



MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, in-person and virtual meeting

Nov. 6, 2024 | 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Chair: Stephanie Stoddard,
Fort Saskatchewan Elementary
Vice-Chair: Michelle Uytterhagen,
Fultonvale Elementary Junior High

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Brian Vick, F.R. Haythorne Junior High
Christan Rasmussen, Westboro Elementary
Deanna Metro, Ardrossan Elementary
Genista Garnett, École Parc Élémentaire
Kim Scott, Sherwood Heights Junior High and
Salisbury Composite High
Krista Scott, Bev Facey Community High
Leanna Bechtel, Fort Saskatchewan Christian
Lindsey Heerema, SCA Elementary
Lisa Harke, SCA Secondary
Lora Slobodian, Brentwood Elementary
Marco Candia, Woodbridge Farms
Elementary (Interim Secretary)
Shauna Samu, Heritage Hills Elementary
Shelley Wiebe, A.L. Horton Elementary

Teresa Bladon, Lakeland Ridge
Tom Sunderland, Bev Facey Community High

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cathy Allen, Chair
Susan Miller, Vice-Chair
Trina Boymook, Trustee
Randy Footz, Trustee

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sandra Stoddard, Superintendent
Marcus Reed, Director of Specialized Supports
Deneen Zielke, ATA Local No. 28 President
Emma Small, Communication Services

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

COSC Chair Stephanie Stoddard provided the land acknowledgement.

AGENDA

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

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COSC Chair Stoddard called for approval of the Oct. 2, 2024 meeting minutes.

MOTION | The minutes be approved, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Report

Board Chair Allen presented the Board Report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The EIPS Board of Trustees made the decision to relocate the senior high French Immersion program to Salisbury Composite High and balance senior high enrolment by redesignating senior high students living in the Lakeland Ridge attendance area to Bev Facey Community High. Both are effective when the new Sherwood Park replacement school opens, expected in the 2026-27 school year.
 - To ensure a smooth transition for students, staff and families, EIPS is consulting impacted stakeholders to develop an effective implementation plan. All impacted families are invited to share suggestions and concerns related to the transition. The survey is open from November 7-20.
 - EIPS will then review the feedback provided and begin developing a draft transition plan, considering local needs, program and outcome requirements, and strategies to enhance student achievement. In early 2025, the Division will share the draft plan at a public feedback session, collecting any input stakeholders may have. It'll use that data to create a final version for the transition.
- Regarding the Proposed Alternate Calendar Survey, 766 responses were submitted by staff and 4539 responses were received from parents and guardians. All of the responses are contained in 618 pages of data. The trustees and senior administration are currently reviewing this data, which reflects a wide range of perspectives from the stakeholder groups. A Report for Recommendation will be presented at the December public Board meeting.
- The Board of Trustees sent a letter to Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides regarding the pending change in the funding formula for education. In the letter, the Board shared its thoughts for his consideration as he and his team discuss possible approaches to a new funding model.
- EIPS has begun preparations for the upcoming trustee election on Oct. 20, 2025. The [Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024](#) sets new rules for local elections. This Act will amend the Local Authorities Election Act and the Municipal Government Act. EIPS is examining these new rules and how they'll impact the election process. The Board has started planning for the new Board of Trustees. It's important to plan for the onboarding of the new trustees, to support them in their roles and responsibilities.
- **Bill 27: Education Amendment Act, 2024:** This Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta on Oct. 31, 2024. If passed, the legislation and regulatory amendments for education continuity during public health and states of emergencies would be expected to come into force on Jan. 1, 2025, except sections regarding school authority policies, which would come into effect on Sept. 1, 2025.
- **Bill 29: Fairness and Safety in Sport Act:** This Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta on Oct. 31, 2024. If passed the legislation and regulatory amendments will come into effect fall 2025.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: What was asked about the moving averages for the funding model?

Answer: Asked about funding regarding inflation and classroom complexity.

Question: How will survey responses be used regarding the proposed changes to the 2025-26 calendar?

Answer: Board meeting will take place in December that'll use the provided report to decide if the calendar can be finalized or if additional time is required.

Question: Will any of the data be made available to COSC and other stakeholders prior to a decision being made by the Board?

Answer: There's not a plan currently in place to share the concerns or feedback with all stakeholders prior to a decision being made. It's possible that a decision may be pushed to a later date if the Board feels that additional conversation is required.

Comment: The calendar conversation needs to be brought to the COSC table as there are very different factors that drive concerns for different regions of the Division. Representation and conversation are vital to ensure all parties feel as though their voice has been heard and they've had an adequate place to speak.

Comment: Adding on to the previous point about the calendar engagement, parents at my school feel as though there was not a sufficient area to provide feedback outside of the options presented.

Question: To clarify, if there was an option to maintain a "status quo" calendar, the collaboration time could not be factored into the academic schedule as is?

