



MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, in-person and virtual meeting
Feb. 7, 2024 | 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Chair: Kendra Roemer, Mills Haven Elementary
Vice-Chair: Dallas Kirtz, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary
Secretary: Chelsea Pretzlaw, Ardrossan Elementary

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Aileen Bozic, SCA Secondary
Amber-Lynn O'Brien, Bruderheim School
April Childs, Lakeland Ridge
Brian Vick, Brentwood Elementary
Christan Rasmussen, Westboro Elementary
Dawn Ferguson, Rudolph Hennig Junior High
Janice Mills, Pine Street Elementary
Jordana Feist, James Mowat Elementary
Justina Gibson, Fort Saskatchewan Christian
Kim Scott, Salisbury Composite High
Krista Scott, Bev Facey Community High
Leanne Weiss, Sherwood Heights Junior High
Marco Candia, Woodbridge Farms Elementary
Melissa Manolescu, École Campbelltown
Sarah Witholt, Heritage Hills Elementary

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cathy Allen, Chair
Susan Miller, Vice-Chair
Don Irwin, Trustee
Trina Boymook, Trustee

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sandra Stoddard, Superintendent
Ryan Marshall, Associate Superintendent
Emma Small, Communication Services

GUEST SPEAKER

Jacquie Surgenor, EIPS parent and presenter at the 2023 ASCA Conference and AGM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

AGENDA

COSC Chair Roemer called for additions or deletions to the agenda.

- Jordana Feist asked if the recent [policy announcement](#) from the Government of Alberta could be added to the agenda. COSC Chair Roemer noted this item be added to the New Business section.

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, with the noted change.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COSC Chair Roemer called for approval of the Jan. 10, 2024 meeting minutes.

MOTION | The minutes be approved, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Report

Board Chair Cathy Allen presented the Board Report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- On January 25, the Board approved a solution to best address the anticipated enrolment pressures in Ardrossan, enhance French Immersion program retention and balance senior high enrolment in Sherwood Park:
 - relocate EIPS' senior high French Immersion program, grades 10-12, to Salisbury Composite High—effective when the new Sherwood Park replacement school opens, expected in the 2026-27 school year;
 - adjust Strathcona County's senior high attendance boundaries for Lakeland Ridge to be redesignated to Bev Facey Community High—effective when the new Sherwood Park replacement school opens, expected in the 2026-27 school year; and
 - adjust the French Immersion junior high attendance boundaries for Cambrian Crossing, to be redesignated to Sherwood Heights Junior High—effective in the 2024-25 school year.
- EIPS will engage families and staff to develop an implementation plan to ensure a smooth transition for everyone when the above changes take effect.
- On January 25, the Board approved the school fee parameters for the 2024-25 school year. Overall, the 2024-25 school fee parameters are similar to the previous year. Highlights include:
 - *Optional-courses fees* – five per cent allowable increase—up to seven per cent for food courses
 - *Noon-supervision fees* – five per cent allowable increase
 - *Activity fees* – five per cent allowable increase
 - *Extracurricular fees* – five per cent allowable increase
 - *Non-curricular travel fees* – five per cent allowable increase
 - *Non-curricular goods and services fees* – five per cent allowable increase
- Schools must set all fees at a cost-recovery rate. If fees are over-charged by more than \$10 a student, schools must refund that amount to the student through credit. Additionally, if any fees exceed the listed parameters, the school must submit an explanation for EIPS' Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer to review. With the fee parameters now approved, schools can begin establishing their 2024-25 School Fees Schedule.
- On January 25, the Board approved sponsoring the registration fee for school council members to participate in the 2024 Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) School Council Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) on April 26-28—for one member per school council up to a maximum of \$5,000. To qualify, members must be part of a school council with an active ASCA membership and apply before the registration deadline, April 8.
- On January 25, the Board received for information the Leveraging Student Achievement (LSA) Fund Initiative Report. In total, the LSA fund balance is \$101,000—used to support initiatives that focus on student learning needs and equity of student programming. For 2023-24, planned LSA initiatives all focus on junior high literacy and numeracy—areas where the Division still sees the highest level of learning loss since the pandemic. Specifically, the Division intends to hire two lead teachers—one for literacy and one for numeracy—to support EIPS' junior high schools, working directly with struggling students and with teachers to help plan, develop, deliver and assess lessons to address learning loss. The goal, of course, is to improve educational outcomes for students in literacy and numeracy; enhance professional learning; and improve supports for students, staff and families.
- Regarding Premier Danielle Smith's announcement about [new provincial policies](#), trustees had a meeting with Minister of Education Demetrios Nicolaidis. There will be continued conversations with Minister Nicolaidis, and EIPS will provide feedback to him on the policies.
 - The Division is waiting for more information and details on these policies, as EIPS learned about them at the same time as the public.

