

APRIL 21, 2022

Chair's Report

RECENT EVENTS

Board Chair Trina Boymook highlighted some recent events:

- On March 25, Chair Boymook attended the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 meeting—always informative with valuable networking opportunities. At the meeting, she expressed concerns to Marilyn Dennis, the President of ASBA, about a new provincial rule requiring school boards to seek further ministerial approval to access reserves and discussed advocacy efforts to reintroduce the fuel-price contingency fund.
- On March 30, Chair Boymook, Vice-Chair Colleen Holowaychuk and Superintendent Mark Liguori attended a meeting with the Village of Andrew Council. The meeting was a followup to a recent Board delegation and ways the Division and Village can work together.
- On April 6, Chair Boymook, Vice-Chair Holowaychuck, and trustees Ralph Sorochan and Don Irwin attended the Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce luncheon. The highlight: guest speakers Nate Glubish, the Minister of Service Alberta and member of the legislative assembly of Alberta for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, and Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, the member of the legislative assembly of Alberta for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. While there, the Board shared its need for processes and supports to transition students arriving from Ukraine effectively.
- On April 8, Chair Boymook attended the 2022 Great Canadian Trade Fair and Sale, hosted by the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce. The event was well attended and offered an opportunity to meet and network with local decision-makers.
- On April 14, Chair Boymook joined school board chairs across the province in a virtual meeting with Education Minister Adriana LaGrange. The focus: The release of the new curriculum, its implementation, and available supports and resources.
- On April 19, the Board took part in a media training session. The session was excellent and will help trustees hone a skill set that benefits them beyond just media interviews.

STUDENT FORUM

On April 12, close to 80 students in junior high and senior high schools throughout the Division gathered to share ideas at the EIPS Student Forum 2022. Led and facilitated by Elk Island Public Schools, the forum focused on career pathways and student well-being. Last year, the EIPS Board of Trustees surveyed families, staff, students and community members to gauge its progress toward meeting the priorities, goals and outcomes outlined in the Division's [Four-Year Education Plan](#) and help guide future decision-making. The feedback demonstrated two key areas are critically important to all stakeholder groups: preparing students for life beyond high school and student mental health and well-being.

Using the World Café style, students shared their thoughts on those two key areas: how the Division can better prepare and transition students for life after senior high and enhance the supports it provides for student mental health and well-being. EIPS will now review the responses from the Student Forum, along with feedback it solicited from the school community in both areas, and update its priority strategies related to career pathways and student well-being accordingly. It will also use the data to inform the new *EIPS Four-Year Education Plan* and develop individual school education plans.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

National Volunteer Week takes place April 24-30. Within EIPS, hundreds of volunteers offer their time and expertise on an ongoing basis. Collectively, these efforts help support the success of EIPS schools and make a

difference in the lives of students and their learning environments. In recognition of National Volunteer Week, and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, Chair Boymook thanked all EIPS volunteers for the many ways they give their time, skills and resources to the Division.

Superintendent's Report

RECENT EVENTS

Superintendent Mark Liguori highlighted several recent events:

- On March 30, Superintendent Liguori joined Chair Boymook and Vice-Chair Holowaychuk for a meeting with the Village of Andrew Council. The meeting focused on ways the Division and village can continue to work together to help build the community and Andrew School.
- On April 10-12, Superintendent Liguori attended the 2022 uLead Conference in Banff, Alta. The conference focused on education leadership, and the highlight: keynote speaker Chief Cadmus Delorme who offered a powerful message about truth, reconciliation and the pathway forward.
- On April 21, Superintendent Liguori joined the Board for the media-training session, which was excellent, informative and valuable.

Association and Local Report

ASBA ZONE 2/3 REPORT

Trustee Jacqueline Shotbolt attended the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 meeting on March 25. The meeting included standard business items and two professional learning sessions—parliamentary procedures and system thinking. Professional learning for the next meeting focuses on reconciliation.

ATA LOCAL REPORT

The Board received for information the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) report from Maxine Holm, the Communications Officer for Local No. 28:

- On April 2, school board trustees, teachers, parents and concerned Albertans spoke out about their concerns with the new kindergarten to Grade 6 curriculum at rallies provincewide. Those at the rally believe the new curriculum is flawed, rushed and incomplete.
- On May 3, the local is hosting its annual general meeting, which will include the election of table officers and budget approval for the 2022-23 school year.

New Business

POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board approved an amendment to [Board Policy 2: Role of the Board](#)—changing “Assurance Framework Review” to “Annual Education Results Report.”