Answer: In previous engagements, EIPS has provided an opportunity to stick with status quo, and it often leads to limited true feedback regarding the proposed changes. Even though status quo was not provided as an option, within the 600 pages of feedback that was gathered, there was significant representation of families stating that the status quo should be maintained. When looking ahead at future parental engagements, the Division will look to use COSC as an additional avenue for concerns and feedback to be presented.

Comment: Feedback provided through a blanket survey should be viewed as separate from the discussion that COSC meetings can provide. Bringing these conversations to the COSC table allows for an opportunity for different perspectives to be shared and allows for a systems thinking approach when seeking feedback on proposed changes of this magnitude.

Comment: The calendar survey was intentionally provided to allow for a large population of representation to be able to provide specific, detailed feedback.

Question: Regarding Bill 27, has a date been provided?

Answer: Not currently provided.

Question: Regarding the weighted moving average, from an Advocacy in Action standpoint, it's important to know what's being requested and why. Will data be provided to stakeholders?

Answer: Meeting will take place in January and an update will be provided when available.

ATA Report

ATA Local No. 28 President Deneen Zielke presented the ATA report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Janet French, Provincial Affairs Reporter at CBC Edmonton, wrote an [article](#) about the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission, criticizing the current state of Alberta's new teacher disciplinary body. Zielke said the article is the first of a series.
- George Georgiou, a professor with the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, completed research regarding assessments. Zielke stated the provincial government has been influenced by this research when conceptualizing new assessments. She explained Georgiou's data does not translate to census-based assessment as the data set is too low, and he sells support materials to school divisions, which the government refers to as the Georgiou Project. She feels he has undue influence regarding policymaking, and she stated questioning data has been going to Georgiou without permission.
- Zielke also discussed the weighted moving average funding model. She said this model's budget cycle does not match the school cycle and extra money is not available until May. Substitutes are hired to assist with testing and both money and their time are not available to support the classroom. Zielke stated students

need to be funded on day one and education partners need to be engaged. If not ready for Budget 2025, Albertans won't see the model until 2026, as decisions will be made in the fall.

- Regarding Bill 27, sexual education will become opt-in, rather than opt-out.
- Zielke stated \$8.6 billion is needed in school builds, 10,000 teachers are needed, and pre-service programs were cut three to four years ago.
- Zielke said Alberta's government is the only one that spends 70 per cent on private schools and 100 per cent on charter schools. These schools can put in caps and class limits and can access capital money now. Alberta is also the only province that funds capital projects for private schools.

For Information

ASCA UPDATE – Stephanie Stoddard, COSC Chair

- ASCA is hosting a free virtual engagement session regarding emotional regulation on November 23.
- Upcoming scheduled school council learning opportunities include:
 - **November 12:** Managing School Council Meetings
 - **November 26:** School Council Purpose
- ASCA has a [partner insurance program](#), available to all Alberta school-based fundraising societies.
- [National Child Day](#) is November 20.
- [Veterans' Week](#) occurs November 5-11. [Remembrance Day](#) is November 11.

CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE – Stephanie Stoddard, COSC Chair

- The [November and December Caregiver Series](#) schedule is now available.
- Offered through Recovery Alberta, the sessions are informative and valuable.
- COSC Chair Stoddard encouraged members to review the [November and December Caregiver Series](#) calendar.

SCHOOL COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT GRANT – Stephanie Stoddard, COSC Chair

- COSC Chair Stoddard asked COSC Liaison Emma Small to discuss the [Alberta School Council Engagement Grant](#). Small reiterated how every school council is receiving \$500 from Alberta Education to use toward engagement activities. Councils will also receive any unused funds from previous years to use in the 2024-25 school year. All grant contact forms have been provided to EIPS Financial Services.
- As such, school councils will receive an email with a grant application on November 7. Small encouraged school councils to submit applications by the end of December. This ensures a plan for the funds is in place.
- Once an application is submitted, COSC Chair approval is required before councils can use their funds.
- When approved, councils will go ahead with their grant activities. When looking to pay invoices or reimburse receipts, a payment request form needs to be filled out. School councils will receive the form link when their grant has been approved but can always request the link from Small.
- Jennifer Daly and Marlene Crippin—co-chairs for the school council at Bev Facey Community High—have brought forward an opportunity to pool grant funds. They'd like to organize a presentation from David Irvine for any interested school councils. More details will be included in the meeting followup email.

COSC Sharing

MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES – All COSC members

- COSC member Jacquie Surgenor Gaglione has offered to provide some mentorship and guidance regarding being involved on a school council.
- COSC member Christan Rasmussen said it can be very overwhelming as a new representative to understand what's going on and what's required within the position.

