

RJH Trustee Report – October 28, 2024

Ralph Sorochan

- 1) **APPRECIATION** – Thank you, for being here today! Your efforts, on behalf of students, is very much appreciated!!
- 2) **BUDGET 2024-25** -
 - a) EIPS is now updating its 2024-25 budget with the final student-enrolment numbers (up 160 students or 1.06% increase from last year, for a total of 17,949), revenue and expense variations, carry forward amounts and any reserve spending changes.
 - b) At a Special Meeting of the Board on October 3, the Board of Trustees passed a motion to utilize the following dollars from Unallocated Capital Reserves:
 - \$1,000,000 to the Salisbury Composite High Chiller project; and
 - \$328,000 increase to the Voice Over Internet Protocol-VOIP (telephone system), both of which are to be started and completed in the 2024-25 year.
 - c) The Board’s budget had a surplus of \$39,592 from last year that was allocated to the Leveraging Student Achievement Fund, which will be distributed to schools.
 - d) Unaudited Financial Statements for Sept 01, 2023, to August 31, 2024 are now available for your perusal. For details, see the information presented to the Board of Trustees on October 17 in the [Board Package](#).
- 3) **BOARD ADVOCACY** -
 - a) On September 18, a letter was sent to the Education Minister, letting him know that EIPS is “shovel ready” for a replacement junior/senior collegiate school in Fort Saskatchewan, as per the provincial school funding announcement.
 - b) On September 18, trustees attended a town hall related to the provincial capital funding announcement—facilitated by Premier Danielle Smith and Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaidis. The meeting gave Alberta-based trustees, school administrators and educators the chance to ask questions and learn more about the new funding.
 - c) A letter is being prepared to be sent to the Education Minister, to address the funding formula review being undertaken by the provincial government.
 - d) See attachment at the end of the report for additional advocacy efforts.
- 4) **FUTURE EIPS CALENDARS** – At the September 19th Board Meeting, Trustees received and considered research on the positive impact collaboration and professional learning has on student achievement. Trustees directed Administration to develop potential calendar options for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 Division Calendars, and a stakeholder calendar survey. A video, links to detailed research, and a stakeholder survey was sent out to families on October 10, to consider possible alternatives to the current calendar. The survey closed on October 21.
Please note:
 - a) The survey was for stakeholder feedback, and your opinions matter!
 - b) Status quo calendars remain an option.
 - c) Instructional minutes will not change – the distribution of minutes, however, changes in the suggested options.
 - d) **The Board has made no decisions** about what the calendar will be.

- 5) **MODULAR CLASSROOM PLAN** – The Board of Trustees approved the Modular Classroom Plan submission for 2024-25. The plan includes a request for provincial funding to achieve the following:
- add two new B-Type modular classrooms from Alberta Education to SouthPointe School;
 - demolish two modular classrooms and reclaim the site at Westboro Elementary;
 - replace eight A-Type modular classrooms at James Mowat Elementary with eight new A-Type units; and
 - demolish eight modular classrooms at Win Ferguson Elementary and relocate six units from Wes Hosford Elementary.

- 6) **TRUSTEE RESIGNATION** - Residents residing in Strathcona County Ward Electoral Subdivision #1, which is comprised of all lands within the corporate limits of the City of Fort Saskatchewan, are hereby advised that Mrs. Jacqueline Shotbolt has resigned her position as trustee of Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) as she is relocating outside of the ward, effective Oct. 31, 2024.

Two legislative sections apply in this situation: Section 21(1)(b) of the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) states that a person may be nominated if the person has been a resident of a ward for the six months prior the election. Section 87(1) of the *Education Act* states that a person is disqualified from remaining as a trustee if they cease to be qualified for nomination under the LAEA.

Residents of Strathcona County Ward Electoral Subdivision #1—lands within the corporate limits of the City of Fort Saskatchewan—will continue to be represented by Trustee Ralph Sorochan until the next local authorities election in October 2025.

As outlined in the *Education Act* Section 81(2), a by-election need not be held: during the three-year period immediately following a general election if there is only one vacancy on the Board, and during the fourth year following a general election, unless the number of vacancies on the board reduces the board to a number that is less than the quorum of the board plus one.

