



EIPS Advocacy in Action

Sent in June 2024

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.

Following robust discussion at the EIPS Board of Trustees' retreat mid-September 2023, the Board set four key areas of focus for advocacy efforts through the 2023-24 school year:

- Infrastructure: *addressing capacity issues and providing learning spaces that promote student achievement and growth.*
- The value of public education: *equitable access, opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse student body, and choice in 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.*
- 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.*

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: Spring 2023-24

Correspondence and conversations

Throughout the spring of 2024, the Board of Trustees sent several letters to elected officials on a range of topics, as well as engaging one-on-one:

February: Met with Elk Island Catholic Schools' Superintendent, Board Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss ways the two divisions have and can work collaboratively.

February: Met with the Hon. Nate Glubish, Minister of Technology and Innovation and MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, to discuss the status of the Sherwood Heights replacement school and the Division's proposal for a collegiate school in Fort Saskatchewan.

February: Met with James Johnson, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister of Education, to discuss classroom complexity and provide background information on the Division's proposal for a collegiate school in Fort Saskatchewan.

March: Met with officials from Strathcona County including the Mayor, members of County Council, and the Executive Team to discuss issues of common interest around infrastructure and programming, and to update them on Division's initiatives.

March: Sent a letter to the Hon. Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Education, with feedback on the proposed changes around gender notification and instruction in human sexuality.

March: Met with the Strathcona County BGC to discuss the status of the non-profit's Youth Centre in the Brentwood neighbourhood, the group's programming, and ways BGC can work closely with schools to serve children and youth in Strathcona County.

April: Sent a letter to the Hon. Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Education, with feedback on the new social studies curriculum.

April: Met with the Hon. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees and MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, about capital projects falling within her constituency and the Division's proposal for a collegiate school in Fort Saskatchewan.

April: Met with officials from the Town of Vegreville, including the Mayor, members of Town Council, and the Executive Team to discuss issues of common interest around infrastructure and programming, and to update them on Division's initiatives.

June: Meeting with the Hon. Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Education, to talk about various topics of high priority for the Division's students.

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

Other

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

- *February:* Attended the City of Fort Saskatchewan's Economic Development update, specifically focusing on the vision for a revitalized downtown area.
- *February:* Attended the Vegreville and District Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting.
- *March:* Attended the Alberta Rural Education Symposium
- *March:* Participated in the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) working session with Minister Nicolaides and officials from Alberta Education on gender notification and instruction on human sexuality. Also posed questions to Minister Nicolaides about cross-ministerial services in rural communities served by EIPS.
- *March:* Attended the Strathcona County Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting
- *April:* Attended the Fort Saskatchewan and District Chamber of Commerce State of the City presentation.

- *April:* Attended the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce’s Great Canadian Trade Fair & Show Opening Ceremony
- *April:* Attended the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce State of the County address.
- *April:* Attended and participated in the Fort Saskatchewan parents’ information session on existing learning spaces and the Division’s proposal for a collegiate school in Fort Saskatchewan.
- *May:* Attended the ASBA Zone 2/3 engagement evening.
- *May:* Attended a presentation on resiliency and overcoming challenges by Janis Irwin, MLA for Edmonton Highlands-Norwood, and Kyle Kasawski, MLA for Sherwood Park, at NextStep Outreach.
- *May:* Attended the City of Fort Saskatchewan’s government update forum.
- *June:* Attended and participated in the ASBA Ministerial Engagement and Alberta Insights Session
- *June:* Attended the ASBA Spring General Meeting

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PRIORITY 2: ENHANCE HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS; GOAL 1: A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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

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

Summary

Throughout the 2023-24 school year, the Board of Trustees will focus advocacy efforts on:

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