

# the JAMES MOWAT Messenger

September 2015



Dear Parents/Guardians,

It is exciting to be starting a new school year! We welcome both new and returning students to James Mowat School. We hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable summer break. We look forward to working with students, staff and parents throughout the year. It is going to be a terrific year!

On Monday, August 31 students in grades 1-6 will receive the following documents:

- Allergy Form
- Volunteer Sign up Sheet
- Student Correction Form (PowerSchool)
- Website Consent Form
- Student Acceptable Use Agreement for Technology Use
- Medication Forms (if applicable, please contact office to complete these forms)
- Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan (if applicable) (for students with life-threatening allergy and/or carry an EpiPen or Allerject)

Grade 1-6 students are to return these forms by Friday, September 4. Forms for kindergarten students will be sent home on Friday, September 4, and are due back Thursday, September 10.

**On Tuesday, September 15, "Student Fee Invoices" will be distributed to students.** As of this date, parents will be able to view and pay student fee invoices online through the Powerschool Parent Portal (<https://powerschool.eips.ca/public/home.html>). Deadline for payment of student fees will be October 31, 2015. Current fees include a \$50.00 Learning Resource Fee (\$25.00 for Kindergarten), \$6.00 for an agenda, and noon supervision fees (if applicable). If you have difficulty accessing or setting up your parent portal account, please contact the school office.

This year the James Mowat School Family Handbook is included in each student's agenda. The handbook includes a wealth of information about the upcoming school year. Please go through the information with your child. A thorough familiarity with the information will be helpful to having a successful school year.

Our first Parent Council meeting will be held on Monday, September 28th in the Library at 6:30pm. All parents are welcome to attend. Meetings are held the last Monday of each month (excluding December and June). We always appreciate your feedback and suggestions as we work together for your children.

We look forward to an exciting year with your children. We are committed to do everything we can to help all students be successful at James Mowat School.

Mike Lastiwka, Principal

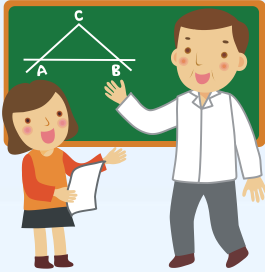


JAMES MOWAT  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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## Meet the Staff 2015-2016



We invite you to come meet your child(ren)'s teacher(s) and the entire James Mowat staff

**Wednesday, September 16 from 6:00pm - 7:00pm**

We will be talking about our new report cards and literacy program at 6:30pm in the gym.

*Mr. Lastiwka and Mrs. Sauder are looking forward to meeting all of you.*

### School Photos

ICON Photography out of Sherwood Park will be taking individual student photos on

**Thursday, September 24**

Photos will start shortly after 8:30am. The afternoon kindergarten class will have their photos taken at 12:30pm.



### Library News

The Library will be open for book exchanges starting **Monday, September 7.**

Are you interested in helping out at Book Fair or volunteering in the library? Your assistance would be greatly appreciated! Please contact the office to submit your name.



### Monthly School Newsletters:

Please Note - This will be the only paper copy of the newsletter sent out this year. Newsletters are available on the school website the Friday following early dismissal each month. Newsletters are also posted on the bulletin board outside the office. If you would like to receive the school newsletter by email, please email Mrs. Bidniak at [karen.bidniak@eips.ca](mailto:karen.bidniak@eips.ca)

### School Calendar

Our school calendar is available online and provides the most current information on events and activities happening at our school. We use *Google Calendar* which provides users the ability to sync the school's calendar along with their mobile phone's built in calendar. [www.jamesmowat.ca](http://www.jamesmowat.ca)



### James Mowat School is on Facebook

We also use Facebook as a tool to help keep parents informed about our school events. Facebook updates are also linked to our school twitter account. Like us on Facebook to keep up to date on the latest events and activities happening at the school.

