

# **Sherwood Heights Junior High School Council**

## **Meeting Minutes - DRAFT**

September 17, 2024 – 6:00pm – Sherwood Heights Junior High School

### **In attendance:**

Executive (2023/24): Leanne (Chair), Kim Scott (Vice Chair)

Staff: Sunny Sandhu (Principal), Angela Sonnenberg (Assistant Principal), Kristian Basaraba (Assistant Principal), Warren Foley, Johanna Ryan

Trustee and Board Chair: Cathy Allen

SWH Parents/Guardians: Christina Swabey, Melissa Manolescu, Jennifer Summers, Rachel Bruce

### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

- a. Meeting called to order by Mr. Sandu at 6:00pm

### **2. Elections**

- a. Conducted by Former Chair Leanne
- b. Open discussion held describing positions
- c. Nominations received for Kim Scott as Chair, Becky Mitchell as Vice Chair and Melissa Manolescu as Secretary – unopposed and unanimously supported
- d. By acclamation, 2024-25 Executive will be:
  - i. Chair and COSC representative – Kim Scott
  - ii. Vice Chair – Becky Mitchell
  - iii. Secretary – Melissa Manolescu

### **3. 2024-25 School Council dates review**

- a. Meetings will be held 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month

### **4. Principal Report**

- a. Background – Chronicle being emailed to families for communication
- b. School startup – everything has gone well, emphasis on helping students feel safe and settled
- c. Enrollment and budget – 630 +/- 4 students currently enrolled, 94.8% of budget allocated to staffing
- d. Programming – programs include IMPACT (~40 students; 15 max/grade), Honors (~50 students), French Immersion (2 classes of ~25 students per grade)
- e. Cell phone policy – Ministerial Order – province-wide mandate; going well so far
- f. Sherwood Park replacement school – build is happening through Alberta Infrastructure (not EIPS) which differs from Davidson Creek or Heritage Hills Schools, fewer opportunities for engagement, building updates will be shared in the Chronicle

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5. **School Education Plan** – 3 goals that direct the school’s focus, past goals are being updated and will be shared at the next School Council meeting, important as 5.2% of budget is discretionary spending and supports these goals

6. **Trustee Report** – as provided by Cathy Allen

**Sherwood Heights School Council Meeting Trustee Report      September 17, 2024**

## **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](https://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.

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## 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.

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## **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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780-417-8109

## **7. Closing questions**

- a. French as a second language option is not available to students in this dual track (English/French) school; can this be offered as an option in future years? Mr. Sandu: discussions will be happening around options currently offered and considerations for what can be offered and how to improve communication to students and families about these options

## **8. Adjournment**