



MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, in-person and virtual meeting

March 5, 2025 | 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Vice-Chair: Michelle Uytterhagen,
Fultonvale Elementary Junior High

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Alanna Mahar, Pine Street Elementary
Anne Wasylyshen, Ardrossan Junior Senior High
Andy Styles, Bruderheim School
Brian Vick, F.R. Haythorne Junior High
Deanna Metro, Ardrossan Elementary
Devon Klein, École Parc Élémentaire
Kim Scott, Sherwood Heights Junior High and
Salisbury Composite High
Krista Scott, Bev Facey Community High
Leanna Bechtel, Fort Saskatchewan Christian
Lora Slobodian, Brentwood Elementary
Marco Candia, Woodbridge Farms Elementary
Miranda Braun, Bruderheim School
Shauna Samu, Heritage Hills Elementary
Shelley Wiebe, A.L. Horton Elementary

Tabitha Topola, Mundare School
Teresa Bladon, Lakeland Ridge (Interim Secretary)
Tom Sunderland, Bev Facey Community High

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Susan Miller, Vice-Chair
Colleen Holowaychuk, Trustee
Don Irwin, Trustee

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sandra Stoddard, Superintendent
Ryan Marshall, Associate Superintendent
Maxine Holm, ATA Local No. 28 President
Emma Small, Communication Services

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

COSC Vice-Chair Michelle Uytterhagen provided the land acknowledgement.

AGENDA

COSC Vice-Chair Uytterhagen called for additions or deletions to the agenda.

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COSC Vice-Chair Uytterhagen called for approval of the Feb. 5, 2025 meeting minutes.

MOTION | The minutes be approved, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Report

Board Vice-Chair Susan Miller presented the Board Report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- From March 2-4, the Board of Trustees attended the 2024 Alberta Rural Education Symposium.
- Board Vice-Chair Miller spoke about equality versus equity—key topics at the event. She provided an example: Equality is every student being given the same pencil in a class, but equity is every student being given a pencil that fits their hand.

Superintendent Report

Superintendent Sandra Stoddard presented the Superintendent Report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- EIPS is implementing a new compensation structure. As such, eligible classified staff will receive a lump sum payment. Classified staff with the Division are not unionized.
- Leadership staff will attend a second session with Kurtis Hewson, a consultant, author and area expert in collaborative response. The work with Hewson is intended to build capacity for leadership staff to implement strong collaborative structures and processes during early out Wednesdays.
- A Division Professional Learning Day will take place on March 7. Certificated staff will meet with their chosen Community of Practice, while classified staff will attend a day of professional development sessions.
- EIPS is exploring full-time kindergarten [pilot programs](#) for the 2025-26 school year—a French Immersion program at École Parc Élémentaire and a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) program at Mundare School and Wes Hosford Elementary.
- EIPS Budget Survey results are informing priority-based budgeting discussions. All results and comments are read by the Board.
- The EIPS Annual Feedback Survey is open until March 21. Superintendent Stoddard encouraged COSC members to share the survey with their school communities.
- The provincial government has changed the transportation distance for K-6 students from 1 kilometre to 1.6 kilometres. With this change, families may see an increase to their transportation fees.
- Superintendent Stoddard provided an overview of [public education funding for 2025-26](#) and an update from the three-year weighted moving average funding model to a two-year model. The Division should receive its funding allocation in mid-March. EIPS will not receive the provincial government's funding manual for school authorities until early April. The Division needs the manual to finalize its own budget.
- EIPS will send an application to fund its Collegiate Pathways programming.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Do funds need to be spent on particular items?

Answer: There are targeted grants and some with flexibility. The Division's approach is to use funds in alignment with the intention of the grant as much as possible.

Comment: In the future, would appreciate focusing on decoding some of the language associated with the budget to help parents make sense of what the information really means to them.

Answer: The funding manual is required to understand the actual impact of any changes in funding. What we hear in the media is not always how it plays out, unfortunately.

Question: Percent changes in any area of the budget do not consider historical underfunding. Are there areas where you are significantly under where you were hoping to be with funding?