\* Search for James Mowat Elementary on Facebook and JMW\_Elementary for Twitter



## **New Report Cards: A Pilot Year!**

James Mowat School is pleased to be one of 11 schools within Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) piloting the new elementary report card this year. Developed by EIPS, the report card is exceptionally designed and intended to clearly communicate student achievement to parents and guardians. Long-term, the new report card will help to enhance the quality of education within EIPS by building strong partnerships among students, teachers, and parents.

As many of you know, EIPS established a Communicating Student Learning committee in 2014. The committee was made up of parents, teachers, administrators, trustees, and central office staff. Using feedback from close to 1,000 parents and 400 principals and teachers, the committee worked to create an innovative system, which reports academic achievement levels and learner attributes.

Similar to the previous report card, students will still be assessed in all areas of the current programs of studies. However, what will be new is the way student learning is reported. The current EPAL scale (excellent, proficient, acceptable and liimited) will no longer be used. Instead, teachers will be using a clear and parent-friendly five-point numeric scoring scale to indicate student achievement. Additionally, the report card allows teachers to share personalized information about each student in relation to learner attributes, areas of strength, areas for growth, and next steps.

James Mowat School is excited about its new method of communicating student learning - it's innovative, inclusive, and based on what stakeholders have indicated they want to see in a reporting system. The 2015–2016 pilot is taking place in 10 other EIPS elementary schools. The full implementation of the report cards will take place in the 2016–2017 school year.

An information session about the report card and how students are being assessed will be held later this fall. The first report card will be sent home on Monday, November 23, 2015.

## **PowerSchool Correction Forms**

On the first day of school, families will receive a PowerSchool Correction Form for each student enrolled in James Mowat School. The form ensures the school has the most up-to-date information regarding each of its students. When you receive the form, please review it carefully and make sure all the information in it is still correct. If any changes need to be made, please update it and add any new details you think necessary. All forms must be returned to the school by **Friday, September 4**. If you have any technical questions regarding PowerSchool, please contact the school office at 780-992-1272. Thank you for your assistance.



## What is Numeracy?

Being numerate means having the confidence and skill to use numbers and mathematical approaches in all aspects of life - at work, in practical everyday activities at home and beyond, as consumers, in managing our finances, as parents helping our children learn, as patients making sense of health information, as citizens understanding the world about us.

Numeracy complements literacy and is sometimes called 'mathematical literacy'. Both skills are needed in order to function fully in modern life.

Being numerate means being able to reason with numbers and other mathematical concepts and to apply these in a range of contexts and to solve a variety of problems. Being numerate is as much about thinking and reasoning logically as about 'doing sums'.

It means being able to:

- Interpret data, charts and diagrams
- Process information
- Solve problems
- Check answers
- Understand and explain solutions

Make decisions based on logical thinking and reasoning.

(<http://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/what-numeracy>)



At James Mowat Elementary, we will continue to focus on numeracy and creating mathematically literate students. **The James Mowat staff and students would like to extend a HUGE thank you to Dow Chemical Canada ULC for an educational grant we received for our numeracy program. We received a donation of \$2500 to purchase teacher resources, classroom resources as well as manipulatives for our math room** which will be used to help all students work on becoming more mathematically literate.



### Tools for School Supplies Available for Students

Do you need help to give your children the basic tools they need to succeed in school? *Tools for School* is a United Way initiative providing families who may have limited resources with essential school supplies to help students achieve success in their studies. A number of backpacks filled with supplies are at our school for students who might need support this year. Contact the James Mowat School office at 780-992-1272 to request a backpack.



### Terry Fox Run and “Toonies for Terry”

Our school will be participating in the Terry Fox Run on September 25. We will start with an assembly in the gym at 12:30pm. Afterwards students will head outside to complete the run (please ensure your children are dressed for the weather). During the month of September students will also walk/run an outdoor course during gym times with the goal of tracking the total distance they traveled. Along with completing the run, students can bring in a “Toonie for Terry” which will be donated to the Terry Fox Foundation.

### Lates and Absences

Parents, please remember to call the school if your child is going to be away or is coming late. Please phone the school at **780-992-1272**. Leave a message if there is no answer with your child’s name, class and reason for the absence.



