



Committee of  
School Councils

# MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, virtual meeting

Jan. 6, 2021 | 6:30 p.m.

## In Attendance

### SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

**Chair:** Lesley Bowman, Pine Street Elementary

**Vice-Chair:** Devon Marshall, SCA Elementary

Brian Vick, Brentwood Elementary

Sara Witholt, Heritage Hills Elementary &  
Woodbridge Farms Elementary

### SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ken Allen, A.L. Horton Elementary

Jackie Anderson, Ardrossan Elementary & Ardrossan  
Junior Senior High

Aileen Bozic, SCA Secondary

April Childs, Lakeland Ridge

Jen Fraser, Salisbury Composite High

Nadine Fricke, James Mowat Elementary

Dawn Ferguson, Win Ferguson Elementary

Cara Kern, Pine Street Elementary

Cassandra Levitt, Fort Saskatchewan Christian

Theresa MacKenzie, Westboro Elementary

Robyn Michaelchuk, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary

Melissa Pressé, Davidson Creek Elementary

Krista Scott, Bev Facey Community High, Fultonvale  
Elementary Junior High & SCA Secondary

Jacquie Surgenor, Westboro Elementary & Salisbury  
Composite High School

Michelle Uytterhagen, Fultonvale Elementary  
Junior High

### ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trina Boymook, Chair

Colleen Holowaychuk, Vice-Chair

Skip Gordon, Trustee

Annette Hubick, Trustee

Don Irwin, Trustee

Jim Seutter, Trustee

Harvey Stadnick, Trustee

### ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent

Jeremy Albert, EIPS First Nations, Metis and Inuit  
Education Centre

Cheryl Devin, First Nations, Metis and Inuit  
Education Centre

Amit Mali, Lamont High

Ryan Marshall, Director, Supports for Students

Deneen Ziekle, ATA Local No. 28 President

Corrie Fletcher, Communications

## CALL TO ORDER

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

### COSC ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Lesley Bowman, the COSC Chair, called the election for the position of Secretary for the 2020-21 school year. There were no nominations for Secretary, and no one declared intent to seek the position. Jacquie Surgenor volunteered to fill the role for the January meeting. The COSC Chair will call an election for the Secretary at the start of each COSC meeting until the position is filled.

## AGENDA

COSC Chair Bowman called for additions or deletions to the agenda for Jan. 6, 2021.

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, as circulated.

*MOTION CARRIED*

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bowman stated after discussion with the COSC executive, they believe the intent of the October minutes was captured. As such, no further changes are needed to the October minutes. Bowman called for confirmation of the meeting minutes for Oct. 7, 2020.

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, as circulated.

*MOTION CARRIED*

Bowman called for confirmation of the meeting minutes for Nov. 4, 2020.

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, as circulated.

*MOTION CARRIED*

## Board Report

Board Chair Trina Boymook presented the Board report.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Students in grades 7-12 transitioned to temporary online learning on November 30. Meanwhile, students in kindergarten to Grade 6 transitioned today. All in-school learners return to in-person classes on January 11.
- Throughout November, the Board of Trustees took part in the Results Review process for all departments and schools. Chair Boymook thanked all school council members who participated.
- At the November 26 Board meeting, trustees:
  - Approved EIPS' 2020-21 fall budget. The 2020-21 operating budget was initially approved by the Board on May 28, 2020. Annually, in the fall, the budget is updated to account for current information regarding enrolment numbers, revenue changes, actual carryforward amounts, expenses and planned reserve spending. In total, the Division's 2020-21 operating budget is \$201.53 million, which includes the federal government's Safe Return to Class money.
  - Accepted the recommendation from the Sherwood Park Value Scoping Session report, produced by Edmonton-based START Architecture. In September 2020, the Division conducted a value scoping session to explore alternative solutions to address the infrastructure needs at Sherwood Heights Junior High and surrounding schools. Based on the discussion, START prepared a report with three recommended solutions. After reviewing each, the Board approved the third solution—combining Sherwood Heights Junior and École Campbelltown into a new kindergarten to Grade 9 school; a minor modernization of Pine Street Elementary, and reducing the footprint of Salisbury Composite High.
  - Approved a change to the 2021-22 Division calendar—moving a professional learning day in October.
  - Approved several amendments to its bylaws in preparation for the upcoming trustee election. It also appointed the returning officer. On Jan. 4, 2021, nominations opened and remain open until noon on Sept. 20, 2021. Refer to the [trustee section](#) on the EIPS website for more information.
- At the December 17 Board meeting, trustees:
  - Directed administration to establish a Junior High Honours system program. Starting in 2021-22, EIPS will offer an honours program at Ardrossan Junior Senior High, F.R. Haythorne Junior High and Sherwood Height Junior High—the same schools the pilot project took place in 2020-21. The program is open to students in grades 8 and 9 who have an academic average of 80 per cent or higher in all four core subjects along with common entrance criteria, such as teacher rating scales. Chair Boymook thanked all those who offered input through the Division survey in the fall.

