



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

DECEMBER 2024

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING: Dec. 5, 2024

New Business

BYLAW NO. 009/2024

Bylaw No. 009/2024: The Establishment of Wards and Electoral Subdivisions received third reading and was then passed by the Board. The bylaw replaces Bylaw No. 007/20 in [Appendix A – Policy 7: Board Operations](#).

BYLAW NO. 010/2024

Bylaw No. 010/2024: The Rules and Procedures for the Conduct of School Trustee Elections received three readings and was then passed by the Board. The bylaw replaces Bylaw No. 008/2020 and will guide the upcoming school trustee election.

BOARD MEETING: Dec. 19, 2024

Chair's Report

RECENT EVENTS

Board Chair Cathy Allen highlighted recent trustee events:

- On December 5, trustee members attended Nate Glubish's, Alberta's Minister of Technology and Innovation and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, constituency office open house. At the event trustees discussed its advocacy priorities and the importance of public education.
- On December 9, trustee members attended a Métis Kitchen Party, hosted by Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) at Salisbury Composite High.
- On December 11, trustees attended the Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce's 2024 Holiday Members Meeting. EIPS presented to members its advocacy efforts for a new collegiate secondary replacement school in Fort Saskatchewan—the first priority in the Division's [three-year capital plan](#). EIPS also presented on its second and fifth capital plan priority—a replacement school for James Mowat Elementary and a modernization of Win Ferguson Elementary, respectively.
- On December 12, trustee members attended Kyle Kasawski's, Alberta's Member of the Legislative Assembly for Sherwood Park, constituency office open house—another opportunity to share the Division's advocacy priorities with an elected official.
- Trustees also attended, several school-based events, including:
 - Fort Saskatchewan High's leadership event—November 29.
 - Vegreville Composite High's Academic Awards—November 29.

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Throughout December, trustees attended, and continue to attend, school-based concerts, performances and activities throughout the Division to celebrate the holidays. Chair Allen thanked all the schools for inviting trustees and said it's something they look forward to every year.

Superintendent's Report

RECENT EVENTS

Superintendent Sandra Stoddard shared with the Board recent events, including:

- On December 6, members of EIPS' senior administration attended the College of Alberta School Superintendents Zone 2/3 meeting.
- On December 10, EIPS Central Services held its annual staff Christmas luncheon.
- On December 11, Superintendent Stoddard joined the Board at the Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce's 2024 Holiday Members Meeting to present EIPS' advocacy efforts for a new collegiate replacement school in Fort Saskatchewan.
- On December 16, Superintendent Stoddard attended a Strathcona County School Site Allocation Committee meeting, which included a collaborative discussion on joint-use planning agreements.
- On December 18, EIPS hosted a Leadership Team meeting, which included a Christmas luncheon prepared by students at Bev Facey Community High and a concert performed by the school's jazz band.
- Like the Board, senior administration members also attended, and continue to attend, school Christmas concerts and performances throughout the Division. It's always exciting to go to these. Superintendent Stoddard wished everyone—trustees, students, staff, and families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Association and Employee Relation Reports

ASBA ZONE 2/3 MEETING

Trustee Colleen Holowaychuk presented highlights from the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 meeting held on December 6. Discussion highlights included:

- Regular zone business, including membership news, financial reports and reports for information.
- Nominations for ASBA's annual awards open in January.
- Members approved the Zone budget for the 2024-25 school year.
- The professional learning sessions focused on reconciliation.

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 December 13, Zielke was elected to the ATA Provincial Executive Council as an Edmonton District representative. The new position means she is no longer the Local's president. In her absence, Maxine Holm will take over as the Local's acting president until an election is held at the annual general meeting in spring 2025.
- Zielke thanked the Board and senior administration for all their support and work over the last few years. She hopes to stay in touch and see everyone at the various upcoming ATA events and meetings.
- On behalf of the Local, Zielke wished everyone a happy holiday season and new year.

New Business

BOARD POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board approved amendments to [Board Policy 2: Role of the Board](#). The approved changes strengthen the policy's clarity, definitions, language and readability.

BYLAW NO. 011/2024

Bylaw No. 011/2024: Criminal Record Checks Required for Trustee Nominations received three readings and was then passed by the Board. EIPS will abide by Bylaw No. 011/2024 throughout the upcoming school trustee election.



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

DIVISION CALENDAR

The Board approved the Division calendars for the next two school years—2025-26 and 2026-27. For the most part, the calendars resemble previous years. However, a change was made to early dismissal days. In previous years, early dismissal days occurred on the first Wednesday of every month—students are released from school one hour early to allow for staff meetings and collaboration. Going forward, early dismissal days will now occur weekly, every Wednesday. On these days, after students are released, school staff will take part in structured collaborative learning opportunities to ultimately enhance student achievement. Before making the calendar change, the Division surveyed the school community—the weekly early dismissal aligns with feedback heard and, also, the Division’s needs (see pg. 36, “[2025-26 and 2026-27 Division Calendars](#)”).

