

MARCH 21, 2024

Chair's Report

RECENT EVENTS

Board Chair Cathy Allen highlighted recent trustee events:

- On February 19, Chair Allen met with Nate Glubish, the Minister of Technology and Innovation and member of the legislative assembly of Alberta for Strathcona-Sherwood Park. Overall, it was a productive meeting focused on shared advocacy priorities.
- On February 21, Chair Allen met with James Johnson, the Education Minister's Chief of Staff. Johnson is new to the role, so the meeting served as an introduction.
- On February 21, Chair Allen and Trustee Randy Footz attended the Vegreville and District Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting. The meeting included details about the municipality, economic development opportunities and current focus area.
- On February 29, Chair Allen and Superintendent Sandra Stoddard took part in a budget debrief with Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaidis. The meeting included school board chairs and superintendents from across the province and a high-level overview of the education budget for the 2024-25 school year.
- On March 1, Chair Allen represented the Board at the EIPS Classified Professional Learning Day event. The keynote speaker was Lisa Vlooswyk, a Calgary-based motivational speaker, teacher and eight-time Canadian long-drive national champion, who spoke about goal setting and strategies to achieve them.
- On March 3-5, trustees attended the 2024 Alberta Rural Education Symposium. The program and keynote speakers were excellent, and all focused on topics relevant to rural school boards.
- On March 7, trustees attended a joint meeting with Strathcona County Council—an ongoing initiative to share information about priorities, strategic plans, infrastructure needs and challenges.
- On March 12, trustees attended an engagement session hosted by Alberta Education. The focus: The scope and sequence for the draft elementary social studies curriculum.
- On March 15, Chair Allen and Vice-Chair Susan Miller met with BGC Strathcona County. The focus: facility development, programming and partnership opportunities.
- On March 18, Chair Allen attended the Alberta School Boards Association's second working session with representatives from Alberta Education.
- On March 18, Chair Allen and Trustee Trina Boymook attended the 2024 High School Culinary Challenge Awards. Chair Allen congratulated the culinary team from Bev Facey Community High for winning silver—just half a point from winning gold. She also congratulated participating teams from Salisbury Composite High and Vegreville Composite High for a job well done.
- On March 19, trustees attended a luncheon hosted by EIPS' Employee Relations Group. At the luncheon, the members of the Employee Relations Group shared successes, discussed challenges and asked questions.
- On March 20, Trustee Boymook attended the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce luncheon, which featured a presentation on the Edmonton International Airport about new initiatives, cargo availability and how these impact regional economic development.

Superintendent's Report

RECENT EVENTS

Superintendent Stoddard highlighted several recent events:

- On March 7-10, she attended the 2024 Innovative Schools Summit, one of North America's top K-12 education conferences that brings together education experts to share best practices and research-based methodologies. The professional learning sessions were excellent, reinforcing the great work already taking place divisionwide, particularly the high-leverage strategies and capacity-building efforts.

- She, or a designate for her, also joined trustees at:
 - the meeting with James Johnson, the Education Minister’s Chief of Staff;
 - Alberta Educations’ Budget Stakeholders Session;
 - the 2024 Alberta Rural Education Symposium;
 - the joint meeting with Strathcona County Council;
 - Alberta Education’s draft social studies curriculum engagement session;
 - the meeting with BGC Strathcona County;
 - the High School Culinary Challenge Awards—congratulations to the students and teachers who participated, it demonstrates the great teaching and learning happening within the Division; and
 - the Employee Relations Group luncheon.

CLASSIFIED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAY

The EIPS Classified Professional Learning Day took place at Bev Facey Community High on March 1. Throughout the day, classified staff collectively participated in various centrally co-ordinated professional learning sessions. The event also coincided with a professional learning day for certificated staff, who participated in learning sessions throughout the day. Once again, the post-event feedback was overwhelmingly positive. As such, the annual Classified Professional Learning Day remains a high priority for the Division.

SUBSTITUTE APPRECIATION WEEK

March 11-15 was Substitute Appreciation Week. On behalf of the entire Division, Superintendent Stoddard thanked all substitute employees working within EIPS. Their everyday work is essential to operations and student learning—and much appreciated.

Association and Employee Relation Reports

ASBA ZONE 2/3 MEETING

Trustee Jacqueline Shotbolt presented highlights from the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 meeting held on February 23. Highlights include:

- Regular zone business—including the President’s report, CEO’s report, committee reports, ministry updates and membership news, such as upcoming award nominations, school board evaluations, bookkeeping and proposed position statement deadlines.
- A discussion on supports for rural divisions and schools.
- Nathan Neudorf, the Minister of Affordability and Utilities, spoke to members about insurance rates, electricity prices, the carbon tax and related advocacy efforts with the federal government.
- The Alberta Education report included information about the draft elementary social studies curriculum, an upcoming engagement session on parental rights, new mental health initiatives and education supports for children with complex needs. Zone 2/3 members also asked about stakeholder engagement for the draft elementary social studies curriculum.
- Upcoming Zone action items—the Budget Sustainability Engagement Survey, municipal elections political affiliation feedback, bookkeeping and proposed position statements.

