



ELK ISLAND  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

*Seeing Christ in Everyone*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
2022-2023  
YEAR-END HIGHLIGHTS



# Governance

## 2022-2023 Board of Trustees



**Le-Ann Ewaskiw**  
Board Chair  
*Strathcona County /  
Sherwood Park*



**Ted Paszek**  
Vice-Chair  
*Strathcona County /  
Sherwood Park*



**Jean Boisvert**  
Member  
*Strathcona County /  
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**Shelley Charchun**  
Member  
*Camrose*



**Teresa Makowecki**  
Member  
*Vegreville*



**Dean Sarnecki**  
Member  
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Sherwood Park*



**Al Stewart**  
Member  
*Fort Saskatchewan*

## Administrative Staff



**Paul Corrigan**  
Superintendent



**Thérèse  
deChamplain-Good**  
Assistant  
Superintendent,  
Educational  
Excellence



**Brett Cox**  
Assistant  
Superintendent,  
Human Resources



**Tracy Leigh**  
Secretary Treasurer

# Message From the Board

## *We Are Better Together As One Community in Christ*



With summer break about to begin, I thought I'd take a moment to reflect on what Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS) and the Board of Trustees have accomplished since this school year began, and to wish our EICS community a break full of joy and rejuvenation.

As you know, we are guided by gospel teachings to nurture the hearts, minds, and spirits of our learners from Kindergarten up to Grade 12. From home, to school, to parish, we all play a vital role in guiding students along their unique academic and faith pathways. This year, our collective efforts at EICS fully embodied the division's theme "Better Together: One Body in Christ", using it as inspiration in and out of the classroom to foster an environment where students explored how demonstrating their faith can impact their community.

Through our ongoing support of Ukrainian refugees, local charities, and other groups, I'm proud of what our schools are doing to demonstrate to students how they can embody Christ's call to care for the other.

We've also launched a new initiative called Here Comes the Sun, which takes an innovative approach to fostering student and staff well-being by integrating the mental health teachings of Indigenous Peoples and the faith teachings of the Church. This program also encourages the physical health of staff and students to help develop resilience and well-being.

"Better Together" also applied to the EICS Trustees. For the first time, we created our own Annual Board Assurance Plan – something that, as far as I'm aware, no other school district board in the province has done before.

This strategic framework serves as a roadmap that guides our collective efforts as Trustees to deliver excellence in education and upholds our commitment to transparency and accountability to the greater EICS community. What you're reading now is one of many direct results of this plan.

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, our board focused on advocating key government stakeholders. We met with our representative MLAs and had positive conversations with Alberta Education to obtain more

funding than initially earmarked for the 2023-2024 school year. Rest assured we will continue to advocate for equitable and fair funding for EICS and Catholic Education in future school years.

We also continued to build partnerships and refine relationships with our own school councils, local parishes, and community organizations, as well as neighbouring school districts – some of whom transport our students – and their related municipalities.

This is just a small taste of what our district and the Trustees have been up to over the last 10 months, and there are many more details on the following pages.

I would also be remiss if I didn't give a brief mention to Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic High School, the new school in Camrose that the community helped name. The school's name was unveiled in the fall, a site blessing ceremony was held this spring, and construction has begun for a fall 2025 opening!

As we finish this school year, I pray that all our EICS families have a wonderful and blessed summer break.

God Bless and warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Le-Ann Ewaskiw".

*Le-Ann Ewaskiw  
Board Chair,  
EICS Board of Trustees*

# Trustees Establish Assurance Plan

Following a full day of professional learning last March, the EICS Board of Trustees put the finishing touches on its first-ever Annual Board Assurance Plan.

The plan was developed during multiple professional development days during the 2022-2023 school year, and is designed to guide the Trustees on their advocacy for our school district.

“A lot of hard work and challenging conversations amongst Trustees went into the creation of this advocacy plan, and the Board has emerged more unified and stronger because of it,” said Board Chair Le-Ann Ewaskiw. “I’m proud of the work that we’ve done to set this plan in motion and look forward to the discourse and results it will create for the division in the future.”

Identified early in this process was the Trustees’ desire to further engage with the EICS community and stakeholders. The hope is that by fostering stronger connections with division stakeholders, including parents, it will create an opportunity for the Board to provide more timely and transparent communication while lowering the barrier for parents and guardians to provide valuable feedback that will help to steer future decisions made by the Board.



The Trustees also dedicated themselves to more transparent communication through utilizing the division website to provide more public information for the Board’s monthly meetings in advance, sharing monthly highlights, and looking at other avenues to create and engage in open dialogue with the EICS community and stakeholders.

