



# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

JUNE 2024

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## BOARD MEETING: June 6, 2024

### New Business

#### 2024-25 BUDGET REPORT

The Board approved Elk Island Public Schools’ (EIPS) 2024-25 spring budget, prepared by Financial Services. Every spring, the Division prepares a budget for the upcoming school year—based on provincial funding, Alberta Education’s *Funding Manual for School Authorities: 2024-25 School Year*, projected student-enrolment numbers, corresponding staffing estimates, Board-approved [budget assumptions](#) and [allocations](#), and stakeholder feedback. Overall, for 2024-25, EIPS is working with a tighter budget than the previous year. The reason: There is no additional funding to cover rising inflationary costs—such as utilities, employee benefits, custodial supplies and insurance premiums. That, in turn, impacts available student programming and services. As such, Financial Services developed a conservative spring budget that aligns with the province’s allotted funding and is built around two key principles—equitable distribution of funds and programs, and transparent and understandable allocations. The following is a brief summary of EIPS’ spring 2024-25 Budget Report. The complete report is available at [eips.ca](https://eips.ca).

#### OVERVIEW

EIPS’ operating budget is \$208.07 million from Sept. 1, 2024, to Aug. 31, 2025. Of that, \$206.26 million will come from the Division’s annual revenues. The remaining \$1.81 million will come from the Division’s accumulated surplus. The Division plans to use the added funds to support EIPS schools and departments—related to classroom complexity, mental health, career pathways, and artificial intelligence and digital tools.

#### ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

EIPS projects an accumulated surplus of \$9.56 million by Aug. 31, 2025. The accumulated surplus comprises investment in tangible capital assets (\$8.33 million), operating reserves (\$10.65 million), capital reserves (\$556,000) and asset-retirement obligation (-\$9.98 million). For 2024-25, EIPS’ operating reserve limit is \$12.45 million, which the Division will ensure not to exceed—currently projected at \$1.8 million below the limit. Meanwhile, EIPS plans to use \$951,000 from its capital reserves to fund the following projects:

- \$150,000 for information technology access points;
- \$220,000 to upgrade the VOIP phone system; and
- \$581,000 to purchase school buses.

#### SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT ALLOCATIONS

School allocations will increase by 0.2% because of higher standard costs, although the exact allocations for each school will vary based on enrolment number changes 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*. Similarly, allocations for central departments will also increase by 0.1%—primarily because of higher staff benefit costs and inflationary expenses.

## REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Overall revenues are down just slightly by \$190,000. Conversely, total expenses are up by \$290,000, again because of higher staff benefit costs and inflationary expenses—utilities, custodial supplies and insurance premiums. In terms of students and staff, EIPS anticipates a student enrolment of 17,813—up by 53. In contrast, the Division expects a decrease in staffing, dropping by approximately 3.5%, or 48.32 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees—declining to 1,324.26 FTE from 1,372.58 FTE. The reason: mostly because the provincial funding for the Mental Health in Schools Pilot program ended and the Division's decision to hire full-time educational assistants as opposed to hiring on an hourly basis. Compensation will also rise, primarily because of salary grid movement and higher benefit costs. Overall, instructional costs comprise 78% of the total budget, costing \$9,362 per student.

Finally, system administration spending will equate to 2.2% (\$4.49 million) of total expenses, which is below the \$6.55-million grant provided by Alberta Education. All unused funds will go toward instruction, as outlined in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities: 2024-25 School Year*. Similarly, by Aug. 31, 2025, the Division's Unallocated Reserve is projected to be \$6.8 million, which, when combined with other operating reserves, falls within the operating reserve limit (\$12.45 million).

## WHAT THE EIPS SPRING BUDGET MEANS

Overall, the spring EIPS 2024-25 budget supports the mission, values and priorities of EIPS. It also allows the Division to fund its key budget priorities to ensure student success—including classroom complexity, curriculum, mental health, career pathways, equity, staff retention, and artificial intelligence and digital tools. Now approved, schools and departments will use EIPS' spring budget to plan for the upcoming school year. The complete [EIPS 2024-25 Budget Report](#) is available at [eips.ca](https://eips.ca).

