

EICS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monthly Highlights



St. Nicholas Catholic School Students enjoy pancakes during the school's Shrove Tuesday celebration. See more on Page 8

Board Highlights

Board agenda highlights from the start of the year

FAITH FORMATION

Over the last two months, the Trustees have been challenged to consider their responsibility in answering Christ's call to make others into disciples.

Meeting this call is done through continuing to make strides in our own faith journeys and demonstrations of faith, as well as through walking with others on their own faith journeys.

"As leaders, our faith should bear fruit in the way we lead, serve, and relate to others, exemplifying the teachings of Jesus," Jody Seymour, our Director of Student and Staff Formation told the Trustees in January. "Conversion is not a one-time event but a continuous process of growth in holiness."

In February she further explored this calling with a focus on the importance



Our Lady of the Angels students lead the Trustees in prayer and land acknowledgement for January's Board meeting.

of building our own relationship with Christ before helping others build theirs.

Prayer and worship, she noted, are critical.

"We cannot help lead others to faith if we cannot hear him calling. We cannot invite others to love him if our own hearts aren't open," she said.

"We want those whom we mentor to feel important, comfortable, understood and cared for. We want our staff, students and families to feel important, comfortable, understood and cared for."

REVIEWED POLICIES

Three policies were reviewed in January and approved in February following a process that revised them to improve clarity and understanding without any major changes to their intent.

These policies are:

- **Policy 4: Trustee Code of Conduct**
- **Policy 5: Role of the Board Chair and Vice Chair**
- **Policy 8: Board Committees**

Another policy, **Policy 21:**

School Fees and Charges

was considered by Trustees during its first reading with proposed revisions outlining when schools must engage parents regarding a decrease or increase of school fees. It also proposes revisions to clarify the reimbursement of unspent fees for students who leave the division prior to the end of the school year.

Worth noting is that Policy 21 does not discuss what the fees will be for an upcoming school year, but rather provides direction for schools how fees may be

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2023-2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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Board Highlights



EICS is working with key partners to modernize K-12 religious education curriculum offered at our Ukrainian Bilingual schools. The new curriculum will be built around understanding who God is, His role, and how we respond to Him.

Superintendent's Report

UKRAINIAN BILINGUAL RELIGION CURRICULUM

Our division continues to work with the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton and Edmonton Catholic School Division on development of an updated Ukrainian Catholic religious education curriculum for schools offering Ukrainian Bilingual programs.

Called Image to Likeness, it is a modernization of the current curriculum and built around understanding who God is, His role, and how we respond to Him while further embracing the Eastern Ukrainian approach to liturgy, spirituality, and theology.

This curriculum is currently

being piloted in relevant schools up to Grade 9 with tentative plans to introduce Grade 10 - 12 curriculum for 2024-2025.

Development of Grade 1 resources for next school year is also underway.

NEW ADMIN PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Administrative Procedure 491 provides procedures for schools to follow when a volunteer coach or volunteer supervisor is required at school.

In all cases, EICS teachers are the preferred choice for coaches and supervisor, but this may not always be possible.

In all situations, these volunteers are required to undergo reference checks where appropriate as well as provide a completed Vulnerable Sector Police Information Check and a Child Intervention Record Check.

Volunteers will also undergo an orientation with the school principal regarding safety requirements, supervision expectations, parent communication, and other details.

The full procedure is available [on our website](#).

SILC PILOTS NEW ONLINE TEST SYSTEM

School districts are

being presented with the opportunity by Alberta Education to participate in a new online student testing system.

St. Isidore Learning Centre opted to utilize this new system in January for some Diploma exams and all Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Tests. Overall, the system shows promise for enhanced efficiency and positive student experiences.

NEW CCSSA PRESIDENT

EICS Superintendent Paul Corrigan has been named President of the Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta.

Board Highlights

Trustees show support for CCSTA, national food policy

TRUSTEES from Page 2

changed from one year to the next.

This policy will come back for further consideration at the March EICS Board of Trustees meeting with the goal of it being finalized this spring.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION SUPPORT THROUGH PROPERTY TAXES

With property tax assessments becoming available, Trustees directed Administration in February to develop a letter that encourages qualifying ratepayers to designate their tax payments to Catholic Schools.

Board Vice-Chair Ted Paszek called this declaration a key step in support of Catholic Education as a whole.

"If that declaration falls by the wayside, you're opening the door to the argument to question the existence of Catholic Education," he said.



St. John XXIII students attend Mass held at their school in celebration of Ash Wednesday.

NEW AUDITOR SELECTED

In February, the Board selected Metrix Group LLP to serve as the division's auditor for financial years ending Aug. 31, 2024, to Aug. 31, 2028.

This new contract follows the expiration of a five-year contract with MNP LLP.

Three submissions were reviewed by the division's Audit Committee after EICS issued a request for proposals late last year.

