

December 2018

the torch



Ward 1

Colleen Carswell
(chair)



Ward 1

Jerry Sodomlak
(vice-chair)



Ward 2

Rod Giesbrecht



Ward 2

John Toews



Ward 3

Brianne Goertzen



Ward 3

Keith Morrison



Ward 4

Peter Kotyk



Ward 4

Susan Olynik



Ward 5

Michael West

Meet your new board of trustees

We are pleased to welcome two new trustees—Keith Morrison and Susan Olynik—to represent River East Transcona for the next four years, and to welcome seven incumbent trustees back to their positions.

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Meet your new board of trustees continued...

WARD 1

Colleen Carswell is a familiar face in Transcona, having been a school trustee for 26 years, both for the former Transcona-Springfield School Division and the current RETSD—she's the longest-serving member on the current board. Her colleagues elected her chair of the board for 2018–19. This year, she will also serve on the liaison committee for the River East Transcona Teachers' Association.

Jerry Sodomlak is serving his second term as an RETSD trustee. He worked for 32 years as a teacher and principal, and he and his children all attended Transcona schools. His colleagues elected him vice-chair of the board for 2018–19. This year, he will also serve on the program, policy review and personnel committee, and the special committee for the Personal Professional Development Fund.

WARD 2

Rod Giesbrecht is in his 17th 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. His children also attended RETSD schools. This year, he will also serve as chair of the negotiations committee.

John Toews is serving his fourth term as an RETSD trustee. He joined the board so he could be a voice for children and families in his community. John's two sons both attended RETSD schools and his wife taught in the division. This year, he will also serve on the finance, facilities and transportation committee, and the negotiations committee.

WARD 3

Brianne Goertzen was first elected trustee in a 2016 byelection. She is a dedicated volunteer, serving on several boards, and sees community service as a rewarding

endeavour. This year, she will also serve on the liaison committee for the River East Transcona Teachers' Association, and as chair of the finance, facilities and transportation committee.

Keith Morrison is very familiar with RETSD, having previously worked as a teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent in the division. This year, he will also serve on the finance, facilities and transportation committee, the program, policy review and personnel committee, and the liaison committee for the River East Transcona Teachers' Association.

WARD 4

Peter Kotyk is in his 24th year as an RETSD trustee. Over the years, he has served on every standing committee and has been elected both chair and vice-chair. This year, he will also serve on the special committee for the Personal Professional Development Fund, and as chair of the program, policy review and personnel committee.

Susan Olynik believes she brings a fresh perspective to the board of trustees as a parent, business executive, and active community member. She has lived in East and North Kildonan all her life. This year, she will also serve on the finance, facilities and transportation committee, and the negotiations committee.

WARD 5

Michael West is serving his second term as an RETSD trustee—a job he's proud to have assumed. He has taught in Louis Riel School Division and at the University of Winnipeg Collegiate, and his three children attend RETSD schools. This year, he will also serve on the program, policy review and personnel committee.

Regular meetings of the board of trustees take place on the first and third Tuesday of the month at the Administration Offices, 589 Roch St. Meetings get underway at 6:30 p.m. and are open to the public. To learn more about the RETSD board of trustees, visit www.retsd.mb.ca.

What do trustees do?

Winnipeg and other Manitoba communities held their civic elections on October 24, and voters cast their ballots for school trustees, as well as the mayor and city councillors.

Six school trustee candidates were elected, and three were acclaimed, to represent their communities' interests on the River East Transcona School Division board of trustees.

RETSD is the second-largest school division in the province with about 16,500 students and 3,000 employees, and the board

of trustees is accountable to the public for the safety, quality, and cost of education through human resource practices, policies, and budgetary decisions.

School boards give local communities a say in one of their most important assets—their children's futures. They are an important grassroots link for parents and the community, addressing both the educational and financial needs of a division, and providing children with the skills necessary to thrive after graduation.

