

NOV. 28, 2024

## Chair's Report

### RECENT EVENTS

Board Chair Cathy Allen highlighted recent trustee events:

- On October 24, trustees met with Kyle Kasawski, Alberta's Member of the Legislative Assembly for Sherwood Park. Topics discussed: divisional needs, public education and areas of concern.
- On October 25, trustees attended Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce's 2024 Business Awards—Elk Island Public Schools' (EIPS) was one of the organizations nominated for the Non-Profit/Community Organization of the Year award—won by the Fort Saskatchewan Multicultural Association. Chair Allen congratulated all the 2024 award nominees and winners.
- On November 8, trustees attended school Remembrance Day ceremonies throughout the Division. Chair Allen thanked all the schools that invited trustees to participate.
- On November 8, Board members attended the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Local No. 28 New Teachers' Induction. It was nice to meet the new teachers and welcome them to the Division.
- On November 11, trustees attended their municipal Remembrance Day services and placed wreaths on behalf of EIPS.
- Trustees also attended, or plan to attend, several school-based events, including:
  - Lamont High's Awards Night—October 24;
  - Bev Facey Community High's Academic Awards Night—October 30;
  - Fort Saskatchewan High's Awards Ceremony—November 20;
  - Fort Saskatchewan Christian's Indigenous Luncheon—November 22; and
  - Vegreville Composite High's Academic Awards—November 29.

### ASBA FALL GENERAL MEETING

On November 17-19, the Board of Trustees attended the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Fall General Meeting, which included trustees from all 65 school boards within the province. Members discussed and voted on various position statements and took part in several professional learning sessions.

### ASSURANCE REVIEWS

Throughout October and November, trustees participated in the EIPS Assurance Reviews, a divisionwide forum for schools and departments to share their individual results, annual plans, budgets, successes and challenges with the Board. Collectively, the reviews allow trustees to gain a holistic understanding of what's happening throughout the Division—which then helps inform decision-making.

### BULLYING AWARENESS PREVENTION WEEK

Staff and students throughout EIPS participated in various activities to promote healthy relationships during this year's Bullying Awareness Prevention Week, which took place November 18-22. The annual event aims to boost awareness among students, staff, families and community members about bullying and ways to prevent it in schools. Within EIPS, students and staff discussed ways to foster healthy relationships, discourage intolerance and communicate through conflict. Year-long, schools build on that work through ongoing activities and lesson plans to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments for everyone.

## Superintendent's Report

### RECENT EVENTS

Superintendent Sandra Stoddard shared with the Board recent events she's attended, including:

- On October 24, Superintendent Stoddard met with Elk Island Catholic Schools about EIPS' Division calendar.
- On November 6-7, Superintendent Stoddard and senior administration attended the College of Alberta School Superintendents' Fall Conference. Many ideas were shared, which EIPS will explore further.
- On November 21, Superintendent Stoddard met with New Horizons School about EIPS' Division calendar.
- On November 27, Superintendent Stoddard met with an EIPS Committee of School Councils member. She stressed the vital role families play in education and the daily work of the Division.

Superintendent Stoddard also joined trustees at the following events:

- The meeting with Kyle Kasawski, Alberta's Member of the Legislative Assembly for Sherwood Park—she appreciated the invitation and the continued back-and-forth communication.
- The Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce 2024 Business Awards—she's proud EIPS was nominated for the Non-Profit/Community Organization award, and congratulated the category's winner—the Fort Saskatchewan Multicultural Association.
- The Fort Saskatchewan Christian's Indigenous Luncheon—which was a lovely event that ended with a sharing circle for families and children to celebrate Indigenous culture.

### ASSURANCE REVIEWS

Over the last month, EIPS conducted its annual Assurance Reviews with schools and departments—using Alberta Education's assurance measures and internal qualitative and quantitative data. The reviews complement the education plans and allow schools and departments to share with the Board their results, annual plans, successes, how they're meeting the needs of all learners, the challenges they are experiencing and potential advocacy focus areas. Collectively, the reviews help build capacity about what's happening across the Division and allow everyone to work together to tackle the challenges raised.

