

the torch



Ward 1

Colleen Carswell
(chair)



Ward 3

Brianne Goertzen
(vice-chair)



Ward 1

Sheri Irwin



Ward 2

Rod Giesbrecht



Ward 2

Sheri Hanson



Ward 3

Keith Morrison



Ward 4

Brenda Bage



Ward 4

Susan Olynik



Ward 5

Shannon Hiebert

Meet your new board of trustees

We look forward to the next four years as we work together for one cause—the best education possible for our children. We wish you a safe, happy, and healthy 2023!

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Meet your new board of trustees continued...

WARD 1

Colleen Carswell was born, raised, and educated in Transcona along with her two children. She is a familiar face in Transcona and has been a full-time, dedicated trustee who continues to make a positive impact at the board table and for students in RETSD. Her colleagues elected her chair of the board for 2022–23. In addition to the daily work as board chair, she has become a mentor to trustees and boards across the province. This year, she will also serve on the River East Transcona Teachers' Association liaison committee.

Sheri Irwin has worked in Transcona for 25 years in a variety of management positions. This experience has provided her with the ability to critically think from different viewpoints; an important skill to bring to the board of trustees. She is the mother of two daughters who were born and raised in RETSD. Sheri will serve on the finance, facilities, and transportation committee and the program, policy review, and personnel committee.

WARD 2

Rod Giesbrecht just passed his 20th year as an RETSD trustee. He's grateful to have the opportunity to contribute to the community he was raised in—he attended Sherwood School, Morse Place School, and Kildonan-East Collegiate. He is employed at Tabor Baptist Church and Concordia Hospital. This year, he

will serve as chair of the finance, facilities, and transportation committee and the negotiations committee.

Sheri Hanson is a dedicated advocate for children's education and has a passion for helping others. She is currently a member of the finance, facilities, and transportation committee and the River East Transcona Teachers' Association liaison committee. Sheri looks forward to bringing new ideas and perspectives to the role and positively impacting the field of education.

WARD 3

Brianne Goertzen was first elected trustee in a 2016 byelection. She is a mother, Ward 3 resident, and public education advocate who is dedicated to bringing positive change to the board table and in the community. She serves on several boards in the community and sees public service as a rewarding endeavour. This year, she will serve as vice-chair of the board, and as a member of the negotiations committee.

Keith Morrison is very familiar with RETSD, having previously worked as a teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent in the division. This is his second term as a trustee. Keith will serve as chair of the program, policy review, and personnel committee for 2022–23.

WARD 4

Susan Olynik believes she has brought new ideas to the board in the last four years, as a parent, business executive, and active community member. For the past two years, she served as chair of the program, policy review, and personnel committee. This year, she will serve on the negotiations committee, and the finance, facilities, and transportation committee. Susan has lived in East and North Kildonan all her life.

Brenda Bage is an educational assistant working with deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Bringing a perspective from the classroom, as well as with inclusion support, is an asset to the board. Her two children attend RETSD schools and she has been actively involved with their early years education and community since nursery school. Brenda will serve on the program, policy review, and personnel committee.

WARD 5

Shannon Hiebert was born and raised in Transcona and has raised her own family in North Kildonan and now East St. Paul. As a parent to three RETSD students, she has been a volunteer in schools for the past 16 years. She manages a not-for-profit association and is passionate about connecting communities. Shannon will serve as vice-chair of the program, policy review, and personnel committee and as a member of the River East Transcona Teachers' Association liaison committee.

What does the board of trustees do?

Our division is governed by a board of nine trustees who are accountable to the public for the safety, quality, and cost of education via human resource practices, policies, and budgetary decisions. Trustees are elected every four years during municipal elections; the most recent held on October 26, 2022.

The board meets the first and third Tuesday of each month.

All decisions are made by the board of trustees as a group. The choices they make include setting policy, establishing priorities, and setting

the division budget. Trustees are motivated by their desire to serve their community.

The board of trustees has three standing committees, a liaison committee, and other committees that meet regularly to take a more in-depth look and deliberate on their area of responsibility. Committee members and chairs are elected at the board's inaugural meeting each year.

One of the committees is the finance, facilities, and transportation committee. Members work with the secretary-treasurer and other

committees to look at annual statements, confirm payments, and deal with matters regarding the use of school facilities and transportation of pupils.

Ultimately, the board of trustees is a group of individuals with strong connections to the River East Transcona community who want to represent your voice when governing the division.

