



MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, virtual meeting
Feb. 1, 2023 | 7 p.m.

In Attendance

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Chair: Lesley Williams, Sherwood Heights Junior High
Vice-Chair: Chelsea Pretzlaw, Ardrossan Elementary
Secretary: Ken Allan, A.L. Horton Elementary

Stephanie Stoddard, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary
Tasha Baker, Next Step Sherwood Park
Tawnia McQueen, Wes Hosford Elementary

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Aileen Bozic, SCA Secondary
April Childs, Lakeland Ridge
Brian Vick, Brentwood Elementary
Christan Rasmussen, Westboro Elementary
Jennie March, Ardrossan Junior Senior High
Jennifer Dechaine, École Parc Élémentaire
Jennifer Fukuyama, Clover Bar Junior High
Kalyn Harrop, Fultonvale Elementary Junior High
Kendra Roemer, Mills Haven Elementary
Kim Scott, Westboro Elementary
Meagan Bruce, Woodbridge Farms Elementary
Melissa Manolescu, École Campbelltown
Sarah Witholt, Heritage Hills Elementary

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trina Boymook, Chair
Colleen Holowaychuk, Vice-Chair
Cathy Allen, Trustee
Jim Seutter, Trustee
Jacqueline Shotbolt, Trustee
Ralph SoroChan, Trustee
Susan Miller, Trustee

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mark Liguori, Superintendent
Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent
Emma Small, Communication Services

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 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 Jan. 4, 2023, meeting minutes.

MOTION | The minutes be approved, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Report

Board Chair Trina Boymook presented the Board Report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- At the January 19 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board approved the classification of a Ukrainian Language and Culture program as an alternative program. This Language and Culture program will replace the Ukrainian Bilingual program at A.L. Horton Elementary for the upcoming school year. The Board also approved the German Language and Culture program to be classified as an alternative program.
- The Board approved the school fee parameters which will guide schools in setting their fees for the upcoming school year.
- The Board received the Vegreville Value Scoping Session Report for information. Board Chair Boymook stated the Board will consider the recommendations from the report in its three-year capital plan and 10-year facility plan discussions.
- On January 30, the Alberta School Boards Association hosted a meeting for board chairs to discuss provincial advocacy strategy for the upcoming election.
- On January 31, the Board met with Bruderheim Town Council where it shared the highlights of the Division's work over the past year and what to expect for the future. They also discussed items of mutual interest. Board Chair Boymook and the Board appreciate the partnerships created with the community of Bruderheim and look forward to continued work with the town council for the interests of students.
- The Board sent a letter to the education minister on the school nutrition program, outlining how inflation is impacting it. The provincially funded program is located at Bruderheim School and Lamont Elementary.
- On February 1, the Board learned about additional funding for low incident supports and services. The Board looks forward to receiving more details on what the Division can expect to receive along with the parameters surrounding the funding.
- The next French Immersion public engagement session will take place at Heritage Hills Elementary from 5:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on February 7. Board Chair Boymook encouraged French Immersion families to attend. She stated those unable to come would have the opportunity to share their insights electronically. Details have been emailed out to families who are registered in the program currently.
- Board Chair Boymook and Fort Saskatchewan trustees are scheduled to meet with Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, a member of the legislative assembly of Alberta for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, to discuss Fort Saskatchewan capital needs on February 10.
- The Board's Advocacy Committee is currently working on its election strategy. Board Chair Boymook stated more information will be shared at either the April or May COSC meeting.

ATA Report

ATA Local No. 28 President Deneen Zielke did not present a report.

For Information

ASCA UPDATE – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

Stand for Education's Hopeful Conversations:

- The deadline for Hopeful Conversations to be submitted to ASCA has been extended to February 17.
- COSC Chair Williams encouraged COSC members to have these conversations with their school councils.
- Information on how to do so is on the [ASCA website](#) and would be in the followup email to the meeting.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference:

- The ASCA AGM and conference takes place April 21-23, 2023. The conference is on April 21 and 22, while the AGM is on April 23.

- The theme this year is connection, with the conference taking place in person at the Delta Marriott Edmonton South for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. More information is available on the [ASCA website](#).
- The AGM and conference feature various events, including different sessions, pre-sessions, a trade fair, a breakfast, a keynote speaker and a Board of Directors election.
- The deadline for [ASCA Board of Directors](#) nominations is April 7.
- The deadline for ASCA advocacy resolutions was the end of January. They're not publicly available yet.

Learning Opportunities:

- New information on course offerings and online learning is available on the [ASCA website](#).