2022-23 KEY BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The Board approved the key budget assumptions for the 2022-23 school year (see pg. 20, “[2022-23 Key Budget Assumptions](#)”). The assumptions are based on the province’s Budget 2022 and *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2022-23 School Year*. EIPS will use the approved assumptions to develop a conservative 2022-23 spring budget to help schools and departments begin planning for the upcoming school year. As with all assumptions, any changes such as funding, reserve usage, enrolment numbers and standard costs can significantly affect the budget.

ASSUMPTION HIGHLIGHTS

- **General operations:** Operations will focus on increased student-learning opportunities, new curriculum work, a new mental health strategic plan, technology upgrades and public-health best practices.
- **Alberta Education:** Alberta Education plans to introduce three new grants: the Student Well-Being Grant, Curriculum Implementation Grant, and Dual Credit and Enhancements for Career and Technology Studies. However, the province's *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2022-23 School Year* doesn't include details on distributing the grant monies or any associated restrictions.
- **Other Funding:** EIPS expects the funding from the province to cover its lease agreements for Strathcona Christian Academy Elementary and Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary; the Mental Health Capacity Building grant to remain in place; all assessments for Program Unit Funding completed by the deadline set by Alberta Education; School Generated Funds to return to normal—similar to the 2018-19 actuals; and funding for the Division's French programming to continue, albeit with a slight reduction because how the programs are split. However, unlike the fall budget, the spring budget doesn't include funding for the Odyssey Language Program, as it's uncertain if it will be supported in 2022-23.
- **Enrolment:** For the 2022-23 school year, the Division expects slightly lower student registration numbers than in fall 2021—decreasing to 16,942 students from 17,124 students.
- **Compensation:** EIPS anticipates overall employee compensation to remain flat. Benefit expenses will increase. However, certificated standard costs will drop by 1.8%—primarily because of hiring teachers with fewer years of experience to replace those retiring or resigning, and the use of temporary staff to fill leaves. Meanwhile, classified standard-cost changes will increase between 0.4% and 4.3%—based on grid movement and benefits costs.
- **Reserves:** New in 2022-23, the province defined the Operating Reserve Limit parameters. School boards must keep operating reserves within a certain percentage of the operating expenses. Alberta Education will recover any money school boards hold in excess of that set limit—in December 2023. For EIPS, the limit is 3.15%, or an estimated \$6.07 million. Administration will ensure operating reserves are below that number.
- **Expenses:** The Division anticipates overall expenses to increase—mostly because of rising fuel, inflation, insurance and Federal Carbon Tax costs. These increases mainly affect Student Transportation budgets, school fees and utility costs.
- **Inflation:** EIPS anticipates significant increases in non-salary inflationary costs based on the overall consumer price index—furnishings, equipment, supplies for Careers and Technology Studies. Schools and departments will cover all added inflationary expenses.
- **System and Administration:** System and administration expenses will stay below the targeted grant amount, \$6.3 million, provided by Alberta Education. The Division will allocate any unused amount for Board expenditures, such as instruction.

ALLOCATIONS AND USE OF RESERVES: 2022-23

The Board approved the budget allocations and reserve use for the 2022-23 school year (see pg. 31, "[2022-23 Budget Allocations](#)"). The following is a summary of the approved allocations and reserve usage.

ALLOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

For the 2022-23 school year, funding from Alberta Education is relatively the same as the current school year. Although, there are some new funding items, including:

- a 1% increase to base funding for kindergarten and grades 1 to 12;
- a 1% increase to Operations and Maintenance;
- a 4.6% increase for Student Transportation;
- various adjustments between grant categories;
- the introduction of the student well-being grant, curriculum funding and new school grant; and
- a commitment to hold school divisions harmless for enrolment decreases resulting from the pandemic.

Overall, the Division’s projected accumulated deficit is \$2.41 million, as of Aug. 31, 2023. The accumulated deficit comprises investment in tangible capital assets, operating reserves and capital reserves, and asset-retirement obligation. The accumulated deficit is the result of the asset retirement obligation, \$14.94 million, which is a new accounting standard requirement. It represents the costs to abate EIPS buildings for asbestos when the Division retires a building—typically covered by Alberta Education in the year the building is retired. As such, it’s better to look at the accumulated surplus, excluding asset retirement obligations, which is \$12.53 million.

For schools, allocations will slightly drop because of lower standard costs. Meanwhile, allocations for Central Services departments will increase to account for higher utility, insurance, fuel and cleaning costs. EIPS also plans to access \$2.48 million from its operating reserves for schools and departments and \$6.43 million from the Division Allocated Reserves to support Division projects. For the most part, these projects include the Focus on Unfinished Learning initiative, consultants in the areas of assessment, numeracy, early learning, career pathways, the new curriculum and mental health initiatives. Finally, EIPS projects the Division Unallocated Reserve to be \$3.92 million by Aug. 31, 2023, which is well within the Operating Reserve Limit.

