



Meeting Minutes

Central Office Boardroom, Sherwood Park

Nov. 6, 2019

7 p.m.

In Attendance:

Chair: Jacquie Surgenor, Salisbury Composite High,
Sherwood Heights Junior High & Westboro Elementary
Vice-Chair: Krista Scott, Fultonvale Elementary Junior High
& Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary
Secretary: Lesley Bowman, Pine Street Elementary

Ginger Hassett-Koza, Fultonvale Elementary Junior High
Devon Marshall, Strathcona Christian Academy Elementary
Holly Pedersen, Fort Saskatchewan Christian
Melissa Presse, Davidson Creek Elementary

School Council Members

Jackie Anderson, Ardrossan Elementary & Ardrossan
Junior Senior High
Alison Blaikie, Bruderheim School
April Childs, Lakeland Ridge
Sheila Connolly, Glen Allan Elementary
JP Grebenc, Ardrossan Elementary & Ardrossan Junior
Senior High
Jeff Hanrahan, Bev Facey Community High

Board and EIPS

Chair: Trina Boymook
Trustee: Annette Hubick
Trustee: Jim Seutter

Associate Superintendent: Sandra Stoddard
ATA President: Deneen Zielke
Communications: Corrie Fletcher

Welcome

Jacquie Surgenor, the COSC chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda

Jacquie Surgenor asked if there were any additions to the Nov. 6, 2019 agenda.

- No amendments were made to the agenda.

Motion: To accept the Nov. 6, 2019 agenda as circulated.

Moved: Krista Scott

Seconded: April Childs

Motion Carried

Approval of the Oct. 2, 2019 Minutes

Jacquie Surgenor asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the Oct. 2, 2019 meeting.

- No changes were made.

Motion: To accept the Oct. 2, 2019 minutes as is.

Moved: Alison Blaikie

Seconded: Jackie Anderson

Motion Carried

Board Report – presented by Trina Boymook, Board Chair, EIPS

Board Chair Trina Boymook presented the Board Report. Highlights include:

- At the October 24 Board meeting, trustees directed administration to request funding from Alberta Education to relocate five modular classroom units to SouthPointe School.
- On November 1, the Board met with its three members of the legislative assembly of Alberta. Discussion topics: enrolment growth in Fort Saskatchewan, urgent facility needs to address the growth, provincial budget impacts, and two K-12 recommendations made in the *MacKinnon Report on Alberta's Finances*.
- The Board is disappointed the province is not funding a Sherwood Heights Junior High replacement school.
- On November 4-5, the Board took part in the Results Reviews for the Division's Central Services departments. School Results Reviews are postponed until the spring.
- The School Fee Regulation for the 2020-21 school year was shared.
 - The five per cent limit and ministerial approval are removed.
 - Schools must to individually track costs related to fees for courses, activities, field trips and other revenue.
- Board process for setting school fees for 2020-21:
 - Timeline
 - January: Board establishes fee parameters and principals hold initial parental consultation.
 - February: Principals will establish proposed fees using specific parameters.
 - Hold an initial consultation before setting fees.
 - two weeks notice prior to that meeting;
 - indicate it's a school fee discussion (course fees, noon supervision, activity fees and extracurricular);
 - provide the 2020-21 school fee schedule;
 - provide a list of questions; and
 - provide a summary of the meeting for those parents who can't attend.
 - Responses to the following questions:
 - Do you want more or fewer field trips?
 - Do you want more or fewer course options?
 - Do you want more or fewer tournaments for sports teams?
 - Do you want tournaments in town or out of town?
 - A second meeting with parents in March or April with two weeks notice:
 - provide copies of proposed fees; and
 - the Principal and school council Chair will sign a declaration confirming completion of all steps.
 - Course selection for the upcoming year:
 - course selection occurs before the approval of fees; and
 - the fee schedule, or last year's fee schedule, is provided with course selection.
 - Extracurricular and Sports:
 - before a student can try out for any team, the parent must be aware of the time and cost obligations;
 - the Principal must provide parents with a form that includes the fee, practice, game schedules, responsibilities of team members and other relevant information; and

