

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 13, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Foundation Feasibility Study Findings

ORIGINATOR: L. Austin, Director of Communications

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Alva Shewchuk

### INFORMATION

#### **Background:**

Edmonton Public Schools has a long history of raising funds to provide enrichment programs and enhancements such as computers. Some schools have established foundations, while other schools and central service decision units are engaged in a wide range of fundraising activities, including special events, sponsorships, partnerships, cash donations, in-kind gift donations, scholarships, and exclusive product agreements. Although this approach is ad-hoc, over the years the district has been the recipient of significant contributions.

However, Edmonton Public Schools has had limited success in developing a sustainable fund development program. This is attributed to a lack of strategic planning and limitations inherent in a decentralized organization. With this in mind, and to address the trend of K-12 education institutions establishing foundations, trustees approved the hiring of an external consultant to undertake a feasibility study. The purpose of the study was to determine if the establishment of an Edmonton Public School Board Foundation was a viable option.

Downey Norris and Associates Inc. conducted an extensive consultation process between February and May 2003, which included one-on-one meetings and focus group sessions with Edmonton Public Schools' various stakeholder groups. Research also included attitude survey analysis, literature and Internet site reviews, and information received through participation in a workshop that involved individuals from school districts that have established foundations or those considering a foundation.

#### **General Findings:**

Based on an objective opinion of Downey Norris and Associates, a foundation is a one possible option Edmonton Public Schools could employ to enhance and grow meaningful community involvement and investment in public education. Attached is the report (Appendix I) outlining the findings of the feasibility study. Anne Marie Downey will be available at the April 13, 2004 public board meeting to provide a brief overview of the study and answer trustee questions.

LA:ams

Appendix I: Foundation Feasibility Study Report

# Edmonton Public Schools Foundation Feasibility Study

June, 2003

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## Introduction

Consistent with Edmonton Public School Board's (EPSB) mission that "all students achieve success in their individual programs of study" and its commitment to high standards for student achievement, the organization is continually seeking means to enhance the learning environment and opportunities for all students. Edmonton Public Schools (EPS) is a recognized leader in providing programs of choice and in focusing on the "whole" student, so that each individual is prepared for postsecondary education, the work world and accepting the responsibilities inherent in citizenship.

The Edmonton community has demonstrated strong support for EPS through the contributions of time, expertise, mentoring, equipment, materials and donations. These gifts have enhanced student learning and the learning environment. They have helped to expose children of limited means to opportunities that are otherwise out of reach, and they have helped support the development of caring, productive and responsible citizens.

To date, seeking gifts has been mostly undertaken at the individual school level, with limited systems and processes in place to facilitate broadening the base of support and addressing district-wide priorities. EPS would like to determine whether broadening the base of support is possible and if so how that might be done. EPS recognizes that it is the efforts of the community, parents, businesses, organizations, government and staff working together that can and generally does make the most significant difference.

Therefore, in February 2003 EPS retained the services of *Downey Norris and Associates Inc.* to conduct a study to help determine whether a district education foundation might be a viable and beneficial option to expand and grow support for Edmonton's future workforce, leaders, volunteers and parents.

### This report addresses the:

- environment within which EPS operates
- role of fund raising
- capacity of the community to support a district education foundation
- support for a foundation
- factors that are key to success

The report also outlines the function of district education foundations and the steps that are recommended should EPS wish to pursue this initiative.

Many study participants do not view activities such as sponsorships and partnerships as fund raising. For the purpose of this report, fund raising is defined as any undertaking to solicit support or receipt gifts, e.g., money, time, expertise, equipment, materials.

## Methodology

Research was conducted between February and May 2003. Input was received from an estimated 319 individuals from Edmonton Public Schools, its Board of Trustees as well as representatives of key internal and external audiences and stakeholders.

