

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 13, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Response to CUPE Local 474 2001 Budget Brief Reply

ORIGINATORS: Gary Reynolds, Department Head
Angus McBeath, Department Head

RESOURCE
STAFF: Gloria Chalmers, Brian Fedor

INFORMATION

Local 474's Budget Brief Reply of February 27, 2001 is appreciated from two perspectives: the local's acknowledgement that a more cooperative/communicative environment has evolved (particularly in the last year or two) and the summary listing of issues and concerns raised by the local since 1995.

As the local has pointed out in the summary there have been and are many issues that affect the local and its members. The desire to have these addressed is legitimate and recognized. A key theme tying the issues together is the local's indication that, in fact, the local is supportive of a collaborative approach to issue resolution. The continued demonstration of this desire to work together serves as the basis on which the district and the local can address the problems on an ongoing basis.

While individual problems and concerns may affect individuals or groups of individuals at any one time, it is the systematic addressing of problems that will provide mutually beneficial and enduring solutions. The point is that we need to be in a position to proactively anticipate and address problems rather than taking a reactionary, critical approach. In order to achieve this, a mutual trust needs to be established and maintained. The administration believes that this is being achieved.

There are many examples of the collaborative solutions/approaches that have been taken in the last few years:

- the Custodial Pilot Project - which created an atmosphere of understanding and the beginning of trust, as well as addressing the issue of contracting out
- the Custodial Work Committee - designed to develop standards for work
- the Custodial Occupational Health and Safety Review Committee - which is reviewing the impacts on custodial staff of workload, safety and related issues.

There are many examples of the work that is going on in formal committees and through other means such as liaison. The above mentioned committees offer the opportunity for many of the individual, collective, and peripheral concerns to be addressed. It is important to note that the findings and recommendations of the committees are being implemented and supported by senior staff in the district.

A number of the concerns raised are reflective of the pressures of funding, specifically underfunding. It is the administration's belief that it has been the collaborative approach which has allowed our district to continue to provide the level of service that we do to our students. Is the level of service satisfactory? No. There is room for substantial improvement and this will only occur if we, as a district, including all of our stakeholders, continue to advocate for public education, and our students. If our efforts are not directed at student success, no one group or individual can claim success in the long term.

The administration is very optimistic that the local will continue to work with us, and the members can be assured that we will "take them up on their offered solutions". The custodial staff of our district have proven time and again their commitment to our district and to public education, and we respect and value their contributions.

In order to reconcile the issues the local has identified, the administration will arrange to meet with the executive of Local 474. The administration team will consist of Mr. Angus McBeath (Chair), Mr. Bob Holt, Mr. Brian Fedor, Ms. Faye Parker and Ms. Donna Barrett. The intent will be to review the issues and determine which are being addressed through committee deliberations or other processes and which ones require further or specific attention. A report will be brought to the trustees by the end of May indicating the findings of the meeting(s) with Local 474.

BF/ls