

# Memorandum



Date: December 3, 2020  
To: Delia School Community  
From: Cam McKeage, Superintendent of Schools  
Subject: **Naming of the new Delia School**

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Prairie Land has received several emails from members of the Delia School community, which have resulted from the public, proper & correct posting of minutes of the regular monthly Delia School Council meeting that took place on November 24, 2020. The minutes of that public meeting correctly record the fact that the Trustee for Delia brought forward information to that meeting that the Board of Trustees of Prairie Land Public School Division were considering the renaming of Delia School to honour Ray Martin.

In respect for the concerns expressed regarding those suggestions, we have created this information bulletin to answer questions and address those concerns, and to bring clarity to the process and the decisions that were considered.

## **Acknowledgement**

First and foremost an apology is required for our part in the turmoil that has been created. We have completely misread the community and the passion that is held for the name of Delia School. In hindsight, a mistake was made and we are prepared to work towards rectifying it. The Board of Trustees and administration mistakenly felt the connection of Mr. Ray Martin as a proposed namesake of Delia School would be greater than it was. We underestimated the community of Delia's objection to this name and we have a lesson learned moving forward.

## **Naming of Schools**

Prairie Land Public School Division, Board Policy 3, speaks to the responsibility that the Board has towards naming schools and other Board owned-facilities. Although there is no documented protocol outlined for the process, factors that are contemplated for this process are the following;

1. Connection to the community
2. Influence on education
3. A life's body of work
4. Consultation with the public
5. Formal Board motion

Reasons as to why Mr. Martin was considered by the Board and central office administration is as follows;

### *Connection to the Community*

Ray Martin was born in Delia in 1941 where he lived with his family and attended the Delia school from grades 1 to 12. Ray's father Jim served four years fighting for Canada in World War II, and his mother Olive, operated an insurance business in downtown Delia (while also taking on the role of secretary-treasurer for the Village of Delia). Ray played all school and community sports, in addition to coaching hockey in both Delia and Hanna at a young age. He always appreciated the identity of Delia and his upbringing in the community, and throughout his life would always make his way back to his hometown to meet old friends or participate in various community events. Ray

is extremely proud of his heritage and was a strong advocate as part of the campaign team to help Delia be granted a new school.

#### *Influence on Education*

Ray attended the University of Alberta where he received his bachelor's degree in Education. His first teaching job was in Alix and he eventually made his way to the Calgary Board of Education where he taught high school. After a successful teaching career in Calgary, he went on to the same with Edmonton Public School Division. After his retirement from both teaching and his time spent in provincial politics, he became a school board Trustee for 8 years with Edmonton Public Schools.

#### *A life's body of work*

In addition to a career spent in education Ray served his province as an elected official and Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for 15 years; while being the Leader of the Official Opposition in Alberta for 9 of those years. In culmination for a life of public service, he wrote a book entitled, Made in Alberta: The Ray Martin Story. It has been described as an inspiring story for young Albertans looking to make an impact on their province. In it, he shares his experiences and upbringing in a tight-knit community and states '*I felt lucky; anyone could be from Edmonton, or another big city, but I get to be from Delia*'.

#### *Consultation with the public*

As mentioned, this was missed and is currently being corrected.

#### *Formal Board Motion*

The Board has not made an official motion regarding the naming of the new Delia School. When this item comes to the board table on the December 15, it will be thoroughly discussed and debated. Information from the upcoming December 8, Town Hall meeting will be taken into consideration.

## **Addressing Misconceptions**

Concerned community members have shared with Prairie Land and spoken publicly that there is evidence of corruption, bribery and kickbacks within this school naming process; this is completely untrue and unwarranted. It would be appropriate to mention that advocacy from the Board of Trustees, specifically your local Trustee (past and present) was always at the forefront of this process. Advocacy is the responsibility of elected officials and the Prairie Land Board of Trustees were successful in bringing a new school to the community of Delia. As has been documented, this project was once removed from the list of new school builds from Alberta Education in 2016, but was included once again as a result of the tireless work from your local Trustee in advocating for this project. The existing Delia School is in disrepair and the new one awarded in 2018 would not be under construction if this did not happen. The Board of Trustees will continue to advocate with local elected officials and others for the betterment of our school division.

## **How can I be heard?**

The board requests your online attendance on December 8, at 1900 hours (link to follow tomorrow), or if you are unable to attend, please follow this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HYLSVVY> to share your thoughts.

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

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