Our school website at [www.jamesmowat.ca](http://www.jamesmowat.ca) is equipped with a Student Attendance button on the *right side* of the home page. Simply click on **GO**, Select **Student Attendance** from the drop down menu of our Contact Section and fill in your information. Your child’s absence will be sent directly to the school office once you hit **Submit**.

**Please Note:** All absence notifications should be sent to the **Student Attendance** email address rather than emailing your child’s teacher directly. Thank You.

### Nut Aware School

**James Mowat is a Nut Aware School** - Several students and staff at the school suffer from allergies. The most prominent allergy is one to nuts and nut products. Elk Island Public Schools has a “Nut Aware” strategy.



We would appreciate your help, as far as is reasonable and practical, by keeping all nuts and nut products out of the school.



## **School Patrol News**

School is in session and the James Mowat School Safety Patrol is back at work. The grade six students are making the crosswalks safe for all of our students. These young people voluntarily contribute their time to make our school a safe and better place. Please give them your support, cooperation and recognition.



### New Patrollers:

If you are a student in Grade 5 or 6 and interested in becoming a school patroller please let Mr. Russell, Mrs. Percy or Mrs. Sauder know as soon as possible. We would like to have all new school patrollers trained and ready to go by the end of September.

## **Music Times!**

Welcome back to music. It's that time of the year when the choir and the handchime ensemble will begin preparing for our Remembrance Day ceremony and our Christmas Concert.

Choir will be offered to all students in grades 3-6. Our choir practices will be held on Tuesdays at lunch recess between 12:05-12:25pm. If your child would like to sign up for choir, they are to take the choir letter home and have a parent/guardian read through it. Our first choir practice is on Tuesday September 29<sup>th</sup> at 12:05pm.

The handchime ensemble will be offered to students in grade 5 and 6. There is a limited number of handchimes, therefore, all grade 5 and 6 students will be given the opportunity to audition for this ensemble. Students who make it through the audition will have their first practice on Wednesday September 30<sup>th</sup> at 12:05-12:25pm.

Handchime auditions will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> during lunch hour between 11:50am-12:25pm in the music room.

I look forward to working with your child whether they are in choir, the handchime ensemble, or both.

Mrs. Sikora

## **Drive - Thru Reminders**

Please remember that there is no left turn out of the drive-thru between 8:15-8:45am and 3:00-3:30pm, when traffic congestion is at its worst.



Also, please do not park your vehicle or leave it unattended on the right hand side of the loop. This lane is intended to be a "drop off" zone only. Please keep traffic flowing by parking on the left side of the loop or on the street in front of the school. Thank you in advance for keeping the traffic flowing smoothly.



## **Tidbits . . .**

**VOLUNTEERS** All volunteers in the school are required to fill in a form. It will not be necessary to review the form with the administration this year if you volunteered last year in the school. If you are a new volunteer to the school we would like to meet briefly with you after you complete the form. All volunteers are asked to sign in at the office and to wear a volunteer badge (located at the office).

**EARLY ARRIVALS** Supervision is provided at the school beginning at 8:10 in the morning. If your child is dropped off earlier than this there is no supervision provided. (The bus students are an exception and will be allowed into the school). Students who go home for lunch are not to return to the school before 12:10pm as there is no supervision outside until this time.

**LUNCHES AND CUTLERY** Loss of school cutlery, due to students borrowing and not returning, is and has been an ongoing problem. Please ensure that your son or daughter has proper utensils, which will in turn minimize disruptions and monetary loss. Thank you.

**DOGS** We encourage you not to bring your dogs onto the school grounds when dropping off children in the mornings, at recess times, or when picking children up after school. Some children are very nervous and anxious around dogs and we want all the children to feel safe.

**LEARN ALBERTA** LearnAlberta.ca is a website that supports lifelong learning by providing quality online resources to the Kindergarten to Grade 12 community in Alberta. Students, teachers, and parents can use the site to find multimedia learning resources that are correlated to the Alberta programs of study. To Access this site, please contact the school office for the userID and password.

