



**Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools**  
**FNMI Leadership Committee Meeting (FLC)**  
**Boardroom, District Office**  
6 St Vital Ave. St. Albert, AB | 780-459-7711

*Nurturing Excellence in Student Learning through Faith, Relationships and Engagement.*

## Minutes

*Linked to the Three - Year Education Plan*

**Thursday, January 12, 2017 | 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

### Committee Members:

- ✓ Edna Arcand, Elder (Alexander First Nation)
- ✓ Ella Arcand (Alexander First Nation)
- ✓ **Jody Kootenay, Director of Education (Alexander First Nation)** Verna Arcand, Assistant Director
- ✓ **Leanne MacMillan, Community Strategy (City of St. Albert)**
- ✓ David Keohane, Superintendent (GSACRD)
- ✓ Rhonda Nixon, Assistant Superintendent (GSACRD)
- ✓ Barb Brochu, Associate Superintendent (GSACRD)
- ✓ Carol Bruineman, Communications Manager (GSACRD)
- ✓ Joan Crockett, Trustee (GSACRD)
- ✓ René Tremblay, Trustee (GSACRD)
- ✓ Noreen Radford, Trustee (GSACRD)

**Chair:** David

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| 12:45 pm – 1:00 pm | 1. <b>Hospitality and Networking</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1:00 pm – 1:02 pm  | 2. <b>Acknowledgement of Territories:</b> David<br><i>The Greater St. Albert Catholic School Board acknowledges that it is meeting on the original lands of the Cree, those of Treaty 6, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1:02 pm – 1:05 pm  | 3. <b>Tobacco Offering:</b> Barb (to Edna and Ella)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1:05 pm – 1:10 pm  | 4. <b>Opening Prayer:</b> Ella                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1:10 pm – 1:15 pm  | 5. <b>Welcome and Introductions:</b> David and Joan<br><b>Round Table Intro – sharing the work we do</b><br><b>David Keohane</b> - Superintendent<br><b>René Tremblay</b> – Trustee<br><b>Carol Bruineman</b> – Communications<br><b>Edna Arcand</b> – Alexander First Nation - working towards helping all the students.<br><b>Ella Arcand</b> – Retired but not really. Involved over the past months with the World Indigenous Games. The games are happening in July and are co-hosted by Enoch, the City of Edmonton and U of A. Jody Stonehouse is leading this. Ella is an elder to these games. Delegates from Australia, New Zealand, Brazil and University of Saskatchewan (First Nation Law) also joined the planning sessions. Translators were provided by the University of Alberta. “Big Bird” Arcand and his wife are looking for volunteers to assist with the games. Ella has a very exciting life.....she loves to brag about her grandson Brooks. He is like his kohkum. He is also involved with the games. The |

planning session was a lot of fun; the delegates were really into the culture. Dancing, drumming, traditional clothes were all very well received.

**Trevor Horne** – MLA for Spruce Grove, St. Albert. Also goes out to Alexander First Nation. He is in between sessions currently, doing lots of committee work. Child and Youth Advocacy Act is currently under review; he is interested in that. Trevor is the only Métis elected member of the legislature. There are no FNMI MLAs. He thanked everyone for the invitation.

**Joan Crocket** – trustee and former teacher (began teaching career in Legal)

**Noreen Radford** – trustee and also a former teacher. She and Ella have mutual ideas about what going forward looks like. Husband is a former RCMP. Appreciative of the invitation.

**Verna Arcand** – Assistant Director of Education. Elders are both her beautiful aunts.

**Barb Brochu** – Associate Superintendent. Very pleased to be able to work with everyone at the table.

1:15 pm - 2:15 pm

6. **Guest Speaker:** Mr. Trevor Horne (MLA for Spruce Grove – St. Albert)

Joan introduced Mr. Horne. Trevor lives in St. Albert. Former political science student. Advocates for meaningful communication. He recently received his Metis sash. Looking forward to hearing your story. A warm welcome.