Answer: Pleased that education was one of the ministries that received an increase. Complexity in the classroom is something that we struggle with, and it has changed considerably over time. The percent increase for classroom sounds great, but there will still be a gap between funding and need. The work for Career Pathways requires funding to sustain, so it'd be nice to have more dollars there. Infrastructure and maintenance would be helpful as our buildings are aging.

Question: Regarding grant funding for the collegiate programming, when will there be more information available on what the funding will cover?

Answer: By end of April, we'll know what will be funded.

ATA Report

ATA Local No. 28 President Maxine Holm presented the ATA report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Holm expressed the ATA's concern with the provincial budget. She said Budget 2025 fails to meet the funding required to address the needs that've repeatedly been outlined for public education. There's also concern over the increased funding of private and charter schools. The ATA is conducting further analysis and advocacy efforts will continue. The ATA considers itself partners with families that support and advocate for public education. For more information, interested COSC members can look at [The Least? Campaign](#) and [stoptheexcuses.ca](#).
- The ATA believes it'd be beneficial for the provincial government to complete an evaluative process of the new curriculum—especially in mathematics, before rolling curriculum into junior high.
- Holm shared teachers' concern surrounding Alberta Education assessments for K-3 students. Teachers worry about the development and curriculum appropriateness; time and money commitment; the validity and lack of actionability for results; and emotional and mental distress for students and staff.
 - While there is an opt-out option, having standardized assessments completed provides value to the school division and schools to identify where there are additional student needs. Results of assessments may be used by the provincial government to determine some funding allocation. The concern is with the teacher resources required for the new assessments, which are significant—especially in the younger grades.
- Holm also spoke about the upcoming trustee elections—the ATA is hosting a session for potential candidates. For those who know someone interested, they can contact Holm. She asked COSC Liaison Emma Small to provide the event details in the meeting followup email.

For Information

ASCA UPDATE – Michelle Uytterhagen, COSC Vice-Chair

- The ASCA Spring Symposium takes place virtually on April 26. The AGM takes place virtually on April 27. The Board will fund the cost of one registration fee per EIPS school council. Interested councils must have *one* member fill out the [Board-sponsored registration form](#) by April 7. EIPS administration will register school councils for the conference and AGM through ASCA after April 7.
- The [proposed advocacy resolutions](#) are published for the 2025 AGM. There are five in total—if COSC members have questions about a resolution, they can reach out directly to the resolution's sponsor for clarification. COSC members plan to discuss the resolutions at the COSC meeting in April.

CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE – Michelle Uytterhagen, COSC Vice-Chair

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

DRAFT JUNIOR HIGH CURRICULUM UPDATE – Ryan Marshall, EIPS Associate Superintendent

- EIPS Associate Superintendent Marshall said EIPS has received no update as of yet. The Division is still waiting for the finalized curriculum and information on pilots for next year. If information is received early enough, the Division will pilot some of the curriculum with junior high students.
- Next year, the province will develop additional new curriculum to be piloted in the following school year.
- There's an opportunity for advocacy. There should have been a scope and sequence from K-12 for the curriculum. This is not in place. In the past, curriculum was rolled out one subject at a time with resources to support implementation. Currently curriculum is received without resources, so the Division creates the resources. The province is rolling out a junior high curriculum with no evidence of where students stand when they leave Grade 6. This is a concern. Families and school divisions should advocate for a curriculum that prepares students for careers and life with the right competencies and skills, and there needs to be good plans for assessing the curriculum to ensure it's achieving the desired outcomes.

PROVINCIAL ALBERTA EDUCATION ASSURANCE SURVEY – Ryan Marshall, EIPS Associate Superintendent

- The provincial Alberta Education Assurance Survey is for parents, caregivers and students in grades 4, 7 and 10, with an exception for smaller schools that survey students in grades 4 and above. New this year, the responsibility for distributing the survey was given to schools. There is variability in how schools are distributing surveys based on how they communicate with their families and what will work best in their context. This direction created additional work for principals and administration staff. Feedback has been provided to the provincial government.