**EARLY DISMISSALS** A reminder that students will be dismissed early the first Wednesday of each month because of the monthly staff meeting. Classes will be dismissed at 2:05 p.m. There will be no kindergarten classes (AM and PM) on the first Wednesday of each month due to early dismissal.

**EXACT CHANGE** We are asking that parents send exact change for any transactions paid in cash this year (hot lunch, school fees, field trips, pictures, etc.). Change will not be provided. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

## **Dress Code Reminder**

As weather continues to be sunny and warm we want to ask students and parents to please observe the dress code as per our student handbook: *“ Skimpy tank tops, halter tops, short shorts, half-shirts, short cut-offs and T-shirts with obscene, vulgar or inappropriate messages, and clothing which may offend others, are not appropriate. Students wearing inappropriate clothing will be asked to change. Makeup is not considered appropriate for elementary students. Shoes must be worn at all times. Each child needs two pairs of shoes, one for indoor use and one for outdoor wear. Indoor shoes should have soles that do not mark the floor.”*

**We appreciate all the parent volunteers who set an example for the students by also following the above dress code. Thank you for your cooperation.**

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JAMES MOWAT  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Parent Council Corner...

### HOT LUNCH:

The next hot lunch is Wednesday, October 7, 2015  
Menu: TBA

### PARENT COUNCIL MEETING:

The next Parent Council meeting is Monday,  
September 28 at 6:30pm in the school library.

### Results of Parent Council Election:

Your new parent council executive consists of:

President:	Lisa Tomchyshyn (new)
Vice President:	Brianne Fedun (new)
Secretary:	Sara Secrist (new)
Treasurer:	Candace Naundorf (continuing)

Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting on May 25 and volunteered for our subcommittees this year. We truly appreciate your support. A list of all the subcommittees and the contact person can be found on our school website (click on the *Parents* tab and then *Parent Council Meetings & Committees*).

### Zip-Line - Coming Soon!!!

We are very excited to announce that the playground Zip-Line is scheduled to be installed the second week of September! We would like to say a HUGE thank you to the **Fort Saskatchewan Lions Club** for donating the funds for this project, as well as to Parent Council for their time and effort in making this dream possible!



### PARENT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

If you are unable to attend the Parent Council meetings, but would like to receive copies of the meeting minutes, please email [jmparentsassociation@hotmail.com](mailto:jmparentsassociation@hotmail.com) to be added to email distribution list.

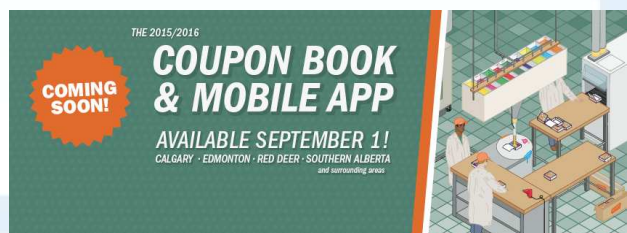
### Upcoming Parent Council Events—Check Us Out On Facebook

To stay informed about the Parent Council's events and activities, please "like" the Facebook page "James Mowat School PAA." <https://www.facebook.com/JamesMowatPlayground>

### SUTP COUPON BOOKS:

Parent Council is selling the SUTP Coupon Book and Mobile APP again this year. Books and mobile apps will be available at the school office for \$20.00 (cash only please).

*Thank you for your support.*







Your Future in MIND

### **Pay school fees easily using PowerSchool**

The 2015–2016 school fee information will be available through PowerSchool beginning September 2. EIPS will send out student school fee invoices the **week of September 14**. To access your fee information, simply login to your Parent Portal account (<https://powerschool.eips.ca/public/home.html>) and click the green dollar sign symbol. Once logged in you will be able to view fees and have the ability to pay online using Visa, MasterCard, or INTERAC Online (if available from your financial institution).