Photo with Trevor's sash; usually worn to special events or celebrations and for Métis Week. Several years ago, at family reunion in Saskatchewan, a distant relative asked his Mother if she had her Métis card yet. Trevor's grandfather was one sixteenth Cree. His Mom built the family tree, going back to the 1400s in Scotland. The application for Métis status was made when Trevor was about 12 or 13. His Mom worked with the Métis Nation exploring genealogy and how their family managed to carry on the history and culture of Métis people (berry picking etc.). Trevor was cautious about how to claim his heritage....it was actually more European, but he is trying to reconnect with his culture. He recalls a story where his Great Great Grandmother remembered being scolded for speaking Cree at home (a conscious decision to repress her culture). Following the elections, there were a few honorary chiefs elected, some were eligible for apply for Métis status but had not yet done so (for example O'Neil Carly (Lac Ste. Anne). Trevor mentioned some of the things government has been doing; particularly the review of Calls to Action. Trevor devoted that much of the TRC work related to the Federal government; yet the work has most recently been adopted by the province. Government has established First Nation education authorities on reserves to reduce the funding gap between federal and provincially funded schools. A top-up to the federal funding has been provided by the province. He has been working closely with the Kitaskinaw Tribal Council (Enoch). Also, a letter of intent was recently signed with Maskwacis (5 Nations). As well, Trevor has assisted with employment opportunities in the North. Trevor previously worked with Ella's grandson Brooks. He commented that it was nice to see that there are indigenous lawyers that are actually "indigenous." Regarding curriculum redevelopment; he was recently speaking with his own parents about the education they received in terms of FNMI history and culture. Work needs to be done to educate teachers on Truth and Reconciliation and First Nation cultures. Recognizing the differences between cultures is more than just the difference between symbols such as totem poles and tipis. Trevor went on a mission as a student and noted later that many of the photos were of his own family! There is lots of work in education is going into building the capacity and providing support for schools, both on and off reserve.

**René** –Wanted to know more about the sash – for example, what it symbolizes. Proof of birth is required to declare Métis status. The sash was used by the French in North

America as part of the fur trade. It had many practical uses including being use to hold men's pants up. It was also used as a sling. At times, the threads were torn off the end and used to stitch up a cut. The sash is associated with voyageurs and Métis. It became a unique symbol of Métis culture. Sometimes, there are rituals and large ceremonies to mark the presentation of a sash. More often it is presented as part of a smaller celebration that may include a prayer.

**Ella** – Regarding curriculum redevelopment and “history redevelopment”. Her walk of life has been with her people. She is looking to develop a model because her understanding is that it is easier to achieve when you have a model to visualize. She has worked diligently on the development of a First Nation Health model (TIPI Model). She was involved in the initial development or GIST of it, now she need to know how we can move it forward. She is working with Alexander First Nation on furthering this model. It will be used as the model for Kipohtakaw (Alexander). She is feeling a sense of urgency. As Trevor mentioned, this is a federal responsibility. Grand Chief at Treaty Six is also involved. “We need to stop talking and start doing something”. She would like to look back in a few years and reflect on what we have done. The urgency is because the children suffer a lot, they have to adjust to mainstream society. There are no two ways. We do not have the support we need such as Speech and Language Pathologists and Mental Health Therapists. All children deserve to excel to their capability. Going back to the TIPI model. Paul Martin was previously involved. Ella presented the concept to the federal Ministers. Gordy Campbell from BC wanted the disc. Ella said “first, you have to show me you remember what I said”. Ella reflected— She has bad knees now as she recalls scrubbing cement floors on her knees as a young girl in Residential School.

