

EICS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monthly Highlights



Students at Our Lady of the Angels Catholic School were welcomed back from Christmas Break with a variety of engaging activities in the school's library. These activities helped to ease the return to school and strengthen the bonds within the school community.

Board Highlights

School calendars move closer to approval for 2025-2026

FAITH FORMATION

The January EICS Board of Trustees Public Meeting began with a reflection on forgiveness and mercy, led by Jody Seymour, Director of Student and Staff Formation. Continuing their faith formation, Trustees explored themes from *The Turning Point* by Dr. Allen Hunt, focusing on transformative encounters with Jesus in the Gospels.

Seymour highlighted two more encounters of

Jesus as seen in John’s gospel, from John 4:4-42 Jesus and the Samaritan woman and the well and from John 8:1-11—Jesus and the adulterous woman to illustrate the transformative power of God’s mercy.

Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well reveals compassion that crosses boundaries and that Jesus sees beyond labels and prejudices. He looks into the heart of each person and offers the healing they need. Jesus’ encounter with the adulterous woman reminds us that Jesus does not dismiss sin, He does not condemn the sinner. His mercy sets her free and He shifts the focus to the hearts of the accusers, teaching us that forgiveness is not an end but a beginning.

Through these

reflections, Trustees were encouraged to examine their capacity for mercy and forgiveness in their personal and professional lives, considering how divine mercy can transform their leadership and their relationships. Seymour also drew connections between these Gospel themes and the celebration of Mass, noting that every prayer and gesture is an invitation to encounter God’s mercy and to be transformed by it.

“Forgiveness and mercy is not just a theme in Gospel stories but the heartbeat of our faith and worship,” she said. “May we bring this gift of forgiveness to those we encounter, becoming true witnesses of God’s relentless love.”

2025-2026 CALENDARS CLOSER TO APPROVAL

The Trustees approved in-principal the proposed calendars for the upcoming

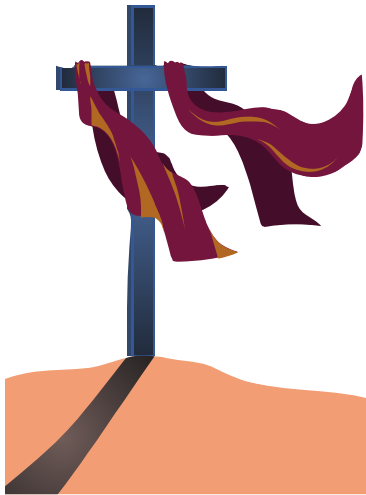
school year.

One change for the Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park/Strathcona County, and Vegreville calendars includes early dismissal for every Wednesday school is in session. This change does not affect Camrose schools.

Superintendent Paul Corrigan told the Trustees that the weekly early dismissal will provide more frequent teacher professional development (PD) opportunities, which will have a direct impact our classrooms.

Christina MacKinnon, the EICS Assistant Superintendent for Educational Excellence, noted that the planning for all EICS PD sessions is based on data her team collects throughout the school year to focus on addressing the specific needs of an individual school or classroom, and that these weekly sessions will be no different.

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ELK ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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Board Highlights

Planning for student success: calendars, technology, and finances

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Each year the EICS calendars are created in consultation with our school communities, including school admin and parent council members. These calendars also must also take into consideration the days when schools are closed to students in the two school divisions that we have contracted to provide transit services for our students in Fort Saskatchewan, Vegreville, and Camrose.

On the days that EICS schools are open but schools in the other divisions are not, there's an additional cost to EICS to provide busing service for our students. As a result, efforts are made to align our calendars with those of our providers.

What's Next

Schools will share the approved-in-principal calendars with their families, and the calendars will return to the Board of Trustees for final approval at a future EICS Board of Trustees public meeting.

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES PRESENTATION

Geoff Pratt, the Director of Technology Services, provided the Trustees with his department's highlights and accomplishments spanning the last 18 months. Some of these highlights include:



Technology Services Director Geoff Pratt presents his department's highlights during the January Board of Trustees public meeting, which was hosted by St. André Bessette Catholic School on Wednesday, Jan. 22.

