



Committee of  
School Councils

# MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, in-person and virtual meeting

April 3, 2024 | 6:30 p.m.

## In Attendance

### SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

**Chair:** Kendra Roemer, Mills Haven Elementary

**Vice-Chair:** Dallas Kirtz, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary

**Secretary:** Chelsea Pretzlaw, Ardrossan Elementary

### SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Aileen Bozic, SCA Secondary

Amanda Shand, École Parc Élémentaire

Anne Wasylyshen, Ardrossan Junior Senior High

April Childs, Lakeland Ridge

Brian Vick, Brentwood Elementary

Christan Rasmussen, Westboro Elementary

Jordana Feist, James Mowat Elementary

Kim Scott, Salisbury Composite High

Krista Scott, Bev Facey Community High

Leanne Weiss, Woodbridge Farms Elementary

Lisa Harke, SCA Elementary

Lisa Plooy, Fort Saskatchewan Christian

Melissa Manolescu, École Campbelltown

Sarah Witholt, Heritage Hills Elementary

Tawnia McQueen, Wes Hosford Elementary

### ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cathy Allen, Chair

Susan Miller, Vice-Chair

Don Irwin, Trustee

Jacqueline Shotbolt, Trustee

Ralph Sorochan, Trustee

Randy Footz, Trustee

### ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sandra Stoddard, Superintendent

Ryan Marshall, Associate Superintendent

Deneen Zielke, ATA Local No. 28 President

Emma Small, Communication Services

## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

COSC Vice-Chair Kirtz provided the land acknowledgement.

### AGENDA

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

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, as circulated.

*MOTION CARRIED*

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COSC Chair Roemer called for approval of the March 6, 2024 meeting minutes.

MOTION | The minutes be approved, as circulated.

*MOTION CARRIED*

# New Business

## POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OF POLICIES TO PRESERVE CHOICE – Sandra Stoddard, EIPS Superintendent

- Parental notification and consent are required for students under 15 years of age to change their names or pronouns.
- EIPS does and will continue to work with families.
- For students that feel unsafe, the Division works with them and their families.
  - There are certain situations where concerns for the student’s safety and well-being outweigh disclosure to their family.
- Parents and caregivers will now have to opt in to human sexuality classes, where it’s currently an opt-out program.
- EIPS’ current opt-out program is done online through Permission Click, but there’s concern for other school divisions without the ability to use online services.
- Human sexuality units are mandated in the curriculum; however, the option of having to opt in opens the door to opting out of other classes that are mandated.
- There are concerns about transgender women not being allowed to compete on women’s sports teams and the effect it will have on high school sports.
- Have to ask yourself: Why is this legislation being brought in? Why is there a focus on this when there are exigent issues like the curriculum?
- There are concerns about unintended consequences—for example, library books and budget concerns.
- There was no communication with school boards before policies were brought forward.

## COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

**Comment:** Lots of appreciation for transparency from EIPS.

**Question:** Has there been an issue regarding sports yet?

**Answer:** Yes, in track and field.

**Question:** How was the track and field issue dealt with?

**Answer:** The majority of students didn’t have an issue with individual sports. It was only a concern for a few students.

**Comment:** EIPS only cares that students are safe, welcome and valued.

**Comment:** Conversations can’t be had without accurate information. The provincial government is offering information sessions on a selective basis.

**Question:** Are there concerns about teaching flow and the impact on education and cross-learning?

**Answer:** Yes, teachers are fearful. They’re concerned of being misinterpreted and accused of indoctrination.

**Question:** Has there been an opportunity to ask about how non-compliance will be dealt with?

**Answer:** No, it has not been discussed yet.

**Comment:** Do not envy the Division for having to deal with this very sensitive issue.

**Question:** Is it less likely for people to opt in versus opt out?

**Answer:** Unsure. It’s still mandated curriculum. It could be more of an issue for smaller divisions who are still using paper forms. It’s also more common to opt out of what you know than to opt in to an unknown variable.

**Question:** Has there been an issue regarding sports yet? How will this be different for EIPS with regards to Permission Click?