We need to do something memorable here. Watching the children that have excelled, Ella sees them inside of the TIPI model. The British Columbia First Nations now have their own Health Authority; Ella has spoken to them about her research and development of the TIPI model. They are ahead now, recruiting their own people into nursing, medical roles and as ambulance drivers. If only we could capture all of this for our students. Then you come back to reality and hear about all the suicides. For example, at 19 years old, what could be so wrong that suicide would be a solution? There is a need to bring the elders to the community; but this needs to be comfortable to speak. Driftpile in particularly has a high suicide rate. Sunchild/O'Chiese also has a suicide high rate. Elders can get their message across in Cree. However, “you lose the deep feeling of compassion when you translate Cree into English.” Youth today don't get what the elders are talking about because of the language barrier (i.e. the students do not understand Cree). The message is not the same when it is delivered in English. Ella wondered if there a way to translate the Cree message effectively into English so that the spirit of the message is not lost. She feels there is not enough spirituality in our schools. There is a big gap; difficult messages needs to be felt. Her grandson came to church. Another grandson spends time with a family that goes to church. Her grandchildren wonder why she play her Gospel tapes? They ask “why don't you just sing the song”? The review of Children's Advocate role is important. The Child Welfare system is a replica of the Residential School. Teaching and supporting the role of parents is important. Alexander is doing another parenting workshop in January. How to be caring parents is an important topic. The challenge for Ella is how do we pass on the wisdom to the next generation. There is a need to liven up the parents as well as the students. Song and music is the best for them (students, elementary anyway). Drama classes are also a way to engage students. They get to express themselves. It's good to do books too.

**Trevor**- spoke about how he cleaned out his office and considered what to do with all the paperwork and wall space and that is not being used. One of the schools in Spruce

Grove attempted to teach stories of TRC and re-present it as artwork on their walls. He shared how we seem to be really good about talking about “truth” but not necessarily about reconciliation.

**Ella-** I think having us sit here and talk with you (GSACRD Leadership Committee) is reconciliation. When she goes to the bank in Spruce Grove, they used to let the door slam. Now, when I go, they hold the door, invite me in, and I feel more gestures of friendship. More smiling there and everywhere is reconciliation. When the French and Scottish came “to civilize” us, indigenous peoples did not have a lot of people to turn to for grounding. Dan said because his Uncle was Chief, Dan was kept on the First Nation side. In the past, nuns wouldn’t look at the children until they washed them. We still see that. There is a lot of poverty and it’s worse for us because there is little land. The children try to survive. In Alexander, we have a hot lunch program. To feed the kids is to feed the brain. In education, we need to ask, “What is the need?” We need to hug the children because that takes away the pain. We need to stimulate the spirit.

**Trevor** – His office receives calls about is questions about “how do we teach all Alberta students about FNMI culture”? How do we develop curriculum that respectfully and comprehensively delivers an authentic message? It’s a bit of a challenge. There is lots of talk about the curriculum on reserve, but little talk about how to teach the FNMI culture to the larger population.

**Ella** – “How do we teach Reconciliation”? We need to do it our way. Especially when children who have been in care return to the community. They feel they do not belong. Upon return, one boy said he was “not Indian”. At 11 years old, he is living in the danger zone. Traditional feasts are held every season at the school. Ella wondered if students could be involved with preparing the food for these feasts? She often takes her grandchildren with her to pick traditional roots (medicines) to use. With our culture, we learn what is put together and the deeper meaning of things. At the time of cultural repression when First Nation ceremonies were forbidden, elders went underground to continue to practice their spiritual traditions. The elders kept it alive. Recently they found the grave of the first great chief of Alexander. The community will honour the site to commemorate Katstaweskum, the Great Chief.

**Trevor** – There is certainly a lot to addressing education of all students. A big part of Reconciliation is focusing on the education. Government needs to address that education is accessible to all regardless of where they reside (and not just distance education with an unreliable rural internet connection). Another challenge is economic development on First Nations. For example, in Fort McMurray, the only employer in the area is the oil and gas industry, which is quite dry right now. Isolated communities keep socially and emotionally connected by having elders come, share a meal and play cards in a room where young students use computers with internet access (for distance learning and more).

