

EIPS “Let’s Talk About: SCHOOLS IN FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Background Information

Over the last several years, Fort Saskatchewan has experienced significant growth. In fact, it’s the fastest-growing community within EIPS. The growth is to the point where it could soon affect the Division’s ability to provide accommodations for students living in the community. With new developments underway in the Industrial Heartland, schools throughout the city will, or already are, experiencing enrolment pressures.

Coupled with the growth, is the age of most EIPS school buildings in Fort Saskatchewan. The only new school in the region is SouthPointe School—already fully utilized at 93%. All other schools in the city range between 42 years old and 68 years old. Given their age, these older buildings are at or nearing end of life, causing significant operations and programming challenges for the Division, which only adds to the capacity issues in Fort Saskatchewan.

Currently, EIPS is exploring ways to best address these concerns—the limited and ageing infrastructure, the region’s growing population and anticipated capacity challenges. It has also formally requested the province fund three Fort Saskatchewan-based capital projects, listed within the EIPS Three-Year Capital Plan.

Ageing Infrastructure						
	Net capacity	2023-24	2028-29	Building age	High capacity	Building limitations
École Parc Élémentaire	385	93%	103%	61 years	⚠️	
Fort Saskatchewan Christian	432	97%	98%	68 years*	⚠️	
Fort Saskatchewan Elementary	427	70%	82%	68 years*		
Fort Saskatchewan High	739	67%	79%	61 years		⚠️
James Mowat Elementary	406	99%	92%	42 years	⚠️	⚠️
Rudolph Hennig Junior High	689	62%	72%	53 years		⚠️
SouthPointe School	725	93%	101%	7 years	⚠️	
Win Ferguson Elementary	496	84%	71%	47 years		⚠️

* A major modernization and addition was completed in 2010

EIPS Capital Priorities in Fort Saskatchewan

- 1 **Priority No. 1:** A new junior-senior high replacement school, grades 7-12, to replace Fort Saskatchewan High and Rudolph Hennig Junior High—with the ability to add 200 student spaces.
- 2 **Priority No. 2:** A new elementary school, K-6, to replace James Mowat Elementary—with an added student capacity of 244 spaces.
- 5 **Priority No. 5:** A major modernization of Win Ferguson Elementary, K-6—with the possibility of added student capacity.

The Goal:

To continue providing high-quality, student-centred education to every student in Fort Saskatchewan.

- By providing 21st-century spaces.
- Preparing students to work in the sectors that exist within the areas they live in—both now and in the future.
- And, ultimately, ensuring they are well-positioned to contribute to the prosperity of the community in which they live.

Question 1: What has the Division done to address the challenges in Fort Saskatchewan to date?**Planning:**

- Over the last few years, EIPS has reviewed student capacity, enrolment projections, site constraints and program distribution, and consulted with stakeholders through a two-day value-scoping session in 2018.
- EIPS has taken advantage of the province's modular classroom program to manage growth at SouthPointe School and James Mowat Elementary. The last request, two new modulars for SouthPointe, wasn't granted.
- The Division has officially requested funding from the province to build three new facilities in Fort Saskatchewan through the [EIPS Three-Year Capital Plan](#).
- Over the last five years, EIPS has also invested \$2.8 million in just three Fort Saskatchewan-based schools to address preventative maintenance and component failure to ensure facilities remain operational and safe for students.
- Additionally, EIPS is piloting a random selection process at James Mowat Elementary to help alleviate the school's enrolment pressures.

Partnerships:

- EIPS has also established various partnerships with the local business community—all aimed at preparing students to work in the region's sectors.
- Dow Chemical Canada provides funding for Fort Saskatchewan High's robotics program, including a mentor engineer and student fees to compete in the FIRST Robotics competition. It also sponsors Partners 4 Science and several RAP positions.
- Shell Canada is one. It fully funds Fort Saskatchewan High's Shell Skills Centre—the first of its kind in the region. The centre allows the school to offer programming to students pursuing trade careers. Some of the features include Virtual Welder machines, electro-technology workstations, 3D printing, industry-standard tools, circuit boards and electric motors.
- The Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce works with Fort Saskatchewan High to offer an enterprise class where students work with chamber members—a mentorship program is also coming soon.

