

May 2023

# the torch



## Great Progress on Westview School Restoration

We're making progress on the restoration of Westview School after a fire in March 2022 nearly destroyed the entire building. Following the fire, the cleanup and removal of debris was extensive. All that remained was a portion of the original wood structure deemed unaffected by the fire, apart from exposure to smoke.

"We have an exciting update," says trustee Rod Giesbrecht, chair of the finance, facilities, and transportation standing committee. "The affected roof has finally been completed and the focus is now on

the restoration of the building. The school is projected to open toward the end of 2023."

During this time, the Board of Trustees continues to advocate with the insurance companies and others on behalf of Westview, so the work can proceed as quickly as possible. Two-thirds of the drywall on the ceiling is installed and brand-new boilers have already been put in place. Next is the rough-in of mechanical and electrical components throughout the building, followed by installation finishes, walls, ceilings, and

flooring. Once this is complete, the contractors will begin painting and installing acoustic ceilings and lighting.

This work is being led by Winnipeg Building and Decorating, the general contractor. The RETSD maintenance department will continue to monitor the progress through the restoration work, placing the interests of Westview at the forefront.

When everything is complete, the building will have many excellent upgrades, including new structural

framing from floor to roof to meet National Building Code requirements, an upgraded building envelope (i.e., windows, roof, and wall insulation), an upgraded HVAC system (i.e., air conditioning and energy-efficient condensing boilers), upgraded electrical and wiring, and all new finishes and furniture. RETSD wants to ensure the space is safe for the return of students and staff.

"Once the school is ready to open, the board will invite the entire Westview community into the building to celebrate not only its restoration, but the resilience of our students and families," adds trustee Colleen Carswell, board chair. "We all want this community school back. We are grateful to the students, staff, parents, and administration of Westview and Radisson schools, and the RETSD maintenance department for all that has been done to navigate this difficult time."



# Jordan's Principle Co-ordinator Welcomed to RETSD



Recently, RETSD welcomed Tracie Leost, an award-winning young Red River Métis leader, activist, and athlete from St. Laurent (in Treaty 1 territory), into the newly created role of Jordan's Principle co-ordinator, a position that is fully funded by the Southern Chiefs' Organization.

Leost will bring Indigenous knowledge and experience to her work with educators and families to access the educational, health, and social programs and services to which First Nations families are entitled.

"We are honoured to partner with the Southern Chiefs' Organization," says RETSD superintendent/CEO Sandra Herbst. "Tracie is such an

accomplished and inspirational person and I know that she will not only assist our First Nations families but help our school division to better walk in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation."

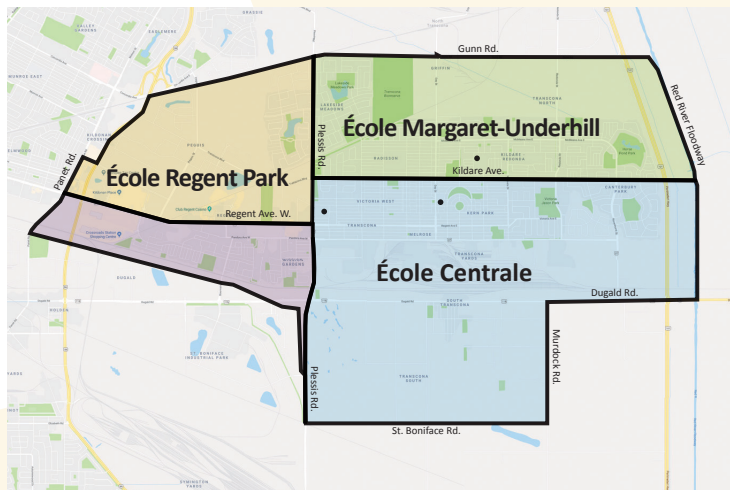
Jordan's Principle is named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation. It is a child-first initiative intended to ensure First Nations children do not experience denials, delays, or disruptions of public services ordinarily available to other children due to jurisdictional disputes. The goal of the initiative is to connect First Nations children and their families with quality services, supports, and resources to achieve positive holistic and educational outcomes.