As the Board is currently within the fourth year following a general election and the remaining trustees on the Board still meet the requirement of not less than the quorum of the board plus one, the Division will not hold a by-election.

- 7) **ASSURANCE REVIEWS** - Assurance Reviews are a forum for schools and departments to share their individual results, annual plans, successes, and challenges. The review informs the Division's Annual Education Results Report and allows trustees to gain a holistic understanding of what's happening throughout the Division. All School Reviews are scheduled for November, while Central Department Reviews have started today and continue tomorrow.
- 8) **REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONIES** – This year, all school Remembrance Day ceremonies must take place on November 8—according to the [Remembrance Day Act](#). Thank you for the invitation to attend, but unfortunately, I am already booked at FSE. I will also be representing EIPS at the Fort Saskatchewan Ceremonies on November 11th.
- 9) **BULLYING AWARENESS WEEK** – will be celebrated November 18-22 throughout EIPS. It promotes awareness and understanding of bullying and its impacts. Schools throughout the Division will be engaged in different activities to take part in this important initiative. Remember, school staff address this topic regularly and not just during this week in November that is legislated by the Alberta government.
- 10) **THE NEW K-9 SHERWOOD PARK REPLACEMENT SCHOOL NEEDS A NAME!** - Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is looking for input from current and future families, Division staff and interested community members on what the new school's name should be. Your input will help the Board of Trustees determine the name and ensure future decisions made about the school best reflect the feelings and opinions of the families and the community it will serve. We invite you to complete the short survey to share your thoughts.. [Complete the survey](#) by October 31, 2024.
- 11) **SCHOOL COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT GRANT** - The \$500 School Council Engagement Grant from Alberta Education is once again available for school councils to use. Remember to have one member from the council at your school complete this [contact form](#) by

Friday, October 25. [Grant Process and FAQs](#).

- 12) **CAREGIVER SERIES: OCTOBER SESSIONS** - Alberta Health Services offers free online programming for parents and caregivers of children and youth. Sessions are offered through Zoom. The list of [October 2024 sessions](#) is now available.
- 13) **NEXT BOARD MEETING** – The next regular Board meeting takes place on November 28, 2024, at 10 AM. Board meetings are held in the Elk Island Public School boardroom. EIPS also livestreams public Board meetings on its [YouTube channel](#).
- 14) Have a great Fall Break!



EIPS Advocacy in Action

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 will meet in October 2024 to recommend the areas of focus for the 2024-25 school year, which will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees as a whole. The advocacy focus areas for the past year included:

- 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: Summer 2024

Correspondence and conversations:

Throughout the summer of 2024, the Board of Trustees sent one letter to an elected official, as well as engaging one-on-one:

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

June: Sent a letter to the Hon. Demetrious Nicolaidis, Minister of Education, advocating for financial support of the proposed replacement junior/senior high school in Fort Saskatchewan, which the

Division will operate under a collegiate model. The school would provide a wide-range of educational and skilled training opportunities that would meet the labour force needs of various sectors in Alberta’s Industrial Heartland—and throughout the province.

July: Spoke with the Hon. Nate Glubish, Minister of Technology and Innovation and MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, to update him on current challenges within the education sector and opportunities for enhanced learning within the division.

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 INFRASTRUTURE 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:

July: Attended Premier Danielle Smith’s speech, delivered at the Strathcona County Chamber of Commerce Luncheon.

September: Participated in the media conference announcing the opening of new CASA Classrooms at eight schools in Alberta—including one at Bev Facey Community High. Took the opportunity to express EIPS’ gratitude for the tremendous cross-ministry work undertaken by Alberta Education, Alberta Addiction and Mental Health, and Alberta Health to make these essential supports for students a reality in our Division.

September: Took part in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Sherwood Park Replacement School—with completion anticipated for the beginning of 2026-27 school year. The start of construction is the culmination of more than a decade of advocacy on behalf of both the community and the Board of Trustees, and the support of locally elected municipal and provincial representatives.

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Summary

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

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