



MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, in-person meeting
March 1, 2023 | 7 p.m.

In Attendance

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Chair: Lesley Williams, Sherwood Heights Junior High

Secretary: Ken Allan, A.L. Horton Elementary

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Aileen Bozic, SCA Secondary

Andrea Brown, École Campbelltown

April Childs, Lakeland Ridge

Brian Vick, Brentwood Elementary

Jennie March, Ardrossan Junior Senior High

Jennifer Dechaine, École Parc Élémentaire

Kim Scott, Westboro Elementary

Melissa Manolescu, École Campbelltown

Monique Bandura, Fort Saskatchewan Christian

Nana Thaver, Woodbridge Farms Elementary

Tawnia McQueen, Wes Hosford Elementary

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trina Boymook, Chair

Cathy Allen, Trustee

Ralph Sorochan, Trustee

Susan Miller, Trustee

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mark Liguori, Superintendent

Deneen Zielke, ATA Local No. 28 President

Emma Small, Communication Services

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 Feb. 1, 2023, meeting minutes.

MOTION | The minutes be approved, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Report

Board Chair Trina Boymook presented the Board Report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- In February, Phase 2 of the French Immersion public engagement initiative began. On February 7, EIPS held a public consultation for all EIPS French Immersion families, students and community members. The information gathered through the in-person session and online survey will inform the next public engagement session taking place on April 13. The Board of Trustees will hear EIPS Superintendent Mark Liguori's recommendation at the Board meeting in June 2023.
- The Board sent a letter to Education Minister Adriana LaGrange, requesting more funding for the EIPS School Nutrition Program to address the inflationary cost of food currently.
- On February 13, Minister LaGrange announced a nutrition grant would be provided to the Community Association for Lasting Success in Vegreville. This grant supports a partnership with a non-profit to deliver nutritious meals to students. The recent announcement ensures all schools in Vegreville have access to healthy meals and snacks.
- Board Chair Boymook and Fort Saskatchewan trustees Ralph Sorochan and Jacqueline Shotbolt met with Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, a member of the legislative assembly of Alberta for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, to discuss the Division's capital needs in Fort Saskatchewan. They also spoke about the increased need for social resources within the city. Additionally, Board Chair Boymook highlighted the Board's concerns around mandate creep—ministries should financially cover the supports that fall within their mandates, instead of relying on school divisions to fund with education dollars to fill in the gap.
- On February 28, the provincial budget was tabled. The Board is cautiously optimistic. There are some positive aspects where the Division will receive more or new funding. However, the Board must wait until the release of the Funding Manual before it can understand the further implications of the budget tabled. On the surface, the Board sees several areas of current funding being reallocated out to another area of the Division's funding. EIPS will bring forward a presentation of the budget at a future COSC meeting.
- On March 1, construction funding was announced for the Sherwood Heights Junior High/École Campbelltown replacement school. The Division can now move into its construction phase once the design has been finalized. EIPS is planning for the designs to be shared at a public open house.
- On March 1, the EIPS Annual Feedback Survey: For parents and caregivers launched and will run until March 23. Board Chair Boymook asked school council representatives to encourage parents and caregivers at their schools to complete this important survey, which is used to guide school improvement planning.
- Starting March 2, the Board will begin its budget planning discussions. It will consider the Division's assurance reviews, stakeholder surveys, progress in current initiatives and reserve status in building the 2023-24 budget.
- The Board will consider a recommendation on the Logos program at its meeting on March 16.
- After completing a Canada-wide superintendent search, the Board approved the appointment of Sandra Stoddard as the next EIPS Superintendent as of July 1, 2023. Stoddard has been with EIPS for over six years as the Associate Superintendent of the Supports for Students department. Her experience extends provincially and around the world in shaping education policy and practices. She has led significant initiatives on behalf of the Board, such as curriculum implementation. She also led the development and execution of the Board's Mental Health Strategic Plan, which includes the mental health pilot project. The Board is confident Associate Superintendent Stoddard will build on the Division's successes and support the continued growth and evolution of EIPS as one of the best school divisions in the province.
- In terms of student transportation, Alberta Education may redefine ineligible and eligible fees so parents and caregivers can save money. Board Chair Boymook was unsure if fees would still be defined using on-foot or would switch to driving distance. Discussion seemed to surround reducing the 2.4 kilometres limit.
 - Student transportation is a shared responsibility between school authorities and Alberta Education.
 - Board Chair Boymook said there are many details still left to go through, and EIPS won't know what will happen until it gets funding allocation.

ATA Report

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

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Teachers attended the Alberta Teacher Association's (ATA) annual North Central Teachers' Convention in person for the first time since 2020. The two days of the convention are mandated in the *School Act*, speaking to the importance of professionals accessing support to expand and improve their professional practice.
 - Beyond the keynote speakers presenting each year, local teachers took time to develop presentations and give up a portion of their convention time to share their expertise with colleagues. Some of the best professional development is peer-driven, where individuals can share similar classroom experiences.
 - Every year, the Local is well represented with many colleagues being selected to share their expertise at the convention. Zielke stated there's an incredible amount of expertise, innovation and enthusiasm to share.
- Recently, Minister LaGrange stated the provincial government will put \$10 million into Grade 1 education. She feels learning gaps from the pandemic have been addressed in the other grades as opposed to those in Grade 1. Zielke stated that if one talks to any teacher in the province, they'll see this is false. With increased class sizes and more students with learning, behavioural and emotional struggles, classrooms are much more complex than before the pandemic. It's extremely difficult to address all student needs.
- Recently, Statistics Canada released new data on student funding. Alberta is dead last in the country when it comes to per pupil school board operating expenditures. Alberta spends \$10,936 per pupil, which is \$1,767 less than the national average and \$3,775 less than the top, being Quebec.
- Zielke stated everyone needs to work together to make education a top priority as the province nears the May election. She added that if anyone is interested in working with the Local on upcoming initiatives, they can let her know.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: What makes up the expenses? Does it include the cost of things like school supplies?

