

Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary School Council Meeting January 20, 2025

Attendance: Nate Peters, Cathy Allen, Teresa Tessier, Leanne Seelochan, Lisa Harke, Amanda Meints, Samantha Jones, Kevin Semenchuk, Matthew Spronk, Justin Tomkins, Kevin Winkel, Rachel

Meeting start: 7:10 pm

1. **Welcome and treaty acknowledgement** - Leanne Seelochan
2. **Approval of agenda** - Lisa motions to approve, Kevin Semenchuk seconds
3. **Approval of minutes** from May 2024 - Nate motions to approve, Lisa seconds
October 2024 - Teresa motions to approve, Nate seconds
November 2024 - Lisa motions to approve with correction to board report date, Nate seconds
4. **EIPS Trustee Report** - Cathy Allen

POWERSCHOOL CYBERSECURITY INCIDENT

The Board of Trustees and the Division are very concerned about this incident. This is upsetting for staff and for families. The EIPS Instructional Technologies team is working with PowerSchool and we are waiting for a report from PowerSchool. Updated information will be posted on the EIPS website. www.eips.ca

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: 2024

The Board approved the Audited Financial Statements for Aug. 31, 2024. MNP LLP, a national accounting firm, issued the following opinion:

“[The Division’s] financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of EIPS as at August 31, 2024, and the results of its operations, its remeasurement gains and losses, changes in its net financial assets (net debt) and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.”

EIPS 2024-25 FALL BUDGET

The Board approved the EIPS 2024-25 Fall Budget Report for the period of Sept. 1, 2024 to Aug. 31, 2025. The Board originally approved the 2024-25 operating budget on June 6, 2024. Every fall, the budget is updated to account for current information regarding enrolment numbers, revenue changes, actual carryforward amounts, expenses and planned reserve spending. Overall, the EIPS 2024-25 budget provides

stability for schools and maintains essential services (see pg. 189, “2024-25 Fall Budget”).

Highlights from the Fall Budget Report:

budget priorities – complexity in classrooms, curriculum and resource development, the mental health strategic plan, collegiate and career pathways, equity, staff retention, and artificial intelligence and digital tools considerations

budget principles – equitable distribution of funds and programs and transparent and understandable changes to allocations

operating budget – \$213.15 million, which includes a \$2.11-million draw from operating reserves and \$390,000 from asset retirement obligation amortization

student enrolment – 17,949, as of Sept. 27, 2024

employees (full-time equivalent) – 1,367, as of Sept. 30, 2024

compensation – salary grid movement and benefit increases have been factored into standard costs for schools, and inflationary salary costs are related to grid movement and benefit costs for departments

operating reserves projection – \$10.59 million, as of Aug. 31, 2025

capital reserves projection – \$210,000, as of Aug. 31, 2025

instructional spending – 78% of the total budget, equating to \$9,518 per student

system administration spending – \$4.51 million, 2.1%, of total expenses

NOTE: System administration spending is within the \$6.55 million provided by Alberta Education. EIPS will distribute the surplus funds for instructional costs, as allowed in the Funding Manual for School Authorities 2024-25 School Year.

ASSURANCE REVIEWS

Trustees participated in the EIPS Assurance Reviews, a division wide forum for schools and departments to share with the Board their results, annual plans, successes, how they're meeting the needs of all

learners, the challenges they are experiencing and potential advocacy focus areas. Collectively, the reviews allow trustees to gain a holistic understanding of what's happening throughout the Division—which then helps inform decision-making.

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.

AERR 2023-24: <https://www.eips.ca/download/475384> Overview of AERR 2023-24:
<https://www.eips.ca/download/475379>

DIVISION CALENDAR

The Board approved the Division calendars for the next two school years—2025-26 and 2026-27. For the most part, the calendars resemble previous years. However, a change was made to early dismissal days. In previous years, early dismissal days occurred on the first Wednesday of every month—students are released from school one hour early to allow for staff meetings and collaboration. Going forward, early dismissal days will now occur weekly, every Wednesday. On these days, after students are released, school staff will take part in structured collaborative learning opportunities to ultimately enhance student achievement. Before making the calendar change, the Division surveyed the school community—the weekly early dismissal aligns with feedback heard and, also, the Division's needs (see pg. 36, "2025-26 and 2026-27 Division Calendars").

NAMING OF THE SHERWOOD PARK REPLACEMENT SCHOOL

The Board approved a name for the new replacement school in Sherwood Park—Forest Grove School—expected to open in the 2026-27 school year. Once open, Forest Grove School will offer a single-track elementary French Immersion program and a dual-track junior high program, including a regular English program and a French immersion program for grades 7-9.