Keep in mind, school fees may change. Junior high and senior high fees will change as courses are added and deleted. School fees may also be added to your child's account throughout the year for various school activities including field trips, class projects, athletic team fees, and more—so be sure to login to your account regularly in case new fees are added.

For more information about school fees and payment deadlines visit [www.eips.ca/fees](http://www.eips.ca/fees).

### **2015–2016 Grade 3 Student Learning Assessments Pilot**

As many of you are aware, this fall Alberta Education will continue the Grade 3 Student Learning Assessment (SLAs) pilot. The pilot is mandatory for all Grade 3 students and will take place between September 14 and November 1. The assessments will focus on numeracy, literacy, and critical thinking; be digitally based; and offer an opportunity for students to show their learning in ways not possible with paper-based tests. The goal is to provide timely information to parents and teachers, help enhance classroom instruction, and ensure any student learning needs are identified.

Based on feedback from last year's Grade 3 SLAs pilot, Alberta Education has made a variety of revisions for this year's pilot, which include:

- Unlike the year previous, the 2015–2016 Grade 3 SLAs pilot will be mandatory for all Grade 3 students to ensure teachers, parents, and students have valid and reliable assessment information about strengths and weaknesses early in the school year. It will also ensure consistency for all Grade 3 students and assurance the education system is meeting the learning needs of students.
- The Grade 3 SLA pilot administration period for the digitally interactive questions will be from September 14 to October 9. The pilot administration for the performance task questions will be from September 14 to November 1. The earlier assessment will offer parents and teachers the opportunity to know a student's results sooner and allow teachers the flexibility to administer the assessments over a three-week period.
- Alberta Education will provide student results for the digitally interactive questions to schools, teachers, and parents by Nov. 16, 2015.
- The digital-numeracy component will focus more on basic math facts; performance tasks will be more streamlined; and accompanying materials, such as scoring rubrics, will be simplified.
- Student results for performance tasks will be reported only at the local school-authority level, and not to Alberta Education as was required in the first year of the pilot.

Further information on the 2015–2016 Grade 3 SLA pilot, visit [www.education.alberta.ca/sla](http://www.education.alberta.ca/sla).

## **Video Surveillance on School Buses**

Elk Island Public Schools Student Transportation would like to inform our parents and students using bus services that all EIPS buses are equipped with video surveillance equipment, which is in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP). The equipment records and stores several days of data and is reviewed regularly by Student Transportation staff who monitor both student and driver conduct. All video and audio recordings of individuals on school buses are for the safety and security of passengers, drivers, and property, and may be used as evidence in a disciplinary matter.

If you have further questions about the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information, please contact the FOIP co-ordinator at EIPS by calling 780-417-8204.

## **Update: Kindergarten Programming Survey**

As many of you are aware, Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) has been exploring the community's interest in a full-day Kindergarten program operating on alternating days. Over the past year, some parents within Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan have posed questions regarding bus-ride times and transportation fees for Kindergarten students attending half-day Kindergarten programs, which are the predominant options in these communities. These questions led to discussions within the division about current Kindergarten programming offered within EIPS.

In late 2014, the Board of Trustees directed administration to complete public consultations within Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan to determine the community's interest in a full-day Kindergarten program operating on alternating days. In the spring, the division conducted a series of focus groups—comprised of both teachers and parents—discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both a half-day program and an alternating full-day Kindergarten program. A survey followed, which gathered additional feedback from teachers, parents, community members, and staff within Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan.

Overall, more than two-thirds of the 1,517 survey respondents agreed EIPS should explore offering more alternating full-day Kindergarten options in their communities. Close to two-thirds of the respondents indicated the division shouldn't eliminate the half-day program and only offer alternating full-day Kindergarten.

Based on all of the responses and suggestions gathered, the Board of Trustees has asked EIPS administration to further explore offering more alternating full-day programming in Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan. As such, throughout the 2015-2016 school year, EIPS will be reviewing where additional alternating full-day programming possibilities may exist. EIPS will continue to keep families updated on any new developments.