The role of the RETSD school board is multi-faceted. Important decisions must be made regarding hiring, negotiating contracts, implementing policies, establishing priorities, addressing enquiries from parents and the community, and setting the divisional budget of approximately \$190 million each year.

School trustees differ from that of city councillors, MLAs, or MPs in that trustees have no authority to act on their own—all decisions are made by the board of trustees as a whole. The power of individual trustees lies in their voice at the

table and their vote.

They do not collect a salary—instead, they are given an indemnity of roughly \$20,000–25,000 per year per trustee. They receive no pension or other benefits. They are motivated by their desire to serve their community.

To learn more about the trustees who represent your interests, visit www.retsd.mb.ca and click on the Board of Trustees link, or continue to read the RETSD board of trustees' newsletter to the community, *The Torch*.



Transportation in RETSD

Every school day, the RETSD transportation department buses over 3,900 students to and from school safely. This is an enormous undertaking that requires thorough planning and on-the-fly problem-solving by our dedicated staff.

Many are unaware that, according to provincial guidelines, the division is not obligated to transport any students in the urban area, except for those with special needs. However, this is a service the RETSD board of

trustees chooses to offer for those who meet established criteria.

For us to receive the transportation grant from the province, the students we transport must be in Grades K–6 and live further than 1.6 km from their designated school. The transportation grant we receive only covers approximately 38 per cent of the cost of transportation—the rest is paid for by taxpayers of the division.

To make use of any empty seats, we offer fee-for-service

transportation. This is not guaranteed year to year and is only offered on buses that have empty seats. Not all buses have empty seats, so not all parents can access fee-for-service busing.

We do not purchase or make use of additional buses for this service, as it would be too costly to parents and taxpayers.

It's possible that parents may access fee-for-service busing for one year and be declined the next, because the bus they used previously had an empty seat that is now full. RETSD is experiencing growth in many areas of its community, leading to more buses being filled, and less or no seats available for fee-for-service transportation.

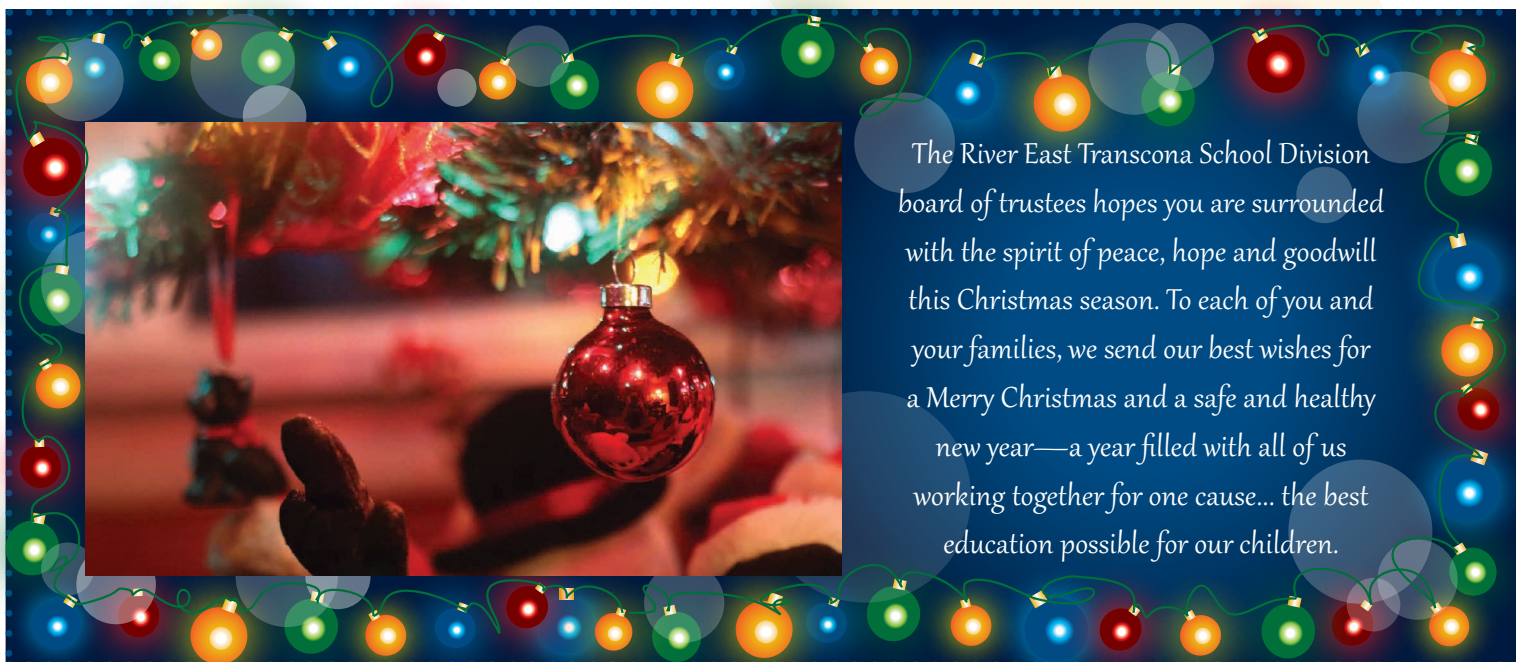
Every year our transportation department designs the routes based on eligible students, so the routes can change from year to year. As well, the transportation department does not fill buses to capacity, and holds a small