SCHOOL FEE PARAMETERS: 2025-26

The Board approved the school fee parameters for the 2025-26 school year. For the upcoming school year, fees can increase by two per cent—in 2024-25, the allowable increase was five per cent. Highlights of the 2025-26 school fee parameters include:

Optional-courses fees –two per cent allowable increase

Noon-supervision fees – two per cent allowable increase

Activity fees – two per cent allowable increase

Extracurricular fees – two per cent allowable increase

Non-curricular travel fees – two per cent allowable increase

Non-curricular goods and services fees – two per cent allowable increase

Schools must set all fees at a cost-recovery rate. If fees are over-charged by more than \$10 a student, schools must refund that amount to the student. Additionally, if any fees exceed the listed parameters,

the school must submit an explanation for EIPS' Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer to review. With the fee parameters now approved, schools can begin establishing their 2025-26 School Fees Schedule.

DRAFT JUNIOR HIGH CURRICULUM

The Alberta government announced that the junior high curriculum will be updated, with the changes affecting mathematics for grades 7 to 9, social studies for grades 7 to 9, physical education and wellness for grades 7 to 10, and career and life management (CALM).

The draft version of the curriculum is scheduled for piloting in September 2025 and the implementation of the updated curriculum is scheduled for September 2026. Once the draft versions are available for viewing, EIPS will make decisions regarding piloting of the updated curriculum.

TRUSTEE ELECTION OCTOBER 20, 2025

BYLAW NO. 009/2024

Bylaw No. 009/2024: The Establishment of Wards and Electoral Subdivisions received third reading and was then passed by the Board. The bylaw replaces Bylaw No. 007/20 in Appendix A – Policy 7: Board Operations.

BYLAW NO. 010/2024

Bylaw No. 010/2024: The Rules and Procedures for the Conduct of School Trustee Elections received three readings and was then passed by the Board. The bylaw replaces Bylaw No. 008/2020 and will guide the upcoming school trustee election.

BYLAW NO. 011/2024

Bylaw No. 011/2024: Criminal Record Checks Required for Trustee Nominations received three readings and was then passed by the Board. EIPS will abide by Bylaw No. 011/2024 throughout the upcoming school trustee election.

Nomination packages are currently being accepted from candidates running for the EIPS Board of Trustees. These packages will be accepted until 12:00 pm on nomination day –

September 22, 2025. Candidate information can be accessed on the EIPS website www.eips.ca

Please contact me with questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Allen cathy.allen@eips.ca

780-417-8109

Q. Samantha - The first junior high curriculums being implemented are social and math?

A. Cathy - yes, and I am surprised as we don't have data on it from the elementary schools yet

Q. Kevin - They are implementing grades 7,8, 9 all at once?

A. Cathy - yes, which is too bad because it would have been a great opportunity to introduce them one year at a time

Q. Lisa - Are you going to see the new curriculum soon? And then how do you decide which schools implement it next year?

A Matt - We are piloting Vretta, a platform for writing exams digitally. Who implements this stuff depends on where schools are at and how admin can work with the changes

Q. Justin - Question about the calendar, what were the main deciding factors for getting early dismissal Wednesdays?

A. Cathy - because of the mix of urban and rural, we thought it would be too much travel time for only a few hours on Fridays; highschoools are already on early dismissal Wednesdays; worry about older students skipping if we had half days on Fridays; we also liked the consistency in the schedule. The biggest challenge for sure is childcare for elementary-aged parents. The division has a plan to work together with boys and girls club, daycares, ECE programs at Sal to help alleviate this.

Q. Justin - How will that time get utilized by staff?

- A. Cathy - We debated whether staff would just use this time for marking/photocopying, but we really want to use it to develop instructional practice, to help kids who are struggling, and we hope this increases student achievement. So there are intentional expectations about what will happen with this time, and teachers will have accountability for how they spend their time.
- B. Matt - currently an administrative procedure is being made and they would like to have clear boundaries defined, but still have flexibility so the time is useful for staff. We will meet as departments and develop plans to help kids from grades 7-

12, we will also get grade teachers to collaborate to help create consistency in support for students and have our school counsellor meet with them.