RETURNING STUDENT REGISTRATION – Mark Liguori, EIPS Superintendent

- [Returning student registration](#) takes place February 1-28. About 3,000 students have already registered. EIPS Superintendent Liguori hopes to hit 10,000 registrations by the end of the week.
- Kindergarten registration also opens February 1. Most kindergarten students are new to EIPS.
- PALS students can be registered too. These are students from age two to five with mild to moderate speech or motor skills delays. Staff do speech-language assessments and then match the students to appropriate programs.
- After returning student registration is closed, schools start calling families to find out if their children still intend to return next year, or if they have alternate plans.
- EIPS reviews the number of students at each school to determine funding, staffing and programming for the upcoming year. Because funding is tied to registration, it's important to register as many students as possible. Registration also helps plan for school capacity.
- Students in closed boundary schools are urged to register early to make sure their spot is saved. For the 2023-24 school year, five schools in EIPS have closed boundaries, defined as more than 95 per cent student enrollment based on school capacity. This includes Ardrossan Elementary, Ardrossan Junior Senior High, Davidson Creek Elementary, James Mowat Elementary and SouthPointe School.
- Because the *Education Act* requires schools to provide education to students who reside in the neighbourhood, some open capacity must be left at every school to allow for any newcomers to the community.
- Some families will move in and out of the community, but this is usually not a significant number in EIPS. The most significant transiency is in urban Sherwood Park at the high school level.
- In previous years, schools would use modular builds to help manage capacity, but this is more difficult now as the modular program in Alberta has largely collapsed.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Why did the modular program collapse?

Answer: Manufacturing shortages. In the past, three Alberta companies manufactured modular classrooms. Two of the three builders that constructed modulars no longer do so. The sole remaining company is unable to meet the demand—charging higher fees to the province to manage requests. Because of these higher fees, it's now cheaper to do a stick build than use a modular one. Modulars used to be a major way to accommodate growth, but these issues make them no longer viable.

CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- The [February 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 [February Caregiver Series](#) calendar.

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

- COSC member Roemer reminded those present to fill out the [School Council Engagement Grant Request Form](#) before the deadline of February 8.
 - Schools can pool part or all their funds.
 - Many schools still have \$500 from last year which can also be pooled.
- COSC member Roemer reported there are likely enough funds pooled to have David Irvine speak.
- If more funds are pooled, there may be the potential for a mini conference with ASCA.
- Parents from all schools can still attend even if they don't pool their money, but pooling schools will decide the topics David Irvine will discuss.
- COSC Chair Williams reminded those present that all school councils, no matter if they're pooling funds or not, must fill out and submit the online [request form](#) to receive their funds.
- COSC Chair Williams thanked those schools who've participated in pooling, in addition to COSC member Roemer and Emma Small, a communications and public engagement assistant at EIPS, for their work on this project.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: What is Kendra's email address?

Answer: The email address is millshavenchair@gmail.com.

Question: Board Chair Boymook asked which school council representatives were unable to attend this meeting and offered the Board's support in reaching those individuals.

Answer: COSC Chair Williams said this information will be provided to all school councils. It will be available in the followup email sent out Friday.

New Business

ASCA RESOLUTIONS: OVERVIEW – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- ASCA resolutions are not yet available but will be posted on the [ASCA website](#). The deadline for submissions was January 27.
- Resolutions help create belief and position statements for advocacy to the education minister and provincial government. Member organizations create and bring resolutions to be debated at the ASCA AGM. Resolutions that receive majority support become positions brought to meetings with government.
- It's hard to predict how many resolutions there'll be this year, but generally there are between 10-25.
- These resolutions are generally discussed at an EIPS COSC meeting in advance of the ASCA AGM. This year, these discussions will likely happen at the March or April meeting.
- In previous years, members used a dotmocracy to determine which resolutions be discussed in detail at a COSC meeting.
- Different parents have different priorities as their children move through the grades. COSC allows a broader perspective from schools across the Division.
- The process to register for voting on these resolutions at the ASCA AGM will be discussed at a future meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting, you can have a proxy voter carry your vote.
- It's important to have these discussions about resolutions at local school council meetings too, especially for proxies.
- COSC members who can come to the ASCA conference and AGM are urged to do so. This often helps inform the member's work on their local school council.
- Check on the [ASCA website](#)— when the resolutions are updated, COSC Chair Williams will post them on the COSC Facebook page.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: If you or a council member cannot attend all three days, are there presentations you'd recommend?

Answer: The specific schedule for the conference and AGM is not yet available. The AGM is very important, if not as educational. A commenter in the chat suggested Saturday is probably the best day to go rather than Friday, since the keynote speaker is always very good. COSC Chair Williams also suggested reviewing the agenda when published, asking what the educational needs are of members' school councils and what their school council needs overall.

Question: Can the School Council Engagement Grant be used to cover the cost of the conference?

Answer: No, it cannot, but the Board usually provides a specific dollar amount to help fund attendance for several COSC members—usually between \$300-350 per chosen member.

ASSURANCE CYCLE: ALBERTA EDUCATION ASSURANCE SURVEY AND EIPS ANNUAL FEEDBACK SURVEYS – Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent

Introduction:

- Surveys form an important part of the relationship-building process to assure stakeholders that EIPS is fulfilling its responsibilities.
- EIPS shares survey results from the Alberta Education Assurance and EIPS Annual Feedback surveys and details how the school is doing in fulfilling its goals related to the Division's [Four-Year Education Plan](#).
- EIPS engages stakeholders in planning, reporting and budgeting, to ensure decision-making is building on what's happening at the school level.