### BULLYING AWARENESS PREVENTION WEEK

Throughout the week of November 18-22, schools divisionwide took part in Bullying Awareness Prevention Week. Activities included school assemblies, fundraisers, presentations on cyberbullying, student performances themed around building healthy relationships, conflict-resolution lesson plans, fundraisers, deeds of kindness and much more. Along with the week, year-long, EIPS schools have ongoing projects and initiatives in place geared towards building healthy relationships and environments that are welcoming, caring, respectful and safe.

## Association and Employee Relation Reports

### ASBA ZONE 2/3 MEETING

Trustee Susan Miller presented highlights from the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 meeting held on October 25. Discussion highlights included:

- a discussion about charter schools and the impact on public school divisions;
- elections were held for the following Zone positions and committees –
  - Director 2 position—Joe Becgneal was acclaimed
  - Alternate Director 2—Kristie Rouse was acclaimed
  - Edwin Parr Committee—three members acclaimed
- The Zone's long-serving treasurer has stepped down—the Zone will now use ASBA's bookkeeping service.

On behalf of the Board, Trustee Miller thanked Trustee Colleen Holowaychuk for the years of service she spent working as a Zone Director.

## ATA LOCAL REPORT

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

- On October 25, Zielke attended a meeting with each ATA Local president. Discussion highlights include:
  - An article series written by Janet French, a CBC journalist, that explores the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission, which oversees disciplinary matters for teachers and teacher leaders.
  - The growing need for new schools and teachers provincewide—8,000 to 10,000 teachers needed; \$8.6 billion required for school builds, 420 school build requests and 90 new school builds planned.
  - The impact private schools have on the public system—Alberta is the only province in Canada that funds private schools at 70% and charter schools at 100%.
  - ATA President Jason Shilling met with the Minister of Education regarding the potential negative impacts of the province's new policies requiring parental consent to change pronouns in schools and an opt-in model for sexual education.
- On November 7, the ATA's Professional Development Committee hosted a learning session for teachers—Regulation and Resilience: Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviour. The session is one of many developed by the committee.
- On November 8, the Local hosted its annual New Teachers' Induction ceremony—where it inducted seven teachers into the association. She thanked trustees for attending the event, which is always a special evening.
- With the holiday season just about here, Zielke hopes trustees, administration, staff and families can take part, and enjoy, the many upcoming school events and concerts.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS GROUP REPORT

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

- On November 26, the ERG met for a regularly scheduled meeting.
- The *EIPS Classified Handbook* is now updated—available online.
- Recent news stories about labour strikes and strike discussions have many classified staff feeling more anxious than normal and asking questions about the possible implications if there was a strike at EIPS.
- This year's Classified Professional Learning Day is set to take place on March 7. The theme: fuel the fire within, with keynote speaker Greg Wells, a scientist, physiologist and author who will share how science can help improve a person's health and performance. The ERG is collecting ideas for possible learning sessions. It should be another great learning event.

## New Business

### BOARD POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board approved amendments to the following Board policies:

- [Policy 13: Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters](#) – the changes strengthen the policy's clarity, language and readability.
- [Policy 14: Hearings and Teacher Transfers](#) – the changes strengthen the policy's clarity, language and readability.

### UNAUDITED ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

The Board approved the transfer of \$5.2 million from the Division's unrestricted surplus to its internally restricted operating reserves to offset the net results in 2023-24.

## AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: 2024

The Board approved the Audited Financial Statements for Aug. 31, 2024. MNP LLP, a national accounting firm, audited the below statements and issued the following opinion:

### Opinion

“[The Division’s] financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of EIPS as at August 31, 2024, and the results of its operations, its remeasurement gains and losses, changes in its net financial assets (net debt) and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.”

### Statements

- *net assets (accumulated surplus)* – \$11.5 million, comprised of:
  - \$11.6 million of operating reserves;
  - \$2.5 million of capital reserves; and
  - A net \$2.6 million deficit in investment in tangible capital assets—includes \$7.7 million invested in capital assets, offset by a \$10.3-million asset retirement obligation deficit.
- *financial assets* — \$23.4 million of cash and cash equivalents and \$3.4 million of accounts receivable.
- *liabilities* — \$13 million of accounts payable and accrued liabilities, \$1.7 million of deferred contributions and a \$14.7 million asset retirement obligation.