Question 2: What is EIPS doing to advocate for, and progress, the projects listed on its Three-Year Capital Plan?**Advocacy:**

- In March, the Board approved EIPS' latest [Three-Year Capital Plan](#) and submitted it to the province for official funding consideration.
- The plan lists the Division's top capital priorities—three of the top five priorities are related to Fort Saskatchewan infrastructure, which speaks volumes about the area's challenges and the resulting need.
- Because of that need, obtaining funding for these capital projects consumes a considerable portion of the Board's advocacy efforts.
- The No. 1 priority: a junior-senior high replacement school, which will ensure 21st-century learning spaces for students in Fort Saskatchewan, allow for new partnership opportunities to better prepare students, and help build the community.
- The Board had hoped to receive funding approval from the province by now. Because it hasn't, trustees will continue advocating for the replacement school.
- School families can help support the Board's advocacy efforts by contacting elected officials and sharing their stories about why these projects are important to them and their children.

Collegiate Model:

- Priority No. 1, the junior-senior high replacement school, also includes plans to incorporate a collegiate model—[Elk Island-Heartland Collegiate School](#).
- Collegiate schools offer specialized programming opportunities in a particular subject or field to provide students with potential career pathways through focused learning experiences related to a specific profession, college or university program, or starting an apprenticeship.
- The proposed Elk Island-Heartland Collegiate School will offer the regular programming students are accustomed to, plus additional options, in partnership with post-secondary and industry—based on community and provincial needs.
- Students will have the opportunity to access specialized coursework and take part in experiences to better prepare them for, and give them a head start on, future career endeavours.



Question 3: How will a junior-senior high replacement school benefit learners?**Programming:**

- As a new build, the physical space will ensure the Division continues to offer high-quality, student-centred education to students.
- But more than that, it will allow EIPS to offer new opportunities, new academic courses and program continuity—including programming other EIPS schools offer that Fort Saskatchewan High doesn't because of its infrastructure limitations.
- The replacement school will also help eliminate the main exit points for students and, ultimately, keep more learners in Fort Saskatchewan.

Collegiate:

- Currently, several dual-credit courses in Fort Saskatchewan are offered online or require students to travel to neighbouring schools. The goal is to change this through the new replacement school and the collegiate model.
- Fort Saskatchewan is uniquely positioned in the Industrial Heartland. The hope is through a collegiate model, the new junior-senior high will make Fort Saskatchewan a leader in education, with students as early as in Grade 7 exploring various career pathways and in learning environments that reflect the real-world demands of the local community.

Question 4: What happens if the province doesn't approve funding for the new replacement school?**Accommodating students:**

- The hope is the province will fund the project. If it doesn't, EIPS will need to further engage the community on how best to accommodate students—boundaries, grade reconfigurations or other solutions the community wants the Division to explore to address growth.
- Addressing ageing infrastructure is more complex and requires tighter budgets, so EIPS must prioritize maintenance and preventive work to address component failure or health and safety requirements.
- EIPS may need to explore spaces within Fort Saskatchewan to ensure the collegiate vision moves forward.

Collegiate:

- If the province doesn't approve a new school, EIPS will continue focusing on the collegiate but in current spaces in Fort Saskatchewan—for lease or for sale.
- The Division has applied for a collegiate startup grant, which it can use to acquire and outfit these spaces, turning them into state-of-the-art learning spaces.
- EIPS will also continue to build partnerships with industry and post-secondary institutions to ensure the collegiate spaces are equipped with the tools, materials and expertise to provide the classrooms Fort Saskatchewan students deserve.

Question 5: What can the community do to help move the plan forward?**Share, share, share!**

- Get engaged. Just being involved brings a new perspective and a new voice, which will help move the project forward.
- Share the conversation with others—family, friends, neighbours. And, get them involved as well.
- Reach out to elected officials. They want to hear from you and know what's on your mind and what matters to you. They also want to know how they can help build the community in Fort Saskatchewan.
- When you contact elected officials, let EIPS and the Board of Trustees know, too, to stay on top of it.
- The power of the community will help influence the government and make these projects a priority for Alberta Education.

Help EIPS advocate for new schools in Fort Saskatchewan

If you're concerned about schools in Fort Saskatchewan, help EIPS advocate for new infrastructure. Tell your friends, family and neighbours. And, share your thoughts with elected officials—what's important to you and your family, and how they can help build the community. An elected officials contact list is available at eips.ca.

Learn more at :

[*Let's Talk About Schools in Fort Saskatchewan*](#)



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