



# EIPS Advocacy in Action

Sent in October 2024

## Introduction

One of the critical roles of the Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Board of Trustees is to represent students' best interests, acting as the voice for public education on behalf of the communities they serve. Each year, the Board determines the focus of its advocacy efforts, which are also in alignment with the Division's [priorities and goals](#). The intent of the Board's advocacy is twofold: To influence the Government of Alberta's education policy, and to seek and secure sufficient resources to meet the needs of all EIPS students.

The Advocacy Committee will meet in October 2024 to recommend the areas of focus for the 2024-25 school year, which will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees as a whole. The advocacy focus areas for the past year included:

- Infrastructure: *addressing capacity issues and providing learning spaces that promote student achievement and growth.*
- The value of public education: *equitable access, opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse student body, and choice in education.*
- Autonomy of locally elected school boards: *school boards should have the flexibility to invest resources in ways that best meet the unique demands of the communities we serve.*
- Education funding: *funding serves the student needs, and is allocated in ways that are equitable, efficient and give students the best chance of academic and career success.*

Quarterly, through this newsletter, *EIPS Advocacy in Action*, the Division will advise school families and EIPS employees about the Board's work and advocacy efforts to ensure EIPS continues to provide high-quality, student-centred education.

## Advocacy Efforts: Summer 2024

### Correspondence and conversations

Throughout the summer of 2024, the Board of Trustees sent one letter to an elected official, as well as engaging one-on-one:

*June:* Met with the Hon. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees and MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, Board Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss career pathways, apprenticeship and trades opportunities for students within Alberta's Industrial Heartland, and EIPS' vision for a collegiate school in Fort Saskatchewan.

*June:* Sent a letter to the Hon. Demetrios Nicolaidis, Minister of Education, advocating for financial support of the proposed replacement junior/senior high school in Fort Saskatchewan, which the Division will operate under a collegiate model. The school would provide a wide-range of educational and skilled training opportunities that would meet the labour force needs of various sectors in Alberta's Industrial Heartland—and throughout the province.

*July:* Spoke with the Hon. Nate Glubish, Minister of Technology and Innovation and MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, to update him on current challenges within the education sector and opportunities for enhanced learning within the division.

***EIPS PRIORITIES AND GOALS:***

*PRIORITY 1: PROMOTE GROWTH AND SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS; GOAL 1: EXCELLENT START TO LEARNING, GOAL 2: SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT*

*PRIORITY 2: ENHANCE HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS; GOAL 3: QUALITY INFRASTRUTURE FOR ALL*

*PRIORITY 3: ENHANCE PUBLIC EDUCATION THROUGH EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT; GOAL 2: ENGAGED AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE*

**Other**

Trustees and the superintendent also attended additional events and meetings that allowed for opportunities to discuss issues and advocate for education:

- *July:* Attended Premier Danielle Smith’s speech, delivered at the Strathcona County Chamber of Commerce Luncheon.
- *September:* Participated in the media conference announcing the opening of new CASA Classrooms at eight schools in Alberta—including one at Bev Facey Community High. Took the opportunity to express EIPS’ gratitude for the tremendous cross-ministry work undertaken by Alberta Education, Alberta Addiction and Mental Health, and Alberta Health to make these essential supports for students a reality in our Division.
- *September:* Took part in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Sherwood Park Replacement School—with completion anticipated for the beginning of 2026-27 school year. The start of construction is the culmination of more than a decade of advocacy on behalf of both the community and the Board of Trustees, and the support of locally elected municipal and provincial representatives.

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**Summary**

Throughout the 2023-24 school year, the Board of Trustees will focus advocacy efforts on:

- promoting growth and success for all students;
- enhancing high-quality learning and working environments; and
- enhancing public education through effective engagement.