

EICS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monthly Highlights



Our Lady of Mount Pleasant and St. Patrick Catholic schools in Camrose welcome Archbishop Richard Smith and Fr. Kris Schmidt in early December 2023. See more on Page 6.

Board Highlights

Draft 2024-2025 school year calendars proposed

The proposed calendars for the next school year were reviewed by the EICS Board of Trustees and are out for feedback from our school communities.

The intent is to develop a calendar that meets the necessary hours of instruction and achieves a high quality learning environment while supporting professional development for teachers and staff.

Some of the other considerations include maintaining fall and spring breaks, coordinated busing services with two other school districts and accommodating four-day weeks at Our Lady of Mount Pleasant Catholic School in Camrose.

As a result, our division has three different calendars the Trustees will need to consider for approval.

The calendar variations

are as follows:

- Schools in Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park, Strathcona County, and Vegreville
- Our Lady of Mount Pleasant Catholic School in Camrose
- St. Patrick Catholic School in Camrose

FAITH FORMATION

Karen Antoniuk, the principal of St. Isidore Learning Centre, led December's Board Faith Formation, which focused on *The Saint John's Bible*, a seven volume handwritten, hand-drawn manuscript.

The 13-year process to create it began in the late 1990s, and it was designed based on ancient techniques of calligraphy and illumination while blending Christian iconography with

Eastern Orthodox, Muslim, Buddhist, and Native American symbols.

Karen's presentation touched on the Birth of Christ: The Gospel According to Luke (2:1-14).

More information about the Saint John's Bible is available at the website saintjohnsbible.org.

POLICY REVIEW

After discussing the below policies in the November meeting, the Board reviewed revisions and commenced actions on the following:

- **Policy 2: Role of the Board**
- **Policy 3: Role of the Trustee**
- **Policy 10: Policy Making**

Changes to all three policies were approved in December.

Policy 10 was revised to change the number of required readings for future policy approvals from three readings to two readings. Additionally, if the first reading of a policy update receives unanimous support, a second reading can be held and voted on at that same meeting.

Before this change, new or revised policies required three readings with the third reading held at a second meeting.

Revisions to Policy 2 include references to Canon Law in regards to faith development in Catholic Education, while Policy 3 was revised to update formatting and other minor changes to enhance reader understanding.

Each month, the EICS Board of Trustees' Policy Committee reviews specific policies and either recommends revising them or leaving them as they are.

2023-2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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Board Highlights

Catholic School Review: St. Luke in South Cooking Lake

St. Luke Catholic School recently completed its internal Catholic School Review process, which was presented to the EICS Board of Trustees as part of the Superintendent's Report at their December meeting.

Each school within our division completes this process once every four years to examine how well it follows the Five Marks of an Excellent Catholic School. By doing these reviews, our division seeks to showcase school strengths and identify areas for future growth.

The review, which is conducted by EICS senior administration, found that St. Luke is a great example of what a small Catholic school should be for students, staff, and families through providing quality education in a faith-filled, welcoming, and supportive environment.



St. Luke students and staff participate in the annual Terry Fox Run in September 2023.

The genuine care for each other among staff and students at the school is clear.

Students unanimously agreed that they feel cared for by the school's staff, and parents echoed that the school exemplifies the family feel with a strong emphasis on instilling Catholic values as members of the school

and parish community.

During the review, parents also noted that they appreciate that their children prayed daily, and they raved about the weekly praise and worship that occurs at St. Luke.

In order to deepen the faith connection between home and school, the division asks that staff consider integrating the

Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ resource at home.

We also encourage the integration of the school mission statement into our division's yearly theme, as well as getting to the core meaning of how to live the theme through a motto that may be referred to daily or displayed in classrooms. This connection helps strengthen the mission statement and have it as a lived experience.

The parish connection with Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church is vibrant and appreciated by all at St. Luke. The parish priests are a significant part of the fabric of the school and results of the review show that their presence is valued by families, students and staff.