Calendar highlights include:

| 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first day of school – Aug. 28, 2025 • November break – November 10-14 • Christmas break – December 22 to January 2 • second semester starts – January 29 • Teachers’ Convention – February 5-6 • spring break – March 23-27 • last day of classes – June 23, 2026 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first day of school – Aug. 31, 2026 • November break – November 9-13 • Christmas break – December 21 to January 1 • second semester starts – February 1 • Teachers’ Convention – February 4-5 • spring break – March 22-26 • last day of classes – June 28, 2027 |

NAMING OF THE SHERWOOD PARK REPLACEMENT SCHOOL

The Board approved a name for the new replacement school in Sherwood Park—Forest Grove School—expected to open in the 2026-27 school year. Once open, Forest Grove School will offer a single-track elementary French Immersion program and a dual-track junior high program, including a regular English program and a French immersion program for grades 7-9.

SCHOOL FEE PARAMETERS: 2025-26

The Board approved the school fee parameters for the 2025-26 school year. For the upcoming school year, fees can increase by two per cent—in 2024-25, the allowable increase was five per cent. Highlights of the 2025-26 school fee parameters include:

- Optional-courses fees* –two per cent allowable increase
- Noon-supervision fees* – two per cent allowable increase
- Activity fees* – two per cent allowable increase
- Extracurricular fees* – two per cent allowable increase
- Non-curricular travel fees* – two per cent allowable increase
- Non-curricular goods and services fees* – two per cent allowable increase

Schools must set all fees at a cost-recovery rate. If fees are over-charged by more than \$10 a student, schools must refund that amount to the student. Additionally, if any fees exceed the listed parameters, the school must submit an explanation for EIPS’ Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer to review. With the fee parameters now approved, schools can begin establishing their 2025-26 School Fees Schedule.

AUDITOR REAPPOINTMENT

The Board approved reappointing MNP LLP, a national accounting firm, as the Division’s external auditor for EIPS’ year-end financial statements for Aug. 31, 2025.

Reports for Information

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT: SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2024

The Board received for information EIPS' Unaudited Financial Report for Sept. 1, 2024 to Nov. 30, 2024—prepared by Financial Services. As of November 30, revenues exceeded expenses, resulting in an operating surplus of \$639,000. The operational revenue for the three months is \$51.28 million, which represents 25 per cent of the budget. Similarly, total expenses are \$50.64 million, also representing 25 per cent of the budget. The primary reason for the surplus is timing differences, meaning expenditures are not incurred evenly over the year. EIPS expects these to resolve themselves by the end of the school year—after all expenses are incurred (see pg. 75, "[Unaudited Financial Report for Sept. 1, 2024 to Nov. 30, 2024](#)").

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

The Board received for information a report regarding Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week 2024, which took place November 18-22. Staff and students throughout EIPS participated in various activities focused on ways to promote kindness and healthy relationships. School activities included morning announcements, presentations, lesson plans, art projects, read-alouds and activities—themed around healthy relationships, empathy building, conflict resolution, inclusion, deeds of kindness, cyberbullying and more.

In addition to Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week activities, all EIPS schools have ongoing projects and initiatives in place focused on building healthy relationships, such as the Seven Sacred Teachings, Random Acts of Kindness, Bucket Fillers, Leader in Me and various community-service programs. Overall, promoting welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments for students and staff is a key priority for the Division and is an ongoing commitment to ensure everyone feels welcomed, caring, respected and safe. Trustees thanked schools for the work they do year-round to promote healthy relationships.

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN

The Board received for information a report on EIPS' updated Mental Health Strategic Plan—specifically, an update to the Division's Reset Rooms. As background, EIPS launched its Mental Health Strategic Plan in spring 2022. The plan was the result of seeing a rise in mental health challenges, particularly at the junior high level. To address these challenges, the Board allocated funding for the Division to create the mental health strategic plan. The goal: To better support students' and staff's socio-emotional and positive mental health development.

Phase 1 involved putting the plan in motion and capacity building. Phase 2, the 2023-24 school year, focused on education, developing and distributing resources on mental health literacy, supporting student mental health and well-being, capacity building and sharing service pathways. It also included establishing Reset Rooms, funded through the province's Mental Health In Schools Pilot Program, in all junior high schools. The mental health support rooms were spaces for students to go when feeling overwhelmed, featuring supports, resources, and EIPS teachers who were trained in mental health literacy and supported by the Division's counselling team. Provincial funding will cease for the rooms in 2025-26. As such, EIPS has now shifted focus for the initiative, which is part of Phase 3 of the plan, to capacity building with staff, to provide similar support to all students divisionwide, but within cohort classrooms instead of individual reset rooms.

Committee Report

POLICY COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Policy Committee meeting held on December 3. The committee reviewed four policies—2, 3, 19 and 23. Policy 23 required no changes. Amendments to Policy 2 were approved at the December Board meeting (see pg. 2, "Board Policy Amendments"). The remaining two policies will come forward to the Board for review later in the new year.



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

STUDENT EXPULSION COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from the Student Expulsion Committee regarding a recent meeting—held on December 10. The committee reviewed all relevant information and upheld the school administrations' recommendations.

GOVERNANCE AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from a recent Governance and Evaluation Committee meeting—held on December 17. Discussion topics included: the *EIPS Trustee Handbook*, onboarding for the newly elected Board, and the agenda for the upcoming Board Retreat.

Board Members

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

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