- Accepted the recommendation to suspend the Provincial Achievement Tests (PAT) for the 2020-21 school year.
- The Returning Student Registration process takes place from February 1-28. Those planning to attend a school or program of choice must declare intent during the Returning Student Registration process. More information will come from the Division.

#### COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

**Question:** The Junior High Honours is at three school sites. Is it only for grades 8 to 9?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Q:** How will funding work for smaller schools, where losing three to four students could be a major hit to their budgets—especially if the school has them in Grade 7, but not grades 8 and 9?

**A:** We recognize sometimes losing even two students is a big blow. There's limited space available in the programs, and students need to meet the criteria to get into the program. Schools also have the ability to offer enhanced learning for those students who are not at those schools. The returning student registration process happens before the budget. So, principals know numbers, and make staffing and funding decisions before that. Principals will know well in advance what their budgets are. We have three sites, and the registration process helps us know what demand is: Do we have enough space for the demand? EIPS has also created challenging Career and Technology Foundations courses—available to junior high schools—and STEM and humanities projects—available at any school. Principals make decisions about what works within their local context.

Chair Boymook asked for comments about the transition between in-school and the temporary online learning:

- Much better than the spring. But, as working parents—both working from home—it was very difficult to work from home. Google Meet was spread out, so it was disruptive for full-time working parents. Parents might need to take time off from work to make it work.
- The transition was much smoother this fall rather than the spring—probably because of the teacher my one child has. Teachers spent a great deal of time preparing students for Brightspace as well.
- Excellent. Appreciates the emphasis on leaving cameras on. It is a great opportunity to talk to your kids about the importance of having them on: You are in a classroom. Parents can talk about value to the teacher, but also to a student. Shocked and amazed at the quality of instruction.
- For their junior high student, the school nailed it. Thank you for keeping options, foods was especially amazing. The parent is grateful to keep that part going—the home economics teacher was a superhero. Having cameras on was great too. Meanwhile, for their elementary students, it could have been more done education-wise during the quarantine time. They understand it's a tough time, but even today, their child only had a half-hour Google Meet. Then, they had to write in their journal, and that was it. Also, their Grade 6 child, had two half-hour Google Meet sessions with a very small amount of work. The perception is a challenge. They had a whole afternoon off, which was hard because they are a working parent. The parent hopes if online continues, there's more education. EIPS response: We know parents want consistency between schools, and we have clear parameters about what a day needs to look like. If you have a different experience, reach out to your school principal—equity of opportunity is important. You can also followup with Sandra Stoddard.
- The quality of instruction is fantastic. The school nailed it in the spring. But the parent's children are more tired this time. It was such a quick switch, and they were so disappointed to have to come home and learn from home. The quality of instruction was great. There is some disconnect in terms of expectations in some small aspects. The parent loves that cameras need to be on, and teachers are taking attendance.

**Comment:** Thank you for the Brightspace information night. I was shocked at participation levels and very grateful for the way the sessions were run. I heard great feedback from other parents too. The content was great. I hope it translates to more parents using Brightspace and fewer questions at the school level.

**C:** Thank you for including parents at results reviews, and that they are asked questions and included, not just sitting there.

# ATA Report

ATA Local No. 28 President Deneen Zielke presented the ATA report.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The theme of this school year is adaptation and change. There was significant preparation required for parents, teachers and school divisions. The switch back to in-person requires extra work too. The Local's disappointed by the lack of support from the government.
- With online learning, there is often an assumption made everyone has access to a device, which is false. Some kids weren't able to join because older siblings or parents were using that device. So, being able to run full-day synchronous lessons isn't feasible. Turning off the camera and doing guided practice mirrors what happens in the classroom. Some kids are home alone and trying to manage this themselves.
- Teaching online is more difficult as teachers can't capitalize on as many learning experiences as in-person.

## COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

**Questions:** Are students allowed to borrow Chromebooks from the school?

**Answer:** Sandra Stoddard replied it's an individual school decision. For elementary, because it was only three days, likely, they would leave it as is.

**Q:** If a child switches to out-of-school learning from in-school learning, can they access a Chromebook?

**A:** Stoddard replied "no," as EIPS doesn't have the capacity at the Division level.

## For Information

**ASCA UPDATE** – Krista Scott and Jacquie Surgenor, COSC members and ASCA Board directors

- The grant funding for services that Alberta Education normally gives to the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) was cut by 70 per cent with no prior indication. The [letter from the Education Minister](#), ASCA's response and [clarification](#) about some of the claims in the letter are posted on the [ASCA website](#).
- The Board of Directors had several long discussions about how to move forward. It feels supports for school councils is essential. So, it's determining how to continue with the supports.
- Jacquie Surgenor and Krista Scott encouraged COSC members to be engaged in the political process. Municipal and school board elections happen in October 2021. ASCA will have a political advocacy-engagement package available for school councils.
- Scott and Surgenor encouraged COSC members to continue reaching out to elected officials to voice concerns surrounding education.
- Regardless of the grant reduction, ASCA will continue with advocacy. The Board is funded through membership fees, not the government grant. So, the advocacy work will continue, albeit possibly different.

**SCHOOL COUNCIL MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** – Lesley Bowman, COSC Chair

Given the news about ASCA's funding, Bowman stated the COSC executive will need to re-examine the school council mentorship initiative—discussed at the November meeting.

**CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE** – Lesley Bowman, COSC Chair

Information about the February Caregiver session is included in the [January COSC package](#).

**SAFFRON CYBER SECOND** – Lesley Bowman, COSC Chair

The *Saffron Cyber Second* is back. Bowman worked with Saffron to create an updated version. It looks different from the previous one and has good links and information. You can distribute it in a school council newsletter, the school newsletter or through social media. It includes good advice and tips.

## **EIPS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY** – Trina Boymook, EIPS Board Chair

Board Chair Boymook shared the [EIPS' Public Engagement Strategy spectrum](#). It includes levels of engagement along with the purpose and EIPS' commitment to the public for each level. The spectrum is a tool the Division uses when engaging stakeholders and the public at large.

### COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

**Questions:** Public versus parent engagement, who is public engagement?

**Answer:** The spectrum doesn't change. Public for EIPS is different stakeholders—the community, staff, parents, families, business community. For example, with Heritage Hills Elementary, there were different stages—the design and name. It's easier to provide information to school families as EIPS has their contact information. With members of the community, the Division uses a variety of different strategies to inform them about undertaking consultation.

- *Internal Community:* staff, school families, students
- *Public:* all stakeholders other than staff

**Comment:** It's important for parents to understand, so we have the right language. It's important for us as parents to have the correct language when we come to the Board and ask what level of engagement the Board has utilized. It helps us understand the intent with the engagement and communication. My hope is we start using the language now, so we all know and can understand it. We also need to encourage school councils to use this as a working document to have discussions about decisions coming down that affect the school.

## **New Business**

### **ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORT** –Sandra Stoddard, EIPS Associate Superintendent

For the full report read: [EIPS Annual Education Results Report 201-20](#) and [Annual Education Results Report Summary 2019-20](#).

Stoddard gave a shoutout to communications for helping craft it and create the layout.

Summary at a high level:

- In November, EIPS looks back at its results from the previous year. Last year, the Division didn't get all the diploma exam results, nor PAT results, but did a survey.
- The results help us determine plans to make moving forward.
- It is important to bring staff, families and the Board to results reviews. It allows schools to do their report, share results and highlight to the community the successes and challenges they've experienced.
- As a Division, we produce a document, *Annual Education Results Report*, which outlines what we've done in the previous year and demonstrates how EIPS is achieving the priorities, goals and outcomes laid out in the Four-Year Education Plan.
- Schools need to align their School Education Plans to the Division's plan, which must align with Alberta Education's plan.
- Once approved by the Board, the document is posted on the EIPS website at the end of November. EIPS also commits to sharing it with COSC as heads of school councils.
- On page 9, it outlines EIPS' Assurance Cycle. For EIPS, it is important we are hearing back from stakeholders on the question: Do you have confidence in the Division and the direction moving forward. There are key times in the year EIPS will consistently gather input, but it will also gather these on an ad-hoc basis.
- Alberta Education has highlighted assurance as important to education.
- There will be discussions coming with the Board to decide how to get meaningful engagement from community stakeholders.
- Confidence in what we are doing will be very important to administration and the Board moving forward.
- The AERR is very honest about what EIPS did well and what it needs to work on.