## French Immersion Reconfiguration Update

Since 2016, RETSD has been rolling out a reconfiguration of early and middle years French immersion milieu schools east of Lagimodière Boulevard. The project will ensure our division can accommodate the projected student enrolment in French immersion at École Centrale, École Margaret-Underhill, and École Regent Park.

Currently, École Margaret-Underhill is at capacity and renovations to École Regent Park are ongoing. The reconfiguration project will help align enrolment with the new catchment boundaries and will balance student numbers at RETSD schools.

"The Board of Trustees recently shared an update with parents regarding a short-term goal to establish École Centrale and École Margaret-Underhill as kindergarten to Grade 5 schools and École Regent Park as a kindergarten to Grade 8 school," says trustee Sheri



Hanson, member of the finance, facility, and transportation standing committee. "In September 2023, we will be adding Grades 2 and 3 students to École Regent Park, and Grade 5 students to École Margaret-Underhill and École Centrale."

This will impact current Grades 1, 2, and 3 students, as the school they attend for Grades 2, 3, and 4 will be based on the reconfigured

boundary lines. Grade 4 students who currently attend École Margaret-Underhill and École Centrale will remain at their school for Grade 5 and then transition to École Regent Park for Grade 6. These grade configurations are in alignment with early years and middle years schools across RETSD.

Kindergarten and Grade 1 students will continue to attend

École Margaret-Underhill and École Centrale based on previous boundaries. We will continue to monitor enrolment and inform the community of any changes.

The long-term plan includes continued work with the Province of Manitoba to purchase land and build a new school in the Peguis area.

The purpose of the realignment is to alleviate enrolment pressures in schools that have reached capacity. As a result, the affected schools are closed to Schools of Choice in order to stabilize enrolment numbers and staffing allocations.

The Board of Trustees will continue to keep parents informed as planning continues. We would like to thank you for your support and patience as these necessary changes take place. If you have additional questions, please feel free to email [info@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:info@retsd.mb.ca).



## Long Service Awards for RETSD Trustees



Colleen Carswell



Rod Giesbrecht

The Long Service Trustee Recognition awards are a special part of the Manitoba School Boards Association's annual convention, and this year was particularly exceptional as trustees with 30 and 20 years of school board service were honoured.

RETSD is proud to announce that trustee Colleen Carswell, board chair, was recognized for 30 years of service, trustee Rod Giesbrecht was

recognized for 20 years of service, and former trustee John Toews was recognized for 16 years of service.

"We appreciate their commitment to our community, to education, and to the many students, parents, and staff who have benefitted from their involvement on the board," says trustee Brianne Goertzen, board vice-chair.

## RETSD TV: Brings Helpful Tips to Parents



RETSD TV is the latest tool available to parents to help them support their children's learning. Easily found on the division's website,

RETSD TV features short five-minute videos offering information on topics of interest to parents.

"It's true that parents are a child's first teacher," says superintendent/CEO Sandra Herbst. "RETSD TV allows us to reach out to these parents, sharing ideas from leaders across our division. We all work together in partnership, so we can educate their children to be inspired, skilled, responsible citizens."

RETSD TV is one way to partner with your child's divisional team and support one another

throughout a student's educational journey. Episodes include, "Home Reading Tips" and "What Can I Expect When I Attend My Child's Student-Parent-Teacher Conference."

"We're pleased with the commitment our leaders have shown toward this new way to reach the parents in our division," adds trustee Susan Olynik. "Parents can look forward to new episodes being added on a regular basis."

## RETSD Students and Staff Garner Awards



From River East Collegiate: teacher Sandra Resendes-Unger, Damian Funk, Phillip Gauthier, and educational assistant Tannar Paszkowski.

Congratulations to the RETSD students and staff who were honoured by the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children in February at their annual Yes I Can! Awards ceremony.

This year, several RETSD students were presented with Yes I Can! Awards, including Ava Narciso from École Springfield Heights School for academics, Phillip Gauthier and Damian Funk from River East Collegiate for athletics and school and community activities, respectively, and Danielle Briden and Hailey Lee from Kildonan-East Collegiate for transition.

As well, certificates of recognition were presented to Candice Sutherland and Sean Oleksewycz, educational assistants at River East Collegiate, Mary LaPage Leclerc, an RETSD student services consultant, and Miranda Pachal, a Project Life partner from CN Transportation Services. Tannar Paszkowski, from River East Collegiate, was nominated for Educational Assistant of the Year.