Engagement Processes:

- In the first year of a newly elected Board, a survey is sent out to ask stakeholders—students, parents and teachers—to ask if current goals, priorities and outcomes are improving student learning.
- The Board reviews this information at a retreat.
- At the end of May, the Board brings forward a new Four-Year Education Plan grounded in feedback.
- In November, assurance reviews are held. School council members come and listen to school reports on results, successes and challenges at each school.
- Also in November, the *Annual Education Results Report (AERR)* is shared. The report includes detailed qualitative and quantitative information on the outcomes in the Four-Year Education Plan.
- In December, the Year-in-Review survey is sent to all stakeholders. The survey asks for information on goals and outcomes and if they're still suitable for the Division.
 - Respondents are asked to identify their top three priorities for next year's budget.
- In January, COSC is engaged around the AERR.
- In February, school fees consultations take place with local school councils, and Alberta Education launches the Alberta Education Assurance survey. Students in grades 4, 7, and 10 are asked to provide info—or all students in grades 4 and above if the school has less than 120 students in grades 4-12.
- In March, the Division administers the EIPS Annual Feedback Survey to all parents in EIPS. This usually provides a higher response than the provincial survey and yields solid data for decision making.
- Additionally, EIPS engages in ongoing generative discussions with school councils. Ad hoc processes also take place, including Ukrainian programming changes, Student and Parent Voice forums and a three-year engagement strategy around capacity issues.

Alberta Education Assurance Survey:

- EIPS Associate Superintendent Stoddard reviewed questions, especially those around parent engagement.
- School councils play a key role in the assurance cycle. Associate Superintendent Stoddard asked school council chairs and representatives to consider how they can promote surveys to their school

community. How can school councils support messaging around parent engagement activities at school or build parent engagement? Parent engagement in EIPS is currently below the provincial average.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Do you know how many families complete the EIPS Annual Feedback Survey per grade?

Answer: Associate Superintendent Stoddard didn't know but said she could bring this information to the next meeting. Usually there are around 1,200-1,500 parent responses, and almost all staff. There were over 300 responses from students in Grade 12 last year.

Question: Has there been another form of reaching out to parents? Instead of using a survey online and emailed out, could a townhall speaking engagement work?

Answer: Alberta Education only uses information gathered through the Alberta Education Assurance survey. In addition to the EIPS Annual Feedback Survey, EIPS parents are invited to Student and Parent Voice forums to talk about parent engagement.

Question: Can school councils promote these surveys at parent-teacher interviews, or perhaps use QR codes to support promotion? Is some information too specific? For example, not all parents are aware about fee structures or school supervision.

Answer: The Alberta Education Assurance survey received a late start, which makes promotion difficult. The EIPS Annual Feedback Survey information is in the meeting package. The EIPS survey launches in March, which allows more time for promotion.

Question: How do parents become informed of information they are missing?

Answer: Principals should go through the EIPS Annual Feedback Survey with school councils to make sure parents can complete it in an informed matter. They can also highlight how the Board and EIPS administration use the survey to guide Division decisions.

Question/Comment: Our school council did lots of promotion, and still had a low response rate. Getting answers to questions about leadership and citizenship has been a struggle. To help improve response rate, we put examples of leadership and citizenship being promoted at school in weekly emails. Could the Division do something similar to help inform parents of how they might become involved at school?

Answer: Good idea. Associate Superintendent Stoddard said she'd discuss this with communications.

Question: Would a list of opportunities at the school provided with the EIPS Annual Feedback Survey help with engagement questions?

Answer: Possibly. Good feedback.

Question/Comment: We find common terminology is key to useful survey responses. What does engagement look like? Coming to school council, coming to interviews, checking report cards and fundraiser participation? Having a list or having an administrator explain will probably be key.

Answer: EIPS administration and communications staff will meet to formulate a list for parents. The EIPS Annual Feedback Survey will be discussed at a future COSC meeting closer to launch.

COSC Sharing

SCHOOL COUNCILS' PAST ASCA CONFERENCE EXPERIENCES – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair and Chelsea Pretzlaw, COSC Vice-Chair

- COSC Chair Williams encouraged members to attend the ASCA conference and AGM or find someone else who's interested on their school council.
- COSC Chair Williams and COSC member Witholt assured members there's a core group of people who attend and sit together.

- COSC member Witholt promoted the breakout sessions and said every school should go if possible. COSC Chair Williams promoted attending with a group of like-minded people who are interested in improving their local schools.
- COSC member Bozic said she enjoys the AGM because she hears about the issues and struggles facing other schools, which broadens her own perspective.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Are there other resources school councils can use to pay for conference costs?

Answer: COSC Chair Williams said local school councils can sponsor conference attendees from their schools.

Question: Is anyone interested in a collaboration on school council best practices? Could be in person or virtual.

Answer: COSC Chair Williams responded that sometimes, following COSC meetings, school council matters are discussed outside formal contexts. Facebook may also be a useful resource. Board Chair Boymook suggested that an opportunity for informal discussion could be set up before the next COSC meeting. For example, the doors could be opened a half hour earlier on March 1.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:48 P.M.

Next COSC Meeting

DATE: March 1, 2023

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

LOCATION: EIPS Central Services building, boardroom.