



APRIL 2025

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## BOARD MEETING: April 17, 2025

### Recognition and Awards

#### OUTSTANDING FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

The Board of Trustees recognized two outstanding first-year teachers:

- Janna MacLelland, a first-year kindergarten teacher at Ardrossan Elementary; and
- Kyle Hagens, a first-year Grade 5 teacher at Strathcona Christian Academy Elementary.

Both were recognized for their commitment to education and innate teaching ability. MacLelland is also this year’s Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Edwin Parr Teacher Award nominee, an annual awards program organized by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) to honour first-year teachers who demonstrate excellence in the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

### Board Report

#### RECENT EVENTS

Board Chair Cathy Allen highlighted recent trustee events:

- On March 26, trustees attended an open house and 50th anniversary celebration for Strathcona County Family and Community Services.
- On March 27, Chair Allen attended a spring engagement session hosted by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), which included school board chairs and superintendents from across the province. Also in attendance: Alberta Education’s Minister, Deputy Minister and assistant deputy ministers, who answered questions from the various school divisions.
- On April 2, trustees attended EIPS’ April Committee of School Councils meeting.
- On April 3, trustees attended a joint meeting with Strathcona County to discuss common issues, successes, challenges and opportunities.
- On April 4, trustees attended the Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce State of the City Luncheon with Mayor Gale Katchur. The address focused on Fort Saskatchewan’s strategic plans, economic development and new opportunities. Overall, it was positive and encouraging.
- On April 7-11, schools across EIPS took part in Education Week by organizing events and activities to showcase the important role public education plays in shaping Alberta and its future.
- On April 9, trustees attended an Alberta Education information session that focused on proposed changes to the *Education Act*.
- On April 11, trustees attended the 2025 Great Canadian Trade Fair and Sale, hosted by the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce.
- On April 16, trustees attended the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce State of the County address, with Mayor Rod Frank. The address included a regional outlook, details on the county’s priority areas, economic growth and upcoming development plans—overall, a positive forecast.

## Superintendent's Report

### RECENT EVENTS

Superintendent Sandra Stoddard shared recent events and information, including:

- On March 27, Superintendent Stoddard joined trustees at the ASBA 2025 Spring Board Chairs Engagement Session. The highlight: the Minister briefing, which included details about the provincial budget, capital plan, upcoming initiatives and a question-and-answer period. Following the Minister's briefing, ABSA held an engagement session where attendees provided feedback about inclusive education, updating standards for special education and contingency planning.
- On April 2, Superintendent Stoddard attended the April Committee of School Councils meeting—it's always positive to discuss recent successes and challenges with school councils.
- On April 3, Superintendent Stoddard joined the Board for a joint meeting with Strathcona County—the discussion focused on recent synergies achieved through collaborative efforts.
- On April 9, the Division hosted a professional learning session for the Division's Leadership team. Facilitated by Kurtis Hewson, a consultant, author and area expert in collaborative response, the session focused on strategies and templates to implement strong collaborative structures and processes during early dismissals on Wednesdays and ensure success for all students.

### EDUCATION WEEK

Education Week took place from April 7-11. Throughout the week, students and staff across EIPS used this year's theme, "learning uplifts all," to showcase and celebrate the important role education plays in shaping students and the province's future. Superintendent Stoddard thanked all EIPS staff for the important work they do to ensure the success of all students.

## Association and Employee Relations Reports

### ASBA ZONE 2/3 MEETING

Trustee Colleen Holowaychuk presented highlights from the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 meeting held on April 11. Discussion highlights included:

- regular reports and updates from the ASBA executive;
- an advocacy discussion on accessing supports for students and families—comparing the previous format used, the Regional Collaborative Service Delivery, to the current one and its impact on school boards and students;
- a presentation of the proposed 2025-26 Zone 2/3 budget; and
- details on the approved ASBA Four-Year Sustainable Framework.

The next ASBA meeting is on May 23—the same day as the 2025 Edwin Parr Teacher Award celebration.

### ATA LOCAL REPORT

The Board received for information the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Local No. 28 report from Maxine Holm, the President of the Local. Highlights include:

- On April 1, the Local held its annual general meeting, which included the executive election, recruitment of committee members and the agenda approval for the 2025–26 school year.
- On April 5, the Local's Women in Leadership Committee sponsored a screening of *Miss Representation*.
- On April 5-8, Holm attended the 2025 ULead summit. The highlight: participating in various leadership sessions and connecting with other local, national and international leaders.
- On April 11-12, Holm attended the ATA's 2025 Spring Professional Development Conference, which included several interesting and informative sessions, including one on Robert's Rules of Order.

- On April 11-13, the Local hosted a booth at the 2025 Great Canadian Trade Fair and Sale, to share information about the importance of public education.
- On April 15, the Local hosted its second annual Multicultural Dance Night—featuring both African and Indigenous dances. The Local also recorded the dances to create a how-to video for members to introduce the dances in the classroom.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS GROUP REPORT

The Board received for information the Employee Relations Group (ERG) report from Michelle Miller, the committee's Chair:

- While classified staff feel a sense of rejuvenation with the warmer spring weather, they also feel anxious given the startup of hiring for the 2025-26 school year.
- Staff are also looking forward to having their questions about the new compensation structure answered at the upcoming virtual town hall meeting in May.

