



APRIL 2023

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Chair’s Report

RECENT EVENTS

Board Chair Trina Boymook highlighted recent events:

- On March 20, trustees attended an Alberta School Board Association (ASBA) advocacy meeting. The highlights: a political analyst who spoke about current political landscape and ASBA discussion on its strategic plan for the upcoming provincial elections.
- On March 20, school board chairs and senior administration met with Education Minister Adriana LaGrange, which focused on the new curriculum—the final draft, implementation plan, and answers to questions.
- On March 22, trustees attended a joint meeting with the Town of Lamont. Discussion topics included: upcoming plans, key focus areas and topics of common interest.
- On April 5, Trustee Jaqueline Shotbolt represented the Board at the Fort Saskatchewan’s State of the City Address—an important event to be part of for networking purposes and building awareness related to the city’s key focus areas.
- On April 11, trustees attended a Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce luncheon with special guest Premier Danielle Smith.
- On April 14, Chair Boymook attended the 2023 Great Canadian Trade Fair and Sale opening ceremony, 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 19, Chair Boymook and trustees Cathy Allen, Don Irwin, Susan Miller and Jim Seutter attended Strathcona County’s State of the County Address, which focused on the county’s work and it’s short- and long-term development plans.

THREE-YEAR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: FRENCH IMMERSION

On April 13, the Board attended the third in-person public engagement session about EIPS’ French Immersion program—which was well attended with lots of constructive feedback. The Board is exploring ways to enhance French Immersion programming by increasing secondary-level retention, addressing anticipated enrolment pressures in Ardrossan and balancing enrolment at the elementary level. For those who couldn’t make the meeting, they can still offer feedback by completing the online [survey](#), open until April 24. Trustees review all the feedback gathered before making decisions. At the June Board meeting, EIPS plans to present a report detailing the French Immersion engagement efforts to date.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

National Volunteer Week is April 16-22. 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.

CONDOLENCES

On April 20, RCMP are holding a Regimental Funeral for Strathcona County's Constable Harvinder Singh Dhami, who was killed in a crash while on duty earlier this month. On behalf of the Board, Chair Boymook expressed heartfelt condolences to his families, friends, colleagues and all first responders.

Superintendent's Report

RECENT EVENTS

Superintendent Mark Liguori highlighted recent events:

- On March 22, Superintendent Liguori joined trustees at its joint meeting with the Town of Lamont.
- On April 13, Superintendent Liguori attended the third public engagement session about the Division's French Immersion program. It was great to see so many people there who provided outstanding feedback.
- On April 16-18, Superintendent Liguori attended uLead 2023, an annual educational leadership summit. Highlights: A session focused on women in leadership, facilitated by Lisa Everitt, the Executive Staff Officer at the Alberta Teacher's Association, and keynote speaker Desiree Cocroft, a leadership consultant, who spoke about unconscious bias.

Association and Employee Group Reports

ASBA ZONE 2/3 REPORT

Trustee Jacqueline Shotbolt attended the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 meeting on March 17. The highlights:

- roundtable discussions about the Traffic Safety Committee and student transportation for 2023-24;
- ASBA presented trustees with key messages on its advocacy priorities for the upcoming election;
- all trustee position statements are due on April 21; and
- the April 28 ASBA meeting now takes place on May 1.

ATA LOCAL REPORT

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

- On April 14-16, teachers gathered in Calgary for a collective bargaining conference—there, it was shared Alberta ranks the lowest in Canada for its per-pupil spending and has the largest class sizes in the country.
- On April 14-16, the Local hosted an information booth at the 2023 Great Canadian Trade Fair and Sale—to build awareness of the importance of a strong public education system—which seems to be paying off as education has become top of mind for Albertans leading into the provincial election.
- On April 26, the Local will host a Pints and Politics event with ATA President Jason Shilling for members to ask questions, engage and learn ways to impact the next election.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS GROUP REPORT

The Board received for information the Employee Relations Group (ERG) report from the group's Chair, Dulcie Arbuckle-Jarvin:

- Classified Professional Learning Day takes place on May 5. Human Resources is working hard and finalizing all the last-minute details—the event promises to be a great day of learning.
- The ERG's Terms of Reference are now complete. The ERG will post it on EIPS' SharePoint intranet site.
- Arbuckle-Jarvin thanked Fred Rempel, a consultant with EIPS, for hosting a safety session for educational assistants working in labs for Careers and Technology Studies.
- Human Resources has started preparing its classified school-based hiring process for 2023-24—to date, there is only one declared surplus staff.

Comments from the Public

PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD: ANDREW SCHOOL

The Board heard a presentation from the Village of Andrew about the possible closure of Andrew School. Deputy Mayor Tammy Ann Pickett discussed her concerns about the possible closure, including the impact on the community, effects from previous grade reconfigurations and how student transportation ride times may be affected. The Board thanked Pickett for taking the time to present her concerns.

PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD: ANDREW SCHOOL

The Board heard a presentation from the Village of Andrew about the possible closure of Andrew School. Mayor Merwin Haight discussed his concerns about the possible closure, including the school's importance to the community and culture, possible negative effects on local organizations and future economic growth plans in Andrew. He also asked the Board if obtaining a third-party quote for the school's needed building repairs is possible. The Board thanked Haight for taking the time to present his concerns.

New Business

BUSINESS ARISING FROM IN CAMERA

The Board approved the motion it “declares 5137 Queen St., Bruderheim, Alta., surplus to the Board’s needs.”

POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board approved amendments to:

- [Board Policy 2: Role of the Board](#);
- [Board Policy 10: Policy Making](#);
- [Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent](#); and
- [Board Policy 20: Assessment and Reporting of Student Learning](#).

Overall, the approved changes strengthen the policies’ clarity, definitions, language and readability.

2023-24 KEY BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The Board approved the key budget assumptions for the 2023-24 school year (see pg. 62, “[2023-24 Key Budget Assumptions](#)”). The assumptions are based on the Board’s mission and belief statements, the Division’s [Four-Year Education Plan](#), Alberta’s Budget 2023 and the provincial *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2023-24 School Year*. EIPS will use the approved assumptions to develop its 2023-24 spring budget, which helps schools and departments plan for the upcoming school year. As with all assumptions, changes such as funding, reserve usage, enrolment numbers and standard costs can significantly affect the budget.

ASSUMPTION HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2023-24

General operations – Focus areas include student learning, student and staff well-being, career pathways, the new curriculum, junior high intervention supports, program equity and Division infrastructure.

Enrolment – The Division expects student enrolment to increase by 23 students by fall 2023—to 17,483 students from 17,460 students in fall 2022.

Funding Grants – Alberta Education is introducing two new grants—the Teacher Settlement Grant and Class Complexity Grant. It will also continue offering the Student Well-Being Grant and Curriculum Implementation Grant. However, these amounts are still unknown and now require an application process. As well, the province made revisions to the Transportation Grant and System and Administration Grant.

Other Revenue – EIPS expects provincial funding to cover its lease agreements for Strathcona Christian Academy Elementary and Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary; the Mental Health Capacity Building Grant; and the

Division's Official Languages in Education Program. The Division will also generate revenue through school-generated funds and school fees. Unlike previous years, the spring budget won't include funding for the Odyssey Language Program, as it's unknown if the federal government will continue to support it, and the amount.

Compensation – EIPS anticipates the overall certificated standard costs to increase by 2.9% and standard classified costs to increase by 2.3% and 8.5%. The increases are the result of the new collective bargaining agreement and a hike in the employee benefits rate.

Inflation – EIPS anticipates non-salary inflationary increases—based on the overall consumer price index. These include higher costs for furnishings, equipment, careers and technology studies supplies, electricity, natural gas and custodial services.

Carbon Tax – EIPS anticipates increases in carbon tax costs based on the *2030 Emissions Reduction Plan*, a federal document outlining Canada's plan to meet its 2030 emissions reduction target. Currently, EIPS pays a \$65 per tonne carbon tax. Annually, that will increase until it reaches the targeted \$170 per tonne, in 2030. As a result, it will continue to impact the Division's budget, and in term, remove funds from the classroom.

Reserves – Alberta Education confirmed EIPS' operating reserve limit for Aug. 31, 2024—3.2%, or \$6.56 million. The Division must ensure its operating reserves are within 3.2% of its operating expenses. Any reserve money more than that amount must be returned to Alberta Education in December 2025. Administration will ensure operating reserves are below that number.

Expenses – The Division anticipates overall capital items purchases to total approximately \$300,000 in 2023-24. Administration also developed a five-year capital projection that lists anticipated capital needs requiring funds into the Capital Reserve over time. The list ensures enough funds in future years.

SCHOOL FEES: 2023-24

The Board approved the proposed school fees for 2023-24, which outlines how fees are charged for optional courses; alternative programs; extracurricular; lunch supervision; non-curricular goods and services; and activity expenses, such as field trips. Earlier this year, parameters were set by the Board to ensure students achieve quality education, while also ensuring fees aren't cost-prohibitive for families. Any fees that exceeded the listed parameters—above a 5% to 7% increase—were reviewed and vetted by Financial Services. Now approved, schools will post fees on their individual websites for the 2023-24 school year (see pg. 79, "[2023-24 School Fees](#)").

Committee Report

POLICY COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Policy Committee meeting held on April 11. The committee reviewed four policies—all will come forward to the Board at the next public meeting in May.

Reports for Information

ANDREW SCHOOL

The Board received for information a report regarding the possible closure of Andrew School. The report was prepared by EIPS administration and includes information about the school's background, programming, infrastructure needs and costs, enrolment, class configurations, staffing, attendance-boundary demographics, costs and finances, student transportation and possible options going forward (see pg. 149, "[Andrew School](#)").