- Internet phone service upgrades in the 2023-2024 school year.
- New software was implemented during the 2023-2024 school year to electronically contact parents/guardians and students, and additional upgrades are planned to further enhance the system.
- School administrators and Tech Services are coordinating to ensure Tech fee funding directly benefits students. Some examples of the fee use include the purchase of new Chromebooks and Chromebook carts for schools who need them, and upgrading of gym audio/visual components for some schools.
- Work continues on establishing a backup system to help maintain phone services in the event that an Internet outage interrupts phone service.
- Holy Redeemer and St. Nicholas Catholic schools are participating in a pilot project to streamline technology in the classrooms. Teacher workstations are being upgraded with new Chromebook Plus computers, which are a fraction of the cost of a Windows computer, have the capability to operate learning tools in the classroom, and are portable for teachers to use outside of the classroom.
- As part of the above pilot project, replaced computers are being re-purposed for other needs across the division to maximize resources and minimize costs.

Also discussed during Pratt's presentation were the recent PowerSchool incident, the positive impact of the province's ban of cellphones and social media from the classroom, and the upcoming formation of an advisory committee within EICS to create an administrative procedure about the use of Artificial Intelligence.

EXCESS RESERVES LETTER

The Board of Trustees approved sending a letter to seek an exception from the Education Minister for our division unintentionally exceeding the limit for

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Board Highlights

Budget updates, community partnerships, and policy reviews

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operational reserves by less than half a percentage point.

Following the 2023-2024 fiscal year, it was discovered that 3.6% of the division's total \$82 million operational budget had been set aside for operational reserves — however the maximum permitted by Alberta Education was 3.2%

Secretary-Treasurer Tracy Leigh explained that the additional reserve funds were not an indication that staff who requested additional funding went

without.

“We’re not hanging onto operational money,” she reassured.

For the current school year, the limit for school division operational reserves was increased by Alberta Education to 6% as a result of feedback from Alberta school divisions and associations, Superintendent Corrigan noted.

PRESENTATION FROM THE PUBLIC

A parishioner from Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Parish provided a general update about some of the initiatives being undertaken at the church.

COMMUNITY GROUP SUPPORT

Superintendent Corrigan met with Bilingual Ukrainian Catholic Parents Society to discuss the future of the Ukrainian Bilingual program offered at St. Nicholas, St. Theresa, and Archbishop Jordan Catholic schools.

He also met with the Knights of Columbus from OLPH Parish to discuss how

the Knights can support EICS.

POLICY REVIEWS

The Policy Committee reviewed the following policies during the January public meeting:

- **Policy 9: Board Representatives**
- **Policy 13: Distributed Decision Making**

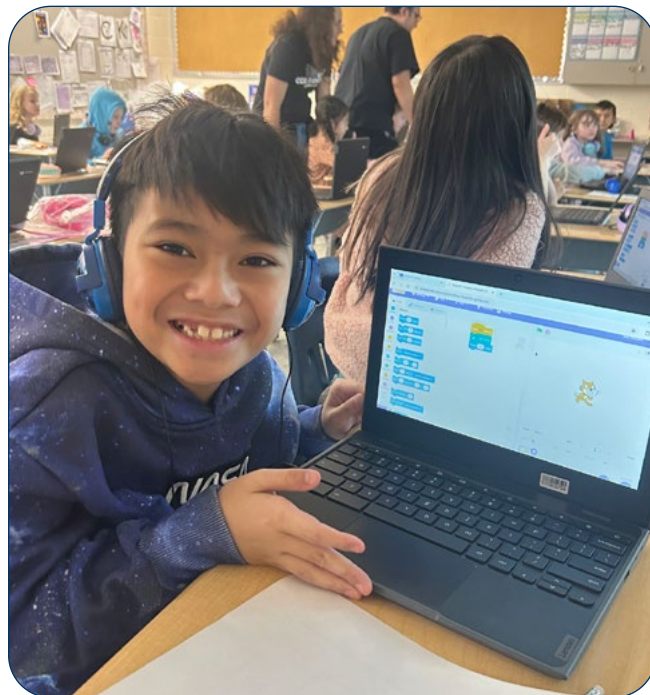
First reading was approved for both policies at January’s meeting, and they will return for a second reading at a future meeting.