- COSC member Krista Scott asked several questions:
 - What levels of mentorship are possible?
 - Can we look at a structured mentorship program?
 - Is it possible to set up a phone-a-friend for ad hoc issues and concerns?
 - Would bylaws allow for attendance at another school's council meeting to see how things may differ between different environments?
- COSC Vice-Chair Michelle Uytterhagen wondered about utilizing the 30 minutes before the COSC meeting to encourage more collaborative and unstructured conversation.
 - COSC member Lisa Harke asked if this could be built into COSC Sharing instead.
 - COSC member Shauna Samu seconded the idea of using COSC Sharing this way.
 - Scott said this was done historically but seemed to tail off as it became less structured and scheduled. Might work again if it's more relaxed.
 - COSC Vice-Chair Uytterhagen suggested COSC Sharing not be at the bottom of the agenda to ensure its not passed over.
- Scott suggested setting up a phone number and email list to allow for questions to be asked in a safe space.
 - As such, Scott requested Small send out an email to COSC members and ask for email addresses and phone numbers for those that are willing to provide support and guidance when issues arise for different representatives.

New Business

EIPS ASSURANCE REVIEW: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO READ YOUR SCHOOL'S RESULT – Marcus Reed, EIPS Director of Specialized Supports

- Reed outlined the Division's Assurance Cycle. There's a timeline of roll-out for all the information to allow for true collaboration between the Division and its stakeholders.
 - Currently, schools are finalizing their information and will soon be meeting with stakeholders to complete Assurance Reviews.
 - In January, Superintendent Sandra Stoddard and Associate Superintendent Ryan Marshall will be going over the *EIPS Annual Education Results Report 2023-24*.
 - School fee information and feedback from the surveys are reviewed to support decision-making and priority review.
 - COSC is engaged regarding the *Four-Year Education Plan*.
 - In May, there's a review of the budget.
 - Newsletters are provided to keep stakeholders updated with the happenings of the Division.
- There are various data analysis considerations. Different quantitative and qualitative data is collected throughout the year. When looking from the lens of a rural-urban school division, there needs to be an opportunity provided for open conversation and accessible feedback opportunities.
- Reed detailed what COSC members can do at their school council meetings in terms of reviewing their school's results. Individual school goals are created and aligned with Division goals.
 - School council members can ask questions about what the school feels was the driving factor to a goal being achieved, improved on or when a result shows a downward trend. They can also ask how school administration think the positive trend can be continued.
 - When dealing with a downward trend, school council members are encouraged to be curious and ask questions regarding specific context. Council members can gain insight as to why the school and Division believes this occurred, if this is this an ongoing goal, and if so, what the school council can do to support this goal.
- Attending your school's Assurance Review allows for more exposure to other schools and what may be working or not working within the Division.

- Board Chair Allen provided information on changes to Assurance Reviews.
 - Less time will be spent on school introductions.
 - Schools will be grouped based on population demographics.
 - There'll be a period to allow principals to focus on positives and a period to focus on areas of concern and opportunities for improvement.
 - The Board is unable to attend all Assurance Reviews but will review the data to flag communicated concerns.
 - The school council representative at the Assurance Review will not be asking or receiving any questions based on the review data. It'll be observational time for this representative.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Is Student Voice offered at other schools within the Division consistently?

Answer: Several schools have Student Voice initiatives, but don't have the exact number currently.

Comment: Assurance Reviews feel like a sweet spot for school councils as they provide an opportunity to help build a plan within a council to address any results that are flagged at the review. Using flagged results, tasks and goals within the school council group can be created to assist in promoting and supporting the school in achieving its goals within the school's education plan.

Comment: I have an issue with parents being asked to give their time to attend Assurance Reviews and not be able to ask questions regarding the information or be given an opportunity to answer a focused question regarding the information provided.

Comment: From my previous experience with Assurance Reviews, it's great to hear what other schools are doing in relation to Star assessments and areas of concern. I took notes during the review and brought those back to my school council meetings.

Question: What kind of parent feedback is being collected throughout the different survey and engagement opportunities in the Division's Assurance Cycle?

Answer: Seems to be a very consistent and good return of feedback but depending on what the sample size is for the data, the trends need to be viewed differently.

Comment: I'm also frustrated regarding the lack of parental engagement opportunity during the Assurance Reviews this year.

Comment: The information regarding the back end of surveys and engagement strategies is very impactful as a newer member of COSC. This is something that's beneficial as a representative of a school.

Comment: Opportunity to connect as a stakeholder with the school directly regarding education is imperative to ensure that every school population can receive representation when it comes to the ongoing of the school and its results. It's not the case that every trustee is able to attend all school council meetings to hear the concerns or questions directly from families.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:35 P.M.

Next COSC Meeting

DATE: Jan. 8, 2025

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

LOCATION: EIPS Central Services building, boardroom. Also hosted virtually on Zoom.