## **FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT PROGRAMMING: 2020-21** – Jeremy Albert and Cheryl Devin, EIPS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Centre

Jeremy Albert and Cheryl Devin introduced the work the EIPS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Centre has done over the past few years, and shared how it's engaging parents.

- EIPS is seen as leading-edge throughout the province in terms of what it's doing around Nations, Métis and Inuit education.
- They stressed the importance of speaking Indigenous languages as many have never heard these, and as a celebration of the resilience against the Residential School System.
- A lot of this work stems from what came out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action. The Commission listened to the stories of survivors and determined actions that should be undertaken in all different areas of Canadian society.
- Call to Action No. 63:
  - develop and implement K-12 curriculum and learning resources;
  - build student capacity; and
  - identify teacher-training needs.
- Albert and Devin work to implement this call to action. Many stakeholders signed an agreement to implement this call to action.
- The three Quality Standards—the professional expectations for teachers, school leaders and system leaders are expected to follow—include three new competencies to honour the TRC's calls to action.
- The centre's focus is on building meaningful relationships as we can't do anything without these relationships.
  - How do we create ethical space where Indigenous families can come and know it's a welcoming, safe space and not a place of harm as may have been in their past experiences?

Main Roles within EIPS:

- Direct supports to students and their families.
- Allocate and monitor Divisionwide targeted funding.
- Foster respectful relationships between First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and the Division.
- Offer dynamic professional learning, engaging student lessons and authentic classroom resources.

Each school must come up with a project plan to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and there is an expectation there will be a lead teacher.

Reconciliation is:

- "establishing and maintaining mutually a respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada." –Truth and Reconciliation of Canada.
- *A Knock on the Door* is a great resource.

EIPS still sees the legacy and impact of residential schools. Most people didn't talk about it, even in families with survivors.

The centre has a three-year plan for engaging parents:

General Information Sessions – open to everyone

- Introduction: February 2; 7 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Terminology: February 23; 7 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Indigenous Languages: March 16: 7 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Self-Identified Family Sessions

- January 26; 7 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

## **COVID-19 UPDATE – Sandra Stoddard, EIPS Associate Superintendent**

- As of January 6, EIPS has 0 active cases.
- Between September 2020 to December 2020, there were
  - a total of 117 cases reported
  - 29 out of 43 schools had confirmed cases
  - 18 schools had fewer than four confirmed cases
- Currently, EIPS has one school on outbreak status—Strathcona Christian Academy Elementary; zero active cases, outbreak ends January 8.
- Currently, EIPS has one school on watch status—SCA Elementary, zero active cases; watch ends January 8
- Salisbury Composite High, Bev Facey Community High, Clover Bar Junior High and Westboro Elementary were lifted off the watch list.
- Over Christmas, it was quiet.

## **COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

**Question:** What are the isolation requirements for busing? I thought it was two rows in front and beside, but I heard about whole buses being required to isolate?

**Answer:** As it was close to holidays, we didn't want to leave it up to chance and wanted to allow them to get tested as we thought they might see family.

**Q:** Will we move back to two rows as the isolation requirement?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Are we still expecting an announcement on January 12?

**A:** We don't know. We heard there should be an update on the 12th, but we are finding we don't get information in advance. We found out that we are going back through a Facebook post.

**Comment:** Stoddard mentioned about the funding cut for ASCA and recommended COSC members look at the funding model and the Assurance Model as the importance of school councils is highlighted there.

**Q:** In November, you mentioned there had been no in-school transmission. Is that still the case?

**A:** We would need to have a final conversation with the Division Principal. What we were able to determine is transmission had not occurred in school. We've not been notified of in-school transmission as of late December

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:42 p.m.

## **Next COSC Meeting**

**DATE:** Feb. 3, 2021

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

**LOCATION:** Virtual meeting, link available in February agenda