Methods of consultation were:

1. 58 one-on-one meetings with trustees, administrators, program heads, public education fund raisers, local fundraising executives, union representatives, philanthropists and corporate giving decision makers
2. 19 focus groups with principals, teachers, students, parents, alumni, business leaders and community representatives
3. Attendance at a workshop about growing your school foundation, with Alberta school foundation representatives and interested parties
4. Analysis of Edmonton Public Schools' 2002 community, parent, student and staff survey results
5. Literature review and internet research

The consultant selected external audience and stakeholder interviewees, with internal interviewees identified by Edmonton Public School Board Staff. The objectives of discussions with School Board representatives were to gain a broad understanding of how and for what purpose funds are now raised and to identify environmental factors that could aid or impede the success of a School Board Foundation.

Discussions with external interviewees also identified environmental factors that should be considered, but as well focused on gaining an understanding of community financial and leadership capacity, and potential support for Edmonton Public Schools as a "cause". To ensure uniformity in data collection, standard questionnaires were used to guide discussions.

In some instances respondents did not feel they had the information necessary to respond to a question or were not comfortable with providing a response. Respondents were asked to share their perspectives and perceptions, and to provide specifics and examples where possible. Responses were accepted regardless of whether they were supported by specifics or "data."

Literature and internet research was undertaken to identify relevant social, political, and demographic factors and to understand giving and volunteering in Alberta and Edmonton.

## District (K-12) Education Foundations

### **What They Are and How They Function**

District Education Foundations are one of the fastest growing trends in mobilizing resources in support of public education for K-12 in North America. They are most often dedicated to improving the quality of educational programs, providing alternative resources and building and strengthening relationships between school districts and the communities they serve.

While this trend is relatively new to Canada, it has been growing steadily in the United States since the early 1980s, starting in California where 33% or more than 300 school districts now operate education foundations. New York state is closing in on those numbers with 18% of schools districts now operating foundations and 25% considering doing so.

The total number of district education foundations in Canada is not known, but foundations have been established in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary, with at least six others operating in Alberta: Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Elk Island (2) and Staveland - and another eight or more in Ontario: Kitchner/Waterloo, Hamilton, Kingston, Durham, Rainy River, London, Toronto Catholic and Ottawa.

District education foundations, based on a definition provided by Brian Brent from the University of Rochester who studied the nature, scope, benefits and costs of such endeavours, are:

*"... privately operated, nonprofit, tax exempt organizations positioned between schools and communities ... that solicit funds from individuals and businesses and then distribute these funds to public school districts."*

Most district education foundations in Alberta are:

1. Independent entities set up under the Society's Act
2. Officially registered with Revenue Canada as a tax exempt public foundation and, as such, have a charitable registered number
3. Governed by a body composed of volunteers representing the community it serves
4. Primarily providers of resources and not generally direct providers of programs and services
5. Focused on grant making and charitable services for the benefit of a single district
6. Focused on supporting programs with a broad reach
7. Able to provide a variety of opportunities for donors

### **What They Do**

The specific purposes of district (K-12) education foundations vary, as too do the means by which each secures support. District education foundations are most often set up to:

- Secure financial and other contributions to enhance the quality of public education
- Build and broaden positive relationships with the communities served to expand and deepen support for public education

To accomplish these ends foundations:

- Educate potential donors and/or partners about the important contributions of public education to society
- Engage citizens in identifying and addressing means to enhance public education
- Identify and secure human (time, talent and expertise) and financial contributions to address immediate needs
- Secure long term funding sources by pooling charitable gifts in permanent, income earning endowment funds and using the annual earnings from these funds to support a wide range of initiatives

While most district education foundations to this point focus on securing resources for shorter term and more immediate needs, there is a growing trend toward the building of endowment funds in an effort to secure long term funding sources that will benefit the school district in the future.

District education foundations can, and sometimes do, work in partnership with other charitable and community organizations toward a shared end, with each complementing the efforts of the other.

Reasons why organizations choose a foundation versus internal fund raising functions include:

- A greater number of people engaged in advancing public education and your district for the purpose of building and improving education
- Provides avenues for interested citizens to have a voice
- Helps develop a broader and deeper community of support
- Raises additional resources
- Provides multiple mechanisms for interested parties to contribute
- Provides meaningful means for citizens to show gratitude and give back

## **Who Gives and How**

People from all walks of life; small, medium and large businesses; and, a range of not-for-profit agencies, associations and organizations currently support Edmonton elementary and secondary schools. This same range of people support district foundations in other jurisdictions in Alberta, Canada and the United States. Based on U.S. statistics, the majority of donations to district education foundations come from individuals, about 60%. Businesses and corporations are the second biggest givers at about 15%.