C. Cathy - And EAs will be a part of this too because they are working directly with students too.

5. **Science Department Presentation** - Samantha Jones

-first year as department head, but fifth year teaching

-have a solid team of teachers and we collaborate a ton, we are always able to share resources

-we have great labs and resources available and have had so many students enrolled in science classes that we have gone through a lot of resources and have gone to two waste disposal pick-ups this year

-try to do lots of projects, such as the STEM fair to help kids do something fun in Science that is not directly a part of the curriculum

-so many opportunities to do fun stuff - physics class went to Galaxyland

-I'm also head of musical theatre, and we are doing Charlie and the chocolate factory this year and we are the first school in Alberta to do it

-last year we had 6000 people come to the Little Mermaid and we are hoping to draw a big crowd this year too

Q. Cathy - What are the dates for the show?

A. Sammy - May 6-9, tickets are already on sale, we start rehearsing next Thursday

A. Lisa - thanks for coming and sometimes I forget how much work you guys have to do - budgeting, planning, curriculum implementing, so thanks for all that you do

6. **COSC Report** - Lisa Harke

- Look at council operating procedures in next meeting to make sure they are working for us

7. **Council Information** - Leanne Seelochan

- School council engagement grant - We have \$630. PT interview nights we will bring in a speaker - Tony Harrison will come speak to us about racism. We will also have our RCMP Constable come in on the second PT night and talk about drug use, vaping. We also looked at SC library coming in to talk about the different resources they have for parents and for students, but we might have to look at doing this in the future with SCE if this is something we want to pursue.

- Leanne - I will reach out to the elementary to see if they want to join us for the SC library thing in the future

Q. Lisa - Should we be doing any planning or prep to have these speakers come?

A. Matt - we can do some promotion, and confirm times so we can start putting things in the eagles eye and make some posters so parents know, touch base with Kevin

Q. Lisa - Another idea would be to have a set-up for the musical theater and promote the play at PT night. Is there also going to be PT interview meal?

A. Leanne - Yes, I will touch base with Ali

8. **Society Report** - Nate Peters

Presentation can be found at <https://scasociety.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2025-01-January-Society-Update.pdf>

-Facility update, audits, budget and fee setting

-Facility updates - replaced elementary roof and boilers in the secondary, planning to refresh paint and bathrooms in the secondary next year, we are looking at getting extra money next year from EIPS to rebuild MRF reserves

- South gym needs renewal, having discussions about what this space should look like

Audited financials - surplus of \$5984

Q. Lisa - was there a reason operating costs came in less than anticipated?

A. Nate - not too sure, usually the janitorial costs are the biggest thing, but the new boilers cut 20% of our energy costs

Budget - projected to build up our MRF so we have funds on hand for emergencies

Q. Lisa - if MRF is built up would it go to the renewal of the South gym?

A. Nate - that is one possibility, but it is not set.

Fees - we have to keep pace with the inflation of our costs, so we are looking at a 3% increase in fees. This is a \$50 increase in tuition costs (\$1730/kid for next year)

9. **Principals Report** - Matt Spronk

- Look at current year fees and look for feedback from parents
- We have different types of fees - extracurricular, course fees and activity fees and a few non-curricular fees (grad)
- Fees are run on a cost-recovery basis and any fees more than \$10 over are reimbursed to parents

Q. Justin - What is the difference between varsity fees and varsity provincial fee?

A. Matt - Varsity fee is the fee for playing regular league games. We don't charge the provincial fee unless they make provincials. These fees are the max we can charge, but not necessarily the amount we will charge depending on where provincials take place

- Survey will be sent out to all parents to ask their feedback on the school fees

- Also want to make sure parents are aware that we do have support for families to have fees waived if they are struggling to pay these fees
- Board will only approve fee increases of 2% this year, anything over that will need special approval

Extracurricular fees -

Q. Lisa - is there any point where we would consider that we should just buy a bus because bussing is a huge cost?

- A. Matt - Owning a bus also isn't free, and we have multiple sports teams playing at once, so it's hard to decide which team will benefit from having a bus. We also have HR costs associated with it and I think at this point in time our resources are best used to contract out bussing.
- B. Cathy - Yes, it is a big job to have educators also drive a bus, it is like a second job for them.

Q. Nate, Justin - I think we have gotten good value out of the money for sports for our kids.

Course fees -

Q. Kevin - I think the fees are reasonable and if we increase by a small amount each year it is good. We want to keep the programming up and if we don't increase consistently we will have to play catch up one day.

- A. Matt - Yes, I would say Foods and Construction we have had to increase fees consistently due to inflation and materials costs.
- B. Nate - Yes, we have had our kids do construction and its awesome the stuff that they get to make
- C. Leanne - Do you have an overview of what kids will get to make in Foods/construction so parents know what their fees are going to?
- D. Matt - I appreciate that, but teachers change for every course and we don't want kids to have unmet expectations if costs change or teachers have a different plan for what to do.

Activity fees -

-Matt - transportation seems to be the biggest cost involved in most of these fees

10. Meeting adjourned - Leanne Seelochan

Meeting ends 8:43 pm.

Next meeting - March 3, 2025