During the review, Fr. Jim Corrigan commented on the "good stuff" that is happening at St. Luke.

Superintendent's Report: December 2023

NEW FACILITIES DIRECTOR

EICS Superintendent Paul Corrigan announced at December's meeting that Dennis Staniland has been hired as the new Facilities Director, starting in January.

Dennis, who was previously the Manager of Assets and Technical Services

at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, has more than 25 years of experience in managing institutional buildings throughout their life-cycle from design and construction to maintenance.

He is replacing current Facilities Director Claude

Valcourt who has announced his plan to retire at the end of January.

VOLUNTEER COACH POLICY

A new Administrative Procedure (AP) is being developed by administration to address the use of volunteer coaches and

supervisors in schools.

While teachers are the preferred option to lead extracurricular activities, the need for adult supervisors and coaches can arise. This AP 491 would set out the procedures in place for schools considering the use of a volunteer in either role.

Board Highlights

EICS Jurisdiction Results Report sets the future tone

Thérèse deChamplain-Good, the EICS Assistant Superintendent of Educational Excellence, presented the 2022-2023 Jurisdiction Results to the EICS Board of Trustees in December.

Information from this report is collected throughout a variety of stakeholder engagement opportunities throughout the year, including our students and their parents, our staff, and our parish priests.

Our delivery of Catholic-integrated education is focused on the four key areas of Faith Integration, Learners and Learning, Systemic Wellness, and Community Engagement. Our Learners and Learning also integrates feedback collected through Alberta Education’s annual survey that seeks feedback on our schools from their

communities.

FAITH INTEGRATION

Through our division’s focus on Faith Integration, our students, staff, and EICS community are provided with an environment that promotes Catholic values of worship, witness, and service.

Jody Seymour, our Director of Student and Staff Formation, and Andrea Haston, our Faith and Wellness Consultant, work with school administration and our school chaplains to develop a rich environment that enables students and staff to explore and grow in their faith through:

- The involvement of our parish priests in our schools.
- Trustee, staff, and student faith formation.
- Intentional faith



Fr. Jim leads the year-end Mass with students from Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School and Madonna Catholic School.

integration in the new Alberta Education curriculum frameworks.

- Collaboration with the provincial Religious Education network.
- Support from the foundation Religious Education Activities for Life that enables faith formation initiatives for

students and staff.

LEARNERS AND LEARNING

EICS relies on implementing multiple pathways to help students and staff develop to their fullest potential.

By our commitment to building the capacity of our administrators and teaching staff in support of school achievement and growth, we are demonstratively seeing positive impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom.

Student and Staff Formation and Inclusive Learning Services work with school administrators, collaborative response coordinators, lead teachers, teachers, and educational assistants to help staff reach their full potential through

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St. Nicholas Catholic School students participate in Hats on for Mental Health.

Board Highlights

Systemic Wellness and Community Engagement are key areas

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some of the following ways:

- Pre-assessments to gather vital student information to properly plan instruction that meets the needs of our students.
- Professional learning sessions to support the implementation of new and existing curriculum as well as intentional faith integration.



Holy Spirit Catholic School's Faith Team volunteer at the Strathcona Food Bank to pack snack bags for kids in need.

SYSTEMIC WELLNESS

Holistic staff and student wellbeing in mind, body, and spirit, is supported through programming and education.

The most significant factor contributing to student success is the daily relationship between teachers and students in the classroom, along with comprehensive support from leadership teams at the school level that include admin, inclusive learning facilitators, collaborative response coordinators, school leads, and our family wellness workers.

Some highlights of these efforts from the 2022-2023 school year include:

- The development of a guiding document that encourages best practice and reflects the current research

in supporting whole school wellbeing that emphasizes weight-neutral language. EICS is responsive to the needs of staff and students, and is proactive in engaging community partners to support this work.