Support is provided through gifts of time, expertise, knowledge, gifts-in-kind and cash. Much less often gifts of real estate, stock, artwork and insurance are received. However, district education foundations appear to focus on seeking one-time and annual gifts versus major and planned gifts. In most cases, donors retain the option of giving directly to their local school or to the foundation. Flexibility appears to be key.

Education foundations can, through guidance and volunteer advice and expertise, provide support to donors to help them make the most of their charitable gifts.

A wide range of activities are undertaken by district education foundations to stimulate contributions, including but not limited to, special events, phone/mail/door-to-door solicitations, grants, planned giving, partnerships and major gifts. Special events and mail solicitations are by far the most used mechanisms to solicit support, with applications for grants the third most used and the development of partnerships growing as a preferred approach.



**Examples of Canadian District Education Foundations**

	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Foundation Activities</b>	<b>Structure</b>
<p><b>Calgary</b> Calgary Board of Education Foundation</p> <p>Activated Jan. 2003</p> <p>\$45,000 committed</p> <p>No annual or long term financial goals set</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Civic engagement in public education and promotion of civil society principles <input type="checkbox"/> Research, innovation, renewal and professional development <input type="checkbox"/> Program choice & enhancement <input type="checkbox"/> Support for parents <input type="checkbox"/> Economically disadvantaged students and families <input type="checkbox"/> English as a second language <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships, bursaries, and life-long learning	<input type="checkbox"/> Articulating case statements for project enhancements <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed planning <input type="checkbox"/> Education of individual citizens, community organizations, corporations and foundations <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration with same to find solutions to issues and to enhance programs <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events, e.g., An Evening with Barbara Bush	<p>Volunteer Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 4 Community</li> <li>&gt; 2 Trustees</li> <li>&gt; 1 U of C, Ed.</li> </ul> <p>Staff (6):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Executive Director</li> <li>&gt; Dir. Development</li> <li>&gt; Dir. Individual &amp; Planned Giving</li> <li>&gt; Controller/IT</li> <li>&gt; Marketing/PR</li> <li>&gt; Admin. Assistant</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 1<sup>st</sup> yr. operating grant of \$750,000; &gt; 2<sup>nd</sup> yr. \$850,000</li> <li>&gt; To seek approval for annual grants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vancouver</b> Vancouver Public Schools Foundation</p> <p>Activated May 2002</p> <p>\$500,000 raised</p> <p>Financial goals not set</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrich and enhance the learning environment <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy/numeracy for pre-schoolers and family supports <input type="checkbox"/> Fostering citizenship <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting students with community leaders	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing case statement <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed planning <input type="checkbox"/> Building internal capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships and sponsorships <input type="checkbox"/> Direct contact solicitations	<p>Volunteer Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 5 Community</li> <li>&gt; 1 Parent</li> <li>&gt; 3 Trustees</li> <li>&gt; 2 Admin.</li> <li>&gt; 2 Education Associations</li> </ul> <p>Staff (1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Executive Director</li> <li>&gt; Supports provided by school board</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 1<sup>st</sup> yr. operating grant of \$150,000</li> </ul>