Stay tuned to learn more about our committees of the board in future issues of the Torch.

Farewell and thank you from the board of trustees



Jerry Sodomlak



John Toews

Two trustees in the RETSD retired prior to the election—Jerry Sodomlak and John Toews. Jerry served as a trustee for eight years and John served for 16 years. Our thanks to you both for your many years of service and your outstanding contribution to our division.

We also thank all those who put their names forward for election including new and returning candidates. Your efforts are acknowledged and appreciated.

The Board would like to share some exciting program news with you in RETSD. Creating community success with RETLife

We are excited to announce RETSD is one of the few divisions to bring back recreation and leisure programming starting this winter. RETLife is creating community success by connecting communities to our schools through dynamic opportunities centred around lifelong learning.

We are introducing new programs with a focus on cultural diversity like Intro to Bhangra and Celebrating Filipino Food with chef Jeremy Senaris. Other exciting new courses include

Introduction to Drone Flying and Modern Board Games. Classic RETLife courses like Kids Can Cook and Zumba and professional development offerings like first aid and food handler’s certification are also available.

We recognize the community is eager to meet in person and there is a need to emphasize mental and psychological wellness. Programs such as Gentle Movement and Meditation and Yoga respond to those needs. Investing in community

collaboration was key to expanding our offerings for the RETLife relaunch. Community

partnerships mean new programming like the Transcona Bioreserve Walking Tour with FortWhyte Alive.

What are you waiting for? Register for RETLife leisure programs today at www.retlife.ca; spots are limited!



International Education Program needs more homestay families

Since 1998, RETSD has promoted diversity and cross-cultural interactions by welcoming hundreds of international students from all over the world through our International Education Program.

Motivated and successful international students come to RETSD for a variety of reasons. Some dream of cultural and language immersion, while others hope to graduate with a Manitoba high school diploma and continue to a post-secondary institution in the province.

To make these students’ dreams a reality, they need warm and welcoming families to stay with. Hosting an international student is exciting and rewarding. You receive support, monthly compensation, and an international addition to your family. We have welcomed students from many countries, including Germany, Colombia, Thailand, Australia, Finland, Japan, and many more.

We believe the homestay experience with a Canadian family provides our international

students with an authentic, real-life situation where they can truly learn the customs, live the culture, and learn English.

If you live within the school division boundaries, have a spare room and a desire to make an international student’s dreams come true, hosting a student might be for you. We’re always accepting applications! Learn more at www.intl.retsd.mb.ca.



Congratulations on behalf of the board!



Trustee Rod Giesbrecht receives the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal

On November 28, trustee **Rod Giesbrecht** was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, which celebrates community mindedness, service, and reconciliation. Congratulations, Rod, for being recognized with this prestigious award for your tremendous community service throughout the years.



Our very own **Jason Drysdale**, assistant superintendent of schools, has been awarded the Excellence in Literacy Leadership Award from the Reading Recovery Council of North America for contributing to our community in a meaningful and long-lasting way by supporting Reading Recovery. He exemplifies

what is possible in a literacy learner and advocates locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally for Reading Recovery as an important, but not exclusive, component of any school's comprehensive literacy plan.



Bev Ilchena is recognized by the Physical and Health Educators of Manitoba

Each year, the Physical and Health Educators of Manitoba present several awards to recognize outstanding contributions to physical and health education in the province of Manitoba. This year, they acknowledged **Bev Ilchena**, RETSD's physical education/health consultant K-12, for her contributions to the field of physical education, including her work on curriculum implementation, planning, instruction, and assessment for the province.



Award recipient Cody McDonald

We are so proud of **Cody McDonald** who has received a Manitoba Indigenous Youth Achievement Award. Cody is a 17-year-old Red River Métis student earning top grades while attending Murdoch MacKay Collegiate. He has embraced many cultural practices, such as beading and learning Michif, Inuktitut, and Cree. He opened an online store selling products featuring Indigenous languages. The award celebrates outstanding Indigenous youth and recognizes their excellence, dedication, leadership, and accomplishments in a variety of fields from Academics to Traditional Employment to Entrepreneurship. Congratulations, Cody!

Your River East Transcona School Division Trustees

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The board of trustees meets the first and third Tuesday of each month. You are welcome to attend, either in person or online. For more information about the board of trustees, visit: www.retsd.mb.ca > Your RETSD > Board of Trustees