EIPS ANNUAL FEEDBACK SURVEY: For Parents and Caregivers – Ryan Marshall, EIPS Associate Superintendent

- The EIPS Annual Feedback Survey is open to all parents and caregivers, students in Grade 9 and Grade 12, and all staff.
- For the parent survey, Section A focuses on the school. Section B focuses on the Division.
- EIPS' survey provides different results than the provincial Alberta Education Assurance survey.
- All survey results are anonymous, and the Division goes through responses carefully and uses the feedback in planning.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Comment: The preview questions for the survey are useful to facilitate conversation within school councils.

COSC Sharing

ASCE GRANT AND THE BRAIN ARCHITECTURE GAME – All COSC members

- Bev Facey Community High's school council is hosting the David Irvine presentation next Tuesday—for schools that pooled their Alberta School Council Engagement (ASCE) Grant.
- COSC member Lora Slobodian has been compiling a list to help school councils with ideas for the ASCE Grant within a Google document. School councils can review the document and add to it. The document will be shared on the [COSC Facebook page](#) and within the meeting followup email.

- Regarding the leftover \$500 from Andrew School's ASCE Grant, COSC members discussed the potential idea of using the funds for copies of the Brain Architecture Game.
 - Associate Superintendent Marshall spoke with Marcus Reed, EIPS Director of Specialized Supports, as promised at the COSC meeting in March. The Division owns 15 copies of the game already, so school councils do not need to purchase more. There's no need to use grant funding for this. Mardi Hardt, EIPS Mental Health Advisor, would be willing to train a group of parents, caregivers and staff on how to facilitate the game, as there is a need to be trauma informed.
- COSC members discussed other ideas on how to use the leftover funds:
 - Potential to roll the additional \$500 into the David Irvine presentation as he's doing it at a significantly reduced cost.
 - Potential to use funds to develop a school council resource library at EIPS Central Services. The library could focus on trauma-informed resources, if that's of interest. However, there'd be time and money considerations required for co-ordination and management. May be more effective for school councils to build their own resource library.
 - Potential to use funds to bring in a speaker on advocacy to teach school communities how to advocate on issues important to them.
- For next school year, COSC members considered establishing a committee at the beginning of the year to take ownership of these grants, as they should be managed through school councils rather than through EIPS administration.

POTENTIAL TRUSTEE CANDIDATE QUESTIONS – All COSC members

- Developing a list of potential questions for trustee candidates can help families know good questions to ask candidates as they come to their doors. The goal is to elect a dynamic Board of Trustees comprised of strong supporters of public education.
- Questions were developed for previous elections and will be shared in the meeting followup email, so they can be discussed with school councils. The plan is to provide an opportunity for COSC members to contribute to the questions through followup and then post the full list of questions. COSC members plan to share questions at the COSC meeting in April.
- There's an opportunity to seek a volunteer from COSC or the school councils to establish a website with this information. Holm said the ATA would be happy to be involved in this effort.

New Business

SCHOOL FEE DEVELOPMENT – Sandra Stoddard, EIPS Superintendent, and Ryan Marshall, EIPS

Associate Superintendent

- The previous mandate requiring the Board to approve all school fees was removed. The Board approves parameters of how fees should be set. School administration is intended to share information about school fees a couple of times throughout the school year. Initial consultation with families must take place in January. Second consultation is to happen in March or April.
- A parameter from the Board for this year is a maximum increase of two per cent in any fees, unless approved by the Superintendent.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: What is the two per cent cap based on?

Answer: A cost-of-living increase, but the Division did not consider the impact of unprecedented tariffs.

Question: Is there a difference in fees depending on delivery type, such as online versus in-person courses?

Answer: Teachers submit fees to the administrator, who is then responsible to review these fees. Cannot charge a fee to complete the curriculum in any mandated courses. Fees are associated with additional co-curricular activities, such as field trips and school sports.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:35 P.M.

Next COSC Meeting

DATE: April 2, 2025

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

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