<p><b>Toronto</b> Toronto Foundation for Student Success</p> <p>Activated 1999</p> <p>\$8 million/yr raised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Addressing the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of students</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> System-wide initiatives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast Program</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bullying Program</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Literacy - pre schoolers, family, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize non-traditional partnerships and fund raising, e.g., local ophthalmologists conduct eye exams and help pay for glasses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Special Events, e.g. Fraser Mustard Award Dinner; Run/Walk</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer employee contributions programs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grant Writing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sponsorships</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Direct mail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3<sup>rd</sup> Party fund raising, e.g., \$80-100,000/yr from Education Opportunities Foundation for schools in 'old' Toronto</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteer Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;2 Trustees</li> <li>&gt;3 Admin</li> <li>&gt;1 Labour Rep</li> <li>&gt;13 Community</li> </ul> <p>Staff (6):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Executive Director</li> <li>&gt;Administrator</li> <li>&gt;Financial Assistant</li> <li>&gt;Fund Raiser</li> <li>&gt;Event Coordinator</li> <li>&gt;Ex. Assistant</li> </ul> <p>&gt;Annual operating grant of \$400,000 from vending machine revenue</p>
<p><b>Red Deer</b> Foundation for Red Deer Public Schools</p> <p>Activated 1993</p> <p>\$110,000/yr \$70,000 in Reserves</p> <p>Goal: To increase revenue by \$13,000/yr</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Technology</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Variety of program supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Building external capacity via awareness/promotion initiatives/new identity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Special Events, e.g., Striving for Excellence Dinner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Special Projects, e.g., 2<sup>nd</sup> Musical Instrument Round-up</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gambling, e.g., 50/50 lottery</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteer Board-15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;7 Community</li> <li>&gt;2 Businesses</li> <li>&gt;2 Trustees</li> <li>&gt;1Admin.</li> <li>&gt;3 Employee Reps</li> </ul> <p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;15-20% of District Administrator's</li> <li>&gt;.25 Admin. Ass.</li> <li>&gt;Supports provided by school board</li> </ul> <p>&gt;Operating grant of up to \$30,000</p>

## Fund Development at Edmonton Public

Formal and informal fund raising, to one degree or another, has been undertaken in Edmonton, Alberta and Canadian public schools for decades. Gifts of money and goods have helped enrich the learning environment and the school experience for tens of thousands of Edmonton students. Over the last ten years though, the emphasis and dependence on fund raising by parents and schools has grown substantially. Prior to the 90s, fund raising was limited and less sophisticated.

Beneficial partnerships between Edmonton schools and businesses have been commonplace for many years, but until 1988 most of them were informal. At that time Edmonton Public Schools initiated its current partnership program to encourage increased and meaningful business and community support for schools. The model is designed to guide the set up and implementation of partnerships to ensure initiatives reflect district and school priorities, enhance curriculum, are in the best interests of students, and beneficial for both parties. A business or organization is matched with a school for the purpose of sharing time, talent and expertise, with the focus on human rather than financial resources.

In 1995 the then Superintendent of Edmonton Public Schools identified fund raising as a means to assist schools and the district enhance the learning environment. The intention was to strengthen community partnerships, make the district more visible and supplement dwindling sources of funding through non traditional means. Fund raising at the district level was initiated and incorporated into the role and responsibilities of the Communications Department.

That same year The Learning Mosaic Foundation was established to "support education through funding enhancement programs and educational activities which will better prepare our children to become good citizens and leaders of the world of tomorrow." This organization was lead by a volunteer board of directors and raised approximately \$15,000. Very few study participants were familiar with the foundation. A number of reasons for its demise were suggested by two of its past board members:

- Lack of financial, fund raising and administrative support from EPSB
- Lack of clear direction and momentum, which led to disinterest by board members
- Differing opinions about involving the Edmonton Catholic School Board, which eventually got involved, but did not apparently demonstrate interest
- Case for support was not clear, compelling or tangible/concrete

Not all donations are tracked, but the systems in place to track donations today are more inclusive than those used only five years ago. Based on the information available, over \$4 million was contributed to Edmonton Public Schools in fiscal year 2001-2002, an increase of 53% since 1999-2000, and an approximate 97% increase since the 1980s when less than an estimated \$100,000 in donations were received by EPSB each year. (See chart on page 10 for details.)

In 2001/02 Parent Advisory Committees raised more than half of this money, with grants accounting for another 25% of the total. The remaining 25% was received as cash and gifts-in-kind in support of special events, scholarships, and partnership initiatives undertaken with other charities and/or businesses, and as unsolicited donations.

