went to, schools are often the first interaction Black and Brown students have with the criminal justice system. Police intervention at such an impressionable age can often escalate small incidents to violent criminal situations. We want support systems, not fear of incarceration.”

In the absence of any Lethbridge community consultation it is difficult to know what the impact of the School Resource Officer program has been on the community.

4) School Resource Officer programs are expensive and should be regularly reviewed to determine that they are an effective use of resources.

As is the case with any program there should be regular review to determine if that program is meeting the needs of the community. I cannot find any information about what this program costs or how it is reviewed. I am concerned with the complete lack of transparency.

I thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns to you.

- **Miranda P. Hlady**



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Meeting highlights from September 22