**Answer:** It won’t change for EIPS or cause a workload issue at all.

# Board Report

Board Chair Cathy Allen presented the Board Report.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- On March 21, the Board of Trustees approved EIPS' nomination for this year's [Edwin Parr Teacher Award](#) nominee, Alexis Kotronis. Annually, the Alberta School Boards Association hosts the award to honour and recognize first-year teachers and their pedagogical excellence. Alexis, a first-year teacher at Davidson Creek Elementary, was selected for her outstanding commitment to education, proactive approach and innate ability to create inclusive learning environments for students.
- On March 21, the Board approved EIPS' [2025-28 Three-Year Capital Plan](#). Annually, the Board reviews and updates the plan to prioritize its key capital projects. Now approved, the Division will submit the *Three-Year Capital Plan* to the province for funding consideration.
  - Every year, each school board creates a list of building projects that are important to their communities for the next three years. The provincial government uses information from the individual school board plans to create a provincial capital plan. The provincial capital plans consider many factors, including:
    - a school's impact on the health and safety of students;
    - the condition of the buildings;
    - enrolment trends; and
    - each school board's three-year capital plan.
  - The provincial capital plan helps the government decide which projects will be approved when funding is available for school projects. If a project is approved, the local school board, Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure work together on the details of the project to help ensure it meets students' needs.
- Board Chair Allen also shared the Board Mythbuster fact for April:
  - Alberta Reserves are accumulated surplus funds that may be designated to a school, department or priority. The Board of Trustees approves the transfer of funds to and from reserves and has a yearly plan on how those reserves are used—to the benefit of students. EIPS identifies high-demand areas and uses its operating reserves for initiatives like student learning, new curriculum work, consultant support, mental health initiatives, technology upgrades, public-health best practices and other one-time projects. Operating reserves are also used to furnish and equip new schools and classrooms. With its capital reserves, EIPS replaces ageing equipment, purchases technology, modernizes and expands student learning spaces, and funds emergent capital needs.
  - Learn more:
    - [Board Policy 2: Role of Board](#)
    - [Administrative Procedure 501: Financial Management](#)
- Board Chair Allen shared National Volunteer Week takes place April 14-20. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, she thanked every COSC member for taking the time to attend the COSC meetings and for everything they do at their schools. The Board knows that parents and caregivers have a never-ending number of responsibilities to look after, so their time is precious and so incredibly appreciated.

## COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

**Question:** How can we advocate for older schools that could use funding?

**Answer:** EIPS' Facility Services do check up on everything, and there's only enough funding for what's already being done. You can go through your principal.

**Question:** How does EIPS plan to guide parents to advocate for lack of funding?

**Answer:** Voters have a voice. Contact the Premier, Minister of Education and members of the legislative assembly. Use your voice by writing or speaking. There'll also be further information coming out to Fort Saskatchewan families about a community conversation.

**Question:** How much does EIPS look at boundaries?

**Answer:** They are looked at regularly by the Division's planner. Once a year, reports are brought for review. More expansion means more boundary reviews.

## ATA Report

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

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Zielke shared the government released the [new draft social studies curriculum](#). While it's an improvement from the previous draft, there are considerable concerns with the content.
  - Teachers and experts in the field who were included in the development of the new draft have stated that their input has—for the most part—been ignored and their inclusion seems to be an attempt to silence critics but not actually engage them in the process.
  - The curriculum is noted to be heavily focused on fact memorization and not critical thinking and development of high-level thinking skills, to appeal to those that choose to home school.
  - Zielke said she had more concerns than her report time allowed. She encouraged COSC members to visit the [Alberta Education website](#).
- The Local will have a booth at the [Great Canadian Trade Fair and Sale](#). They'll have prizes for children and information for the public, highlighting the importance of public education and current trends noted in ATA surveys.
  - She said current EIPS teachers and some retired teachers will be working in the booth, but it would be great if parents and caregivers joined. She encouraged COSC members to get in touch with her if they were interested.

## For Information

**CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE** – Dallas Kirtz, COSC Vice-Chair

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

**ASCA UPDATE: Credential voting and proxy voting** – Kendra Roemer, COSC Chair

- The credential voting form and proxy voting form must be signed and submitted by April 18.
- New member perspective surveys were emailed to ASCA members. They're due at noon on April 18. The survey will also be included in the COSC followup email to share with school councils.
- The deadline for the ASCA Board of Directors nominations is April 12.
- EIPS is nominated for the Division School Council Engagement Award.

## COSC Sharing

**ASCA AGM DISCUSSION** – All COSC members

- Tabled because of a lack of time. COSC Chair Roemer said they'd have an informal virtual chat about the [ASCA resolutions](#) the week of April 8-12. She said to stay tuned for details in the COSC followup email and in the [COSC Facebook group](#).

## **EDUCATIONAL COMPOSTING INITIATIVES AT YOUR SCHOOL – All COSC members**

- Composting Initiatives can be tied to clubs or curricular outcomes. Not to be mistaken with organics waste diversion, which must be considered at the division-level.
- École Campbelltown’s school council is interested in what other councils have going on at their schools in terms of composting.
- Councils are looking into composting worms and gardening.
- It’s very expensive to have a divisionwide organics waste diversion program.
- École Parc Élémentaire has a compost program supported by the City of Fort Saskatchewan. COSC member Amanda Shand asked others to connect with her if they’d like to know more.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:30 P.M.

## **Next COSC Meeting**

**DATE:** May 1, 2024

**TIME:** 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** EIPS Central Services building, boardroom.