### *Comparison of Funds Raised Between 1997-98 & 2001-02*

	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000-2001	2001/02
<b>Donations</b>	\$258,813	\$ 407,664	\$ 483,055	\$ 529,033	\$ 360,566
<b>Parent Committees*</b>	--	--	\$ 932,319	\$1,974,356	\$2,208,973
<b>Grants</b>	\$303,427	\$ 904,271	\$ 868,282	\$ 671,888	\$1,048,247

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<b>Other Charitable</b>	\$ 97,421	\$ 163,489	\$ 397,776	\$ 274,260	\$ 422,380
<b>In-kind</b>	\$ 60,249	\$ 88,146	\$ 50,091	\$ 53,748	\$ 135,375
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$719,910</b>	<b>\$1,563,570</b>	<b>\$2,731,523</b>	<b>\$3,503,285</b> <b>(28%□)</b>	<b>\$4,175,541</b> <b>(19%□)</b>
<b>% of Board Budget**</b>	0.17%	0.35%	0.6%	0.5%	0.76%
<b>% Budget less salaries***</b>	0.86%	1.7%	2.9%	3.5%	3.8%

\*Funds raised by parent advisory committees were not tracked at the district level until 1999/2000.

\*\*Based on approved spring budget numbers.

\*\*\*Salaries estimated at 80% of the total district budget for each year.

As is the case for most district education foundations, the majority of gifts to EPS in 2004/02 (based on receipted gifts only) came from individuals (78%), with about 22% coming from businesses and community organizations. The average gift (based on receipted gifts only) from a business and/or community organization is estimated at \$1,030, versus \$264 for individuals and \$30,830 for grants. The average value of a gift-in-kind is about \$1,758.

The amount each school benefits from fund raising varies greatly between schools. There are schools that do not appear to do any fund raising, while others raise up to \$150,000 some years. It appears a significant number of schools raised between about \$35,000-\$50,000 each year. Special initiatives such as the city centre education project have raised upwards of \$300,000, according to the information provided. The amount raised by any one school seems to be dependent on three main factors:

- socio-economic status and financial capacity of the community within which a school operates
- willingness and capability of parents to give and/or access to the skills to generate/solicit funds
- perspective of the principal on fund raising as a means of enhancing the learning experience.

Many schools that fundraise admit they could function without the fund raised dollars, but to do so would mean the end of "extras" to which schools have become accustomed, and which many feel are now necessities. Some feel the loss of fund raised dollars would affect students, teachers and parents negatively. Overall, the continuation of alternative sources of funding is seen as important.

A multitude of approaches are currently employed to raise funds. Product sales and gambling are by far the most popular activities, with lunch sales and special events taking third and fourth place respectively. A handful of schools utilize more sophisticated methods including the development of scholarship programs (e.g., McCauley), trusts (e.g., Metro Community College), foundations (e.g., Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts), and endowments (e.g., Centre High).

Dollars raised are primarily use the following purposes: (listed in order of frequency)

1. Scholarships and awards
2. Library enhancements
3. Specialty programs, e.g., arts, career pathways
4. General environmental and teaching enhancements
5. Classroom enhancements
6. Playgrounds
7. Sports programs
8. Nutritional programs
9. Computers
10. Field trips

The Alberta government does not permit fund raising for "basic instructional needs." However, there does not appear to be a commonly shared definition by education stakeholders of what constitutes a "basic instructional need." As such, this matter is controversial and the rancor has recently spilled into the public arena. In 2002 Alberta Learning investigated 22 reported incidents of fund raising for "basics" brought to their attention, in most cases by parents. Funds were being raised for library books, music instruments, computers, gym equipment, field trips, calculators, security cameras, supplemental textbooks, playgrounds and the salary of a social worker. In all cases, according to information provided by Alberta Learning, the conclusion was that the money was being used for supplemental enhancements.

## Environment Scan

This section is designed to identify some of the trends, issues and opportunities that might influence EPSB's decisions about fund raising initiatives. It is designed to bring some understanding to the context within which a possible EPSB foundation would operate now and into the future.

