



MEETING MINUTES

Elk Island Public Schools, in-person and virtual meeting
Jan. 10, 2024 | 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

Chair: Kendra Roemer, Mills Haven Elementary

Secretary: Chelsea Pretzlaw, Ardrossan Elementary

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Aileen Bozic, SCA Secondary
Amanda Shand, École Parc Élémentaire
Anne Wasylyshen, Ardrossan Junior Senior High
April Childs, Lakeland Ridge
Brian Vick, Brentwood Elementary
Dawn Ferguson, Rudolph Hennig Junior High
Jenn Fukuyama, Clover Bar Junior High
Jordana Feist, James Mowat Elementary
Justina Gibson, Fort Saskatchewan Christian
Kilby Ritchie, Wes Hosford Elementary
Kim Scott, Salisbury Composite High
Krista Scott, Bev Facey Community High
Lisa Harke, SCA Elementary
Marco Candia, Woodbridge Farms Elementary
Stephanie Stoddard, Fort Saskatchewan Elementary
Tawnia McQueen, Wes Hosford Elementary

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cathy Allen, Chair
Susan Miller, Vice-Chair
Don Irwin, Trustee
Jacqueline Shotbolt, Trustee
Ralph SoroChan, Trustee
Trina Boymook, Trustee

ELK ISLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sandra Stoddard, Superintendent
Ryan Marshall, Associate Superintendent
Marcus Reed, Director of Specialized Supports
Mardi Hardt, Mental Health Advisor
Deneen Zielke, ATA Local No. 28 President
Emma Small, Communication Services

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

AGENDA

COSC Chair Roemer called for additions or deletions to the agenda.

- COSC Chair Roemer noted the person presenting the ASCA update and Caregiver Series change from COSC Vice-Chair Dallas Kirtz to COSC Secretary Chelsea Pretzlaw.

MOTION | The agenda be adopted, with the noted change.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COSC Chair Roemer called for approval of the Nov. 1, 2023 meeting minutes.

MOTION | The minutes be approved, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Report

Board Chair Cathy Allen presented the Board Report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- On November 30, the Board of Trustees approved the motion: “That the Board of Trustees ratify the memorandum of agreement for the Elk Island Public Schools Teachers’ Collective Agreement, Sept. 1, 2020 to Aug. 31, 2024.”
- On November 30, the Board accepted the resignation of Trustee Jim Seutter, effective Nov. 30, 2023. Seutter recently moved. His new residence is outside the ward he represents, which disqualifies him as an EIPS trustee. As outlined in the *Education Act*, section 81(2), a by-election isn’t required when there is only one vacancy on the Board. As such, EIPS will not hold a by-election. Instead, the remaining eight trustees will assume Seutter’s duties, by modifying:
 - the 2023-24 Trustee School Liaison Representative list;
 - the 2023-24 Board Committee Representatives list; and
 - the 2023-24 Acting Chair Schedule.
- On November 30, the Board approved the Audited Financial Statements for Aug. 31, 2023. MNP LLP, a national accounting firm, audited the statements and provided the opinion:
 - “[The Division’s] financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of EIPS as at August 31, 2023, and the results of its operations, its remeasurement gains and losses, changes in its net financial assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.”
- On December 14, the Board approved designating Clover Bar Junior High’s Sport for Life program as an EIPS alternative program, effective starting in the 2024-25 school year. Open to students in grades 7 through 9, the year-long program introduces learners to healthy living through a range of sport, recreation and well-being activities. The aim is for students to use the skills and knowledge attained through the program and incorporate these into their daily living—now and throughout their lives. As such, the Board also approved amending [Board Policy 18: Alternative Programs](#). Starting in the 2024-25 school year, the policy will list the Sport for Life program as an EIPS alternative program.
- On December 14, the Board received for information a report about the locally developed courses available to students in the second semester of 2023-24. The Division plans to introduce Developing Personal Value: 15, 25 and 35 at Next Step starting in February 2024. Open to students in grades 10, 11 and 12, the course helps learners recognize their inherent worth by emphasizing their infinite personal value.
- The Board has participated in three professional learning opportunities to better understand the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching and learning. Throughout the next several months the Board will be developing an AI policy that will guide the appropriate use of this revolutionizing technology.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: What is the timeline for ChatGPT and AI use in schools?

Answer: There’s no timeline yet—everyone is just dipping their toes in.

Question: Are there any updates on the French Immersion program? When can we expect to hear?

