



Committee of
School Councils

MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, virtual meeting

Nov. 2, 2022 | 7 p.m.

In Attendance

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Chair: Lesley Williams, Sherwood Heights Junior High

Secretary: Ken Allan, A.L. Horton Elementary

Kalyn Harrop, Fultonvale Elementary Junior High
Devon Marshall, Salisbury Composite High, SCA
Secondary and SCA Elementary
Andrea Brown, École Campbelltown

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Alison Blaikie, Bruderheim School
Aileen Bozic, SCA Secondary
Brian Vick, Brentwood Elementary
Christan Rasmussen, Westboro Elementary
Jacquie Surgenor, Salisbury Composite High and
Sherwood Heights Junior High
Jennifer Dechaine, École Parc Élémentaire
Jennie March, Ardrossan Junior Senior High
Jennifer Fukuyama, Clover Bar Junior High
Kim Birkigt, Ardrossan Junior Senior High
Kendra Roemer, Mills Haven Elementary
Lisa Harke, SCA Elementary
Lynn Walker, Davidson Creek Elementary
Meagan Bruce, Woodbridge Farms Elementary
Tawnia McQueen, Wes Hosford Elementary
Stephanie Stoddard, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trina Boymook, Chair
Colleen Holowaychuck, Vice Chair
Cathy Allen, Trustee
Don Irwin, Trustee
Jim Seutter, Trustee
Jacqueline Shotbolt, Trustee
Ralph SoroChan, Trustee
Susan Miller, Trustee

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mark Liguori, Superintendent
Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent
Corrie Fletcher, Communications
Emma Small, Communications

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

AGENDA

COSC Chair Williams called for additions or deletions to the agenda.

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COSC Chair Williams called for approval of the Oct. 5, 2022, meeting minutes.

MOTION | The minutes be approved, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Report

Board Chair Trina Boymook presented the Board Report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Board Chair Boymook thanked parents for their participation in the second round of engagement sessions held in October. Engagements included:
 - discussions around the possible redesignation of Brentwood Elementary and north-east Sherwood Park junior high students; and
 - the Logos program.
- On October 26, the Division began a new public engagement initiative on French Immersion programming and how to best improve program retention at the junior high and senior high levels. Board Chair Boymook stated the deadline for parents to share their feedback and thoughts online was November 14.
- The Board approved status quo calendars for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years.
- In October, the Board launched its first quarterly newsletter to parents and staff that highlights the Board's advocacy efforts.
- On November 1, the Board completed department assurance reviews and looked forward to the school assurance reviews being held the first week in December.

For Information

ASCA UPDATE – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- COSC Chair Williams again encouraged members to visit the [ASCA website](#) for information and school council engagement opportunities.
- Highlights from the website include the [ASCA newsletter](#), a school council engagement questionnaire and upcoming [workshops](#).
- School councils who are ASCA members can [sign up](#) to become a part of ASCA's School Council Engagement Task Force. ASCA will then send the school council a questionnaire. This survey can act as a guide for meetings, encouraging rich discussion and providing valuable feedback to ASCA. Once filled out, the school council sends the survey back to ASCA for their review. *Note:* School councils must sign up every year—even if they were a part of the task force last year.
- COSC Chair Williams reminded COSC members to use a dedicated school council email address to sign up for ASCA and for other school council correspondence, as opposed to a personal email address, as this improves continuity when school council executive teams change.
- COSC Chair Williams and COSC member Jacquie Surgenor encouraged all members to attend the [ASCA engagement opportunity](#) from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m on November 19. An online silent auction was also mentioned, running from November 19-25.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Will the engagement sessions be recorded?

Answer: COSC Chair Williams believes they won't be recorded but said she'd confirm this and report back to the group.

Comment: One COSC member reported issues with login to the ASCA website, because there are separate logins for the school council and fundraising sections of the website.

Response: COSC Chair Williams confirmed there are separate logins for the school council and fundraising sections of the ASCA website.

CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- The [November Caregiver Series](#) schedule is now available.
- Offered through Alberta Health Services, the sessions are informative and valuable.
- COSC Chair Williams encouraged members to review the [November Caregiver Series](#) calendar.

SCHOOL COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT GRANT – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair and Kendra Roemer, COSC member

- COSC Chair Williams confirmed that the provincial School Council Engagement Grant will be available again this year.
- Though not all details are yet confirmed, it is assumed that the amount—\$500 per school—and conditions of the grant will be similar to last year, though this year in-person events would be eligible for the grant along with virtual events.
- COSC Chair Williams encouraged school councils to use the grant funds on ASCA development opportunities, as these sessions have been designed to fulfil the conditions of the grant.
- COSC Chair Williams confirmed that 21 schools who were unable to use the grant last year would be able to use the funds with this year’s grant, though she believes this sort of carryover would not be available in the future.
- COSC member Kendra Roemer stated that COSC was looking for potential topics and speakers to use on pooled grant funding for this year, along with committee members to help administer the pooling of grant funding among COSC members. Emma Small will send out a survey about this in the coming weeks, which will both allow school councils to contribute ideas for pooled grant money and gauge the interest of school councils to pool funds. For more information, members can reach COSC member Roemer at millshavenchair@gmail.com.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Will the survey go out to all school council chairs?

Answer: The survey will be sent to the school council’s contact email on file at EIPS.