### Population

- Edmonton's population has grown steadily over the last ten years, with similar growth projected for the foreseeable future. Edmonton's 2001 population of 666,104 reflects an 8.1% increase from 1996, and makes up about 71% of the 937,845 population of the Greater Edmonton Region. The region's population is expected to surpass one million by 2007. (Statistics Canada 1991, 1996 & 2001 Census; Economic Development Edmonton Info 2001)
- Approximately 13.5% of Edmontonians, compared to 11.2% of the Canadian population, are visible minorities, with the majority of those individuals coming from Asia and Europe. Edmonton is also home to a fast growing population of members of Canada's first nations. (Economic Development Edmonton Info 1999 & 2001)
- Approximately 27% of Edmontonians have children attending elementary, junior high or high schools. (Edmonton Public Schools)
- As is the case in most of North America, Edmonton's population is aging. By 2015 the current dominant position held by baby boomers will be shared by a growing population of 2035 year olds, with a decreasing population of school aged children. (Economic Development Edmonton Info 1999 & 2001; Highlights of Alberta Economy: Spring 2003, Alberta Economic Development)
- Albertans and Edmontonians are among the most educated populations in North America, with 51% of Albertans and 57% of Edmontonians having post secondary education. However, the number of people receiving certification in the trades has decreased. (Statistics Canada 2001 Census)
- Edmonton has been identified as one of the top cities in the world for lifelong education based on the number of people who pursue continuing education and training, and the educational/training opportunities offered. (Economic Development Edmonton Info 1999)
- Approximately 82,000 children attend Edmonton Public's 206 schools, reflecting a 7% increase since 1995 when about 76,500 children selected EPS. EPS serves 69% of the primary and secondary students in Edmonton. (Edmonton Public Schools)
- 76% of Edmontonians indicate they are affiliated with a religious organization. (Statistics Canada 2001 Census)

## **Economy, Employment and Income**

- Alberta's economy has outperformed the national economy in a number of areas for the last decade, with all private sector forecasts projecting Alberta to be leading or second in the country in 2003 and 2004 (Highlights of Alberta Economy: Spring 2003, Alberta Economic Development)
- The longer term impact on the Canadian and Alberta economies of mad cow disease, SARS and other public health issues is not known.
- Greater Edmonton is one of Canada's top performing economies, with strong growth projected to continue for the next several years. However, it is anticipated that growth will be constrained by labour shortages. (Economic Development Edmonton, Competitiveness Strategy and October, 2002 News Release)
- Alberta is increasingly diversifying its economy, with its dependence on the energy sector decreasing from 35.4% in 1985 to 26.5% in 2001. (Highlights of Alberta Economy: Spring 2003, Alberta Economic Development)
- Alberta and Edmonton unemployment rates continue to be among the lowest in the country. Although the employment and participation rates have remained at all time highs, the pace of employment growth has slowed somewhat. (Statistics Canada & Alberta Economic Development)
- The average household income in Edmonton is \$46,698, compared to about \$44,000 for Alberta. Average income in Edmonton households with two or more persons is \$58,691 and in households where there are couples with children, it is \$71,720. (Statistics Canada 2001 Census)
- Edmonton has a 26% poverty rate compared to 18% province wide, based on 1996 Canadian Census data and Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut Off for 1995. (No Safeguards: A Profile of Urban Poverty in Alberta, February 2000)
- In a comparison of 26 cities across Canada, Edmonton's property taxes are the ninth lowest, however, taxes in Calgary, Red Deer, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge are slightly lower. (2002 Residential Property Taxes and Utility Charges Survey, The City of Edmonton Planning and Development Department)
- Individual Albertans carry the lowest combined provincial and federal tax burden. (Alberta Finance - Budget 2003; The Alberta Economy www.alberta-canada.com)

## **Public and Parent Attitudes**

The information in this section comes from Edmonton Public Schools 2002 Community, Parent, Student and Staff Surveys. Subsequent to those surveys however 2002/03 saw considerable public debate about EPSB's budget challenges, public criticism by government officials, including a third party audit directed by the Minister of Learning, and the layoff of some 450 teachers. Coupled with a relatively recent teachers' strike, views and attitudes about EPSB and support for EPSB could be negatively impacted.

### **Quality**

- 92% of parents are satisfied with the overall quality of education received by their child, while 80% of community members are satisfied with the overall quality of education.
- 80% of community members support an increase in public school funding. Of those surveyed that had children in school, 87% were supportive of increased funding.
- Approximately 54% of community members feel EPS effectively responds to public concerns, down from about 61% in 2001 and 64% in 1998.
- About 93% of community members and 90% of parents feel an EPSB education is better than or the same as that provided in other Canadian jurisdictions.
- About 55% of community members feel an EPSB education is better than that provided elsewhere in Canada, with more than 65% of all respondents indicating that an EPSB education is better than that provided in other countries.

