



# EIPS Advocacy in Action

Sent in February 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.

Following robust discussion at the EIPS Board of Trustees' retreat mid-September 2023, the Board set four key areas of focus for advocacy efforts through the 2023-24 school year:

- 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: Fall and Winter 2023-24

### Correspondence and conversations

Throughout fall and winter of 2023 and 2024, the Board of Trustees sent several letters to elected officials on a range of topics, as well as engaging one-on-one:

*October:* Along with school board chairs and superintendents from across the province, attended meeting with the Hon. Demetrios Nicolaidis, Minister of Education—organized by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA).

*October:* Sent letters to the MLAs from Strathcona County, Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, personally inviting them to attend the Alberta School Boards Association Fall General Meeting.

*November:* Met with Kyle Kasawski, MLA for Sherwood Park, and education critic Rakhi Pancholi, MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud, to discuss classroom complexity.

*November:* EIPS Board Chair and superintendent met with His Worship Karl Hauch, Mayor of Bruderheim, to discuss education in the region.

*December:* Attended the Elk Island Heartland Collegiate event and liaised with locally elected officials, individuals from post-secondary institutions, and local industry leaders to discuss the need for additional educational infrastructure in Fort Saskatchewan and the goal of implementing a collegiate model to benefit both students and high-demand career sectors.

*January:* Sent letters of support to both Shannon Stubbs, Member of Parliament for Lakeland, and Garnet Genuis, Member of Parliament for Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan, advocating for the *National Framework for a School Food Program* act.

*January:* Along with a copy of the Division's Annual Education Results Report, sent a letter to elected officials and community leaders profiling EIPS's growth and achievements over the 2022-2023 school year.

### **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 INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ALL*

### **Other**

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

- *October:* Attended the Public School Boards Association of Alberta (PSBA) annual general meeting and fall conference.
- *October and January:* Attended chamber of commerce meetings in Sherwood Park and Vegreville. Of particular note was the January meeting, where the Hon. Nate Glubish, Minister of Technology and Innovation, and MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, gave an update on the state of the province.
- *October and February:* Met with the superintendent and trustees from Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS) to discuss opportunities to partner and work together across divisions.
- *December:* Met with Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) Local 28 president and the ATA Chair of Political Action to discuss common themes in advocating for public education.
- *January:* Trustees and the superintendent escorted the Hon. Nate Glubish on a tour of Bev Facey Community High's computer lab, where he heard from students and teachers about cyber defense and other technology-based learning—which represent significant career opportunities in Alberta.
- *February:* Attended the City of Fort Saskatchewan economic development meeting to learn about the city's vision for future growth.

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*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 1: A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY*

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

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

## 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.