RESERVE FUND REQUESTS

The Board approved the following reserve fund requests:

- Transfer \$5.33 million to the Division Allocated Reserves from the Division Unallocated Operating Reserves.
- The use of \$6.43 million from the Division Allocated Operating Reserves to cover costs for the Focus on Unfinished Learning, consultants and other Division project expenses.
- Transfer \$1.37 million to Division Allocated Capital Reserves from the Division Unallocated Capital Reserves.
- Transfer \$1 million to Division Allocated Capital Reserves from the Division Operating Reserves.
- The use of \$1.04 million from Capital Reserves.

SCHOOL FEES: 2022-23

The Board approved the proposed school fees for the 2022-23 school year, which outlines how fees are charged for optional courses; noon supervision; extracurricular and activity expenses, such as field trips; and non-curricular goods and services. Parameters were set by the Board of Trustees to ensure students achieve quality education, but also to ensure fees are not cost-prohibitive for families. Now approved, schools will post fees on their individual websites for the 2022-23 school year. The Division will also update school fees on its website by the end of May 2022 (see pg. 64, “[2022-23 School Fees](#)”).

2022-23 ADMINISTRATIVE FEES

FACILITY RENTAL FEES

The Board approved the facility rental and lease fees for the 2022-23 school year. Fees are reviewed annually and determined by current market rates and operational cost-recovery analysis. Based on higher operational, inflation and insurance costs, fees are increasing in September 2022. The most notable fee changes include the youth weekend Tier 1 gym space, \$60 per hour; youth weekend Tier2 gym space, \$50 per hour; the not-for-profit registered societies lease fee, \$5.68 per square metre, and the for-profit organization lease fee, \$18.15 per square metre. While rental and lease fees are increasing, all EIPS after-hour rentals remain significantly lower than other school boards and other community lease-space providers (see, [After-Hour Fee Schedule:2022-23](#)).

SPECIALIZED SUPPORTS FEES

The Board approved the Specialized Supports Fees for the 2022-23 school year. The fees cover the costs associated with providing specialized supports and services in both inclusive settings and system programs for non-resident students. For 2022-23, fees will increase by 1% to align with the province’s per-student funding—also rising by 1% (see pg. 143, “[2022-23 Specialized Supports Fees](#)”).

PARTNERS FOR SCIENCE

The Board approved the Partners for Science (P4S) fees for the 2022-23 school year. Annually, EIPS supplies its schools and other school jurisdictions with P4S kits. Fees aren't charged to EIPS schools but are charged to other school jurisdictions to cover the proportionate operational costs. For the upcoming school year, these fees will increase by 13.75% to help offset the rising costs associated with the P4S program. The Division will also continue to charge a restocking fee for any P4S kits returned late, rising to \$26.25 (see page 147, "[2022-23 Partners for Science Fees](#)").

ALBERTA NON-RESIDENT AND INTERNATIONAL

The Board approved the Alberta non-resident and international fees for the 2022-23 school year. Rates for non-Alberta residents and international students will increase by 1% to align with the province's per-student funding—also rising by 1%. EIPS fees are comparable to other Alberta-based school division rates. Currently, EIPS has two international students—one full-time and one part-time—and no non-Albertan resident students enrolled in its schools (see [Non-Resident Student Fees](#)).

PLAY AND LEARN AT SCHOOL

The Board approved the Play and Learn at School (PALS) fees for the 2022-23 school year. The fee is for the typically developing twin of a child who meets the criteria for PALS programming—providing programming for a typically developing twin benefits the child with disabilities and the PALS program as a whole. For the 2022-23 school year, fees will increase by 1% to align with the province's per-student funding—also rising by 1% (see pg. 152, "[2022-23 Play and Learn at School Fees](#)").

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION FEES

The Board approved Student Transportation fees for the 2022-23 school year. Student Transportation offers a two-tiered, cost-recovery fee structure. As such, all riders—eligible and ineligible—pay a fee for transportation services. It's an equitable structure for riders and allows EIPS to maintain its current level of service.

The recent increase in fuel prices and rising inflationary costs have the Division, and school boards provincially, struggling with Student Transportation budgets. In fall 2021, EIPS paid \$1.13 per litre for diesel. It's now paying \$1.74 per litre—an increase of \$0.61 per litre. The impact is significant as EIPS serves one of the province's largest geographical areas. Currently, it projects fuel costs to increase by \$543,100 for the upcoming school year. That, coupled with rising inflation costs, insurance rates that have doubled, and the delivery of the legislated Mandatory Entry-Level Training program are substantial and create a significant shortfall for the Division.

