

Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary School School Council Agenda

September 16, 2024 7:00pm The Commons

Attendance: Amanda Meints, Leanne Seelochan, Matthew Spronk, Kevin Semenjuk, Elaine Reed, Chris Little, Sandy Johnson, Teresa Tessier, Jason Tessier, Michael Janzen, Sheena Singleton, Lisa Harke, Justin Tomkins, Nate Peters, Leah Schmidt, Kevin Winkel, Victoria Molnar, Andrea Bennett

1. **Welcome/Call to Order** – 7:04 pm Leanne Seelochan
2. **Opening Prayer** – Leanne Seelochan
3. **Approval of Agenda** – motion to approve – Lisa Harke, unanimous second
4. **Approval of Minutes from May 20204** – postponed until October
5. **EIPS Trustee Report** – Leanne Seelochan (for Trustee Cathy Allen)

2024-25 SPRING BUDGET REPORT

Overall, for 2024-25, EIPS is working with a tighter budget than the previous year. The reason: There is no additional funding to cover rising inflationary costs—such as utilities, employee benefits, custodial supplies and insurance premiums. That, in turn, impacts available student programming and services. As such, Financial Services developed a conservative spring budget that aligns with the province’s allotted funding and is built around two key principles—equitable distribution of funds and programs, and transparent and understandable allocations. The following is a brief summary of EIPS’ spring 2024-25 Budget Report. The complete report is available at eips.ca.

OVERVIEW

EIPS’ operating budget is \$208.07 million from Sept. 1, 2024, to Aug. 31, 2025. Of that, \$206.26 million will come from the Division’s annual revenues. The remaining \$1.81 million will come from the Division’s accumulated surplus. The Division plans to use the added funds to support EIPS schools and departments—related to classroom complexity, mental health, career pathways, and artificial intelligence and digital tools.

ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

EIPS projects an accumulated surplus of \$9.56 million by Aug. 31, 2025. The accumulated surplus comprises investment in tangible capital assets (\$8.33 million), operating reserves (\$10.65 million), capital reserves (\$556,000) and asset-retirement obligation (-\$9.98 million). For 2024-25, EIPS’ operating reserve limit is \$12.45 million, which the Division will ensure not to exceed—currently projected at \$1.8 million below the limit. Meanwhile, EIPS plans to use \$951,000 from its capital reserves to fund the following projects:

- \$150,000 for information technology access points;
- \$220,000 to upgrade the VOIP phone system; and

- \$581,000 to purchase school buses.

SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT ALLOCATIONS

School allocations will increase by 0.2% because of higher standard costs, although the exact allocations for each school will vary based on enrolment number changes 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*. Similarly, allocations for central departments will also increase by 0.1%—primarily because of higher staff benefit costs and inflationary expenses.

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Overall revenues are down just slightly by \$190,000. Conversely, total expenses are up by \$290,000, again because of higher staff benefit costs and inflationary expenses—utilities, custodial supplies and insurance premiums. In terms of students and staff, EIPS anticipates a student enrolment of 17,813—up by 53. In contrast, the Division expects a decrease in staffing, dropping by approximately 3.5%, or 48.32 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees—declining to 1,324.26 FTE from 1,372.58 FTE. The reason: mostly because the provincial funding for the Mental Health in Schools Pilot program ended and the Division's decision to hire full-time educational assistants as opposed to hiring on an hourly basis. Compensation will also rise, primarily because of salary grid movement and higher benefit costs. Overall, instructional costs comprise 78% of the total budget, costing \$9,362 per student.

Finally, system administration spending will equate to 2.2% (\$4.49 million) of total expenses, which is below the \$6.55-million grant provided by Alberta Education. All unused funds will go toward instruction, as outlined in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities: 2024-25 School Year*. Similarly, by Aug. 31, 2025, the Division's Unallocated Reserve is projected to be \$6.8 million, which, when combined with other operating reserves, falls within the operating reserve limit (\$12.45 million).

ENGAGEMENT PLAN: TRANSITION PLANNING

The Board received for information the EIPS Engagement Plan: Project 1 transition planning. The plan will guide the Division as it develops a transition strategy for secondary students relocating to Salisbury Composite High for French Immersion and Lakeland area students who are redesignated to Bev Facey Community High—effective when the new Sherwood Park replacement school opens in 2026-27. Briefly, EIPS plans to consult with all impacted stakeholders to develop an effective transition plan—starting in fall 2024. Consultations will include working-group meetings, online surveys with staff and school families, student engagements and a public consultation with stakeholders to fine-tune the draft plan. A final transition plan is expected in spring 2025.

TRANSFER TO CAPITAL RESERVES

The Board approved transferring \$1 million to the Division capital reserve from the operating reserve to ensure EIPS' surplus remains under the province's mandated operating reserve limit. The Board also directed administration to provide a report detailing allocations for capital projects before trustees approve the 2024-25 fall budget.

ORGANIZATIONAL BOARD MEETING

The Board held its annual organizational meeting, which included nominations and elections for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. Trustee Cathy Allen was acclaimed the Chair, and Trustee Susan Miller was acclaimed the Vice-Chair. The Board committees recommendation will be presented at the September Board meeting.

