



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 6, 2024

The regular meeting of the Elk Island Public Schools Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, June 6, 2024—in the Boardroom at the Central Services Office in Sherwood Park, Alberta. The Board of Trustees meeting convened with Board Chair Cathy Allen, calling the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

C. Allen, Board Chair
S. Miller, Vice-Chair
T. Boymook
R. Footz
C. Holowaychuk
D. Irwin
J. Shotbolt
R. Sorochan

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

S. Stoddard, Superintendent
R. Marshall, Associate Superintendent – Supports for Students
R. Johnson, Associate Superintendent – Human Resources
W. Gilewich, Information and Security Officer
C. Cole, Secretary-Treasurer
L. McNabb, Director, Communications Services
C. von Tettenborn, Director, Budget, Financial Services
C. Gillis, Senior Accountant II, Financial Services
C. Langford-Pickering, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair welcomed all in attendance in person and online. The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. with all trustees noted above in attendance except for Trustee Shotbolt.

TREATY 6 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Board Chair Cathy Allen proceeded with the Land and People Acknowledgment.

AGENDA

Board Chair Allen called for any additions or deletions to the Agenda.

[115/2024](#) | Trustee Irwin moved: That the Agenda be adopted, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

New Business

2024-25 BUDGET

Superintendent Stoddard shared how proud she was of the budget, recognizing where students are at and where we need to focus our priorities. It has been a difficult budget as funding for inflation was not received. Superintendent Stoddard thanked the finance team for the incredible hard work on the budget and is confident with what was pulled together—best scenario for our staff and students.

116/2024 | Vice-Chair Miller moved: That the Board of Trustees approves the 2024-25 Budget for Elk Island Public Schools, as presented.

Secretary-Treasurer Cole and Director von Tettenborn proceeded to present to the Board the Elk Island Public Schools 2024-25 Budget. For the 2024-25, EIPS has prepared a \$208.07 million operating budget.

Secretary-Treasurer Cole noted that in April 2024, the Board of Trustees approved assumptions, and in May approved allocations used to build the 2024-25 Budget. Secretary-Treasurer Cole noted the importance of taking into consideration the feedback from all stakeholders.

The Board's budget priorities included: complexity in classrooms, curriculum and resource development, Year 3 of the Mental Health Strategic Plan, continued pursuit of Collegiate School/program and support for Career Pathways, equity for rural schools, equity for all, retention of staff, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Digital Tools Consideration.

Board Chair Allen opened the floor for questions.

Trustee Shotbolt arrived at 9:17 a.m.

Superintendent Stoddard highlighted the robust work EIPS has done in developing new curriculum resources and the value in advocating for funding support from the government to continue this work and build capacity within the context of the Division's own professional learning.

The static funding posed significant challenges, made us examine past supplemented specialized supports and to be creative and rethink utilization of resources as classroom complexity is on a rise.

The Board appreciated the direction taken on priority budgeting, however, shared concern with overall funding, and lack of support from the provincial government. A new allocation model has been developed to mitigate some of the shortfalls. An assessment framework will be used to measure success and a report will be provided to the Board in the latter part of 2024-25 school year.

Secretary-Treasurer Cole continued with the summary of the budget and noted that the key budget assumptions are around: reserve usage, enrolment and standard cost, and noted that significant changes to these could significantly change the budget—to be reviewed in the fall.

Contributions to operating reserves are \$3.77 million higher than previously reported to incorporate proceeds from the sale of the IP addresses. A potential transfer of \$367,000 from operating reserves to capital reserves has been included in 2023-24 and will be brought to the Board for approval in June 2024.

For 2024-25, EIPS Division Allocated Reserve is being accessed for a total of \$1.45 million. The Government of Alberta has implemented a maximum limit on school board operating reserves (a "cap"). Based on projected balances at Aug. 31, 2025, EIPS projects to be below the maximum limit by \$1.8 million. At Aug. 31, 2024, EIPS is over the cap due to the one-time item—IP address sale. An exemption request to the Minister will be sent for being over the cap due to this one-time item.

Board Chair Allen opened the floor for questions.

Director von Tettenborn proceeded with the Statement of Revenues and Expenses and highlighted any changes to the Alberta Education revenue, schools and central allocations, school expenses, and school enrolment.

Board Chair Allen opened the floor for questions.

Secretary-Treasurer Cole shared that inflation costs for 2024-25 were approximately \$1.9 million including, increased benefit costs (ASEBP increased \$750,000), and increases in property insurance, electricity, natural gas, custodial supply contracts, and supplies and equipment. Administration is anticipating \$1.7 million inflation for 2025-26.

Secretary-Treasurer Cole presented the School Full Time Equivalent data, changes to Supports for Students – Early Learning and Specialized Supports.

Director von Tettenborn provided a summary of changes for all Central Services between fall budget and the spring budget.

Board Chair Allen opened the floor for questions.

Director von Tettenborn corrected an answer shared previously and noted that EIPS has received approval for one French Language assistant through Odyssey. Director von Tettenborn continued to present the Alberta Education Budget Report 2024-25. The Alberta Education Budget Report form (BRF) takes the information presented in the budget report and consolidates it into a standardized format required by Alberta Education.

The Division is continuing to operate in a fiscally constrained environment. A higher percentage of revenues received continue to be targeted, along with external factors outside of the Division’s control such as inflation on many of the goods and services purchased by schools and departments, increased costs for utilities, and large increases to benefits have made the budget tight as there is less discretionary funds.

Administration believes the budget for 2024-25 school year will allow EIPS to fund its key budget priorities and focusing on these priorities will allow our students to not only continue to grow academically but socially as well as; we are seeing results from prior years’ investments addressing the effects of the pandemic. Achieving these results allows the Division to look to the future to items such as collegiate programming, use of artificial intelligence, etc., so that students are set up for success after graduation.

Due to inflationary pressures, detailed in this report, and the lack of additional funding from the province for school divisions to assist with these pressures, divisions now must budget within fiscal constraints. Looking forward to next year, significant operational changes will need to be made for 2025-26 as we anticipate funding to be the same as this year.

Board Chair opened the floor for final comments and questions.

The Board shared appreciation for administration’s action plan for the 2024-25 budget, anticipating budget shortfalls for 2025-26, finding ways to modify supports in schools, to continue to provide world class education.

On behalf of the Board, Board Chair Allen thanked Secretary-Treasurer Cole and the Financial Services team for their work effort on the 2024-25 Budget.

VOTE ON MOTION 116/2024 | CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Allen concluded the public session and declared the meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

Cathy Allen, Board Chair

Sandra Stoddard, Superintendent