## New Business

### BOARD POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board approved amendments to:

- [Policy 18: Alternative Programs](#);
- [Policy 21: Expense Transparency](#); and
- [Policy 22: Health and Safety](#).

The approved changes strengthen the policies' clarity, definitions, language and readability.

### 2025-26 KEY BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The Board approved the key budget assumptions for the 2025-26 school year (see pg. 24, "[2025-26 Key Budget Assumptions](#)"). The assumptions are based on the Board's mission and belief statements, EIPS' [Four-Year Education Plan](#), Alberta's Budget 2025 and the provincial *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2025-26 School Year*. EIPS will use the approved assumptions to develop its 2025-26 spring budget, which helps schools and departments plan for the upcoming school year. As with all assumptions, changes such as funding, reserve usage, enrolment numbers and standard costs can significantly affect the budget.

### ASSUMPTION HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2025-26

*BUDGET PRIORITIES* – Focus areas include support for literacy and numeracy; the collegiate school and career pathways; classroom complexity; curriculum and resource development; staff compensation structure and training for retention; early learning; educational technology, digital tools and artificial intelligence; and equity for rural schools to address unique needs.

*ENROLMENT* – Alberta Education made a significant change to the funding allocation formula. Previously, funding was based on a three-year weighted student enrolment average. Starting in 2025-26, the formula will shift to an adjusted enrolment method based on a two-year weighted student enrolment average—70% for projected Year 1 (2025-26) enrolment and 30% for the estimated Year 2 (2024-25) enrolment. Given the new funding structure, the province has eliminated the Supplemental Enrolment Growth Grant, as the funding percentage (20%) for the third-year enrolment under the prior formula is now added to Year 1 of the new formula, meaning funding levels are weighted more toward current enrolment, ensuring most student growth is funded. Within EIPS, the Division expects student enrolment to decrease by 100 students—dropping to 17,849 students in fall 2025 from 17,949 students in fall 2024.

*FUNDING GRANTS* – For the most part, base funding rates remain unchanged—any increases are related to enrolment growth and the adjusted enrolment method. That said, there are a few grant increases, including Program Supports and Services (up by 2.32%), Classroom Complexity (up by 20%), Operations and Maintenance (up by 3%), Transportation (up by 2.32%), School Technology (up by 20%) and community-based grants (up by 2.32%).

*OTHER REVENUE* – EIPS anticipates receiving provincial funding for its lease agreements, Mental Health Capacity Building, Program Unit Funding and the Division’s Official Languages in Education Program. The Division will also generate revenue through school generated funds and school fees. Additionally, similar to previous years, the spring budget won’t include funding for the Odyssey Language Program, as it’s unknown if the federal government will continue to support it, and the amount.

*COMPENSATION* – EIPS anticipates the overall certificated standard costs to increase by 0.5% and classified standard costs to go up by anywhere from 0.2% to 3.4%. The increases are the result of higher employee benefits rates and salary grid movement.

*INFLATION* – The Division continues to experience inflationary pressures across operations, including increased costs for insurance; the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP) benefits; utilities, construction labour and materials; software; and infrastructure purchases such as fleet vehicles and school buses.

*CARBON TAX* – Given the federal election, EIPS is unsure how the new government will address the carbon tax. As such, department budgets will continue to include consumer carbon tax costs for utilities and busing. If the carbon tax is eliminated, EIPS will hold the funds as a contingency to mitigate the potential tariff impact.

*DEPARTMENTS* – EIPS departments will continue to provide support to schools through their resource allocations.

*RESERVES* – EIPS’ 2025-26 operating reserve limit is 6% of the prior year’s operating expenditures—excluding school generated funds. Any surplus of more than 6% must be returned to Alberta Education. Administration will ensure operating reserves are below that number.

*CAPITAL* – EIPS anticipates \$751,000 in capital needs, \$300,000 funded by school operating budgets, and another \$451,000 worth of capital items—technology infrastructure and a school bus replacement—funded through EIPS’ capital reserves. Looking ahead, EIPS will review and update its five-year capital projects list, as needed.

## **TRUSTEE REMUNERATION**

The Board approved tabling the Trustee Remuneration Report to a future public Board meeting.

## **Committee Reports**

### **POLICY COMMITTEE**

The Board received for information a report from the Policy Committee meeting held on April 8. The committee reviewed five policies—12, 17, 18, 21 and 22. Draft policy 12 was amended to align with the *Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard*, being brought forward at the Board Caucus meeting on May 1. Policy 17 was sent for administration to ensure alignment with government regulations. And, amendments to policies 18, 21 and 22 were approved earlier at the April Board meeting (see pg. 2, “Board Policy Amendments”). The next meeting will take place on June 11.