Students and staff in our Ukrainian Bilingual schools joined with members of our Senior Leadership Team to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany at St Sophia’s Ukrainian Catholic Parish on Monday, Jan. 6.

School News in Pictures

January was a busy month of faith and learning across our schools. Clockwise from top right: Code Ninjas visits Madonna Catholic School; St. Martin's Catholic School students hit the Sunridge slopes; Holy Spirit Catholic School students learn how to in-line skate; Face-to-Face Ministries makes plenty of noise at Our Lady of the Angels Catholic School in celebration of our faith; Fr. Abraham blessed the doors of St. André Bessette Catholic School in celebration of the feast day for the school's namesake.



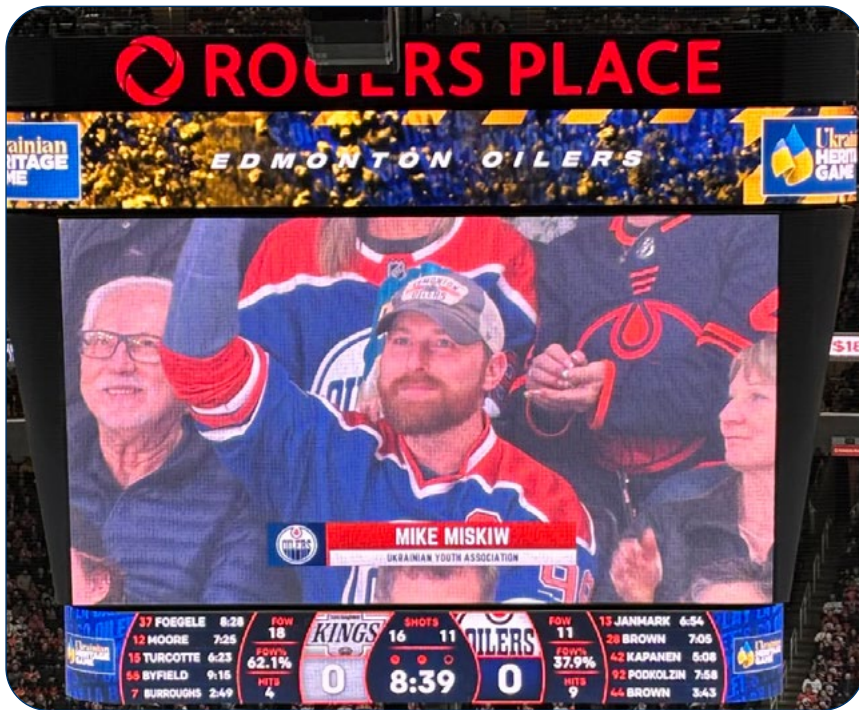
School News in Pictures



Holy Redeemer Catholic School students and staff let their imagination shine with Crazy Hair Day during first week of classes following the Christmas break.



School News in Pictures



St. Theresa Catholic School teacher Mike Miskiwi was honoured for his contributions to the local Ukrainian community through his leadership in education and hockey at a January Edmonton Oilers game.

Trustee Event Calendar for January

January 6

The Feast of Jordan celebration at St. Sophia Catholic Church.

January 17

ASBA Zone 2/3 General Meeting.

January 22

EICS Board of Trustees Public Meeting.

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT PUBLIC BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, February 19

1 p.m.

EICS CLS Office
310 Broadview Road
Sherwood Park, Alberta

Visit our website for meeting agendas and minutes.



ELK ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Seeing Christ in Everyone

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

CONTACT US

310 Broadview Road
Sherwood Park, Alberta
T8H 1A4
780-467-8896
eics.ab.ca

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