*NOTE: As with all budgets, any changes to funding, reserve usage, enrolment numbers and standard costs can affect the initial budget. As such, in the fall, EIPS will update its 2024-25 budget with the final student-enrolment numbers, revenue and expense variations, carryforward amounts and any reserve spending changes.*

## BUDGET REPORT: ALBERTA EDUCATION

The Board also approved the Alberta Education Budget Report for the year ending Aug. 31, 2025 (see pg. 76, "[Alberta Education Budget Report: 2024-25](#)").

## BOARD MEETING: June 20, 2024

### Chair's Report

#### RECENT EVENTS

Board Chair Cathy Allen highlighted information and events trustees attended since the last Board meeting:

- On May 26, trustees and senior administration attended the Alberta School Boards Association's (ASBA) Zone 2/3 Edwin Parr Awards Banquet, an annual celebration that recognizes the work of first-year teachers.
- On June 3-4, trustees attended ASBA's spring general meeting.
- On June 7, Trustee Jacqueline Shotbolt was a judge for James Mowat Elementary's speech competition.
- On June 12, trustees met Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, the Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees and a member of Alberta's Legislative Assembly for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.
- On June 14, trustees attended the Alberta Teachers' Association Local No. 28's annual retirement dinner.
- On June 17, Chair Allen joined school board chairs and superintendents from across the province to meet with Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaidis. The focus: the new provincial standards for personal mobile devices and social media use in schools.



# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

## ASBA TRUSTEE GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

Congratulations to Trustee Colleen Holowaychuck, who recently completed ASBA's Trustee Governance Program, offered through the University of Calgary's Continuing Education department. The year-long program focuses on the theory and practice of leadership and effective governance.

## GRADUATION AND SCHOOL EVENTS

It's an exciting time for schools, students and families within EIPS. Senior high schools are busy hosting graduation ceremonies—congratulations to all EIPS 2024 graduates. Meanwhile, elementary and junior high schools are hosting farewells, school awards and performances. Every year, trustees look forward to these events and sincerely appreciate the many invitations to attend.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The Board looks forward to meeting with Education Minister Nicolaides on June 24.

## Superintendent's Report

### RECENT EVENTS

Superintendent Sandra Stoddard highlighted recent events:

- On June 11, she met with the Strathcona Christian Academy Society about its lease agreement.
- On June 12, she joined the Board to meet with Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, the Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees and a member of Alberta's Legislative Assembly for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. Also in attendance were representatives from Elk Island Catholic Schools and several community partners. The focus: career pathways and a proposed collegiate in Fort Saskatchewan.
- On June 13, she met with the Elk Island Logos Society President to discuss future programming.
- On June 17, she joined Chair Allen at the board chairs and superintendents meeting with Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides on the new provincial standards for personal mobile devices and social media use in schools. EIPS administration will soon meet to discuss its implications, which should be minimal—the Division already has a policy in place for personal communication device use.
- On June 24, she looks forward to joining the Board to meet with Education Minister Nicolaides.

### GRADUATIONS AND SCHOOL EVENTS

Throughout May and June, EIPS administration has attended several graduations, farewells, awards and school performances across the Division—a wonderful way to wrap up the school year. Superintendent Stoddard also congratulates all EIPS 2024 graduates.

### YEAR-END MESSAGE

Superintendent Stoddard wishes staff, students, families and community partners a wonderful summer break and thanks everyone for their support, efforts, expertise and dedication to EIPS over the last year. She also thanks the Board for its vision, strategic direction and commitment to ensuring strong public education. She looks forward to seeing everyone back on Aug. 29, 2024.

