



**Ecole Parc School Council & Ecole Parc Fundraising Society 2023-2024
Annual Report for EIPS**

Trustee: Ralph Sorochan
Principal: Tandy Atchison
Vice Principal: Jade Jordan

SCHOOL COUNCIL BOARD:

Chair – Amanda Shand
Vice Chair – Rebecca Milburn
Secretary – Danielle Rusk

COSC Reps: Amanda Shand

FUNDRAISING SOCIETY BOARD:

Chair – Amanda Shand
Vice Chair – Rebecca Milburn
Secretary - Danielle Rusk
Treasurer – Jasmyne Garbe

Casino Reps – Melanie Redfearn
Hot Lunch Coordinator – Michelle
Poitras
Green Space Coordinator – Jennifer
Dechaine

MEETING DATES:

September 23, 2023 (AGM)
October 11, 2023
November 29, 2023
January 11, 2023
February 14, 2024

March 13, 2024
April 10, 2024
May 8, 2024
June 11, 2024

OVERVIEW

This past year can best be defined as a transition year as both the educational team, school council (SC) and fundraising society (FC) all saw significant changes in membership. Amongst the turnover at Ecole Parc Elementaire (EPE) was a change in leadership with Tandy Atchison assuming her new role of school principal. School council also saw a significant transformation with three new parents volunteering in executive and coordinator roles (Vice Chair, Secretary, and Hot lunch coordinator) with no previous experience with council.

These changes in tandem with the current financial climate being experienced by many families created our two main goals for the year. First to continue to support the staff. The members of this council have a strong conviction that every staff member at EPE makes up the educational team. For them to best support the children in learning, we also need to support them in their needs. This includes ongoing support of the Zen Den, acts of appreciation and also being respectful not to take on larger initiatives before they had a chance to establish a sense of comfort in their new roles. The second goal was to look at building a framework for supporting the school community in the future from a parent/family perspective. This means looking at how we fundraise and communicate and engage with parents. FS

has approved the purchase of school contact cards with the use of the ASCE grant as well as building a resource library for parents. These funds are also funding a pilot project of providing dictionaries to new families who are just starting their french immersion journey. We have also looked at the implementation of the new hot lunch system as well as a survey to gauge how parents feel they can best engage with the council and the school community as a whole.

SCHOOL COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- Co-sponsored the outdoor family movie night to start off the year.
- Participated in Annual Assurance Review.
- Applied for the School Council Engagement Grant which covered two elements. The printing of school contact postcards for all families and the acquisition of early learning dictionaries for Division one parents to help bridge the learning gap associated with a second language.
- Funded a space in the school for a teachers reset room (The Zen Den).
- Participated in School Fee consultation.
- Continued to work with the City of Fort Saskatchewan and support the composting program for the whole school.
- Participated in the EIPS Annual Feedback Survey in March.
- Participated in and promoted the EIPS French Immersion Review.
- Continued with the playground expansion project which included recruiting new volunteers to form a project committee.

FUNDRAISING SOCIETY HIGHLIGHTS

- Maintained Hot Lunch as our main and consistent fundraiser for the year.
- Along with hot lunch we hosted the following events – Spirit Wear, Farm to School, Write-On school supplies. Tru Earth and Cobs are ongoing fundraisers.
- Participated at the Camrose Casino, fundraising dollars are anticipated in late 2024.
- Maintained a webpage linked to the school website for all School Council and Fundraising Society information.
- Coordinated our annual Teacher Appreciation lunch.
- Unveiled our Grizzlies' Greatness program which allows families and students to send messages of support and gratitude to the Ecole Park staff.
- Received a large donation of mulch for the green space from GCS General Contracting, coordinated by the Garbe-Smith family.

FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED

- Agendas
- Classroom stipend
- Teacher Appreciation
- Green Space Maintenance
- Gardening Club
- Family movie night
- Zen Den supplies
- Compost program

- WIX webpage

KEY SCHOOL COUNCIL AND FUNDRAISING SOCIETY INITIATIVES:

GREEN SPACE & INDIGENOUS OUTDOOR CLASSROOM PROGRAM

This year we focused on maintaining the spaces we have developed. Green space volunteer coordinator, Jennifer Dechaine, has been diligent in the monitoring of all of our green space projects including the mud kitchen, planters and indigenous outdoor classroom. It was noticed that two of the trees did not survive the winter and as a result will be removed for the playground over the summer break

EPE offered students the opportunity to participate in the gardening club. This year Jennifer will work with club leaders to ensure participants have the access to the needed supplies and tools to continue to support this group.

Over the 2023 summer break several of the outdoor planters were vandalized necessitating the need to rebuild them. This May beautiful new wooden outdoor planters were placed in the school yard. Thank you to Rickie Solamillo for your beautiful craftsmanship. The cost of the materials totaling 400\$ were provided by the FS.

At this time there are no plans to expand the outdoor learning spaces beyond what has currently been developed. The focus instead is to install new playground equipment better suited for the PALS and division one students. To facilitate this, a sub committee has been created and they are in the process of applying and researching grants to help support the cost of the new build.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The EPE volunteering program was deferred this year due to the departure of our Volunteer coordinator and in conjunction with wanting the new instructional team to have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the EPE culture. This decision was made in partnership with school administration.

Despite not having a formalized program the parents and guardians of EPE students are an amazing group who continually make themselves available to support the learning environment and team in informal ways.

EMERGENCY SNACK & LUNCH SUPPLY

During the 2022-23 school year the FS was awarded funds through donation for emergency snack and lunch supplies. Over the course of this school year FS has been in continual contact with the office regarding the needs to replenish the current pantry. It has been noted by office staff that with parents having access to services such as Skip the Dishes and Door dash the need for the supplemental or emergency pantry items has greatly diminished. As a result the FS will carry over a balance of \$646.84 into the next school year.

ZEN DEN SPECIAL PROJECT

SC executed a key achievement last year with the construction of the Zen Den. A quiet place for EPE staff to take a step away from the energy of the classroom and halls and focus on their own mental health. This year the goal was to continue to support the space by providing grab and go options for breakfast, lunch and snacks.

ASCA CONFERENCE

We were regrettably not able to attend the conference this year due to issues with scheduling and participant availability. We look forward to attending next year as the conference always provides valuable learning opportunities to support our school community.

HOT LUNCH

During the height of the pandemic it was decided that the Hot lunch program would be the main form of fundraising undertaken by the EPE fundraising society. To date it has remained a highly successful fundraising tool and is overall enjoyed by several families. This year EPE hosted 20 hot lunches ensuring that both group A and B kindergarten classes were accommodated. Three key vendors were utilized, A&W, Sky Hy pizza and donair, and Panago. Over 1751 meals were purchased with a return profit to the school of approximately 3397.19\$. As of the date of this report there are two outstanding hot lunches that will take place June 24th and 25th. As a result, the numbers provided are accurate to May 29, 2024.

EPE fundraising society heard from parents this year that they were experiencing some challenges related to hot lunch ordering. This included website challenges, frustration about ordering one day at a time and lack of variety. In addition, it was noted by our hot lunch coordinator that with the growing popularity in the hot lunch program and school population the workload was becoming overly demanding for one person. We started a search for a new platform that can serve everyone's needs. In May 2024, the fundraising society entered into a working agreement with Lunchbox. Their platform was endorsed by ASCA for the 2024 school year. Preliminary talks with our representative have been very encouraging. Four vendors have been onboarded to date with more to come.

Additionally, the fundraising society released a survey to parents looking for feedback on how they interact with the hot lunch program and what they would like to see in the future. Results are due June 11, 2024 and the information gathered will be shared with the Lunchbox team and SC to help build the program into the new school year. We look forward to further collaboration with them over the summer as we work toward a September roll out.