Throughout the year, the Board advocates among many stakeholders on a variety of priorities that matter to Catholic Education and, specifically, the education of students attending our schools. Many of these stakeholders range from elected officials at all levels of

government to EICS staff, parents, and students.

With a nod to the provincial election that was held in the spring, the Board also created an election advocacy plan that called for the increased supports of Catholic Education, Instructional Funding, Capital Funding, and Mental Health. These four priorities were determined by the Board based on feedback from within and outside of the EICS community.

Although the election season is over, the Board will continue to advocate on these priorities, as well as other needs throughout the division, and continue to meet with elected officials on an ongoing basis.





**In November 2022, Trustees and Senior Administration met with Hon. Nate Glubish (front, second from left), MLA Jackie Lovely (front row, far right), and Hon. Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk (who joined virtually).**

## Multi-Faceted Board Advocacy

When not participating in monthly meetings, our Trustees were out in the community meeting with local stakeholders and engaging with organizations that are committed to Catholic Education to learn about what matters to them. They use this knowledge in their advocacy meetings with elected officials and other stakeholders.

During the 2022-2023 school year,

Trustees had in-person and virtual meetings with our four local MLAs, enabling the division to provide jurisdiction updates and information about the value of Catholic Education, and to request continued support and understanding of our division's needs.

The Board also hosted candidates in the provincial election for a night of discussion to share our perspectives

on Catholic Education and discuss our needs for equitable funding to support instructional funding, as well as supports for mental health and operations and maintenance funding.

Our Trustees and Senior Administration also participated in regular meetings with our parish priests in all of our communities, and met with Archbishop Richard Smith of the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton and Bishop David Motiuk of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton.

Trustees also met with local municipalities to continue to provide updates and information about EICS.

Each Trustee is encouraged to be fully involved in their local parish and to share updates with the Board on what's happening within their respective parishes, and the Board holds public meetings in each of the division's four communities at least once a year. The local and parish communities are always welcome to attend these meetings.



**Trustee Jean Boisvert speaks with provincial election candidates during an evening of conversation in the spring.**

# Supporting Catholic Communities

Aside from being a member of the EICS Board of Trustees, many of our Trustees participate with other organizations that promote Catholic Education by being on their boards, or actively engaging in their communities.

Our Trustees are active members and supporters of:

- Alberta Catholic Schools Trustees' Association (ACSTA)
- Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education (GrACE)
- Religious Education Activities for Life (REAL) Foundation
- Alberta School Board Association (ASBA).



**EICS Trustees attend the ACSTA's MLA reception in the spring (top left), as well as the ACSTA's fall annual general meeting (top right).**



**Trustees attend the ASBA general meeting (above), and thank supporters at the REAL Foundation Golf Tournament (below).**



**Trustee Shelley Charchun brings greetings at our Catholic Education Night last fall, which was co-hosted with GrACE in Camrose.**

# 2023-2024 Assurance Plan Steadies the Course in Student Faith, Education, and Well-Being

Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS) continues to build upon its focus on student well-being and educational support through refining the division's four key pillars of faith, learning, wellness, and engagement.

The 2023-2024 Division Education Assurance Plan is focused on integrating Catholic values in the classroom; providing custom approaches to help students of all abilities achieve their academic success; supporting the holistic well-being of students and staff; and providing transparent two-way communication with parents, staff, students, and other community stakeholders.

A key component of the division's focus for the next school year is continuing to address student mental health and offering more supports for diverse learning needs. Through initiatives like the Here Comes the Sun, which empowers EICS staff to provide holistic care for themselves and students, division educators will have a renewed capability to guide students towards achieving their potential.

"I am confident in the hard work and dedication of our educators to deliver an exceptional experience for our students that will encompass

faith, academic excellence, well-being, and community stewardship," said Thérèse deChamplain-Good, the EICS Assistant Superintendent of Educational Excellence.

"Going into the next school year, our mental health and well-being strategies will showcase our commitment to nurturing students and further fostering a community where the Catholic faith and achieving academic excellence go hand-in-hand," said EICS Superintendent Paul Corrigan.

"The EICS Board of Trustees is excited to watch our students further grow as individuals and in their academic ability next year," said Board Chair Le-Ann Ewaskiw. "We are proud of our division's ability to use new understandings about mental health and education as we meet students where they are and respond in a compassionate way that benefits the whole person spiritually, mentally, and academically."