**Ella** – We have to respect each other. Upon entering the room, she recognized Trevor. There are many paths we can take with this committee to plant our flag to say “we’ve done it”! There are many issues and we will not be able to answer all of them. Trustees, please remember, all children suffer. We are the teachers and can help. We cannot do it alone, but we can do it together. Everybody knows the truth. Reconciliation begins with me doing my best. It can be done, but we need to be patient.

**Trevor** – What does reconciliation look like? It is easy to have a dialogue. But how do we follow up on that dialogue. It’s beginning to move in the right direction, but it will take a while. Government is looking at consultation policies for the Métis people. Alberta is the only province with Métis settlements. The Daniel’s case which recognizes Métis rights may set president. There needs to be a Métis treaty negotiated. Especially with the pipeline announcements. There have been conversations about what meaningful consultation looks like. There is a big problem with Gateway. The province sent people with no power to change things to have consultations. How do we make sure

the consultation is meaningful?

**Ella** – there is a lot of political drama around the pipelines. “First, we were pushed to lands that had little value....now they want the land back again”! Ella doesn’t think she’ll live long enough to see us shake hands on this! There is not a true understanding or deep appreciation of the land. Moose meat and Marmalade is a series that Ella enjoys. We can look to the animals for some signs in nature that creation is stressed. For example, muskrats have disappeared. Frogs came so late last spring. Some elders thought they were gone. But, they do have a purpose. At first, Ella didn’t hear them because there was no water in the creek. There are legend of frogs, squirrels and the little white mink. The Métis nation is closely related to the First Nation people. Ella mentioned two aunts who married off reserve and then later came back. They were able to gain back their treaty status. Fr. Lacombe was fondly called “the black robe”. It is all about survival....the animals, ourselves and those who are coming....the children. Those are the ones we need to feed.

**Noreen** - Thank-you to Trevor. We are glad you are a part of our government and that people are encouraged to tell their story. Believe that the name Arcand come originally from a police officer in St. Albert.

**David** – One of the great pieces of your presentation, other than being a Métis man, is that you have a strong sense of curiosity. Not all of our teachers come with that gift. As educators, we have to help people move from Truth to Reconciliation. To accomplish their work, government puts standards into place that are complimentary to those standard needs to be something to raise the sense of curiosity. All that is asked, is that you look towards (complimentary to that standard), adequate resourcing. It’s important that the government is interested in resourcing our teachers so they know how everything fits together. For example, in GSACRD, we raise staff curiosity by doing the Blanket Ceremony. We need to have adequate resourcing in place and available to us in order to continue to raise the level of curiosity.

2:15 pm – 2:30 pm

7. **Break**

2:30 pm – 2:45 pm

8. **Questions** (included above)

2:45 pm – 3:00 pm

9. **Mentorship Opportunity** – The Rotary Club in conjunction with Big Brothers and Sisters (BBBS) - Gordon Boddez.

Currently at Notre Dame, At Risk Gr. 3 students are provided with mentors. This is offered through BBBS. Wondering if Alexander might be interested in having some of their students involved? The mentorship program has worked well in Morinville. Gordon will try next in Camilla. It’s important though to make sure you can get enough mentors.

**Ella** – Verna would be the one to take it to the powers that be. Other initiatives have been successful for example, the Apple School Project. Perhaps this could be beneficial.

Barb spoke to Ella’s comment that there are currently no specialized supports such as SLP and MH available to students at KEC (i.e. through RCSD). There is funding available, but supports are not currently being accessed. Verna, Jody and Barb will continue this discussion when chief and council are ready to do so.

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm

10. **Website Review** – Rhonda and Carol.

There was explanation of the website components. Changes were suggested by Verna and the website has now been revised. Thank you for your assistance.

11. **Ideas/Suggestions for On-going meetings:**

- Recognition of FNMI students

- Joan presented/handed out the ATA Resource: Education is our Buffalo resource. It was brought forward by the ATA liaison.

3:15 pm – 3:30 pm

12. **Closing Prayer:** David