- parents must sign and return form before tryouts.
 - The Board recognized flexibility is needed to add fees or make changes for missed or new opportunities.
 - Changes during the year are subject to approval by the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer.
 - The Board is working on a reporting mechanism to ensure all fees collected are used for the purpose they were collected.
 - [Board Policy 23: School Fees](#)—already in place.
 - The Superintendent will create an administrative procedure to accompany Policy 23.
- On November 8, the province is hosting a webinar about the Choice in Education Act, at 1 p.m. Chair Boymook is looking forward to hearing stakeholder feedback.

Questions and Comments

Comment: In January, it's good practice to hold meetings in the third week to circulate the information two weeks before the meeting.

Question: Are we asking school councils to serve first notice about the school fee meeting before winter break?

Answer: Yes, the letter should go out before winter break.

Q: What happens when a school doesn't have a strong school council or administration doesn't value the parent perspective in this conversation?

A: Part of the idea of chairs signing the document is for that information to go to school councils and make sure the consultation takes place. We need to establish an accountability process for keeping feedback and how EIPS Central Services conducts followup.

C: This is an opportunity to increase participation and interest in those schools where we need more engagement. It's a positive.

A: This means three of nine council meetings are focused around this mandated fee conversation. Is there a way to increase participation in any of the other focuses on school council?

C: When families see this is the venue for them to come forward, have their voice heard in their school and help make decisions about education at their school, it honours the legislated role of School Councils.

C: Provincial Achievement Results are another way to engage parents.

Q: In terms of implications, can you give an example for elementary?

A: Noon supervision and field trips.

Q: Where does fundraising for band and sports programs fit into this conversation?

A: Administration is amending [AP 520: Fundraising](#). Fundraising money is separate from school fees. For sports teams, it's supposed to be part of the background information about students being on a team—you need to fundraise, donate or give extra cash.

Q: What is the focus of the webinar?

A: It will outline the scope and intent for the Choice in Education Act.

Q: The time of the webinar is tough for some people to attend or listen in, will it be archived?

A: They've done that in the past. And, they also have an opportunity to engage with questions or comments before the event. During the webinar, Chair Boymook will suggest it be archived to accessed later.

Q: Where are the archives?

A: On the Alberta Education Website.

C: Thank you for talking about Parents as Partners for the fee schedule.

ATA Report — presented by Deneen Zielke, President, Alberta Teachers' Association Local No. 28

Deneen Zielke presented the ATA Report. Highlights include:

- The loss of two colleagues saddens Local members. Both Chris Frederickson and Lisa Sauder recently passed away and are deeply missed by students, parents, staff and friends.
- On October 17, Zielke attended Bev Facey Community High's Awards Night. At the event, she presented the ATA Local Scholarship to Anna Fraser, a former Bev Facey Composite High student who is completing a degree in education. She's a hard-working student and will make a great addition to the teaching profession.
- On October 18, the Local hosted its annual Induction Ceremony at the University of Alberta Facility Club. It was a lovely evening and an opportunity to develop collegial connections. Zielke thanked Vice-Chair Heather Wall for attending and bringing greetings.
- Unfortunately, the provincial budget has brought even worse news than anticipated. EIPS teachers are appreciative of the work done by the Board and senior administration to prepare for the budget and its decision to use its reserve funds to provide stability this year. Many Boards are laying off teachers, amalgamating classes and withdrawing services. The ATA recognizes tough decisions are ahead, which will impact the learning conditions for students and working conditions for teachers. Everyone must speak up if there is any hope of turning this around.

