

**June 18, 2010**

**For Immediate Release**

## **EICS Board of Trustees Approve 2010-11 School Year Budget**

Sherwood Park, AB – Elk Island Catholic Schools' (EICS) Board of Trustees approved the 2010-11 school year budget at the June 17, 2010 Regular Board Meeting. The Operating Budget for the upcoming school year is \$57,531,770, which includes a deficit of \$2,342,741.

EICS was presented with numerous financial challenges this year, including a significant government claw back of Division reserves, reductions of class size funding allocations, a freeze on most funding grants and cuts to both the high school completion and daily physical education grants.

In addition, the Division has not received provincial funding to cover the 2.92% Average Annual Weekly Earnings (AAWE) Index increase in teachers' salaries.

"We recognize the hard work that went into preparing the overall budget for next year and understand the careful balancing act our Administration had to go through in ensuring we continue to provide quality Catholic education to our students," said EICS Board Chair, Mr. Tony Sykora.

"Our Division was faced with a significant challenge of having to use resources that were targeted for our Division's future vision and needs to sustain our present level of exemplary service to our school communities. Although we struggled in preparing the budget, we kept our focus on our number one priority throughout the entire budget process – our students and their education. As a result of everyone's diligent work, we were able to present a budget that clearly demonstrated our continued commitment in directing as much funding as possible to the instruction component for student learning," said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Chris Diachuk.

"Our Division recognizes that our greatest strength is the staff who serve our students and schools on a daily basis. As a result, the Board of Trustees and Administration made the difficult decision to use school, department and Division reserves to maintain overall Division staffing levels for the upcoming school year," continued Dr. Diachuk.

The option of using reserves to cover for the lack of funding is not sustainable beyond the 2010-11 school year. In fact, EICS will be in a dire situation next year as all available reserves are expected to be nearly depleted by August 2011. The situation is compounded as it prevents EICS from responsible and proactive long-term strategic planning to address future needs of students.

"Our Board and Administration will continue to work hard to shine a spotlight on the inequity of the Renewed Funding Framework introduced by the government this past year and the resulting negative impact it has had on our Division," said Mr. Sykora.

The 2010-11 Division Budget is available on the Division website at [www.eics.ab.ca](http://www.eics.ab.ca) under Division-Reports and Publications.

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