TRUSTEE NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND INFORMATION REQUESTS

Chair Boymook made a motion, and the Board approved, "that a Board special meeting be called at 10 a.m. on May 4, 2023, at which time administration is to provide the Board of Trustees with a final recommendation report regarding Andrew School."

Special Board Meeting: April 6, 2023

ANDREW SCHOOL

The Board directed administration to prepare an information report regarding the possible closure of Andrew School, provided to trustees before the next Board meeting on April 20, 2023.

Special Board Meeting: April 27, 2023

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS AND RESERVES USE: 2023-24

The Board approved the budget allocations and reserve use for the 2023-24 school year (see pg. 3, “[2023-24 Budget Allocations Including the Use of Reserves](#)”). Overall, EIPS will receive a 4.8%, or \$8.82 million, increase in funding from Alberta Education—\$6.6 million for specifically targeted grants and \$2.2 million for non-targeted grants. Despite the increase, it’s still a tight budget given rising inflation for utilities and employee benefits costs, rules for targeted grants and restrictions on accessing reserves. As such, the Division will develop a conservative spring budget that supports the mission, belief statements and priorities of EIPS.

FUNDING CHANGES HIGHLIGHTS: 2023-24

Changes in funding include:

- a 6% base-funding increase—to offset the decrease in bridge funding;
- a 10% increase to supports and services grants—for specialized learning support; Program Unit Funding; English as an additional language; refugee students; and First Nations, Métis and Inuit education—to offset the decrease in bridge funding.
- a 20% increase to the School Nutrition Grant;
- a 5% increase to the Operations and Maintenance Grant;
- a new Classroom Complexity Grant;
- a new funding model for student transportation that expands rider eligibility and helps absorb rising inflationary costs; and
- the elimination of bridge funding.

SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS: 2023-24

Allocations for schools will increase, by 1.6%, because of higher standard costs. Although, the exact allocations for each school will vary based on enrolment number changes, the weighted-moving-average funding formula and standard cost adjustments. And, for small rural schools, allocations will align with the funding levels detailed in the province’s *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2023-24 School Year*.

Similarly, allocations for central departments will also increase, by 2.3%. However, after factoring out the targeted student transportation funding, department allocations will end up decreasing, by 1.1%. The drop is primarily because of one-time spending projects planned in 2022-23—which were funded by reserves.

ACCUMULATED SURPLUS AND RESERVES

Overall, the Division projects an accumulated surplus of \$3.58 million, as of Aug. 31, 2024. The accumulated surplus comprises investment in tangible capital assets (\$7.66 million), operating reserves (\$4.67 million), capital reserves (\$840,000), and asset-retirement obligation (-\$9.6 million). As well, EIPS plans to access \$1.86 million from its operating reserves for schools and departments and \$1.17 million from the Division Allocated Reserve to support Division projects—for the most part, related to student learning, student and staff well-being, career pathways, the new curriculum, junior high intervention supports, program equity and Division infrastructure. Finally, EIPS projects the Division Unallocated Reserve to be \$3.45 million by Aug. 31, 2024, which is well within the operating reserve limit (see pg. 4, “Assumption Highlights: Reserves”).

CAPITAL PURCHASES

The Board approved \$1.33 of capital purchases in 2023-24:

- \$814,000 for the Salisbury Composite High Stormwater Project; and
- \$220,000 for the building management system.

MEETING WITH FORT SASKATCHEWAN

As part of the Allocation discussion, Chair Boymook shared the Board met with the City of Fort Saskatchewan on April 26, 2023. The Board expressed to the city its concern about needed supports outside its mandate to better serve children, families and the community. In previous years, the City of Fort Saskatchewan had a family-school liaison worker (FSLW) on staff who provided the mentioned supports and services. However, the province suspended the grant that paid for the FSLW. So, the position was eliminated. Looking ahead, the EIPS Board will continue to advocate for a FSLW in Fort Saskatchewan, and administration will explore ways to help facilitate re-establishing the position.

BOARD POLICY 17

The Board approved amendments to [Board Policy 17: Student Transportation Services](#). The changes align with Alberta Transportation Funding Manual's distance eligibility requirements.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION FEES: 2023-24

The Board approved Student Transportation fee schedule for the 2023-24 school year. Student Transportation offers an enhanced transportation fee structure. As such, all riders pay a fee for transportation services. It's an equitable structure for riders and allows EIPS to maintain its current level of service. Thanks to a new provincial funding model for student transportation, fees will decrease in 2023-24. Changes made to the funding model include expanding rider distance eligibility, including for riders attending a school or program of choice, and added funding to cover higher fuel and inflationary costs. Student Transportation will also continue to offer a payment-plan option—available to families with fees of \$300 and more—paid over seven months. The approved 2023-24 student fee schedule is available online at [Student Transportation Fees 2023-24](#).

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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