percentage of seats on a bus for eligible students who may move into the area during the school year.

This is fiscally responsible, as it saves money by alleviating the need to purchase buses in the middle of a budget year for eligible students. The board would prefer to use the division's money wisely by putting as much as possible into the classroom to educate students.

The RETSD board of trustees does their very best to make sure students receive the best education possible, and to accommodate families requiring transportation. Getting children to and from school is a shared responsibility between parents and the division.

For more information, see Transportation—A Guide for Parents & Students at: www.retsd.mb.ca/Lists/Publications/trans_guide16.pdf



The River East Transcona School Division board of trustees hopes you are surrounded with the spirit of peace, hope and goodwill this Christmas season. To each of you and your families, we send our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a safe and healthy new year—a year filled with all of us working together for one cause... the best education possible for our children.



Two RETSD trustees retire

River East Transcona has two trustees who retired from their positions before the election, and whom we'd like to thank for their many years of service—Brian Olynik and Eva Prysizney.

Mr. Olynik served as a trustee in River East School Division and RETSD for 21 years. Ms. Prysizney served as a trustee in RETSD for 12 years.

Their commitment to the division, and hard work on behalf of the board of trustees and their communities, was greatly appreciated.

Our sincere thanks and best wishes to both Brian and Eva.



If you have a concern...

Your child's school will always try to make the learning experience a positive, safe, and happy one for its students. However, if you have a concern or an issue, please don't hesitate to let the school know. Open communication

between home and school is very important.

The RETSD board of trustees stresses the steps shown below must be followed if concerns are to be properly addressed. The

trustees' role is to hear all sides of the concern before making a decision on any appeal, to be the link between parents and the division, and to help with divisional processes and policies (such as this concern protocol). They realize there is no greater advocate for your child than you, the parent.

Here are the steps to follow if you have a concern:

1. Talk to the person most directly involved—your child's teacher. If you must leave a message, please be sure to provide a day and evening phone number where you can be reached.
2. If talking to the teacher doesn't resolve the issue, talk to the principal.

(The majority of parental concerns are resolved at either of the first two steps)

3. If you've talked to the principal and over a period of time, and attempts at resolution, the issue has still not been resolved, call the superintendents department.
4. If your concern is not resolved by the superintendents' department, you can make an appeal in writing to the board of trustees.
5. The board of trustees will hear your appeal either in person or in writing, whichever you prefer.

For more information, visit:
www.retsd.mb.ca > Your RETSD > Policies > Policy KE—Concern Protocol; Policy KE-R—Concerns and Complaints Procedures

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For more information about the board of trustees, visit: www.retsd.mb.ca/BoardofTrustees