## GOVERNANCE AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from a recent Governance and Evaluation Committee meeting—held on April 8. Discussion topics included: sections 6 to 8 of the *EIPS Trustee Handbook*, the Board’s work plan, and tentative dates and venues for the next Board retreat. In June, a recommendation report will come forward to the Board on whether the Governance and Evaluation Committee should continue in the 2025-26 school year.

## EIPS SPECIAL BOARD MEETING: April 24, 2025

### New Business

#### BUDGET ALLOCATIONS AND RESERVES USE: 2025-26

The Board approved the budget allocations and reserve usage for the 2025-26 school year. Every year, EIPS establishes assumptions and allocations to serve as building blocks when developing the upcoming budget. The proposed use of reserves and allocations of funds allows schools and departments to invest in essential services and support the Division’s mission, beliefs and priorities. The following summarizes the approved allocations and reserve usages for 2025-26. For more detailed information, see, “[Board Recommendation Report: 2025-26 Budget Allocations and the Use of Reserves.](#)”

#### ACCUMULATED SURPLUS AND RESERVES

Overall, the Division projects an accumulated surplus of \$7.24 million, as of Aug. 31, 2026. The accumulated surplus comprises investment in tangible capital assets (\$8.3 million), operating reserves (\$9.12 million), capital reserves (\$781,900), and asset-retirement obligation (-\$10.97 million). EIPS also plans to access \$1.95 million from its Division allocated operating reserves to support schools and departments—through its key budget priorities (see pg. 3, “Assumption highlights for 2025-26”). Meanwhile, EIPS’ budgeted operating reserve is \$7.42 million, which falls well within its operating reserve limit of \$12.79 million.

#### KEY BUDGET PRIORITIES

EIPS will use a series of allocations and initiatives to support its key budget priorities, including:

*LITERACY AND NUMERACY* – EIPS will support the priority through its Leveraging Student Achievement Reserve, the Reading Enrichment and Development Program, and the Literacy and Numeracy Grant funding.

*COLLEGIATE AND CAREER PATHWAYS* – EIPS will support the priority through the new Campus EIPS, an ongoing focus on building and expanding Career Pathways opportunities and continued efforts to pursue a collegiate school in Fort Saskatchewan.

*COMPLEXITY IN CLASSROOMS* – EIPS will support the priority in the following ways:

- Address learning gaps using the Leveraging Student Achievement reserve funds.
- Build capacity through a new collaborative learning structure, built into the 2025-26 calendar, taking place divisionwide every Wednesday.
- A specialized support allocation, which is largely consistent with the previous year. However, a change was made to the allocation, which reallocates some additional funds to classroom complexity allocations from system program allocations. Similar to last year, the Division will continue to use its complex classroom allocation to address classroom complexity needs equitably. The allocation is based on an algorithm that the Division updated to make improvements, considering several factors, such as provincial achievement and diploma results, levelled inclusive supports, special-education codes and socio-economic factors.

*CURRICULUM AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT* – The grant funding for the priority is increasing by almost half to \$700,000. The reason: The new curriculum roll-out involves kindergarten to Grade 6 social studies. The year before, it only involved grades 4-6 for science and French Immersion language arts and literature. EIPS will use the funds for professional learning and resources.

*STAFF RETENTION AND EQUITY* – EIPS will support the priority by continuing to hire more permanent educational assistants, implementing the new classified compensation structure, offering the Educational Assistant Capacity Building Program, providing more leadership training, adding classified staff to the last operational day of the Division calendar and creating a Workplace Psychological Safety Group.

*EARLY LEARNING* – EIPS will support the priority by piloting two new full-day kindergarten programs—a French Immersion program at École Parc Élémentaire and a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) program offered at Mundare School and Wes Hosford Elementary.

*EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE* – EIPS will support the priority by finalizing its artificial intelligence work, a strategic plan for the use of education and system software solutions in schools and developing the educational technology component for the new curriculum.

*EQUITY FOR RURAL* – EIPS will support the priority through an allocation to help cover school programming, funding shortfalls for small rural schools, and travel allowances for rural-based school staff to attend meetings and professional learning in urban areas. It also plans to fund a symposium with rural families.

## **SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS: 2025-26**

Overall, combined allocations for Schools and Supports for Students-Schools will increase by approximately \$380,000. That said, the exact allocations for each school vary based on the student makeup and classroom complexity. Similarly, for small rural schools, allocations will align with the funding levels detailed in the province’s *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2025-26 School Year*—with any decreases softened through additional allocations. For central departments, excluding Student Transportation, allocations will increase as a result of inflationary costs and staff grid movement. However, the increases are offset by an accounting calculation decrease for capital expenditure and reallocating funds to support the new Campus EIPS, launching in 2025-26. As for Student Transportation, EIPS will adjust its allocations when it develops the spring budget 2025-26—once the grant amount is recalculated and the Board approves Student Transportation fees for 2025-26.

Now approved, EIPS will incorporate the allocations into the 2025-26 spring budget, coming forward to the Board on May 29.

## **Board Members**

Cathy Allen, *Chair* | Susan Miller, *Vice-Chair* | Trina Boymook | Randy Footz | Colleen Holowaychuk | Don Irwin | Ralph Sorochan

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