Answer: Once the Board meeting agenda is approved, the new recommendation for French Immersion will be brought to the Board meeting on January 25. An email will go out with the agenda, recommendation and a video explanation.

Question: Will there be any further French Immersion engagement?

Answer: No. Any further engagement will be done for the implementation stages.

ATA Report

ATA Local No. 28 President Deneen Zielke presented the ATA report.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Zielke wished those in attendance a happy New Year.
- In December, Zielke attended the ATA's professional development conference and saw a session on AI. It was very interesting and proved to her its endurance, its advantages and how it can be used as a tool for learning.
 - The Local is looking at providing teachers with professional development from the provincial ATA that will focus on professional and legal requirements. It'd also cover how AI can be used in planning, including differentiation to meet the needs of various students. The Local is eager to bring this project to light.
- The ATA is working on a member engagement campaign to prepare members for upcoming provincial bargaining. As well, this campaign is meant to engage and educate members in advance of local school board elections in spring 2025.
 - Zielke explained there are groups, such as Take Back Alberta, that are holding monthly meetings looking to run candidates across the province and control local school divisions.
 - Zielke said Take Back Alberta's goal is to fire superintendents, principals and teachers that don't bend to their will. This is the same group that was involved in the trucker convoy to Ottawa and the demonstrations at the ATA's provincial office, as well as other events protesting LGBTQ2S+ supports. Their agenda targets health care too, and tweets from the organizer David Parker speak to racist ideology. Zielke emphasized that this threat is very real, well-funded and organized. She urged members that they need to be engaged, as apathy is what this group is relying on.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: How have diplomas been affected by AI?

Answer: Currently written diplomas are done on Quest A+, and the rest is still done by hand. Software is being trialed elsewhere.

For Information

ASCA UPDATE – Chelsea Pretzlaw, COSC Secretary

- The Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) is pleased to announce the return of its [Awards Recognition Program](#). The categories include School Council Award of Merit, School Council Parent of Distinction Award, Excellence in Learning Partnerships Award and Division School Council Engagement Award. Deadline to submit nominations is **February 1**.
- The deadline to [submit advocacy resolutions](#) for the ASCA Annual General Meeting (AGM) is **January 15**.
- The ASCA Board of Directors election will take place at the AGM on April 28. Six positions are open.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Will the school board be paying to send anyone from school councils to the ASCA conference?

Answer: Yes, there's approximately \$5,000 set aside in the budget.

CAREGIVER SERIES UPDATE – Chelsea Pretzlaw, COSC Secretary

- The [January Caregiver Series](#) schedule is now available.
- Offered through Alberta Health Services, the sessions are informative and valuable.
- COSC Secretary Pretzlaw encouraged members to review the [January Caregiver Series](#) calendar.

SCHOOL COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT GRANT – Kendra Roemer, COSC Chair

- The deadline to complete the application form for the School Council Engagement Grant has been extended to **January 31**.
- The grant can be used for ASCA [learning opportunities](#), [support services](#) and [conference fees](#).
- School councils best know their individual school context, so that'll guide how they want to use their grant.
- After filling out the application, school councils must wait to receive approval from the COSC Chair. When they have approval, they can go ahead with their plans for the grant. Once approved, school councils will receive a final form to attach their invoices for payment or receipts for reimbursement from their grant activities. For more information on the grant process, refer to the [November COSC meeting package](#).

COSC OPERATING PROCEDURES UPDATE – Kendra Roemer, COSC Chair

- Since an update was made to [EIPS Board Policy 2: Role of the Board](#), COSC Liaison Emma Small created an updated version of the COSC Operating Procedures reflecting this change after speaking with the COSC executive. In addition, other minor changes included switching “district” to “Division,” stipulating that the *School Act* is now the *Education Act* and grammatical edits.
- This updated version has not been posted to the website yet and is available in the [January COSC meeting package](#). Small said she would send the document with tracked changes to interested COSC members for them to suggest any edits. Once finalized, the EIPS website will be updated with the new version.

New Business

ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORT 2022-23 – Ryan Marshall, EIPS Associate Superintendent

- The purpose of the report is to demonstrate what the Division is doing to meet expectations and to provide stakeholders with confidence about those expectations being met. There's focus placed on strengths and areas of growth.
- A four-page [overview](#) is available in addition to the 82-page [full report](#).
- The report is organized by the Division's priorities and subsequent goals and outcome that include the following sections:
 - Background
 - Results
 - Building capacity
 - Opportunities for growth
 - Strategies
- Associate Superintendent Marshall went through some of the data from the report, digging in deeper to discuss the context, what it means and how it can be interpreted.
- The report includes added sidebars coloured grey for Building Capacity sections and green for Priority Strategy for Education Plan sections.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Question: Where is the Grade 2 reading program currently servicing?