- More than 50% of community members believe the quality of education provided by EPSB is not as good as that provided by private schools.

## Funding

- 75% of parents support schools receiving financial donations, compared with 67% of the general public, for average support of 70%.
- Just over 50% of parents support schools receiving funding from fund raising, compared to 54% of the general public, for average support of 53%.
- Parents are significantly more supportive of funding from sponsorships (73%) than the general public (61%), with average support of about 65%.
- The vast majority of both parents and the general public support funding from partnerships (89%), while just over 60% are opposed to schools receiving funding from exclusive supply agreements.
- More than 50% of parents and about 45% of the general public are opposed to parents paying fees for enhancements to basic education, e.g., sports, field trips.

## General Satisfaction

- When asked to identify the most important issue facing education, the most frequent response was a lack of funding (38%), followed by class sizes (31%), and meeting the needs of all students (20%).
- About 87% of parents and 70% of community members expressed satisfaction with EPSB's Superintendent, with 83% of parents and 59% of the uninformed general public satisfied with Trustees.
- 93% of staff feel Edmonton Public Schools is a good place to work and 86% feel the district's mission is consistent with their personal beliefs.

## Programming

- Approximately 81% of parents feel EPSB effectively prepares students for postsecondary education. 77% of community members feel EPSB is effective in this regard, reflecting an increase from a low of about 71% in 1999.
- Approximately 73% of parents feel EPSB effectively prepares students for the work world, down from about 80% in 1998, while 98% feel it is important for schools to develop job related skills. About 59% of community members feel EPSB is effective in this regard, reflecting an increase from about 52% in 1999. 97% of community members believe it is important to develop job related skills.
- 60% of community members and 70% of parents feel EPSB effectively prepares students to be responsible citizens, while 97% of both parents and community members feel it is important that schools develop life skills.
- Close to 89% of all respondents support the provision of a variety of courses in addition to core courses. However, members of the public (62%) are less supportive than of parents (80%) of providing a range of different types of schools (programs of choice). Support from the broader uninformed public for such programming is down from a high of about 85% in 1999.

## Giving in Alberta and Edmonton

Unless otherwise indicated, information in the following section comes from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy Research Bulletins Vol. 8, No. 3 - Summer 2001 (1997-2000 data), Vol. 8, No. 1 - Autumn 2001, and Volume 9, No. 2, 2000, and from the 1997 and 2000 National Surveys of Giving, Volunteering and Participating.

- 69% of Edmontonians aged 15 and over made a financial donation to charitable and nonprofit organizations each year between 1997 and 2000, compared to 76% of Albertans and 78% of Canadians.

- The average annual donation in Edmonton was \$312 compared to \$338 for Alberta, the highest among all provinces, and \$239 for Canada.
- The top 25% of Edmonton donors represent 79% of financial contributions, compared to 81% in Alberta and 82% in Canada
- The top 5% of Edmonton donors represent 38% of dollars donated, compared to 41% in Alberta and 47% in Canada.
- The number of Alberta donors increased by 20% between 1997 (1.6 million) and 2000 (1.97 million) exceeding by far increases in all other provinces and for the country as a whole (2.5%).
- Donations in Alberta increased by 31% from 1997 to \$729 million in 2000, exceeding the national average of 11%. The increase in real dollars, when inflation is considered, is 6% for Canada and 22% for Alberta.
- While the average donation in Canada increased from \$60\$70 or 8%, the increase has not kept pace with household incomes which are up on average by 16%.