The committee's

recommendation to select Metrix LLP was based on their experience in auditing school divisions, history of previously providing auditing services to EICS prior to MNP and offering a fair price for audit services in comparison to MNP LLP.

Secretary Treasurer Tracy Leigh told Trustees that the recommendation to select Metrix LLP was not a reflection on the quality of the audit services provided by MNP but rather a reflection of the

current economic reality of the division.

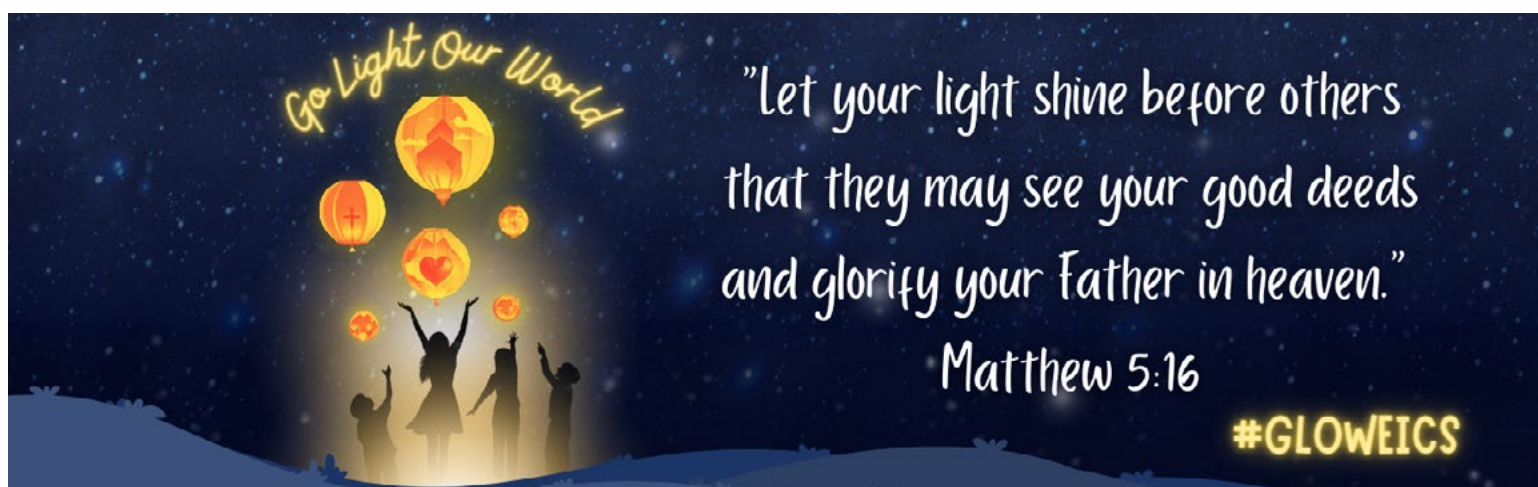
CCSTA AGM SPONSORSHIP

The Board voted unanimously in January to provide \$1,000 in sponsorship funding for the 2024 Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association Annual General Meeting and Convention, which will be held this spring in Calgary.

NATIONAL FOOD POLICY SUPPORT

The Trustees will submit a letter on behalf of the division in support of a national food policy in coordination with other members of the Canadian School Boards Association.

This is in regards to **Private Member's Bill C-322**. If the Bill becomes law, it would require the federal Minister of Health to work with stakeholders to develop a national food program in schools.



Board Highlights



Liane Gingras (far left) and Heidi Cunningham (far right) demonstrate how many steps students should take from a bus to be in the safety zone as a part of the First Rider Program's orientation in August 2023. More than 80 students participated in the orientation across three sessions.

Transportation department is small, but mighty

The busing of students to and from school is something that can be easily taken for granted, but a lot of work goes on behind the scenes to ensure each ride is a safe one.

Michael Hayden, the Director of Transportation for EICS, had the opportunity to showcase the work and dedication of his team at February's Board of Trustees meeting.

The department provides student transportation services within Strathcona County, and consists of 51 full-time and part-time staff,

including 36 full-time drivers and six spare drivers. (For our school communities outside of Strathcona County, transportation is provided through an agreement EICS has with other local school districts.)

This department is anchored by Hayden as well as Transportation Coordinator Liane Gingras and Safety and Planning Coordinator Heidi Cunningham.

Gingras' role is focused on the external delivery of student transportation field trips, and she helps manage more than



EICS Mechanics and Red Seal Service Technicians Justin Henker (left) and Ron Usipiuk.

2,000 transportation requests from families and 1,700 field trip requests from schools each year. Cunningham plans the bus routes, ensures our division remains compliant with government regulations, (including bus and bus driver licensing and training), and oversees evacuation preparedness for drivers and all students.

Hayden, Gingras, and Cunningham also serve as bus drivers when necessary.