- EIPS remains committed to [Board Policy 19: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning and Working Environments](#). Board Chair Allen emphasized how every EIPS student matters and how every EIPS student is important.
- The Division supports open communication with parents and caregivers because we're partners in their children's education.
- The Board anticipates the release of the 2024-25 Government of Alberta budget at the end of February 2024. Additional Board meetings have been scheduled for Board discussions regarding the EIPS 2024-25 budget. The EIPS Budget Survey took place in December 2023 and had an increased participation rate from last year. This survey was completed by parents, staff, grade 12 students and community members. The Board has reviewed the quantitative and qualitative data contained in the survey responses.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Comment: The invitation to Board meetings about French Immersion changes was appreciated.

Comment: Thank you to the Board for sponsoring school councils to attend the ASCA conference and AGM!

Question: Is the Board concerned about local autonomy surrounding the government policies?

Answer: EIPS has a different community than other school divisions, and it looks like multiple policies which form one large one. The Board wants autonomy for choices within the Division, and EIPS does feel somewhat left out of the process after finding out at the same time as families. Parents and caregivers are not being excluded from important choices about their children. Share your opinion with your MLA and CC the Minister of Education.

Question: Concerned about division and marginalization. Is there a plan to counter this?

Answer: The Division will continue following [Board Policy 19: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning and Working Environments](#), which aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment for every student and staff member. EIPS will continue to make learning and working environments positive and value every individual. Each child will always feel welcome.

Question: How can we advocate for funding? How do we reframe these questions to increase funding?

Answer: The Board will continue to meet with MLAs ongoing, and with consistent messaging. Parents and caregivers can write letters to various ministries and try to get them to work together to increase funding. Advocate for all to students to have access to a high-quality education.

Comment: The email to parents about the provincial policies was appreciated. The Division message is the same as it was eight years ago. Parents and caregivers are not intended to be left out by EIPS. This has been passed along to ASCA.

Question: Has the Division message about the new provincial policies been sent as an advocacy resolution to ASCA?

Answer: No, this is simply to show that EIPS has a good handle on the situation.

Question: For the money that was used for junior high—did this go to all junior highs or just a selection?

Answer: Went to schools that showed the highest need based on assessments, such as STAR testing. The pilot project in Grade 2 is using the same model with great results so far. The junior high program will be starting in mid-February.

Question: What about kids that fell through the cracks and are now in high school?

Answer: Ongoing assessments will show students that are struggling, and interventions will happen within the school environment. Students are being closely tracked on their schedule for graduation, and the Division and its schools are doing the best for as many students as possible.

Question: Importance of direct supports. Will there be specialized instruction for grades 9-10 with direct contact?

Answer: The Division is building levels of capacity in schools and working on this especially in high schools. For example, using non-permanent vertical surfaces.

Question: How can we make sure all kids get caught when they're struggling with literacy? Particularly for kids that haven't been diagnosed with a learning disorder.

Answer: A balanced model developed by EIPS to foster a love of reading. All elementaries are building capacity within staff in hopes of catching issues earlier so that there are less gaps further on in education. On the [EIPS YouTube channel](#), there are literacy videos to help families.

For Information

ASCA UPDATE – Dallas Kirtz, COSC Vice-Chair

- The [ASCA Conference and AGM](#) takes place April 26-28, 2024.
 - The Board of Directors election will happen at the AGM on April 28.
 - Once again, the EIPS Board is funding the cost of one registration fee per EIPS school—up to a maximum of \$5,000. Registrants must be part of a school council with an active ASCA membership. Extra pre-session registration costs are the responsibility of the attendee. Registrations are first-come, first-served. Interested COSC members were directed to complete the Board-sponsored registration form that'd be shared in the COSC meeting followup email.
 - School councils having a representative attend the AGM need to fill out the [Credential Voting Form](#), even if their representative's registration is sponsored by the Board. A [Proxy Voting Form](#) is available for school councils who won't be able to attend the AGM, so they can have another council vote on their behalf. The deadline to complete the forms is **April 18**.
 - A list of Board-sponsored attendees will be compiled and shared with COSC.
- A recording is available from the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education around [financial literacy resources for K-12 parents and caregivers](#).
- The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta will be having their [Science Olympics](#) in Edmonton on April 7.