Looking ahead into the new school Year our Hot Lunch coordinator Michelle Poitras has announced that she will not be moving forward in this role. The EPE fundraising society would like to acknowledge Michelle for her hard work and dedication this school year. In addition to bringing on a new vendor for us (Sky Hy) you navigated all the challenges associated managing a large program like this with kindness and dignity. Thank you for making Hot lunches wonderful this year!

COMPOSTING

EPE has been participating in a composting program since 2019 as primarily a 4th grade student lead project with the support of a parent volunteer and the City of Fort Saskatchewan. FS supported the restocking of needed supplies (40\$ towards the cost of bags). This year, however, has presented some challenges. The departure of our parent volunteer, limited staff capacity, inconsistency of student participation as well as a few issues of authoritative leadership within the student group lead to the program being disbanded by the end of 2023. The FS would be receptive to supporting this initiative

again should a new volunteer be identified and school administration approve its return in the future.

TEACHER APPRECIATION

A key point of focus for the SC and FS is supporting every member of the EPE staff. This year we hosted our annual Staff appreciation lunch. In an attempt to support our local community, 33 lunches were ordered from The Venue by Ken's Catering and drinks and doughnuts were provided from Co-op.

We launched our Grizzlies Greatness program which gives parents and students a chance to recognize the amazing things the team does to make EPE exceptional. Everything from relationship building, acts of kindness and initiatives in the school were acknowledged by 21 parents as of the writing of this report.

Teacher stipends were approved for teaching staff. This has been a long standing tradition for the FS. We award 100\$ to each homeroom class and the music room to help offset the cost of classroom materials.

FARM TO SCHOOL

The Farm to School event is a great fundraiser as it supports both the school and great community of Fort Saskatchewan. This year Farm to school ran between October 2nd and November 5th, with a delivery date of November 16, 2023. Although we received less profits than in previous years, this remains a strong fundraiser. In the end we donated 336 pounds of fresh vegetables to the food bank and raised \$642.50 for our school. Should the council choose to run this again in the future, it may be beneficial to look at an early delivery date that aligns with Thanksgiving.

SPIRIT WEAR

This year we gave families the opportunity to order Spirit Wear through October-November with delivery in December. The sale is a fundraising opportunity for the school and this year it generated 118.12\$ in fundraising dollars. With feedback from parents, we broadened the products available. We did experience a few quality issues that were concerning as there was little communication back from the company regarding the concerns. As a result for next year's order the FS will be moving ahead with a new vendor who is local to the Fort Saskatchewan Community, Enhance It. Additionally the store will be opening over the summer and into early fall to ensure families have the ability to order in a time that is convenient to them and that they have their gear closer to the start of the school year.

COMMUNICATIONS

With the support of the ASCE grant, the council and fundraising society have purchased a school contact card. These are reference cards for parents that include the key contact information including Elk Island transportation, the school absentee email and school and council websites. These cards are distributed at the start of the school year to every family.

Challenges in communication is an ongoing conversation within SC and the FS. This council continues to endorse using the Gazette as the main source for disseminating information to families. However, classroom specific and the general school Facebook pages are still used as tools to issue reminders for important reminders such as Hot lunches. EPE plans to continue using the council website as well as an

additional resource for school council and fundraising activities.

Parents engagement

Our school council has been very fortunate to have a strong core group of parents who have been engaged in the various undertakings undertaken by both the council and fundraising societies. However, the challenge is that several members will be aging out of the school in the next two years. This combined with the increased demands of parent time has led to the questions of how the practices undertaken by this group can be best adapted to suit the needs of the community moving forward. School council has issued a survey to gauge the degree of knowledge and understanding regarding the council and society's existence and potential barriers, if any, that parents may experience preventing them from engaging with the group. All options will be explored moving forward including possibly moving meeting times to day time hours, providing child care and using more virtual platforms. The data shared will be used over the summer and with next year's council to help guide changes.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (attached): The financial statement attached is not the final statement, as the reporting period will end on August 31, 2024.

A Shand
School Council Chair

June 24, 2024
Date

J Garbe
Fundraising Society Treasurer

June 26, 2024
Date