Each of the pillars in the yearly EICS assurance plans are determined in coordination with the Alberta Assurance Framework and through yearly feedback from key EICS stakeholders. More information about the EICS assurance plan for 2023-2024 is available through the [EICS website](#).



## 2023-2024 DIVISION EDUCATION ASSURANCE PLAN

Four Key Pillars for Student Success

### FAITH INTEGRATION

Elk Island Catholic Schools students and staff will be provided a faith-integrated environment through worship, witness, and service.



### LEARNERS AND LEARNING

Develop our students and staff to their fullest potential through using multiple pathways that best suit their needs.

### SYSTEMIC WELLNESS

Support student and staff well-being in mind, body, and spirit through education and professional development.



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Enable student success through enhanced communication, engagement, and partnership opportunities.

eics.ab.ca |   



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# New Programs Seek to Further Empower Student Learning

Announced during the 2022-2023 school year, two new programs will kick into full gear for the upcoming school year by offering holistic and educational supports for EICS students.

## Here Comes the Sun

A \$440,000 grant funded by Alberta Education's Mental Health in Schools Pilot will empower our schools to further elevate their holistic mental health supports.

Called Here Comes the Sun, the pilot project runs through June 2024 and is in partnership with St. Francis Xavier Church in Camrose, members of the Indigenous community, EdCan Network, and the Edmonton-based wellness organization PEPY. These partnerships enable school chaplains, health champions, and Indigenous mentors to develop additional skills that will further help EICS students, families, and staff to more proactively support and strengthen their overall well-being.

"I am excited for the opportunity that this grant provides for our division to further refine its focus on systemic wellness in light of our faith," said EICS Superintendent Paul Corrigan.

"This grant supports us tremendously in our goal of supporting staff and student well-being spiritually, physically, and mentally," said Jody Seymour, the EICS Director of Student and Staff Formation. "Our approach to wellness weaves together who we are as a Catholic community with Indigenous perspectives and the PEPY model."

## Cogito Academy

Madonna Catholic School (MCS) is launching new program this fall that offers alternative accelerated teaching.

Cogito Academy features a focused and structured learning environment that empowers students to have an in-depth

understanding of core subjects.

Emphasis is placed on academic excellence as well as an advanced understanding of math and literacy at their grade level.

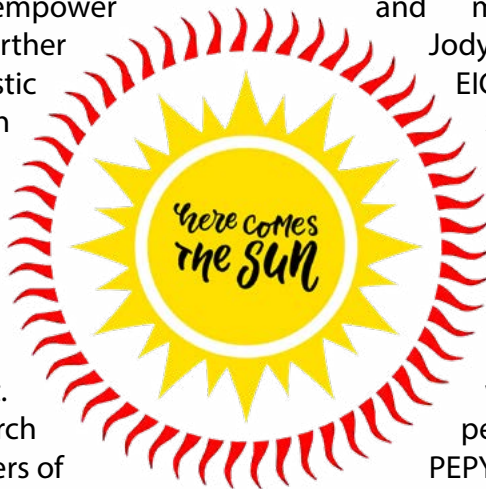
To facilitate learning, parents are viewed as active partners in their child's education; they play a role in assisting their child when needed and are encouraged to communicate with the Academy's teacher.

"Cogito Academy is teacher-driven, and encourages students to dig deeper in their studies as they develop their critical thinking skills," said MCS Principal Karen Antoniuk.

"I'm delighted to offer Cogito Academy to families who are looking for a more traditional learning environment."

Students attending Cogito Academy will learn in a teacher-directed environment that provides a familiar routine, homework, and regular testing that enables students to progress through their studies together. All Cogito Academy curriculum is based on Alberta Education's academic requirements.

Registration for Cogito Academy's 2023 - 2024 school year is currently available through [the EICS website](#).





# Chief Cadmus Delorme Inspires at 2023 Faith and Wellness Day

Our division-wide Faith and Wellness Day brought EICS staff together on March 3 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish to celebrate Mass together for the first time in a few years, and to gain valuable insight into Truth and Reconciliation from the perspective of Indigenous Peoples.

Following a Mass led by Fr. Jim Corrigan, keynote speaker Chief Cadmus Delorme of the Cowessess First Nation delivered powerful messages recounting his personal experiences in Canada's journey toward Truth and Reconciliation and in being a part of the committee that brought

Pope Francis to Canada last year.

Presenting a mix of humour and sombre reality checks, Chief Delorme highlighted the Indigenous worldview and explained how every person can be a champion of Truth and Reconciliation.