Additionally, the non-financial assets include \$158 million in capital assets and \$1.9 million in prepaid expenses. Meanwhile, the spent deferred capital contributions total \$145.6 million, comprised of provincial funding to cover capital assets. EIPS is in a healthy financial position, with financial assets exceeding liabilities by \$11.9 million when the asset retirement obligation is excluded. Overall, the Division ended the 2023-24 school year with an operating surplus of \$3.2 million—revenues and expenses were greater than budgeted because of increased enrolment, changes in grant funding and a one-time sale of non-capital assets.

## BYLAW NO. 009/2024

Bylaw No. 009/2024: The Establishment of Wards and Electoral Subdivisions received two readings by the Board. The third reading will take place at a Board meeting in December. Once passed, the bylaw will replace Bylaw No. 007/20 in [Appendix A – Policy 7: Board Operations](#).

## ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORT 2023-24

The Board approved EIPS’ *Annual Education Results Report 2023-24*, an Alberta Education reporting requirement that provides school families and community members easy-to-understand information about the Division. It also serves as a mechanism to improve accountability and transparency with local stakeholders. The *Annual Education Results Report 2023-24* features detailed information about how EIPS is doing relative to Alberta Education’s performance measures; how the Division supports students to achieve the best possible outcomes; and its successes, challenges and priorities moving forward. Now approved, the Division will submit the report to Alberta Education on November 29. After sending it to the province, EIPS will also post it online and share it with stakeholders and the Committee of School Councils. To read the report visit, [eips.ca](https://eips.ca).

## EIPS 2024-25 FALL BUDGET

The Board approved the EIPS 2024-25 Fall Budget Report for the period of Sept. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2025. The Board originally approved the 2024-25 operating budget on June 6, 2024. Every fall, the budget is updated to account for current information regarding enrolment numbers, revenue changes, actual carryforward amounts, expenses and planned reserve spending. Overall, the EIPS 2024-25 budget provides stability for schools and maintains essential services (see pg. 189, “[2024-25 Fall Budget](#)”).

Highlights from the Fall Budget Report:

*budget priorities* – complexity in classrooms, curriculum and resource development, the mental health strategic plan, collegiate and career pathways, equity, staff retention, and artificial intelligence and digital tools considerations

*budget principles* – equitable distribution of funds and programs and transparent and understandable changes to allocations

*operating budget* – \$213.15 million, which includes a \$2.11-million draw from operating reserves and \$390,000 from asset retirement obligation amortization

*student enrolment* – 17,949, as of Sept. 27, 2024

*employees (full-time equivalent)* – 1,367, as of Sept. 30, 2024

*compensation* – salary grid movement and benefit increases have been factored into standard costs for schools, and inflationary salary costs are related to grid movement and benefit costs for departments

*operating reserves projection* – \$10.59 million, as of Aug. 31, 2025

*capital reserves projection* – \$210,000, as of Aug. 31, 2025

*instructional spending* – 78% of the total budget, equating to \$9,518 per student

*system administration spending* – \$4.51 million, 2.1%, of total expenses

*NOTE:* System administration spending is within the \$6.55 million provided by Alberta Education. EIPS will distribute the surplus funds for instructional costs, as allowed in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2024-25 School Year*.

## Committee Report

### STUDENT EXPULSION COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Student Expulsion Committee regarding two meetings—held on October 18 and November 26. The committee reviewed all relevant information and upheld the school administrations' recommendations.

### GOVERNANCE AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from two Governance and Evaluation Committee meetings—held on October 22 and November 26. Discussion topics included: trustee concerns, timelines, workflow, professional development and agenda topics for the next Board retreat.

### POLICY COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Policy Committee meeting—held on October 29. The committee reviewed three policies—12, 13 and 14. During the November Board meeting, trustees approved the committee's recommended amendments to policies 13 and 14. Meanwhile, Policy 12 was reviewed and deferred to a later meeting. The next policy meeting takes place on Dec. 3, 2024.

### ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from two Advocacy Committee meetings—held on October 30 and November 21. At the October 30 meeting, members reviewed last year's advocacy plan and discussed potential advocacy priorities for 2024-25. At the November 21 meeting, members reviewed the draft EIPS Board Advocacy Plan: 2024-25 and made amendments. The final version of the plan will come forward to the Board at the next Caucus meeting.



# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

## AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Audit Committee meeting held on November 5. Discussion topics included the Division's audited financial statements and the auditor's findings—by MNP LLP. Overall, the auditor had no concerns with EIPS' accounting practices.

## Board Members

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

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