"We are very proud of the accomplishments of these award recipients and nominees," says trustee Brenda Bage. "And we hope they enjoy this well-deserved recognition."

# Appropriate Interventions and Disciplinary Consequences

RETSD’s approach to appropriate interventions and disciplinary consequences emphasizes positive and proactive strategies that foster student learning, as opposed to punitive and reactive strategies. As a division, we have tried to move away from solely using suspension as a means of discipline as we recognize the interconnectedness of student engagement, behaviour, and academic success.

The division promotes a tiered approach to supporting student behaviour that is guided by the schoolwide Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. PBIS is an evidence-based approach that improves social, emotional, and academic outcomes for all students. The divisional PBIS staff includes a psychologist, an occupational therapist, and a teacher. Each

school in RETSD has a site-based PBIS team that works with the divisional team to examine their data and implement both proactive and reactive interventions related to student behaviour.

RETSD has also adopted Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) training in response to serious incidents. VTRA is a practical approach to monitor, assess,

and intervene to respond to and prevent violence within our school community.

A VTRA is not punitive; it is an intervention—a response to a cry for help. The process involves the collection of data for the purpose of creating a meaningful plan to support the student to be successful.

## TRUSTEES Did You Know?

In this new column, we will highlight the workings of the Board of Trustees. We begin with a focus on one of the board’s three standing committees.

### What does the finance, facilities, and transportation standing committee of the board do?

Related to finance, members confirm all payment of accounts, review and report on recommendations having financial implications, and receive regular reports from the secretary-treasurer showing the financial position of

the division. RETSD’s budget for 2023–24 is \$224.7 million.

For facilities and transportation, the committee makes recommendations regarding the use of school grounds, facilities, and buildings. They consider matters of school design, construction, alteration, and maintenance, as well as structural security of buildings and grounds. They also deal with matters directly related to the transportation of students. River East Transcona has one of the largest transportation departments

in Manitoba, operating 80 school buses and safely transporting an average of 3,900 students over 1.5 million kilometres per year.

### Who sits on the committee?

For the 2022–23 school year, the chair is trustee Rod Giesbrecht and members are trustees Sheri Hanson, Sheri Irwin, and Susan Olynik. Secretary-treasurer Elise Downey works closely with this committee. Each year, the chair and members of this committee are elected at the board’s inaugural meeting held at the beginning of the school year. The terms are for one year and can be renewed.

### When does the committee meet?

The committee meets monthly during the school year. The secretary-treasurer and superintendent attend each meeting.

### What topics are discussed at the committee meetings?

The agenda is drafted each month by the chair of the committee and the secretary-treasurer. Agenda items include a monthly update on ongoing capital projects and school renovations, a monthly budget update, requests for proposals, and transportation appeals.

### How are decisions put into action?

Committee members and staff work together to consider matters closely. The committee then brings their recommendations to the whole board for consideration. This ensures the committee does not make decisions or act independently of the board.

## Your River East Transcona School Division Trustees

### Ward 1

Colleen Carswell (chair)  
204.222.1486  
[ccarswell@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:ccarswell@retsd.mb.ca)

Sheri Irwin  
204.223.5079

[sirwin@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:sirwin@retsd.mb.ca)

### Ward 2

Rod Giesbrecht  
204.661.5984  
[rgiesbrecht@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:rgiesbrecht@retsd.mb.ca)

Sheri Hanson  
204.915.7313  
[shanson2@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:shanson2@retsd.mb.ca)

### Ward 3

Brianne Goertzen (vice-chair)  
204.955.6782  
[bgoertzen@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:bgoertzen@retsd.mb.ca)

Keith Morrison  
204.795.3357  
[kmorrison@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:kmorrison@retsd.mb.ca)

### Ward 4

Susan Olynik  
204.661.6440  
[solynik@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:solynik@retsd.mb.ca)

Brenda Bage  
204.221.2951  
[bbage@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:bbage@retsd.mb.ca)

### Ward 5

Shannon Hiebert  
204.771.8435  
[shiebert@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:shiebert@retsd.mb.ca)

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](http://www.retsd.mb.ca) > Your RETSD > Board of Trustees