

MINUTES OF THE **SPECIAL MEETING** OF THE MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF TRUSTEES HELD IN THE **BOARD ROOM** IN THE **SCHOOL DIVISION ADMINISTRATION OFFICE** ON **TUESDAY JANUARY 6, 2026** AT 2:00 P.M.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Catherine Wilson, Pat Grisonich, Gwendoline Dirk (virtual), Megan Hilgendorf, Quinn Skelton

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Tracy Hensel, Superintendent of Schools
Leanne Dulle, Secretary Treasurer
Cody Edwards, Associate Superintendent: Learning and Student Supports
Jason Peters, Associate Superintendent: Human Resources
Carla Carrier, Executive Director of Learning

CHAIR: Catherine Wilson

RECORDING SECRETARY: Hope Schick

I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. **TREATY 7 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy and the people of Treaty 7 Region in Southern Alberta. We honour and acknowledge the homeland of the Métis people. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us.

Video Land Acknowledgement Video - Crestwood School.

III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

34. M. Hilgendorf

CARRIED

IV. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Presentation and adoption of the Minutes of the Community Engagement Sessions held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025 and Thursday, December 4, 2025.

THAT the minutes from **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**, and **Thursday, December 4, 2025** be approved as presented.

35. P. Grisonich

CARRIED

V. ITEMS FOR ACTION

Webster Niblock/Southview School: Long-Term Facilities and Sustainability Planning

The Board and Executive Team engaged in a value scoping exercise in January 2025 to inform the development of the 3-year capital plan that was submitted to Alberta Education in April 2025. The value scoping process included an in-depth analysis of schools by geographical sector of the city including enrollment trends, building utilization and building conditions. This process highlighted the number of small and underutilized schools in certain sectors of the city.

Having multiple schools with low student enrollment results in resources being stretched across several buildings, reducing efficiency and hindering efforts to create modern, 21st-century learning environments for all students and staff

On November 4, 2025, the Board agreed to explore the closure of Southview School and Webster Niblock School at the end of the 2025-2026 school year, in accordance with the process outlined in Policy 724.

The closure exploration process occurred between November 5th to December 4th, 2025, which included staff engagement conversations, stakeholder online survey, Webster Niblock and Southview School Council meetings, followed by Webster Niblock and Southview School Community Engagement Sessions. The feedback gathered through these engagements informed the planning and recommendations shared in the presentation. Key feedback themes included relationships, belonging and community, school capacity constraints, class size concerns, transportation, transition and change, and staffing, supports, and services.

Population and Enrollment Trends

Population trends and projections indicate a continued decline in the number of school-aged children in the city. This trend is particularly evident in kindergarten enrollment, where a decrease in births over the past decade has directly contributed to smaller kindergarten enrollment numbers. As a result, annual kindergarten enrollment is now significantly lower than the number of students graduating from grade 12.

Over the past decade the number of MHPSD schools with fewer than 300 students has increased from five to ten, which is atypical when compared to other urban and metro divisions in Alberta. Additionally, no two MHPSD schools are located more than 10 kilometers apart.

Other Presentation Highlights:

- Student Programming Opportunities
- Student Supports
- School of Choice
- Staffing Enhancements
- Staffing Levels
- Financial Considerations (Operating and Capital)
- Transition Planning
- Proposed Boundary Reconfiguration
- Community Engagement Theme Analysis

Southview School Recommendation

The recommendation follows the process outlined in Section 62 of the Education Act and Medicine Hat Public School Division Administrative Procedures 724. All feedback was reviewed and considered in the decision-making process.

It is recommended that the Board approve the closure of Southview School, at the completion of the 2025-2026 school year, and direct administration to develop and implement a transition plan.

Webster Niblock School Recommendation

The recommendation follows the process outlined in Section 62 of the Education Act and Medicine Hat Public School Division Administrative Procedures 724. All feedback was reviewed and considered in the decision-making process.

It is recommended that the Board approve the closure of Webster Niblock School, at the completion of the 2025-2026 school year, and direct administration to develop and implement a transition plan.

THAT the Board approve the closure of Southview School, at the completion of the 2025-2026 school year, and direct administration to develop and implement a transition plan.

36. Q. Skelton

ALL IN FAVOUR

CARRIED

THAT the Board approve the closure of Webster Niblock School, at the completion of the 2025-2026 school year, and direct administration to develop and implement a transition plan.

37. P. Grisonich

ALL IN FAVOUR

CARRIED

VI.

ADJOURNMENT

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

38. M. Hilgendorf

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m.

CHAIR

SECRETARY TREASURER