Following the keynote sessions, our staff had opportunities to focus on their spiritual, mental, and physical wellness through participating in a variety of activities, including volunteering at the Strathcona Food Bank, prayer walks, yoga sessions, and joining their peers in friendly board games and sporting events.





# Future Camrose High School Gets A Name and Blessing

Members of EICS, our local school communities, and the local parish gathered in Camrose to celebrate the site blessing of the future Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic High School in April.

We were honoured to have Fr. Jim Corrigan, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, provide a homily and bless the site with the assistance of Fr. Kris Schmidt from St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church. Elder Donald Northwest from Maskwacis began the site blessing with a smudging ceremony.

Students from St. Patrick Catholic School sung a beautiful hymn, and students from Our Lady of Mount Pleasant shared their excitement about being part of the first class to graduate from the new high school in 2026.

Blessed Carlo Acutis is a contemporary spiritual model for young people. Before his passing in 2006 at the age of 15, he was devoted to computers and more so to the Eucharist through developing a website to catalogue

Eucharistic miracles. Further, he showed courage in defending those of his peers who were marginalized or abused in school, and he faced the pain of leukemia with similar courage.

Our EICS Board of Trustees chose to name the school after Blessed Carlo Acutis in October 2022 upon reviewing feedback and suggestions from a survey that was previously sent to EICS staff, parents, and students, as well as St. Francis Xavier parishioners.

The name was announced at our Catholic Education Night, which was co-hosted with GrACE last fall.

With construction underway on a site in the Valleyview subdivision in southwest Camrose, Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic High School is scheduled to open by September 2025. The estimated cost of the new high school is approximately \$23 million, and it is being designed for a capacity of 460 students. The 4,720-square-metre school will also include shared facilities with the City of Camrose.



# Schools Rally in Support of Ukrainian Newcomers

Since Russia invaded the Ukraine in February 2022, EICS schools have welcomed more than 50 Ukrainian refugee students and their families.

Since this time, our schools have gone above and beyond in welcoming them to Canada and helping to make them feel at home. Three of our schools have been able to do this through utilizing their strong Ukrainian bilingual programs and outside-school communities to offer supports for these students and their families — inside and outside of the classroom.

Due to the nature of Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School, St. Nicholas Catholic School, and St. Theresa Catholic School already having existing bilingual Ukrainian programs, these schools have teachers who were

able to immediately speak with these new students and their families in a language they're familiar with. For the students, these programs also reduced the language barrier for interacting with their peers.

Last September we partnered with St. Sophia's Ukrainian Catholic Church, their parishioners, and the Bilingual Ukrainian Catholic Parents Society to welcome our Ukrainian newcomers with a barbecue, which had more than 150 attendees.

Two months later in November, St. Nicholas hosted Alberta Premier Danielle Smith at a press conference to announce that the provincial government would provide additional funding to school districts for each new Ukrainian newcomer student they receive.

Community support has continued to pour in during this time, and has been reflected in other school activities and fundraisers, including a tomato plant sale. In February, St. Theresa hosted a students vs staff hockey game in support of



humanitarian aid in Ukraine that collected nearly \$3,000 in donations.

In March, Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School also worked in conjunction with St. Theresa, St. Nicholas, and St. Sophia's Parish to host an afternoon of games and community building for Ukraine families in which they were also provided with non-perishable food and other household items.



# EICS Staff Recognized with Awards



Members of our Board of Trustees and Senior Administration attend the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association Blueprints Retreat in the spring. Justine Wright (third from right), a teacher and chaplain for St. Isidore Learning Centre, was also recognized at the event for receiving the Excellence in Catholic Education Award.

Principals Tracy Melnyk (third from right) and Aoife Cahill (second from right), received the ATA Council for School Leadership's 2023 Distinguished Leadership Award. Tracy is the principal for St. Isidore Learning Centre, and Aoife is our principal for Holy Spirit Catholic School.



Former EICS Trustee Michelle Szott (fifth from the left) received the ACSTA Meritorious Service Award in the fall.

Multiple members of the EICS family — including current Trustees and teachers — were recipients of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal in a December ceremony.



# EICS Staff Recognized with Awards



**Rhianna Zazula (middle), a teacher at Saint Andre Bessette Catholic High School in Fort Saskatchewan, was our nominee for the 2022-2023 ASBA Edwin Parr Award in Zone 2/3.**

**Ana Dumec (middle), an Educational Assistant at Archbishop Jordan Catholic School, received our EICS Excellence in Catholic Education - Support Staff award for 2022-2023.**





# ELK ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

*Seeing Christ in Everyone*

*Better Together*



ROMANS 12:5

*one body in Christ*

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