Answer: Mostly includes operating expenditures. The Government of Alberta uses very specific language and speaks in terms of growth—the provincial government's Funding Manual will come out in the next couple weeks. The total money a school board receives is all operational, from utilities to infrastructure.

Question: Is Alberta the only province with charter schools?

Answer: The definition is ambiguous—private schools are similar to charter. Alberta is not the only province with charter schools; other provinces, such as Ontario and British Columbia, have them as well. Generally, charter schools don't accept everyone, and they don't have to. The public system is required to support all types of learners while charter schools can be selective—they're also not accountable to elected school boards.

Question: Is New Horizons in Sherwood Park a charter school?

Answer: Yes, it is.

For Information

ASCA UPDATE – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- The Alberta School Councils Association’s (ASCA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) is set for April 23. The advocacy resolutions to be discussed are posted on the [ASCA website](#). The AGM voting process for the resolutions has also changed for this year—it will take place digitally on members’ devices.
- The Board has a maximum of \$5,000 to cover the registration for EIPS school council members with a limit of one member per council. This registration covers the conference and AGM sessions, but not the pre-sessions. Board sponsorship for the ASCA conference and AGM is first-come, first-served.
- School councils must fill out the [Credential Voting Form](#) for themselves.
- Registration information and proxy voting information is available on the [ASCA website](#).
- COSC Chair Williams encouraged COSC members to have at least one person from their school council attend as the sessions at the conference and AGM are informative and helpful.
- Nominations for [executive positions](#) on the ASCA Board of Directors are still open.

CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

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

SCHOOL COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT GRANT – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- The David Irvine session will be held virtually at 7 p.m. on April 19.
- The cost of the group session has gone down because of the number of school councils pooling funds.
- COSC Chair Williams approved numerous school councils who have completed the [School Council Engagement Grant Request Form](#) and are using their grant for individual purposes.
- COSC Chair Williams thanked COSC member Kendra Roemer for her dedicated efforts organizing the group session. She also thanked those schools who reached out for feedback on individual engagement sessions.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: How do individual school councils access their grant money through EIPS?

Answer: School councils can send an invoice for the session, or a receipt for reimbursement to finance.submissions@eips.ca and cc [Emma Small](#).

Question: How long do school councils have to use their funds?

Answer: Until the end of the current school year. Although grants were rolled over last year, this won’t happen again for the next school year. ASCA only has so much capacity for sessions, so if you want a session and haven’t booked yet, do so promptly.

New Business

ASCA RESOLUTIONS – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- The [ASCA Resolutions](#) are now available on the website.
- School councils discuss these resolutions and decide how they want to vote on them at the AGM. Representatives then vote on the resolutions at the meeting, and these resolutions form the basis of ASCA’s advocacy work over the next year. Resolutions typically need to have majority vote to become advocacy policies.
- Members discussed each of the six advocacy resolutions in turn.
- COSC Chair Williams advised school councils to pick their top three resolutions to prioritize as discussion points at their next council meeting and then simply yay or nay the other resolutions.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Can any school council submit a resolution?

Answer: Yes, any council can.

PIPA AND RECORDS RETENTION FOR SCHOOL COUNCILS – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- Schools have a legal responsibility to fulfill their obligations under the [Personal Information Protection Act](#) (PIPA). Strong record-keeping and protection of parents' and caregivers' information helps build credibility and trust within the community.
- Minutes responsibilities for school councils are covered under PIPA. School councils must keep their email lists and minutes for at least seven years as stated in the Act. These records are likely digital now.
- A school council and fundraising society—if the school has one—need to maintain separate mailing lists as they are separate organizations.
- When student information is entered in PowerSchool, there's a button that allows sharing of information with their school council.
- A Frequently Asked Questions document on PIPA for school councils will be shared in the follow-up email sent out Friday.
- COSC Chair Williams stated front office staff at councils' schools may clean up the school website, so school councils should keep tabs on where their records move. Additionally, councils should keep records accessible to their members, especially after executives move on.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: What if the former chair hasn't provided minutes?

Answer: In future, consider putting minutes on Google Docs to make them more accessible for all. You can create succession planning policies to prevent this from happening again.

Question: Can a school council have direct control over its own section of the school website?

Answer: Superintendent Liguori stated the Division website provider has limitations on the number of admin logins for school websites. Emma Small, a communications and public engagement assistant at EIPS, also responded that she wasn't sure if a login could be provided for only one part of the website. One member reported their school council and fundraising group now maintain their own website for such a reason.

COSC Sharing

SCHOOL COUNCILS' NUTRITION AND FOOD INITIATIVES – Lesley Williams, COSC Chair

- Tabled because of a lack of time.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:05 P.M.

Next COSC Meeting

DATE: April 5, 2023

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

LOCATION: EIPS Central Services building, boardroom.