ALLOCATION OF ONE-TIME FUNDING

The Board approved allocating an additional \$1.6 million to schools for the 2024-25 school year. Over the summer, EIPS received an added \$1.6 million in one-time funding from the province. Of that, \$50,000 will go to Next Step schools, \$66,130 will go to the Educational Assistant Capacity Building Project and the remainder will go to schools throughout the Division—based on a classroom complexity algorithm to ensure equitable access. If there are any other needed adjustments to the 2024-25 budget, including shortfalls, EIPS will fund these through its reserves.

NAMING OF THE NEW SHERWOOD PARK SCHOOL

Students, parents/guardians, staff and community members will have the opportunity to provide suggestions for the name of the new Sherwood Park school. An online survey will be available in mid-October. The trustees will consider the suggestions and make a motion for the name of the school at the December Board meeting.

Please contact me with questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Allen

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Q. Which school is being renamed?

A. Sherwood Heights

Q. Why are they renaming it? Is it because Sherwood Heights and Ecole Campbelltown are combining?

A. Leanne – That would be a question for Cathy next month.

6. Council Information – Leanne Seelochan

- *Roll of School Council* – The resource guide, which outlines what councils are for and what they can and cannot do can be found at:
<https://education.alberta.ca/media/3273179/school-council-resource-guide-2016-final.pdf>

Q. Justin – What is the difference between council and society?

A. Leanne – They are two different entities. The council is the main place for parent voice, while society holds and oversees the alternative program of SCA and is made up of elders from SPAC.

Q. Michael – How does it work for parents to give feedback at council?

A. Leanne – Matt sometimes poses open-ended questions and asks for our opinions. We also have a council email that you can send ideas to, or you can have a conversation with Matt if you have something you'd like to see addressed at future meetings.

Q. Michael – Is the output of the conversation feedback or a motion?

A. Leanne – Usually just feedback, unless a motion is called for. We need a quorum, which I think is 7 parents, to pass a motion.

- *Review Parent Engagement Opportunities*

1. Be involved in parent groups (school council, parents in partnership)
2. Support learning (PowerSchool, Brightspace, contact teachers, talk to kids about school)
3. Attend School Events (Meet the teacher, PT interviews, chapel, sports games/events, arts shows, film festival, musical performances, STEMposium)
4. Staying Informed (Eagles Eye, social media, school website)
5. Provide Feedback (EIPS parent survey, Alberta Ed survey, discussion at school council meetings)

Matt – I wanted to highlight talking to kids about school. I've started asking my kids what their highlights, lowlights are in their day. It helps to establish routines and break the questions down to start those conversations

Leanne – In elementary kids are pulling us in and wanting us around, but in junior high and high school it requires more effort on our parts as parents. It helps to learn about what opportunities we have to engage.

Kevin – We had great parent engagement at our retreat today and at chapels. As a school, we've found it very helpful to make sure parents are getting that invitation.

Matt – If parents want to get engaged in something, just ask and put it out there. Maybe there won't be an opportunity today but if teachers know you are interested, they may be able to get you involved at a later time.

7. **Society Report** – Nate Peters

Going over same formula for presenting information to parents as past years.

November – Financials: costs and benchmarks

January – Financials: audits and fee setting

May – Ministry/budget planning and program updates

8. **Principals Report** – Matt Spronk

- New staff – Mr. Klapstein, Mr. Kraus and Mrs. McCune. Mr. Johnson working in admin
- Secondary has 653 students this year, we continue to grow, its encouraging but also puts a bit of strain on our facilities

Q. Chris – do you see the school doing an addition?

A. Nate – that is a question we are looking at as a society. We would have to look at campaigns to raise the capital. We don't have an answer yet.

-Significant chance around spiritual programming in our school. Pastor Jordie is now leading Bible classes and we have partnered with Kiera, Jamie and Luke, the youth pastors of SPAC to work with our kids and lead our chapels, devotions and retreats. It has been a real blessing and it allows us to help connect our kids to a church when they graduate.

-Program changes – year long Phys Ed, world of sports, outdoor ed, community kitchen. A third of high school has wanted to be in community kitchen, they are prepping food for WeCare and its nice for kids to have a tangible way to serve.

Q. Andrea – Do kids serve?

A. Matt – We are looking at having special weekends where they do get to serve.

Q. Leanne – I liked that the first week of school, community kitchen also worked to bless the student body (icecream, popcorn, cookies). This helped create community in the school. Do you still run the welcome lunch for new students?

A. Matt – Yes we do, and we pair the new kids up with a student who has been here a while.

Q. Chris – Do you know the percentage of kids coming from other schools that aren't SCE?

A. Matt – We have about 60 new students come in that weren't from Fort Christian or SCE. We are also having a lot of families that are new to Canada come in, which is great to see.

- In October we will talk about the school education plan, in January we will talk about school fees.

9. **Meeting Adjourned/Closing prayer** – Matthew SPronk

Meeting adjourns 7:50pm

Next Meeting October 28, 2024 at 7pm in the Commons.