For Information

a) Results Review — presented by Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent

- Feedback from Trustees: Some schools do amazing work, getting feedback and sharing results.
- The Division will work on this going forward and discussing ways to gather information from families.
- Principals are starting to make decisions about budgets.
- The strategies from the principals will look different because of the new budget requirements.
- The November Results Reviews are postponed, which coincides with budget.

Comments and Questions

Questions: Will the Results Reviews continue to be in the spring or roll back to November?

Answer: Not sure where it will go in the future.

Q: As parents, being involved in the Results Review is meaningful in the fall. It's more about the strategic implications of reporting in the fall rather than the spring. As a parent, we want to know how last year ended in terms of results and how this is impacted by the budget. Not being able to reflect in November—these were our priorities, how they worked and what we can do going forward—we lose that ability to reflect at the appropriate time.

A: You won't miss out. Those conversations and a review of the results will still take place in April, no matter what. It's temporary for this year only. The ideal time is November.

Q: In terms of principals updating their five-year planning, can we go through our School Education Plan? How did we do relative to the goals?

A: The Board will sit down with the Superintendent on November 8. They will look at schools with areas of greater concern and have those conversations.

Q: Can we expect principals to have this discussion at the November school council meeting as they have in the past?

A: We've informed principals that they need to have this conversation at their school council meetings.

b) ASCA Update – presented by Jacquie Surgenor, COSC Chair

- The Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) received its provincial funding grant.
- Services will continue.

c) ASCA: Online engagement opportunity – presented by Jacquie Surgenor, COSC Chair

- Webinar on November 23, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- The link is on the ASCA website.
- There are three or four engagement opportunities: vaping, diploma examination weightings, education funding and the budget framework.

d) ASCA: School Council Engagement Task Force – presented by Jacquie Surgenor, COSC Chair

- The Choice in Education Act engagement opportunity is closed.
- The second one is on vaping.
- A website on smoking and health has engaged stakeholders to create a plan to advocate for the elimination of flavoured vaping products. Currently, there are no regulations around who can sell vaping products to underage kids.
- There's a survey to fill out on the [ASCA website](#).

e) PEP Talk – presented by Jacquie Surgenor, COSC Chair

- The November issue of [PEP Talk](#) is now available.

New Business

a) Fall 2019-20 Budget – presented by Trina Boymook, Chair, EIPS

Chair Boymook presented the 2019 EIPS Budget:

- As of Aug. 31, 2019, EIPS accumulated surplus totals \$19.7 million, which are not all available to spend by the Division.
 - made up of operating reserves (\$12.6 million), capital reserves (\$895,000) and investment in tangible assets (\$6.27 million).
- The projected Aug. 31, 2020 accumulated surplus is \$11.8 million.
 - made up of operating reserves (\$4.3 million), capital reserves (\$727,000) and investment in tangible assets (\$6.73 million).
- Operational reserves are divided into allocated and unallocated.
 - Allocated reserves include money that is committed to something specific. Typically, these are one-time investments.

- Unallocated reserves aren't committed.
- The Board's allowable threshold is to maintain two per cent, or \$4 million, of its operating budget in unallocated reserves.
- Unallocated reserves are used to cover unexpected expenses that might arise mid-year.
- In spring 2019, Board chose to build a conservative budget for the 2019-20 school year.
- That decision was based on a number of assumptions, given the provincial budget wasn't tabled.
- Assumptions included:
 - no increase in funding;
 - no funding for growth;
 - the elimination of the classroom improvement fund and the nutrition program;
 - no funding related to the teacher's collective agreement; and
 - school staffing was capped at 95 per cent of a school's budget—before it was roughly 97%.
- The province's 2019 budget was tabled on October 24.
- While a conservative approach was used to develop it, the Division didn't foresee the elimination of two important grants—class-size funding and the School Fee Reduction Grant—totalling \$9 million in cuts.
- In addition, two weeks before the budget was tabled, EIPS learned insurance rates are increasing by \$1.5 million, starting in the 2019-20 school year. The added cost wasn't factored into the spring budget.
- Between the budget shortfall and insurance rate increase, EIPS is looking at a \$5.5 million shortfall.
- On October 31, the Board met to go over the provincial budget and determine how to address the shortfall best.
- The government pooled the \$7.9-million class size funding grant, the \$7.9-million Classroom Improvement Fund and the School Fee Reduction Grant of \$1.2 million together and gave it back as a one-time per student transition grant, based on two rates.
 - Urban rate: For school boards that include a community with more than 30,000 residents. The rate is \$203 per student.
 - Rural rate: School boards serving communities with less than 30,000 residents. The rate is \$365 per student.
 - The government is funding EIPS at the urban rate.
 - It doesn't recognize the Division as a mix of both rural and urban, meaning EIPS isn't getting any funding at the rural rate—all students are funded at the urban rate.

