

Glen Allan School Council Meeting May 25, 2023

THREE-YEAR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: FRENCH IMMERSION

On April 13, 2023 the Board attended the third in-person public engagement session about EIPS' French Immersion program—which was well attended with lots of constructive feedback. The Board is exploring ways to enhance French Immersion programming by increasing secondary-level retention, addressing anticipated enrolment pressures in Ardrossan and balancing enrolment at the elementary level. Trustees will review all the written feedback and survey data before making decisions. Another public engagement session is scheduled for June 2023.

SCHOOL CLOSURE - ANDREW SCHOOL

At a special board meeting on Thursday May 4, 2023, the EIPS Board of Trustees voted to close Andrew School, effective June 30, 2023. The school continues to experience declining enrollment (40 students) and the buildings needs \$3.5 million in repairs and maintenance – fire suppression system and replace roof.

2023-24 KEY BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The Board approved the key budget assumptions for the 2023-24 school year (see pg. 62, "[2023-24 Key Budget Assumptions](#)"). The assumptions are based on the Board's mission and belief statements, the Division's [Four-Year Education Plan](#), Alberta's Budget 2023 and the provincial *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2023-24 School Year*. EIPS will use the approved assumptions to develop its 2023-24 spring budget, which helps schools and departments plan for the upcoming school year. As with all assumptions, changes such as funding, reserve usage, enrolment numbers and standard costs can significantly affect the budget.

ASSUMPTION HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2023-24

General operations – Focus areas include student learning, student and staff well-being, career pathways, the new curriculum, junior high intervention supports, program equity and Division infrastructure.

Enrolment – The Division expects student enrolment to increase by 23 students by fall 2023—to 17,483 students from 17,460 students in fall 2022.

Funding Grants – Alberta Education is introducing two new grants—the Teacher Settlement Grant and Class Complexity Grant. It will also continue offering the Student Well-Being Grant and Curriculum Implementation Grant. However, these amounts are still unknown and now require an application process. As well, the province made revisions to the Transportation Grant and System and Administration Grant.

Other Revenue – EIPS expects provincial funding to cover its lease agreements for Strathcona Christian Academy Elementary and Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary; the Mental Health Capacity Building Grant; and the Division's Official Languages in Education Program. The Division will also generate revenue through school-generated funds and school fees. Unlike previous years, the spring budget won't include funding for the Odyssey Language Program, as it's unknown if the federal government will continue to support it, and the amount.

Compensation – EIPS anticipates the overall certificated standard costs to increase by 2.9% and standard classified costs to increase by 2.3% and 8.5%. The increases are the result of the new collective bargaining agreement and a hike in the employee benefits rate.

Inflation – EIPS anticipates non-salary inflationary increases—based on the overall consumer price index. These include higher costs for furnishings, equipment, careers and technology studies supplies, electricity, natural gas and custodial services.

Carbon Tax – EIPS anticipates increases in carbon tax costs based on the *2030 Emissions Reduction Plan*, a federal document outlining Canada’s plan to meet its 2030 emissions reduction target. Currently, EIPS pays a \$65 per tonne carbon tax. Annually, that will increase until it reaches the targeted \$170 per tonne, in 2030. As a result, it will continue to impact the Division’s budget, and in term, remove funds from the classroom.

Reserves – Alberta Education confirmed EIPS’ operating reserve limit for Aug. 31, 2024—3.2%, or \$6.56 million. The Division must ensure its operating reserves are within 3.2% of its operating expenses. Any reserve money more than that amount must be returned to Alberta Education in December 2025. Administration will ensure operating reserves are below that number.

Expenses – The Division anticipates overall capital items purchases to total approximately \$300,000 in 2023-24. Administration also developed a five-year capital projection that lists anticipated capital needs requiring funds into the Capital Reserve over time. The list ensures enough funds in future years.