## Association and Employee Group Reports

### ATA LOCAL REPORT

The Board received for information the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Local No. 28 report from Maxine Holm, on behalf of Deneen Zielke, the president of Local No. 28:

- On June 11, the Local No. 28's Women in Leadership Committee held its final event for the year, which was well-attended. Holm thanked Chair Allen for attending and addressing attendees.

- On June 13, the Local No. 28's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee hosted a booth at the Fort Saskatchewan Pride Week Closing Celebration.
- On June 14, the Local hosted its annual retirement dinner at the University of Alberta's Faculty Club. Holm thanked Chair Allen and trustees Trina Boymook and Randy Footz for attending and sharing in the celebration. It's always a fun event that honours colleagues' long and diverse careers.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS GROUP REPORT

The Board received for information the Employee Relations Group (ERG) report from Michelle Miller, the committee's Chair:

- As schools work through their 2024-25 budgets, classified staff are adjusting to their reassignments.
- Many members have asked what the Division plans to do with the Job Information Questionnaire. An update on next steps is expected in early fall 2024.
- The ERG is looking for a new member to represent schools in Vegreville. The reason: Long-time member Marlene Steeves will step down at the end of the school year.
- In August, Miller plans to participate in the Division's Off To A Good Start, an orientation program for new employees. There, she looks forward to meeting EIPS' newest classified staff.
- The ERG wishes everyone a relaxing and enjoyable summer.

## New Business

### SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION REPORT

The Board approved the Superintendent's Evaluation Report, which documents the performance of the Division's Superintendent from July 1, 2023, to June 18, 2024. The Board also authorized the Chair to make any required technical edits and to sign the report on its behalf.

### POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board approved amendments to:

- [Board Policy 17: Student Transportation](#)—The changes help clarify the provision of mandated and non-mandated student transportation.
- [Board Policy 22: Health and Safety](#) – The change requires an annual report to be presented to the Board to demonstrate continuous improvement of health and safety within the Division.

Amendments were also made to:

- [Board Policy 7: Board Operations](#)
- [Board Policy 13: Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters](#)
- [Board Policy 18: Alternative Programs](#)
- [Board Policy 20: Assessment and Reporting of Student Learning](#)
- [Board Policy 21: Expense Transparency](#)

The approved changes strengthen the policies' clarity, definitions, roles, language and readability.

### SURPLUS PROPERTY DECLARATION: ÉCOLE CAMPBELLTOWN

The Board approved the recommendations to declare the École Campbelltown building, excluding its modular classrooms, surplus to the Board's needs—effective 90 days after occupancy of the Sherwood Park replacement school. Additionally, the Board will offer the building to Alberta Infrastructure—at net book value—in accordance with the *Real Property Governance Act*. If declined, it will ask permission from the Education Minister to transfer the building to Strathcona County.

## Committee Reports

### AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Audit Committee meeting held on June 5. The committee discussed EIPS' 2023-24 financial statements, the audit service plan and upcoming audit reports—slated for November 2024.

### POLICY COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Policy Committee meeting held on June 10. Policies discussed: 7, 8, 9, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22. No amendments were required for policies 8 and 9. Amendments to the remaining policies were approved earlier during the June 20 Board meeting (see pg. 4, "Policy Amendments"). That concludes the annual review of Board policies for the 2023-24 school year. The committee will reconvene after the summer break.

## Reports for Information

### ENGAGEMENT PLAN: TRANSITION PLANNING

The Board received for information the EIPS Engagement Plan: Project 1 transition planning. The plan will guide the Division as it develops a transition strategy for secondary students relocating to Salisbury Composite High for French Immersion and Lakeland area students who are redesignated to Bev Facey Community High—effective when the new Sherwood Park replacement school opens in 2026-27. Briefly, EIPS plans to consult with all impacted stakeholders to develop an effective transition plan—starting in fall 2024. Consultations will include working-group meetings, online surveys with staff and school families, student engagements and a public consultation with stakeholders to fine-tune the draft plan. A final transition plan is expected in spring 2025.

### UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT: SEPTEMBER 1 TO MAY 31

The Board received for information the EIPS Unaudited Financial Report for the nine months ending May 31, 2024. Overall, revenues exceeded expenses, resulting in an operating surplus of \$1 million. Revenue for the nine months is \$156.21 million, which represents 78 per cent of the year-to-date budget—an expected percentage at this point in the fiscal year. Meanwhile, total expenses are \$155.2 million, representing 77 per cent of the year-to-date budget. Significant financial developments in the past quarter include the sale of IP addresses (\$3.8 million), new funding (\$150,000) to implement a new provincial digital assessment platform for provincial achievement tests and diploma examinations, and a reallocation of surplus funds (\$1.1 million)—approved by the Board in March. For the complete report, see the Board Package: June 20, 2024, pg. 101, "[Unaudited Financial Report.](#)"

### PLAYGROUND SUMMARY REPORT: 2023-24

The Board received for information the 2023-24 Playground Summary Report:

*STRATHCONA COUNTY* – The county is responsible for monthly inspections, maintenance and annual audits. Both Strathcona County (90 per cent) and EIPS (10 per cent) are responsible for maintenance and reporting costs. For 2023-24, one project is planned: expanding and upgrading Wes Hosford Elementary's playground. Work is expected to start in July 2024 and be completed by August 2024.

*CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN* – The city is responsible for monthly inspections, maintenance and annual audits. All costs for maintenance and reporting are shared equally between EIPS (50 per cent) and the City of Fort Saskatchewan (50 per cent). In 2023-24, no playground projects are planned in the Fort Saskatchewan area.



# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

**RURAL AREAS**—EIPS staff certified in playground inspections inspect playgrounds monthly. A third-party inspection company is also contracted to perform an annual audit of the playgrounds. EIPS Facility Services pays all costs associated with playground inspections, maintenance and audits using Plant Operations and Maintenance funding. In 2023-24, one project is planned: replacing Lamont Elementary’s south and north playgrounds. Work is expected to start in July 2024 and be completed by August 2024.

*Upcoming projects* – Looking ahead, EIPS anticipates two playground projects in 2024-25—A.L. Horton Elementary’s north playground and Glen Allan Elementary’s east playground. Meanwhile, in 2025-26, EIPS anticipates three projects—A.L. Horton Elementary, James Mowat Elementary and Mundare School.

## **INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL FIELD TRIPS: 2023-24**

The Board received for information the International and National Field Trip report for the 2023-24 school year. Throughout the year, schools participated in the following field trips:

- *National field trips*: nine trips and 244 students
- *International field trips*: one trip and 44 students

## **LOCALLY DEVELOPED COURSES**

The Board received for information a report about the locally developed courses available to students in 2024-25. At the senior high level, the Division plans to acquire 11 new locally developed courses and renew four. It’s also waiting on the release of one other course—Mental Health Literacy 15. Meanwhile, at the junior high and elementary level, no newly acquired courses nor renewals are planned for 2024-25 (see pg. 127, “[Locally Developed Courses: 2024-25](#)”).

## **TRUSTEE NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND INFORMATION REQUESTS**

EIPS Board Chair Cathy Allen wishes everyone a relaxing and rejuvenating summer break. She extends a heartfelt thank you to Superintendent Stoddard, EIPS administration and all staff within EIPS for helping move learning forward. She also thanks her fellow trustees for their support and encouragement over the last year.

Trustees also thanked Chair Allen for her hard work and for representing the Board throughout 2023-24.

## **Board Members**

Cathy Allen, *Chair* | Susan Miller, *Vice-Chair* | Trina Boymook | Randy Footz | Colleen Holowaychuk | Don Irwin | Jacqueline Shotbolt | Ralph Sorochan

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Cathy Allen, *Board Chair* | P 780 417 8109

Laura McNabb, *Director, Communication Services* | P 780 417 8204

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