Answer: Fort Saskatchewan and Bruderheim. It was started as a pilot program, but there are plans to expand if it's working.

Question: What students are included in the 2.5 per cent dropout rate?

Answer: Grade 12 students only.

Question: Will the next year be all new curriculum?

Answer: Yes. This will make year over year comparisons harder.

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN: RESET ROOMS – Marcus Reed, EIPS Director of Specialized Supports and Mardi Hardt, EIPS Mental Health Advisor

- Hardt asked COSC members why it's important to understand the stress response system. She explained that if students are not regulated, they can't learn.
- She went through a three-step process at regulating stress:
 - Step 1: Recognize stress level
 - Step 2: Through co-regulation, use a strategy that has worked in the past or try a new strategy
 - Step 3: Rate stress level again
- COSC members attending in person were given a physical copy of the Steady Strategies Checklist, available online in the [January COSC meeting package](#).

Question: Is there a plan for parental engagement on the importance of parallel learning between parent and child?

Answer: A plan is coming. Trying to find ways not to overburden parents. There's a pilot in Fort Saskatchewan.

Question: How did the pilot start?

Answer: It was staff engaged.

Question: Is there an express need for reset rooms at other levels than junior high?

Answer: Student engagement indicated that junior high had the highest levels of distress. For example, higher absences and behaviour issues.

Question: Have we considered ways to combine career programs and reset rooms if funding runs out? Specifically in high school?

Answer: No, but it's being considered and thought about now. It will be further investigated.

Question: Could the School Council Engagement Grant be used to pay for workshops around mental health using the kits Hardt spoke about?

Answer: There are kits already purchased, and Hardt is available at no cost to guide workshops.

Question: Do differently configured schools, such as K-9 and 7-12, allow for students not in junior high access to the reset rooms currently?

Answer: Yes. It would be unfair to not allow access.

Question: When is the grant money for the reset rooms done?

Answer: The end of this school year.

Question: Is it possible for parents to get collated information and data for the Board's advocacy work?

Answer: Something will be put together in a publicly accessed document on the EIPS website.

Question: With the way that the provincial government wants to restructure health care, do you see any opportunities?

Answer: Hopeful that there'll be a recommendation for mental health services to come into schools.

COSC Sharing

ASSURANCE REVIEWS: SCHOOL COUNCIL EXPERIENCES – All COSC members

- Tawnia McQueen said this year's assurance review at her school was amazing—it felt very open and there was less pressure involved. Many teachers had a lot to say about navigating mental health and the added load.

- COSC Chair Roemer agreed, saying her school’s assurance review was also stress free and felt very real. She suggested the Division should keep elementary schools together, junior highs together and senior highs together for school pairings.
- COSC Secretary Pretzlaw explained there was a problem with the school pairing at her school’s assurance review. Ardrossan Elementary was paired with schools that have a smaller student population, so it was hard to compare between each other. Not all rural schools are the same.
- Krista Scott asked COSC members to think about how assurance reviews can be shared with their school council and how they can engage parents and their school community.
- Superintendent Stoddard asked COSC members to think about how the Division can extend the assurance review experience to other parents and the school community.

WORK SESSION PLANNING – All COSC members

- COSC Chair Roemer asked about what COSC members would like for work sessions at future meetings, such as agenda setting.
- COSC Chair Roemer has reached out to ASCA to have them come speak at an upcoming meeting.
- Krista Scott asked if COSC sharing can be moved up in the agenda to prioritize it. COSC Chair Roemer agreed. EIPS Board Chair Cathy Allen supported this idea, along with EIPS administration.
- COSC members feel like they need to support each other. COSC Chair Roemer spoke about casual get-togethers outside of COSC meetings to help everyone get to know each other in an informal context.
- A sub-committee will be made to create templates for new school council chairs. The templates would include a how-to, groundwork, meetings and more. To be a part of the sub-committee, COSC members were asked to email COSC Liaison [Emma Small](#) with their interest.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:44 P.M.

Next COSC Meeting

DATE: Feb. 7, 2024

TIME: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: EIPS Central Services building, boardroom.