- Health champions worked with Wellness teams to maintain and strengthen staff connections during the pandemic.
- Through Here Comes the Sun health program, the PEPY model for wellbeing is supporting the development of the whole person.
- Faith and Wellness days are hosted by schools for their students and by the division for its staff.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A vital component of our mission to deliver excellence in Catholic Education, our annual Education Assurance Survey measures communication from our schools and by the district. This includes stakeholder engagement, parental involvement, school improvement and

operational performance, and staff satisfaction with professional learning opportunities.

Overall, 94.4% of our surveyed stakeholders are satisfied with our level of communication.

The full 2022-2023 Jurisdiction Results Report is **available on our website.**



Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Eva Stang shares Indigenous artifacts with students at Holy Redeemer Catholic School.

School News

Archbishop Smith visits both EICS schools in Camrose

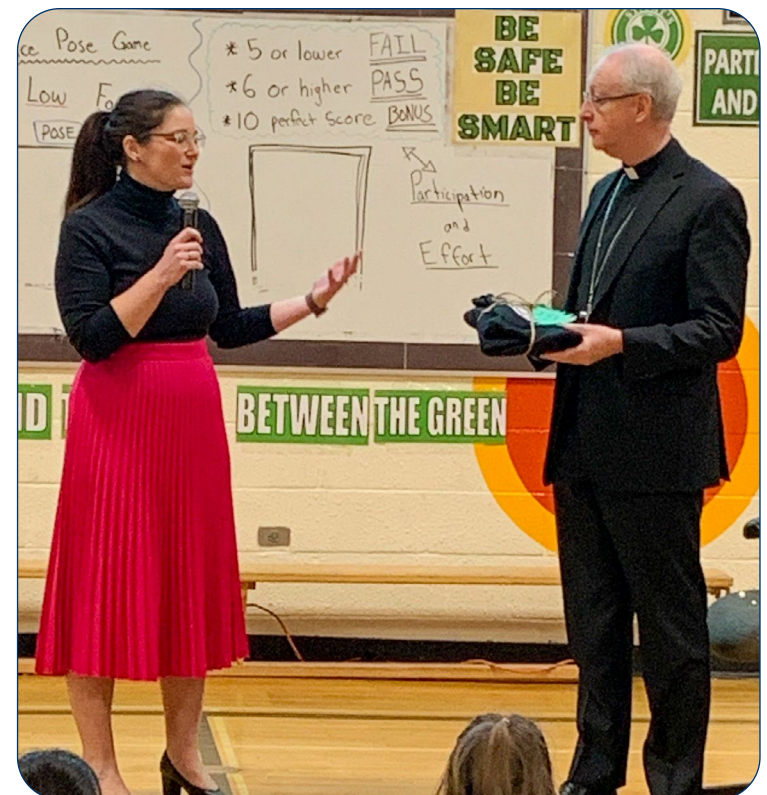
Archbishop Richard Smith was welcomed by our Camrose schools during His Excellency's tour of the St. Francis Xavier Church Parish on Friday, December 1, 2023.

At St. Patrick Catholic School, His Excellency met with the Grade 4 students to discuss the importance of prayer, participated in a school assembly, and answered questions from students ranging from what his favourite subject was in school to how students can embrace the division theme Go Light Our World. He also received a St. Pat's hoodie, becoming an honorary

member of the school community.

St. Pat's Principal Michelle Nianas said the visit "was a really lovely and meaningful experience for our students, staff and parents that attended."

At Our Lady of Mount Pleasant (OLMP), His Excellency made Advent wreaths with some Grade 5 students and led a question and answer session with some of the high school students in the school's chapel.



School News

Schools come together to support their communities

The Elk Island Catholic Schools community was busy during the Christmas season with fundraisers and donation drives in support of each community that our schools are located in.

In Vegreville, the St. Mary's Catholic School Grade 12 Religion class hosted a donation drive inspired by the Advent calendar with new items donated each day for the local food bank.