RETURNING STUDENT REGISTRATION – Sandra Stoddard, EIPS Superintendent

- Superintendent Stoddard reminded COSC members that [2024-25 returning student registration](#) runs from February 8-21. She emphasized how important this information is for budgeting.

CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE – Dallas Kirtz, COSC Vice-Chair

- The [February Caregiver Series](#) schedule is now available.
- Offered through Alberta Health Services, the sessions are informative and valuable.
- COSC Vice-Chair Kirtz encouraged members to review the [February Caregiver Series](#) calendar.

SCHOOL COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT GRANT – Kendra Roemer, COSC Chair

- The deadline to complete the application form for the School Council Engagement Grant passed on **January 31**. Thirty out of 37 school councils completed the form. COSC Liaison Emma Small said she'd follow up with the seven councils remaining to see if they have plans for their grant.
- COSC Chair Roemer encouraged COSC members to share their plans for the grant on the [COSC Facebook group](#). Krista Scott said it's easy to be added to the group—simply log in to Facebook and request to join.
- COSC Chair Roemer said that she's excited to hear how grant activities went at upcoming meetings.

COSC Sharing

SCHOOL COUNCILS' PAST ASCA CONFERENCE EXPERIENCES – All COSC members and Jacquie Surgenor

- COSC members shared their past experiences at the ASCA Conference and AGM, detailing how they gained valuable information, networked with councils from across the province, and saw their own school and EIPS from a new perspective.
- Jacquie Surgenor attended the event last year and presented on the Reset Room initiative—a mental health project piloted at all EIPS junior highs. Surgenor discussed the initiative from her perspective as a parent at Sherwood Heights Junior High, emphasizing the collaboration between the school and families.
- Additionally, COSC Chair Roemer noted Wendy Keiver, the Executive Director at ASCA, will be joining the meeting next month to speak on the ASCA resolutions for the AGM. She'll also be there to answer questions about the association generally.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Do all resolutions submitted to ASCA get distributed?

Answer: No, they are screened against foundational documents. Emergent resolutions can come up as well.

New Business

ASSURANCE CYCLE: EIPS BUDGET SURVEY, ALBERTA EDUCATION ASSURANCE SURVEY AND EIPS ANNUAL FEEDBACK SURVEYS – Sandra Stoddard, EIPS Superintendent and Ryan Marshall, EIPS Associate Superintendent

- Superintendent Stoddard and Associate Superintendent Marshall discussed several surveys that the Division uses in its assurance cycle.
- Superintendent Stoddard discussed the EIPS Budget survey—completed in December 2023 by staff, families, Grade 12 students and community partners. She said the number of responses significantly increased across all stakeholder groups.
- Associate Superintendent Marshall spoke about the Alberta Education Assurance Survey—to be completed by parents and guardians of students in grades 4, 7 and 10. Teachers and students also complete the survey online at school. In schools with fewer than 120 students in grades 4-12 and most charter and private schools, surveys are sent to parents and guardians of students in Grade 4 and above. The deadline to complete the survey is March 1.
- Associate Superintendent Marshall also discussed the EIPS Annual Feedback Surveys—to be completed in March by staff, families, and Grade 9 and 12 students. As the feedback surveys were still being drafted, school councils were told they'd receive a copy of the survey questions in the upcoming COSC meeting package. They'd also receive a survey QR code poster.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: For the Alberta Education Assurance Survey, does a school get to decide who is surveyed? A Grade 5 student's parent received a code.

Answer: It should only be grades 4, 7 and 10, unless the school has less than 120 students enrolled in grades 4 and above.

Comment: Some other Grade 5 parents at Pine Street Elementary were mailed codes from Alberta Education. EIPS and the school will follow up.

Comment: Having the survey ahead of time is invaluable. It helps to understand the language and align the language with parent and caregiver experiences.

PROVINCIAL POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT – Cathy Allen, EIPS Board Chair and Sandra Stoddard, EIPS Superintendent

- The provincial policy announcement was covered in the Board Report section of the agenda.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:21 P.M.

Next COSC Meeting

DATE: March 6, 2024

TIME: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: EIPS Central Services building, boardroom.