



AUG. 26, 2021

Chair's Report

CHILD AND YOUTH WELL-BEING

On June 30, Chair Boymook attended a youth mental health town hall, as part of the province's Child and Youth Well-Being Review. The town hall was specifically aimed at school boards, focusing on the school experience during the pandemic and what supports divisions need for the upcoming school year. Chair Boymook shared Elk Island Public Schools' (EIPS) experience and the need for more family school liaison workers, particularly in the rural areas.

NEW STAFF ORIENTATION

Chair Boymook had the honour of meeting the Division's newest classified employees at the annual Off To A Good Start conference, an orientation program for new EIPS staff on August 24. The Division's hosting another orientation for new certificated staff on August 27. Chair Boymook's pleased to have the new employees joining the EIPS team and wishes them the best in the upcoming school year.

STRATHCONA COUNTY FOOD BANK

Over the summer, the Board received a letter from the Strathcona County Food Bank thanking the Division and its schools for the tremendous support over the last year. Collectively, the ongoing food and cash donations make a significant impact in the community.

Superintendent's Report

STARTUP AND WELCOME

Superintendent Mark Liguori welcomed staff and students to another school year. Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is thrilled to have more than 17,000 students returning to school this year. He also thanked EIPS staff for all the work done over the summer, behind the scenes, preparing for the school startup and ensuring operations takes place in the safest way possible.

RECENT EVENTS

Superintendent Liguori also highlighted recent events:

- On August 5, Superintendent Liguori attended a luncheon hosted by the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce. The keynote speaker: Premier Jason Kenney, who discussed the province's economy and projects planned within Strathcona County.
- On August 23, Superintendent Liguori met with EIPS' leadership team at the Division's annual opening school meeting. It was great to see everyone in person again.
- On August 24, EIPS hosted its annual Off To A Good Start, an orientation program for new employees. The August 24 event was for classified staff. The Division's hosting the Off to a Good Start for certificated employees on August 27.

Comments from the Public

MASK MANDATE

The Board heard three delegations regarding its recent decision to make masks mandatory in all EIPS elementary schools and all schools if the percentage of fully vaccinated youth (ages 12-19) in the community is less than 70 per cent. The delegations included:

- Delegation 1:** Courtney Liddle, a teacher and a parent of children attending EIPS, voiced her concerns about mandatory mask use in some Division schools—citing the use can have negative effects on children—physically, socially and mentally. She asked the Board to reconsider its decision by making masks optional to the student and families.
- Delegation 2:** Heidi Andruchow, a parent of children attending EIPS, voiced her concerns about mandatory mask use in some Division schools—citing possible adverse effects, parent choice, a low risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes in children, potential of improper use of masks and disfavoured using a community’s immunization rate to determine mask protocols. She asked the Board to reverse its mask mandate.
- Delegation 3:** Maggie Sinfield and D’Arcy Vermette, both parents of children attending EIPS, voiced their support for the Division’s mask protocol. Both expressed their appreciation—citing it protects students and their families who aren’t eligible to be vaccinated or at risk of severe outcomes, ensures fewer learning interruptions throughout the school year, and makes sense to link it to vaccination rates in the community. They asked the Board to keep the mask mandate until most school-aged children are fully vaccinated.

The Board thanked all four individuals for taking the time to present feedback to trustees.

Association and Local Reports

ATA LOCAL REPORT

The Board received for information the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) Local No. 28 report from President Deneen Zielke:

- Teachers look forward to a more normal school year. However, many are concerned about students and staff, given the rise in COVID-19 cases, the more contagious Delta variant, and the number of children still ineligible for the vaccine.
- Zielke thanked the Board and senior administration for their work developing the *EIPS Operations Guidelines 2021-22*. While some people are upset about the Board’s decision about mandating masks in some Division schools, most of the feedback received by the ATA Local is positive. It’s important public-health measures are in place to provide a safe and stable learning environment to students.

New Business

BUSINESS ARISING FROM IN CAMERA

The Board approved the motion: “that the Board of Trustees approve the use of \$200,000 from reserves for the expansion of the Home Education program for additional student registration through Next Step for the 2021-22 school year, conditional on the approval of the Minister of Education.”

2020-21 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE: AMENDED

The Board approved the amended Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule for the 2020-21 school year. The schedule now includes September and October of 2021 (see pg. 12, [“2020-21 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule”](#)).

Committee Reports

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report about the Advocacy Committee meeting held on June 28. Topics discussed: strategies for the Board’s advocacy efforts, including a new campaign focused on the value of public education, launching in September.

Trustee Reports Roundtable

Trustees shared information and highlighted recent events:

- **Vice-Chair Colleen Holowaychuk** attended the virtual Canadian School Boards Association's annual congress in July. She hopes everyone had a nice summer and is looking forward to a wonderful year ahead.
- **Trustee Randy Footz** wishes everyone, staff and students, within EIPS a safe and successful school year.
- **Trustee Annette Hubick** attended the virtual Canadian School Boards Association's annual congress in July. The highlight: a student panel focused on mental health. She wishes everyone a safe and more joyous and engaging education experience this year.
- **Trustee Jim Seutter** looks forward to a normal school year.
- **Trustee Harvey Stadnick** mentioned trustees received several emails from concerned families. What he hopes for is a school year much better than last year.
- **Trustee Heather Wall** wishes all EIPS students, staff and families a healthy, happy and safe school year.

EIPS Bereavements

On behalf of the Board, Chair Boymook extended condolences to the family, friends, colleagues and students of Jill Hayduk, who passed away on July 21. For the last eight years, Hayduk worked at A.L. Horton Elementary as an educational assistant helping the teaching team and supporting students. She's remembered for her passion, dedication and as a caring educator and colleague. She'll be missed by all.

Board Members

Trina Boymook, *Chair* | Colleen Holowaychuk, *Vice-Chair* | Randy Footz | William (Skip) Gordon | Annette Hubick | Don Irwin | Jim Seutter | Harvey Stadnick | Heather Wall

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