SCHOOL FEES: 2023-24

The Board approved the proposed school fees for 2023-24, which outlines how fees are charged for optional courses; alternative programs; extracurricular; lunch supervision; non-curricular goods and services; and activity expenses, such as field trips. Earlier this year, parameters were set by the Board to ensure students achieve quality education, while also ensuring fees aren’t cost-prohibitive for families. Any fees that exceeded the listed parameters—above a 5% to 7% increase—were reviewed and vetted by Financial Services. Now approved, schools will post fees on their individual websites for the 2023-24 school year (see pg. 79, “[2023-24 School Fees](#)”).

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS AND RESERVES USE: 2023-24

The Board approved the budget allocations and reserve use for the 2023-24 school year (see pg. 3, “[2023-24 Budget Allocations Including the Use of Reserves](#)”). Overall, EIPS will receive a 4.8%, or \$8.82 million, increase in funding from Alberta Education—\$6.6 million for specifically targeted grants and \$2.2 million for non-targeted grants. Despite the increase, it’s still a tight budget given rising inflation for utilities and employee benefits costs, rules for targeted grants and restrictions on accessing reserves. As such, the Division will develop a conservative spring budget that supports the mission, belief statements and priorities of EIPS.

FUNDING CHANGES HIGHLIGHTS: 2023-24

Changes in funding include:

- a 6% base-funding increase—to offset the decrease in bridge funding;
- a 10% increase to supports and services grants—for specialized learning support; Program Unit Funding; English as an additional language; refugee students; and First Nations, Métis and Inuit education—to offset the decrease in bridge funding.
- a 20% increase to the School Nutrition Grant;
- a 5% increase to the Operations and Maintenance Grant;
- a new Classroom Complexity Grant;
- a new funding model for student transportation that expands rider eligibility and helps absorb rising inflationary costs; and
- the elimination of bridge funding.

SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS: 2023-24

Allocations for schools will increase, by 1.6%, because of higher standard costs. Although, the exact allocations for each school will vary based on enrolment number changes, the weighted-moving-average funding formula and standard cost adjustments. And, for small rural schools, allocations will align with the funding levels detailed in the province's *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2023-24 School Year*.

Similarly, allocations for central departments will also increase, by 2.3%. However, after factoring out the targeted student transportation funding, department allocations will end up decreasing, by 1.1%. The drop is primarily because of one-time spending projects planned in 2022-23—which were funded by reserves.

ACCUMULATED SURPLUS AND RESERVES

Overall, the Division projects an accumulated surplus of \$3.58 million, as of Aug. 31, 2024. The accumulated surplus comprises investment in tangible capital assets (\$7.66 million), operating reserves (\$4.67 million), capital reserves (\$840,000), and asset-retirement obligation (-\$9.6 million). As well, EIPS plans to access \$1.86 million from its operating reserves for schools and departments and \$1.17 million from the Division Allocated Reserve to support Division projects—for the most part, related to student learning, student and staff well-being, career pathways, the new curriculum, junior high intervention supports, program equity and Division infrastructure. Finally, EIPS projects the Division Unallocated Reserve to be \$3.45 million by Aug. 31, 2024, which is well within the operating reserve limit (see pg. 4, "Assumption Highlights: Reserves").

CAPITAL PURCHASES

The Board approved \$1.33 of capital purchases in 2023-24:

- \$814,000 for the Salisbury Composite High Stormwater Project; and
- \$220,000 for the building management system.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION FEES: 2023-24

The Board approved Student Transportation fee schedule for the 2023-24 school year. Student Transportation offers an enhanced transportation fee structure. As such, all riders pay a fee for transportation services. It's an equitable structure for riders and allows EIPS to maintain its current level of service. Thanks to a new provincial funding model for student transportation, fees will decrease in 2023-24. Changes made to the funding model include expanding rider distance eligibility, including for riders attending a school or program of choice, and added funding to cover higher fuel and inflationary costs. Student Transportation will also continue to offer a payment-plan option—available to families with fees of \$300 and more—paid over seven months. The approved 2023-24 student fee schedule is available online at [Student Transportation Fees 2023-24](#).

Please contact me with questions or concerns.

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