ATA LOCAL REPORT

The Board received for information the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) Local No. 28 report from Deneen Zielke, the Local’s President. The report focused on the ATA’s 2024 Political Engagement Seminar, which took place March 1-2. The highlights:

- Nathan Cooper, the Speaker of Alberta’s Legislative Assembly, spoke about legislation and bill passing.
- Various school board trustees discussed recent experiences and current concerns, including the Take Back Alberta movement targeting school board elections and proposed provincial changes to municipal elections—namely legislating political-party affiliations.
- A budget discussion, briefly:
 - According to the ATA’s pulse survey and Statistics Canada data, education funding in Alberta is the lowest in the country.
 - In terms of overall education funding, public schools will receive a 4.4 per cent increase, while charter schools will receive a 15 per cent increase.
 - Over the last six years, the province’s per-pupil spending dropped by 13 per cent.
 - The province borrowed money to balance its budget.
 - The government will likely introduce tax cuts before the next election.
- Keynote speaker Graham Thomson, a journalist and political columnist, spoke about Premier Danielle Smith and her connection with David Parker, the head of the Take Back Alberta movement. The ATA’s takeaway: During the next election, it’s important Albertans aren’t apathetic to ensure the best outcomes for students and public education.

New Business

THREE-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN: 2025-28

The Board approved EIPS’ [2025-28 Three-Year Capital Plan](#). Annually, the Board reviews and updates the plan to prioritize its key capital projects. The Division’s top five capital priorities are:

Priority 1: A replacement school for Rudolph Hennig Junior High and Fort Saskatchewan High (grades 7-12).

Priority 2: A replacement school for James Mowat Elementary (grades K-6).

Priority 3: A new school for the Cambrian Crossing neighbourhood (grades K-9).

Priority 4: A modernization and expansion of Vegreville Composite High to accommodate K-12 programming.

Priority 5: A modernization of Win Ferguson Elementary (grades K-6)

Now approved, the Division will submit the *Three-Year Capital Plan* to the province for funding consideration.

ASBA EDWIN PARR TEACHER AWARD: 2024

The Board approved EIPS’ nomination for this year’s Edwin Parr Teacher Award nominee, Alexis Kotronis. Annually, the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 2/3 hosts the award to honour and recognize first-year teachers and their pedagogical excellence. Kotronis, a first-year teacher at Davidson Creek Elementary, was selected for her outstanding commitment to education, proactive approach and innate ability to create inclusive learning environments for students.

REALLOCATION OF SURPLUS FUNDS

The Board approved changes to the allocation of funds for the 2023-24 school year. The reallocation allows the Division to use any net surplus funds and ensures its operating reserves remain below the provincially mandated 3.2 per cent reserve limit. In total, the Division will use the surplus of \$1.1 million for Windows computer evergreening (\$694,058), for Chromebook evergreening (\$325,000) and to construct a new entrance for Next Step Sherwood Park (\$80,000).

APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS

The Board appointed Karen Baranec as the Returning Officer and Laura McNabb as the Substitute Returning Officer for the EIPS trustee election in 2025.

Committee Report

STUDENT EXPULSION COMMITTEE

The Board received for information a report from four Student Expulsion Committee meetings held on February 21, February 23, March 14 and March 20. The committee reviewed all relevant information and upheld the recommendations put forward by each school's administration.

Reports for Information

THREE-YEAR ENGAGEMENT PLAN: ATTENDANCE AREA

The Board received for information an update on one of the last remaining projects listed in the Division's [Three-Year Engagement Plan](#)—the junior high attendance area cleanup. As background, throughout spring and fall 2022, the [Division consulted stakeholders](#) to explore possible changes to the junior high attendance boundaries in Sherwood Park—moving the feeder school for all regular program students at Brentwood Elementary to F.R. Haythorne Junior High for grades 7 to 9; and moving the feeder school for students living within Lakeland Village, Summerwood and Summerwood North to Clover Bar Junior High for grades 7 to 9.

After analyzing the feedback from the attendance area cleanup, background information, trends, facts and figures, enrolment projections, attendance boundaries and available infrastructure, EIPS administration chose to keep the junior high attendance boundaries in Sherwood Park unchanged. The reason is four-fold:

1. In general, feedback from the attendance area cleanup engagement didn't strongly support either boundary change.
2. After the engagement effort, the province approved construction for the new Sherwood Park replacement school, grades K-9, which impacts student capacity at the replacement school.
3. The Board approved an attendance boundary change for the Cambrian Crossing area structure plan, which impacts the junior high Attendance Area Cleanup engagement by designating students living there to Clover Bar Junior High and F.R. Haythorne Junior High.
4. The Board approved a solution for its French Immersion program and to balance senior high enrolment, which impacts student capacity at Sherwood Heights Junior High and Ardrossan Junior Senior High.

Keeping the attendance areas unchanged honours the feedback and ensures EIPS junior high schools have sufficient student capacity in the long term. As such, for the upcoming 2024-25 school year, the junior high attendance area for students living within Brentwood Elementary's attendance area and the areas of Lakeland Village, Summerwood and Summerwood North will stay status quo.

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS: 2023-24

The Board received for information a report regarding the Division's financial projections for the 2023-24 school year. Overall, there are no areas of concern, deficits or excessive surpluses. Briefly, EIPS projects its accumulated surplus to rise by \$800,000 from what was reported in the Fall Budget Report. The increase is primarily the result of projected surpluses for utility, staffing and snow removal budgets; increased interest income; and unbudgeted software rebates—which are offset by reallocating the surplus funds. Overall, the Division's projected reserves remain well within the provincially mandated limit (see pg. 147, "[Financial Projections 2023-24](#)").



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2023 TO FEBRUARY 2024

The Board received for information the EIPS Unaudited Financial Report for the six-month period ending Feb. 29, 2024. Overall, expenses exceeded revenue, resulting in an operating deficit of \$18,872. Revenue for the six months is \$101.21 million, representing 51 per cent of the year-to-date budget—an expected percentage for the fiscal year midpoint. Meanwhile, total expenses are \$101.23 million, also representing 51 per cent of the year-to-date budget. (see pg. 160, "[Unaudited Financial Report for Sept. 1, 2023 to Feb. 28, 2024](#)").

Board Members

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

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