## **Tips and guidelines for home-school communication**

To enhance communication between families and schools, Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) has recently developed a Communication Protocol for Schools document to provide a framework for communication between the school and our families. The purpose of this document is to guide, manage, and improve home-school communication by offering a standard format, structure, and sequence for regular, ongoing communication.

The document is a useful tool that outlines how schools within EIPS use a variety of communication formats, such as face-to-face meetings, email, Synrevoice, and social media. It also provides a process for parents or guardians to use if they need to bring forward a question or concern. We encourage families to review the document so they know what to expect and what we expect of families.

As communication changes, this document may also evolve. James Mowat School will work to keep parents informed as any processes evolve and change.

The full *EIPS Communication Protocol for Schools* document is available by visiting <http://www.eips.ca/parents>.

## **Elk Island Regional Honor Choir**

The Elk Island Regional Honor Choir Association is a fantastic way for your child to express themselves through singing!! All Three choirs get quality instruction from teachers and perform numerous times throughout the year. Elk Island Public Schools is proud to offer this unique opportunity for your child to become a more confident singer and seasoned performer. The Elk Island Regional Honor Choir Association is moving into its 30th year and we would love to have you sing with us!!

### **Come Sing With Us!!**

- \*excellence in choral education
- \*professional instructors
- \*special workshops and choral retreats
- \*three annual concerts
- \*touring opportunities
- \*meet new friends from other schools

### **Elk Island Public Schools Junior Honor Choir-Grades 3-6**

Leesila Dawkins

Monday Rehearsals 4:30-5:30pm at FR Haythorne School

Annual Choir Fee: \$375

### **Elk Island Public Schools Intermediate Honor Choir-Grades 7-9**

Angela McKeown, Director

Monday Rehearsals 6:30-8:00pm at Bev Facey High School

Annual Choir Fee: \$400

### **Elk Island Public Schools Senior Honor Choir-Grades 10-12**

Esther Madsen, Director

Monday Rehearsals 6:30-8:00pm at Bev Facey High School

Annual Choir Fee: \$400

Please contact Larry Frank at [larry.frank@ei.educ.ab.ca](mailto:larry.frank@ei.educ.ab.ca) or 237-2167(c)



## Little Elk Island Adventures: Registration

Elk Island Public Schools is once again offering its Little Elk Island Adventure, a fun and informative program for **first-time school bus riders**.

Annually, Student Transportation offers the Little Elk Island Adventure to new riders and their parents. The program's aim is to help ease any anxieties a family may have about riding the bus before starting school. Through a series of activities, riders learn about: school-bus safety, danger zones, tips on boarding, using the scan card, and how to properly sit on the bus.

After that, both students and parents, hop on the bus to practice what they learned while adventuring out on a short ride.

Sessions and times are available in these locations:

Location	Date	Time
EIPS Central Office Boardroom	September 1	10 a.m.
EIPS Central Office Boardroom	September 2	5 p.m.
EIPS Central Office Boardroom	September 2	5:45 p.m.
EIPS Central Office Boardroom	September 2	6:30 p.m.
Fort Christian/Fort Elementary	September 1	5:45 p.m.
École Élémentaire Ardrossan Elementary	September 2	9 a.m.
A.L. Horton Elementary	September 4	9:30 a.m.
Ministik School	September 8	9:30 a.m.

*EIPS Central office is located at 683 Wye Rd., Sherwood Park*

*Fort Christian School is located at 9806 101 St., Fort Saskatchewan*

*École Élémentaire Ardrossan Elementary is located at 53131 Range Rd. 222, Ardrossan*

*A.L. Horton Elementary is located at 5037 48 Ave., Vegreville*

*Ministik School is located at 21246 Hwy 14, Sherwood Park*

**Space is limited and pre-registration is required.** To register for this year's Little Elk Island Adventures visit <http://goo.gl/forms/hJ3qIPrmQr>.

More information regarding busing for Kindergarten students can be found at: <http://www.eips.ca/kindergarten-faq>.