



EIPS Advocacy in Action

Sent in February 2025

Introduction

One of the critical roles of the Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Board of Trustees is to represent students' best interests, acting as the voice for public education on behalf of the communities they serve. Each year, the Board determines the focus of its advocacy efforts, which are also in alignment with the Division's [priorities and goals](#). The intent of the Board's advocacy is twofold: To influence the Government of Alberta's education policy, and to seek and secure sufficient resources to meet the needs of all EIPS students.

The Advocacy Committee met in October 2024 to recommend the areas of focus for the 2024-25 school year, and the advocacy plan was subsequently reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees as a whole.

Advocacy Priorities for 2024-25:

The Board identified areas for advocacy efforts which align with the focus areas of the Strategic Plan. Advocacy in these areas occur as a matter of course in interactions with others and as opportunities present themselves.

1. Education funding
 2. The value of public education
 3. Autonomous school boards
 4. Capital investment
 5. Curriculum
- Education funding: *funding serves the student needs, and is allocated in ways that are equitable, efficient and give students the best chance of academic and career success*
 - The value of public education: *equitable access, opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse student body, and choice offered within public education.*
 - Autonomy of locally elected school boards: *school boards should have the flexibility to invest resources in ways that best meet the unique demands of the communities we serve.*
 - Capital investment: *addressing capacity issues and the need to provide learning spaces that promote student achievement, growth, and enhanced career pathways.*
 - Curriculum: *Advocate for funding and resources to effectively transition students into new curricula; provide constructive and meaningful feedback to the Minister of Education on student challenges emerging with the revised curriculum and the transition to grades where new curriculum is not yet in place.*

Quarterly, through this newsletter, *EIPS Advocacy in Action*, the Division will advise school families and EIPS employees about the Board's work and advocacy efforts to ensure EIPS continues to provide high-quality, student-centred education.

Advocacy Efforts: Fall 2024 and Winter 2025

Correspondence and conversations

Throughout the fall of 2024 and winter of 2025, the Board of Trustees sent two letters to elected officials, as well as engaging one-on-one:

September: Sent a letter to the Hon. Demetrious Nicolaides, Minister of Education, advocating for financial support of the proposed replacement junior/senior high school in Fort Saskatchewan—in light of the announcement of accelerated funding for school builds and modular construction.

October: Sent a letter to the Hon. Demetrious Nicolaides, Minister of Education, providing suggestions about the revised model for education funding in Alberta.

October: Met with Sherwood Park MLA Kyle Kasawski to discuss the accelerated funding for school builds and modular construction; rural/urban board challenges; board autonomy and flexibility; cross-ministry work; engagement; classroom complexity; and school construction and capital requests.

January: Met with the Hon. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees and MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville to continue discussions about career pathways, apprenticeship and trades opportunities for students within Alberta's Industrial Heartland, and EIPS' vision for a collegiate school in Fort Saskatchewan.

February: Superintendent Stoddard sent a letter to Mr. Jeff Willan, Assistant Deputy Minister/Senior Financial Officer, Alberta Education, appealing the decision about transportation funding eligibility for outreach students—according to the 2024-2025 School Authority Funding Manuals. A letter from the Board Chair is being sent to the Hon. Demetrious Nicolaides, Minister of Education, to bring the matter forward for his attention.

EIPS PRIORITIES AND GOALS:

PRIORITY 1: PROMOTE GROWTH AND SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS; GOAL 1: EXCELLENT START TO LEARNING, GOAL 2: SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

PRIORITY 2: ENHANCE HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS; GOAL 3: QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ALL

PRIORITY 3: ENHANCE PUBLIC EDUCATION THROUGH EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT; GOAL 2: ENGAGED AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Other

Trustees and the superintendent also attended additional events and meetings that allowed for opportunities to discuss issues and advocate for education:

- *October:* Attended the Strathcona County Chamber of Commerce Luncheon and General Meeting, at which Mark Plamondon, Executive Director of the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association, spoke about driving economic and environmental outcomes in the region.
- *October:* Attended the Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce 2024 Business Awards, as EIPS was nominated in the category of Non-Profit/Community Organization of the Year.
- *November:* Attended the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Fall General Meeting, including the MLA breakfast with the Hon. Nate Glubish, Minister of Technology and Innovation.

- *December:* Took part in EIPS' presentation to the Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce members regarding the proposed collegiate program and requested replacement school build in that community.
- *December:* Attended the Christmas Open House events held by the Hon. Nate Glubish, Minister of Technology and Innovation and MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park; and Kyle Kasawski, MLA for Sherwood Park.
- *January:* Took part in the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Local 28 dinner meeting with EIPS Board of Trustees
- *January:* Participated in the final public engagement info session with school families regarding the transition plan for French Immersion students in Strathcona County and Fort Saskatchewan.

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Summary

Throughout the 2024-25 school year, the Board of Trustees is focusing its advocacy efforts on:

- promoting growth and success for all students;
- enhancing high-quality learning and working environments; and
- enhancing public education through effective engagement.