

JAN. 23, 2025

## Chair's Report

### RECENT EVENTS

Board Chair Cathy Allen highlighted recent trustee events:

- On November 20, Trustee Randy Footz attended the Mundare and Vegreville Indigenous Family and Community Evening. Chair Allen thanked the event organizers for the invitation—it was a lovely and important event to attend.
- On January 6, Chair Allen met with Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, Alberta's Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees and the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. Discussion topics included: shared advocacy interests, EIPS and recent Division successes and challenges.
- On January 20, Board members attended the Alberta School Boards Association's Speakers Corner, facilitated by Jane Halford, the founder of Edmonton-based Halford Consulting Ltd. The focus: governance practices and board dynamics.

## Superintendent's Report

### RECENT EVENTS

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

- On January 8, she attended the January Committee of School Councils meeting—always enjoyable and provides an opportunity to meet, discuss and engage with school council chairs from across the Division.
- On January 22, EIPS held its monthly leadership meeting with senior administration, principals and directors. The meetings help guide future planning, enhance operations, and provide opportunities for schools and departments to share relevant issues and concerns. Schools are encountering increasing complexities and demands for student supports—likely stemming from recent current affairs and growing economic uncertainty. Superintendent Stoddard encourages schools to be mindful of the pressures facing staff and families and to offer reassurance by remaining focused on the Division's vision and educational priorities.

## 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 January 17. Discussion highlights included:

- Regular zone business, including membership news, committee reports and reports for information.
- The professional learning sessions focused on Careers: The Next Generation.
- The advocacy topic focused on transportation, specifically safety and fly-by concerns.
- Nominations are now open for ASBA's annual Honouring Spirit Award. The deadline for nominations is February 5.
- The next Zone 2/3 meeting takes place on February 21.

### ATA LOCAL REPORT

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

- Maxine Holm introduced herself to the Board as the new President of ATA Local 28. The Local's executive team has also seen some changes: Naomi Halcrow is now the Communications Officer, and Nicole Mitchell now serves as the Secretary.

- The province has accepted the ATA’s nominees to assist in developing the new junior high curriculum.
- A recent ATA advocacy topic is the province’s mandatory early learning assessments. Specifically, the ATA raises concerns about the assessments' age-appropriateness, loss of teaching time and related costs.
- On January 14, the Local hosted a professional learning session on artificial intelligence. Overall, the session was well-attended, and the feedback received after the session was positive.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS GROUP REPORT

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

- The makeup of the ERG committee has recently undergone a slight change. Katie Perepeletza now represents the Vegreville area, and Tammy Seney represents the Andrew, Lamont and Mundare areas.
- The January ERG meeting included an opportunity for members to address concerns. Two were raised:
  - the support strike at Edmonton Public School Boards; and
  - the recently approved Division calendar—for the most part, members want to ensure classified staff are included in EIPS’ collaborative learning opportunities.
- Work continues on this year’s Classified Professional Learning Day, taking place on March 7. It should be another great learning event.

## Business Arising from Previous Meeting

### BOARD POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board approved amendments to [Board Policy 3: Role of the Trustee](#). The approved changes strengthen the policy’s clarity, definitions, language and readability.

## New Business

### BOARD POLICY AMENDMENTS

The Board approved amendments to [Board Policy 11: Board Delegation of Authority](#). The approved changes strengthen the policy’s clarity, definitions, language and readability.

### 2025 ASCA SCHOOL COUNCIL CONFERENCE AND AGM: REGISTRATION SPONSORSHIP

The Board approved sponsoring the registration fee for school councils to participate in the virtual 2025 Alberta School Councils’ Association (ASCA) School Council Conference and Annual General Meeting on April 26-27—per school council up to a maximum of \$5,000. To qualify, members must be part of a school council with an active ASCA membership and apply before the registration deadline, April 7.

### SIGNING AUTHORITY MATRIX

The Board approved the amended Signing Authority Matrix for the Division. Changes were made to Appendix A: Signing Authority Matrix and Appendix B: Responsibility Matrix. Collectively, the changes strengthen the matrix’s definitions, process, language and clarity (see pg. 26, “[Board Package: Signing Authority Matrix](#)”).

## Reports for Information

### SCHOOL STATUS REPORT: 2023-24

The Board received for information the School Status Report for the 2023-24 school year. The report identifies enrolment numbers, school utilization rates and per-student costs within the Division. The data is presented by geographic sectors and on a four-year comparative basis to ensure the analysis is based on long-term trends

and not isolated incidences (see pg. 36, "[Board Package: School Status Report for 2024-25](#)"). Highlights from the report:

- In 2023-24, the average per EIPS student cost was \$7,054—down by \$43 from the previous year.
- In 2023-24, 21 Division schools operated above the \$7,097 average.
- In 2023-24, EIPS' utilization rate rose to 78 per cent—rising two per cent from the previous year.

## **COR AUDIT**

The Board received for information a report on the Division's 2024 Occupational Health and Safety Certificate of Recognition (COR) Audit Report. Annually, EIPS undergoes the voluntary COR audit to certify its commitment to occupational health and safety. Overall, the Division scored an impressive COR score of 91 per cent, exceeding the mandatory 60 per cent requirement. The Division's noted areas of strength include:

- use of policies, procedures and online resources;
- integration of health and safety in the workplace;
- emergency plans, first aid and security measures in place; and
- positive role modelling.

The audit also offered areas for the Division to work on in preparation for the recertification. These include awareness campaigns related to incident reporting, emergency drills, job hazard assessments, and general communication to enhance health and safety efforts.

## **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY**

The Board received for information a report detailing recent amendments to the province's student transportation eligibility criteria, which take effect in the 2025-26 school year. Specifically, the changes relate to student transportation and rider eligibility. Currently, Alberta Education considers an elementary rider, kindergarten to Grade 6, eligible for provincial student transportation funding if they live one kilometre or more from the school they attend. For secondary students, grades 7-12, riders are eligible if they live two kilometres or more from the school they attend.

In 2025-26, Alberta Education will increase the elementary eligibility distance to 1.6 kilometres—the secondary rider eligibility will remain unchanged. The change in elementary eligibility has significant financial implications for both EIPS and school families. For instance, EIPS will see a substantial reduction in funding from the province. That, in turn, will result in an inability for EIPS Student Transportation to maintain its current service level, potentially leading to higher student transportation fees for families. Short term, the province has committed to some transition funding for 2025-26. However, that won't be the case long term. Therefore, the Division needs to develop a plan to address the new criteria and communicate the change to school families promptly.

## **Committee Report**

### **ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

The Board received for information a report from the Advocacy Committee meeting held on January 7. The committee reviewed the Board's advocacy plan, advocacy work done to date and focus areas for the remainder of 2025-26.

### **POLICY COMMITTEE**

The Board received for information a report from the Policy Committee meeting held on January 13. The committee reviewed four policies—3, 5, 6 and 11. Policies 5 and 6 required no changes. Amendments to Policy 3 and 11 were approved earlier at the January Board meeting (see pg. 2, "Board Policy Amendments").



# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

## GOVERNANCE AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from a recent Governance and Evaluation Committee meeting—held on January 14. Discussion topics included: the *EIPS Trustee Handbook*, section 3, and the Board Retreat agenda. The committee will bring forward suggested amendments to the handbook at the upcoming Board Caucus meeting in February.

## Board Members

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

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