CHANGES IN FUNDING ASSUMPTIONS	2019-20 SPRING BUDGET	2019-20 FALL BUDGET	DECREASE IN FUNDING
CLASS SIZE FUNDING	7,909,196	--	(7,909,196)
SCHOOL FEES REDUCTION GRANT	1,221,697	--	(1,221,697)
2019-20 ONE-TIME TRANSITION GRANT	--	3,369,800	3,369,800
ENROLMENT GROWTH	--	1,451,047	1,451,047
TOTALS	9,130,893	4,820,847	(4,310,046)

- Boards were told to balance budgets—through fees, mid-year transportation fees, the use of unallocated funds.

- The Minister will also allow funds to move from capital reserves to unallocated reserves. She'll approve any requested shifts. EIPS rarely allocates reserves into the capital reserve because, in the past, it has been too difficult to move it out once allocated.
- To compensate, the Board is using funds from its unallocated reserves. The use of reserves will alleviate issues related to grant changes, support schools and departments and defer the reality of less funding one more year.
- After such time, the Division's Unallocated Operating Reserve is expected to drop to \$2.61 million, or 1.31% of the total budget, by Aug. 31, 2020, which is below the Board's two per cent threshold.
- The Board's also calling back all central department carry-forward amounts—the only exception is Supports for Students. For schools, the maximum allowable carry-forward amount is one per cent.
- Overall, the provincial investment in education will not move from the 2018-2019 rate until 2023.
 - There's a freeze on the investment in education.
 - Alberta attracts young families, and the pot of money will remain the same while the student population grows by a rate of 2.2% per year or about 15,000 students per year.
- On October 31, the Board met to discuss the shortfall.
 - EIPS ended the year off better than predicted at \$5.36 million in unallocated reserves.
 - In 2019-20, the Board is going to spend below the two per cent unallocated reserve threshold. By Aug. 31, 2020, it will drop to 1.31% of the total budget, or \$2.61 million.
 - The Board will continue to support the startup costs associated with for Heritage Hills Elementary and Davidson Creek Elementary.
 - The Board has suspended upgrades to the remaining modular mechanical cooling systems.
 - Funding for the new curriculum implementation will remain.
- EIPS will not have to reduce staffing in the current school year, providing minimal to no impact to the students in the classroom. That said, this is a one-time-only budget adjustment, and the Division will likely have to make adjustments for the next school year.
- The Board knew the government was going to go after the deficit. Being that Education is the second biggest budget item, the Board was confident the sector would be hit with some cuts. That's why EIPS made the conservative choices it did in the spring.
- The Board will continue to advocate for adequate funding. Because we know how much the province is investing in education, the Board can make plans accordingly.
- The Board will start to have conversations about using high-leveraging opportunities.
- The Division can right-size staffing through retirement.
- Before the spring budget, the Board has time to look at the budget and allocations and determine what that means for EIPS.
- The Board will have generative discussions about what it values and where to put funding.
- The Board will continue to have thoughtful conversations about providing the best education it can for students in the Division.
- Conversations at school council meetings can focus on larger class sizes in the year coming, and if teachers and EAs will have time to work on extracurricular activities. It's a place for parents to step up.