Next year, the province is providing school divisions with a 4.6% funding increase for student transportation budgets—to help offset higher costs for fuel, insurance, supplies and services, and training. It's also waving the provincial fuel tax—when oil hits \$90 U.S. However, the added funding and fuel-tax savings still don't cover the expected shortfall. As such, Student Transportation fees will increase by \$21—for eligible, ineligible, non-resident and supplemental busing riders. Fees for replacement passes and administration processing remain unchanged. Student Transportation will also continue to offer a payment-plan option—available to families with fees of \$300 and more—paid over seven months (see, [EIPS Student Transportation Fees](#)).

BUDGET REALLOCATION: 2021-22

The Board approved a budget reallocation of unanticipated surplus. The Division will use the funds to:

- support a divisionwide enhanced kindergarten initiative (\$110,000);
- cover costs related to renovations to the Connections and Play and Learn at School programs at Pine Street Elementary (\$184,000); and
- cover costs at schools divisionwide to enhance student achievement and school supports (\$400,000).

Committee Report

STUDENT EXPULSION COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from three Student Expulsion Committee meetings held on April 5 and April 8. The committee reviewed all the submitted information and upheld the recommendation put forward by the school.

POLICY COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Policy Committee meeting held on April 12. The committee reviewed several policies. Some require minor changes related to housekeeping and gender inclusivity.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Advocacy Committee meeting held on April 14. Topics discussed: the draft strategic advocacy plan and the communication plan.

Trustee Reports

Trustees shared information and highlighted recent events:

- **Vice-Chair Colleen Holowaychuk** attended the Vegreville and Area Stands with Ukraine meeting, Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce luncheon, her regular school council meetings, the Policy Committee meeting and budget meetings. She also joined Chair Boymook and Superintendent Liguori at the meeting with the Village of Andrew, which was an incredibly worthwhile couple of hours. As well, Vice-Chair Holowaychuk enjoyed the EIPS Student Forum and the media-training session—both were exceptional and valuable. She thanked the organizers for their work putting the events together.
- **Trustee Cathy Allen** attended the media-training session, the EIPS Student Forum and several school council meetings, which is lovely being in person again. Many schools are planning large-group student activities—field trips, picnics, dances. And, a lot of schools are conducting surveys with their caregiver communities to gauge comfort levels, given the pandemic, and what activities families are most comfortable with. Trustee Allen also thanked teachers and school staff for organizing these activities for students and the community. She then took a minute to recognize National Volunteer Week, taking place April 24-30, and thanked the many EIPS volunteers supporting students.
- **Trustee Randy Footz** attended the April Committee of School Councils (COSC) meeting, EIPS Student Forum, media-training session and his regular school council meetings. He thanked all those who helped organize the EIPS Student Forum and media-training session—both were excellent and valuable. He also shared with trustees a card and gift he received from a retiring teacher expressing her gratitude for spending her career at EIPS and being involved in the Ukrainian Bilingual program, which both enrich the lives of others.
- **Trustee Don Irwin** attended his regular school council meetings, various committee meetings, the April COSC meeting, EIPS Student Forum, several budget meetings and a COSC-organized presentation with Jody Carrington. He also enjoyed the professional learning session at the ASBA Zone 2/3 March meeting and the media-training session for trustees. Finally, in recognition of National Volunteer Week, he thanked the many EIPS volunteers who give their time to support the Division, its schools and students.
- **Trustee Jacqueline Shotbolt** attended meetings for ASBA's Edwin Parr award and her regular school council meetings—student transportation was a common discussion topic and she thanked attendees for their feedback. She also attended the March ASBA Zone 2/3 meeting—the professional learning sessions are excellent. In fact, tomorrow, she's taking part in a professional learning session at the April Zone 2/3 meeting. The topic is reconciliation, and all trustees are invited. Also, tomorrow, she's also participating in a governance meeting centred on the funding model for small schools and welcomes ideas and comments from trustees.



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

- **Trustee Jim Seutter** attended his regular school council meetings and the April COSC meeting. He also enjoyed the EIPS Student Forum and media-training session—both were excellent.
- **Trustee Ralph Sorochan** attended meetings for COSC, Board Caucus, the budget and a number of school council meetings—in person, which he enjoys as it offers the opportunity to speak directly with school families. He also attended the Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce luncheon and the media-training session—which were both excellent. Trustee Sorochan's also looking forward to the month of May for two reasons. One, the Trustees School Tours resume. And, two, May's the month of appreciation—National Volunteer Week, Administrators Appreciation Day, Bus Driver Appreciation Day and the EIPS Long Service and Retiree Banquet. It's during this time, we collectively show gratitude and thank all those who make EIPS a great place to be.

Board Members

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

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