"The act of giving during Advent is particularly significant, as it mirrors the season's themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. It also touches on this year's division theme of Go Light Our World to demonstrate how students can be a shining light in our community," explained St. Mary's Assistant Principal Darby Murphy.

"Giving back to the community is crucial in fostering empathy and a sense of responsibility



Above: St. Mary's students pose in front of goods that were collected for donation. Bottom Left: Madonna Catholic School donates to the Strathcona Food Bank. Bottom Right: St. Luke Catholic School collects donations for the Tofield Food Bank.

among students. It helps them understand the needs of others and embodies the Christian virtue of charity."

Also in Vegreville, St. Martin's Catholic School donated toys and games in support of the local Christmas Bureau, and donated an

estimated 500 items to the Vegreville Food Bank.

In Fort Saskatchewan, St. André Bessette and St. John XXIII Catholic schools donated in support of Lurana Shelter and the Bissell Centre.

Operated by Catholic Social Services, Lurana Shelter

is an emergency shelter for women and children who are leaving domestic violence.

In Sherwood Park and Strathcona County, schools donated items to the Strathcona and Tofield food banks, as well as the local Christmas Bureau. Funds were also donated to support a hospital in Ukraine and Lurana Shelter.

Our Camrose schools donated to the non-profit organization The Open Doors, which offers support to youth, adults, and families in need; the local women's shelter; and the local animal shelter.

These are a few examples of how our schools and staff supported their local communities during the Christmas season, and is a sliver of the stewardship offered by our schools during the year.

As a division, EICS also donated \$17,321.75 to Lurana Shelter through fundraising efforts.



Community Supporters

Jacek Chocolate donates \$4K in support of students

In honour of the late Sgt. George Miok, Jacek Chocolate donated \$4,000 to our division through its annual November fundraiser of selling chocolate with flavours inspired by Sgt. Miok.

The money is donated to the Sgt. Miok Scholarship Fund, which recognizes academic achievement and students who go above and beyond for their peers at three EICS schools.

Sgt. Miok graduated from Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School (ABJ) in 2001, and died in 2009 while serving in Afghanistan. Between tours of duty in Bosnia in 2002, and Afghanistan in 2006 and 2009, he earned his Education degree and taught at a junior high in Edmonton.

"I think it's important to remember the ultimate sacrifice that George and other members in our community paid for our



Jacek Chocolate owner Jacqueline Jacek (second from left) donated \$4,000 to Elk Island Catholic Schools in support of the Sgt. George Miok Scholarship and Miok Moments hosted at some of our schools.

Left to right in the photo are: Grace Laybourne, a previous Miok Moment recipient at St. Theresa holding a plaque that commemorates past recipients; Jacqueline; ABJ Principal Ruth Tymko; St. Theresa Principal Pierre Ouimet holding a photo of Sgt. Miok; and École OLPH Principal Stefan Johnson.

freedoms," said Jacqueline Jacek, the owner of Sherwood Park-based Jacek Chocolate.

"It brings me joy to be the financial arm of the scholarships through the sale of chocolate, as it is so important to continue

the conversation about freedoms in Canada in our schools, and remembering all those who have served, and continue to serve today."

The Miok scholarship fund dates back to 2011 when Sgt. Miok's family and friends began to fund raise

in his name with a modest fundraising goal of \$500. The money was presented to the winner of an annual ABJ essay contest about what it means to be a Canadian.

Students at St. Theresa Catholic School and École Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School (École OLPH) are also recognized by a program called Miok Moments, which recognizes students who show a strong sense of character through acts of service.

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT PUBLIC BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, Jan. 24

1 p.m.

Our Lady of the Angels
Catholic School
9622 Sherridon Drive,
Fort Saskatchewan

**Visit our website for
meeting agendas and
minutes.**



Catholic-integrated education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in the communities of Camrose, Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park, Strathcona County, and Vegreville.

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