Questions and Comments:

Question: What happens next year if this budget is only for this year?

Answer: We'll be below our reserve thresholds, and we'll have no more money left in the little pots.

Q: Should parents expect higher fees?

A: We need to look at nice to haves and need to haves. We need to start thinking about next year already and knowing what we have. We will need to look at core values and do the best with what we have to continue our best work.

Q: I want to compliment the Board and administration for their commitment to keeping this together for the year and the upcoming year. There are good Boards and good administration, but what is going to happen to the poor performers?

A: We are obligated to present balanced budgets. All boards need to submit a balanced budget by November 30. Everyone is in a deficit and looking at a mid-year adjustment. Some are reducing staff immediately.

Q: Can you comment further on the insurance premium increase?

A: Our insurance has gone up 274 per cent since last year. Insurance rates increased for all school boards that are part of the Alberta School Boards Reciprocal Insurance Exchange.

b) Parents as Partners – presented by Trina Boymook, Chair, EIPS

Methods of engagement the Division uses that work best.

- Results Review. I like to engage the parents that attend to be a part of the conversations.
- What are the methods of engagement the Division uses that work best?
- It seems some parents are hesitant to engage because they aren't sure it would be taken seriously, and their feedback would go nowhere.
- That is part of why results reviews have been so meaningful.
- Over the past four or five years we have been on a trajectory where the Division has asked the questions and taken our responses seriously.
- Do some schools have a school council table at Parent-Teacher Interviews? Is it worthwhile?
 - Could a trustee come and have a table during Parent-Teacher Interviews?
 - Some parents might not necessarily know what to ask or what to say.
- As a Division, we're an example around the province. However, at a school level, there are a wide variety of responses.
 - There is a range, from genuine participation and value to some administrators, essentially resenting our presence.
 - Just as we expect deliverables for other areas, the same should be expected of parents as partners.
 - Adversarial situations create opportunities for honing advocacy, but also prevent optimized co-operation between parents and administration.
 - Parent-Teacher Interviews and Meet-the-Teacher Nights are the things that impact parents and students.
 - It's an opportunity to engage with teachers and help them understand our role as parents and supports our students.
 - I want to be valued for what I bring to the conversation and that I am the expert on my child.
 - How do we create that value for parents and staff? We all want kids to succeed. That might look different to different people. But it means a genuine commitment to that process.
 - What do we do when we don't get that?
 - How do we convey that to school council chairs?

- What does cultural change look like? A shift from a principal in a position for many years could take a while to turn around.
- It will take time, and we shouldn't get frustrated.
- Parents as Partners has been a part of our Division goals for as long as we can remember. It's an expectation for some and not all? How do we measure our success on something that is a soft skill?
- There will be bad experiences, which happens in every organization. We need to know this isn't the common experience in our Division.
- It often takes a challenging situation to get involved. Bring it back to understanding who's the customer—in this case, it's the student, and their advocate is their parent.
- Where do we go when it seems like there is an ongoing problem and no solution?
- If there is a performance discrepancy between teachers and style, where do we go in these situations?
- Points of engagement are being informed, consulting and collaboration.
- Collaboration can be a part of it but doesn't necessarily equal partnership. We have made big gains in the engagement piece, however, school-based leadership should know where they are engaging with us.
- An environment of mutually beneficial partnership is where we need to go to begin the conversation at our schools.
- We need to know that there is a place to go that we will be heard and that respects me as the expert in my child.
- It makes us think of the Leadership Quality Standard—what's the metric for the measurement of these?
- A framework for conversation that demonstrates the value of parents as partners.
- Clearly, there is a desire for some process around parental engagement and some further discussion of what parents as partners look like from school to school.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

The next COSC meeting:

Date: Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020

Time: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Location: Boardroom, EIPS Central Services Office, in Sherwood Park