New Business

EIPS ASSURANCE REVIEW – Associate Superintendent Sandra Stoddard

- Associate Superintendent Stoddard reminded COSC that school boards have a responsibility to assure stakeholders that they’re fulfilling their responsibilities. This requires EIPS policies on engagement, processes, actions and evidence. Assurance is a process of relationship-building—through conversations, touching base and building confidence.
- EIPS believes a key part of engagement is getting stakeholders engaged in planning and budgeting processes.
- Associate Superintendent Stoddard stated that engagement processes are based on direction from the EIPS Board of Trustees and outlined that process.
- During the Board's first year after election, input is gathered from stakeholders (parents, grade 12 students, staff), who are asked to review the goals, priorities and outcomes in the [EIPS Four-Year Education Plan](#).
- The Board reviews this feedback during their retreat and uses the information to generate a new *Four-Year Education Plan*. The Board then approves the plan.
- In November of the following year, schools participate in their assurance review. During the assurance review, principals present successes and challenges over the past year. School plans are adjusted based on the data presented, in addition to the results found in the *Annual Education Results Report (AERR)*.
- In January, EIPS engages COSC around the AERR and Year-in-Review Survey. This survey is distributed to various stakeholders.
- Other engagements include:

- **February:** School fees consultations with school councils and the Student and Parent Satisfaction Survey (including questions about priority budget items)
- **March:** Provincial surveys
- **May:** COSC engagements on budget allocations
- **Ongoing:** Generative governance and quarterly newsletter
- **Ad Hoc:** Three-year engagement strategy around programming and school capacity issues
- Associate Superintendent Stoddard discussed the data analysis process. Full data will be available November 4. Principals and senior EIPS management review multiple data sets, both qualitative and quantitative. Data is triangulated to ensure data is reliable and valid, considering trends over years, the number of responses and who responded (such as, parents, students or staff).
- As school council representatives, COSC members should start to ask questions about data around school plan priorities. Data should be shared by your principal to show growth or not. School councils can ask how data affects the school plan moving forward. The principal's job is to assure stakeholders that plans are making a difference for students.
- The [Alberta Education Assurance Measures](#) report comes from the provincial government. It includes survey results, learning indicators and Provincial Achievement Test results. A summary report is received for each school.
- Questions for school councils to ask as they review their school's report may include: How does this school compare to the rest of the province? How do current results compare to previous results? How does this school compare to the three-year average?
- Color coding will appear in this report. Associate Superintendent Stoddard assured COSC members orange "need improvement" coding in a specific category doesn't indicate a need to panic. School councils should look at comparisons to the province, previous results and the three-year average. Is there a demonstrated improvement? School councils should be concerned over drastic declines. School councils can ask their school's principal how plans might be adjusted to resolve this.
- Associate Superintendent Stoddard gave various examples of elements of the report with information about how parents might interpret results. School councils should consider consistency among groups when reviewing survey results, especially noting if parents and students agree.
- COSC Chair Williams encouraged parents to review the report and attend their school's assurance review, encouraging members new to school councils to not be afraid to get involved. Those who aren't comfortable with this sort of feedback method can also fill out a survey.
- The assurance reviews take place December 1 and December 5-8, depending on the school. School councils can ask their principal for their school's scheduled time.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Where can COSC members get access to this information? Should we review it before the assurance review?

Answer: COSC Chair Williams said documents will be provided by the principal. Board Chair Boymook told COSC that school councils will be receiving an invitation to the school's assurance review, and that school council representatives will be given an opportunity to give feedback about the results and talk about their school council. These reviews will start on December 1, and each school group will get a half-day with the board (2.5 hours).

Question: Do the principals have the scheduled times already?

Answer: Board Chair Boymook replied that they likely do. Associate Superintendent Stoddard said she would send a reminder to principals about assurance review invitations to school councils.

Comments: COSC Chair Williams asked the group to share their experiences with the assurance review process. Members shared with COSC their positive experiences hearing about other schools' experiences and sharing with the Board how a school council supports the school plan.

SCHOOL COUNCIL ROLES – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- This was discussed as part of the EIPS Assurance Review item above.

COSC Sharing

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS 2022-23: Structure, focus, engagement – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- **Discussion Question:** How are you managing your school council this year in terms of structure, focus areas and engagement?
- One school tried holding their first school council meeting on Meet the Teacher night. The principal helped round people up, and they got 20 people to attend. At the second meeting, a blanket ceremony was held for parents, which was well attended.
- From the chat: “Our September meeting was triple the attendees from last year, however we did have to cancel October due to multiple illnesses. We are currently in person only as our old VP was our tech guy.”
- Board Chair Boymook asked one COSC member to share how they gathered information using Facebook. The member responded that their principal is sending out a survey this week about how they want to communicate with families, but they’re also using their Facebook page to share information on agendas, topics of discussion and other items. They’re also considering having older kids babysit younger kids while the meeting happens. They’re looking to get more parents to come to meetings, especially more men.
- One COSC member wanted to continue to do virtual and in person. Many parents in their area are single caregivers and this improves the accessibility of the meeting for them.
- One COSC member reported their meeting had moved to in person only. They’ve found success talking to people directly about the school council, as many people do not read the newsletter.
- COSC Chair Williams suggested holding an organizational meeting at the end of the year and using cookies to encourage people to stay for the entire meeting.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: How often does your school council meet?

Answer: Schedules varied. COSC members shared responses about meeting schedules in the chat. The most common seemed to be monthly for one to two hours.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:02 P.M.

Next COSC Meeting

DATE: Jan. 4, 2023

TIME: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

LOCATION: EIPS Central Services building, boardroom.