

## FSE School Council – February 12, 2025

### Ralph Sorochan

- 1) **APPRECIATION** – Thanks to everyone for engaging in your child’s education!
- 2) **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY CHANGE** – The Board received for information a report detailing recent amendments to the province’s student transportation eligibility criteria, which take effect in the 2025-26 school year. Specifically, the changes relate to student transportation and rider eligibility. Currently, Alberta Education considers an elementary rider, kindergarten to Grade 6, eligible for provincial student transportation funding if they live one kilometre or more from the school they attend. For secondary students, grades 7-12, riders are eligible if they live two kilometres or more from the school they attend.

In 2025-26, Alberta Education will increase the elementary eligibility distance to 1.6 kilometres—the secondary rider eligibility will remain unchanged. The change in elementary eligibility has significant financial implications for both EIPS and school families. For instance, EIPS will see a substantial reduction in funding from the province. That, in turn, will result in an inability for EIPS Student Transportation to maintain its current service level, and lead to significantly higher student transportation fees for families. Short term, the province has committed to some transition funding for 2025-26. However, that won’t be the case long term. Therefore, the Division needs to develop a plan to address the new criteria and communicate the change to school families promptly.

#### Key Concerns:

- Impact on Families: Over 686 students within EIPS will be affected by the 1.0-kilometre distance criteria change effective the 2026-27 school year.
  - Financial Implications: The amendment is projected to result in a funding shortfall exceeding \$415,000 for EIPS. This deficit may lead to reductions in transportation services or increased fees for families. Even a substantial increase in fees will not recoup the loss of funding.
  - Service Disruptions: If we choose to no longer provide transportation service to students who do not meet the distance eligibility criteria, this will pose significant challenges for families who rely on transportation services for access to education.
  - Trust and Policy Consistency: The initial reduction to 1.0 kilometres was a commitment to improving accessibility. The revision to 1.6 kilometres undermines this trust and raises concerns about the government’s commitment to its policy objectives.
- 3) **ASCA CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP** - The Board approved sponsoring the registration fee for school councils to participate in the virtual 2025 Alberta School Councils’ Association (ASCA) School Council Conference and Annual General Meeting on April 26-27—per school council up to a maximum of \$5,000. To qualify, members must be part of a school council with an active ASCA membership and apply before the registration deadline, April 7.
  - 4) **OHS COR AUDIT** - The Board received for information a report on the Division’s 2024 Occupational Health and Safety Certificate of Recognition (COR) Audit Report. Annually, EIPS undergoes the voluntary COR audit to certify its commitment to occupational health and safety. Overall, the Division scored an impressive COR score of 91 per cent, exceeding the mandatory 60 per cent requirement. The Division’s noted areas of strength include:

- use of policies, procedures and online resources;
- integration of health and safety in the workplace;
- emergency plans, first aid and security measures in place; and
- positive role modelling.

The audit also offered areas for the Division to work on in preparation for the recertification. These include awareness campaigns related to incident reporting, emergency drills, job hazard assessments, and general communication to enhance health and safety efforts.

- 5) **SCHOOL STATUS REPORT: 2023-24** - The Board received for information the School Status Report for the 2023-24 school year. The report identifies enrolment numbers, school utilization rates and per-student costs within the Division. Data is presented by geographic sectors and on a four-year comparative basis to ensure the analysis is based on long-term trends and not isolated incidences (p.36 "[Board Package: School Status Report for 2024-25](#)").
- 6) **BOARD RETREAT** – The Board of Trustees will engage in a 3-day retreat during February 10-13, in Fort Saskatchewan. Some of the important topics of discussion will include budget priorities for the 2025-26 school year, rural education sustainability, capital planning, and student transportation.
- 7) **REMINDER: ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORT 2023-24** - The Board approved EIPS' *Annual Education Results Report 2023-24*, an Alberta Education reporting requirement that provides school families and community members easy-to-understand information about the Division. It also serves as a mechanism to improve accountability and transparency with local stakeholders. The *Annual Education Results Report 2023-24* features detailed information about how EIPS is doing relative to Alberta Education's performance measures; how the Division supports students to achieve the best possible outcomes; and its successes, challenges and priorities moving forward. Now approved, the Division will submit the report to Alberta Education on November 29. After sending it to the province, EIPS will also post it online and share it with stakeholders and the Committee of School Councils. To read the full report visit, [eips.ca](https://eips.ca).
- 8) **CAREGIVER SERIES: JANUARY AND FEBRUARY SESSIONS** - Recovery Alberta offers free online programming for parents and caregivers of children and youth. Sessions are offered through Zoom. The list of [January and February 2025 sessions](#) is now available.
- 9) **NEXT BOARD MEETING** – The next regular Board meeting takes place on February 20, 2025, at 10 AM. Board meetings are held in the Elk Island Public School boardroom. EIPS also livestreams public Board meetings on its YouTube channel.
- 10) **INQUIRIES?** - If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at [ralph.sorochan@eips.ca](mailto:ralph.sorochan@eips.ca) or 780 417 8107.
- 11) Have a wonderful Family Day weekend!