"I truly am blessed to have the two of them because they

come in and are enthusiastic to be here at work," Hayden told the Trustees. "I always say we may be a small department, but we are a mighty department."

Transportation has installed GPS in the buses to provide more accurate GPS locations and send diagnostic alerts to help pro-actively address maintenance.

Looking forward, a separate system called MyStop will also enable parents to track when and where their students get on or off the bus.

Transit by the Numbers

- 2 Mechanics
- 4 Bus Monitors
- 6 Spare Drivers
- 36 Full-Time Drivers
- 597 Students on Strathcona Transit
- 1,559 Students on EICS Buses
- 1,700 Field trips
- 2,000 Transportation requests for students
- 2,035 Total students bussed

Division News

Registration for 2024-2025 school year is open

The registration process for the 2024-2025 school year is open!

At EICS, we are dedicated to providing all students with a faith-integrated learning environment that celebrates and nurtures the academic, spiritual, and personal growth of every student.

SOME OF OUR EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

From early learning to Grade 12, our students have a diverse range of educational programs and opportunities that meet the unique needs and interests of each student, including:

- Pre-Kindergarten



PUF Supported and Independent Learners

- Nature Kindergarten and other elementary programs inspired by nature.

- Flexible Pathways
- Cogito Academy for accelerated learning
- French Immersion and Ukrainian Bilingual programs



- Online Learning and Summer School

From early learning to high school, there are many more unique programs on offer at each of our schools across our division.

Calendars approved for 2024-2025 school year

The Elk Island Catholic Schools Board of Trustees approved the 2024-2025 school year calendars at their public board meeting in January.

A number of factors are taken into consideration during the creation of the school calendars for each year, including:

- Maintaining a fall and spring break.
- Providing the necessary hours of instruction.
- Supporting a quality learning environment and professional

development for staff.

- Joint student transportation coordination with service providers, including Elk Island Public Schools in Fort Saskatchewan and Vegreville, and Battle River School Division in Camrose.
- The four-day school weeks at Our Lady of Mount Pleasant Catholic School in Camrose.
- Draft versions of these calendars were provided to the Alberta Teachers' Association Local 21 and

our school communities for feedback prior to their finalization.

Some of the notable dates from the 2024-2025 calendars include:

- **August 29:** First day of school in Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park/Strathcona County, Vegreville.
- **September 3:** First day of school in Camrose.
- **November 11 - 15:** Fall Break - All schools closed.
- **December 23 - January 3:** Christmas Break -

All schools closed.

- **March 24 - 28:** Spring Break - All schools closed.
- **April 18 - 21:** Good Friday and Easter Monday - All schools closed.
- **June 25:** Last day of school in Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park/Strathcona County, Vegreville.
- **June 26:** Last day of school in Camrose.

In addition, all schools have the flexibility to implement staggered starts to begin the year.

[**View the calendars.**](#)

School News in Pictures



Our Fort Saskatchewan schools were blessed to host Archbishop Richard Smith during His Excellency's visit to the Our Lady of the Angels Parish community on March 5.



School News in Pictures



The beginning of Lent was celebrated across our schools in mid-February with pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and Mass on Ash Wednesday. The word “shrove” is the past tense of the “shrive” which itself is the act of confession. Likewise, ashes in the form of a cross on the forehead are an outward reminder to turn away from temptation.



School News in Pictures

Here Comes the Sun and PEPY teach healthy living



Throughout the month of January, students in schools throughout our division participated in our Here Comes the Sun initiative that promotes holistic well-being for students and staff. These sessions emphasized the importance of balancing spiritual, social, and physical well-being.



School News in Pictures



Pink Shirt Day was celebrated across our schools on Wednesday, Feb. 28.



School News in Pictures



Students at École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School were a hit singing the national anthem for an Oil Kings home game in January.

Trustee Event Calendar to Start 2024

January 24
Meeting with City of Fort Saskatchewan.

Richard Smith at the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton.

program that connects students with seniors.

February 22 & 28
Value Scoping: EICS future planning in Fort Saskatchewan.

February 2
Board Advocacy meeting with representative UCP MLAs.

February 9 - 10
Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association Catholic Symposium.

February 14
Meeting with members of Battle River School Division in Camrose.

February 6
Winter Carnival at École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School

February 12
Meeting with Elk Island Public Schools Board Chair and Superintendent.

February 14
Ash Wednesday Mass

February 8
Advocacy meeting with Archbishop Richard Smith.

February 13
Meeting with Linking Generations and École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School to learn about the school's new pilot

February 15
Catholic Education Parent Advisory Council Meeting.

February 9
Breakfast with Archbishop

February 16
EICS Faith and Wellness Day; lunch with parish priests.

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT PUBLIC BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, March 20
1 p.m.
St Mary's Catholic School
4434 53 St.
Vegreville, Alberta

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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