### **Who Gives**

- Albertans aged 35-44 contributed the greatest percentage of the total value of donations (30%) and accounted for the largest percentage of donors (26%).
- Albertans aged 45-54 were more likely to make charitable donations than Albertans in other age groups (84%).
- While only 9% of Alberta donors were aged 55-64, they contributed 16% of the total dollar value of donations, making the largest average annual donations (\$600).
- The average annual donation tended to increase with the level of education, with half of all donors holding a post-secondary diploma or degree and contributing \$6 out of every \$10 donated.
- Albertans with household incomes of \$80-\$99,000 were most likely to contribute (96%) and those with incomes over \$100,000 made the highest average annual donations (\$681).
- Although only 15% of donors had household incomes of \$80,000 or more, they contributed 25% of the total value of donations.
- Women were more likely to donate than men, but men made larger average annual donations.
- Albertans affiliated with a community of worship, regardless of their religion, were more likely to donate, and to make larger average annual donations and contributions to non-religious organizations (90%) than they were to religious organizations (59%).

### **Where Donations Go**

	Edmonton 1997			Alberta 1997			Canada 2001		
	Donors	Value	Dollars	Donors	Value	Dollars	Donors	Value	Dollars
Religion	13%	53%	82m	14%	61%	339m	14%	49%	2.42b
Health	37%	12%	18m	39%	11%	61m	41%	20%	963m
Social Services	21%	13%	20m	20%	9%	53m	20%	10%	503m
Education/Research	7%	5%	7.8m	7%	3%	16m	8%	3%	152m
Arts/Culture/Recreation	5%	3%	4.7m	6%	3%	16m	5%	3%	152m
Philanthropy/Volunteerism	5%	6%	9m	--	--	--	5%	7%	363m
Environment	--	--	--	--	--	--	2%	2%	98m
International	--	--	--	--	--	--	2%	3%	152m



- Donating through a place of worship accounted for more than half of the value of total donations (55%). Second were donations in response to a mail requests (9%) and third, in memoriam (7%). In contrast, door-to-door canvassing resulted in the highest number of donations at 24%. Responses to mail requests were second at 16% and sponsoring an individual in an event was third at 14%. Donations through a place of worship accounted for only 11% of the total number of donations.
- Donor directed gifts is the fastest growing means of giving in North America. For some organizations, the value of such donations increased by over \$100% in just three years. One example shows an increase of more close to 1000% percent over three years.
- Donations to endowments tend to come from a small number of individuals but are of a larger dollar value, and most often come from a person's assets versus income. (Edmonton Community Foundation)
- 75% of individuals who give to endowment funds are age 50 or older. (Edmonton Community Foundation Survey, 2000)

### **Donor Attitudes**

- Primary reasons given by Albertans for making a charitable financial donation are to help a cause personally believed in (96%), feeling compassion for people in need (94%), personally affected by the cause (73%) and owing something to their community (66%).
- Reasons most frequently given by Albertans for not making financial donations to charitable organizations were the need to save money for future needs (64%) and prefer to spend money in other ways (62%).
- Nearly half of all donors (47%), accounting for over half (54%) of the total dollar value of donations in Canada, indicate that they do not donate more because they dislike the way requests are made. In 1997, 41% of donors expressed this view.
- In 2000, 46% of donors indicated that they did not give more because they were concerned the money would not be used efficiently, up from 37% in 1997.
- Donors are becoming more strategic, making fewer but larger donations, with 25% planning in advance which charities they will support. As such, the actual number of donations made in Canada was down by four million between 1997 (74 million) and 2000 (70 million), while the total amount donated continues to increase.
- In 2000 41% of donors said they give regularly to the same organizations, down from 44% in 1997.
- Donation patterns tend to mirror economic conditions and reflect favourable changes to tax policies, e.g., changes in tax credits, reduction in capital gains tax on donations of publicly-traded shares to registered charities.

## Key Findings

It is important to emphasize that the findings outlined in this report integrate the results and input gathered through all of the research methods. The findings do not reflect the views or opinions of any one individual or group of individuals who participated in the interviews or focus groups, nor any one avenue of input. Rather they are the independent and objective views of the consultant, *Downey Norris & Associates Inc.*, based on the cumulative results of all input received from all sources, and the professional opinion of *Downey Norris & Associates*.

## **Role of Fund Raising**

- Fund raising plays an important role in enhancing the quality of education provided by EPS and most people support schools receiving financial donations and gifts of time, expertise and materials. (See page 9 for details on fund development at EPSB.)
- Individual schools already undertake a broad range of fund raising initiatives to support a myriad of classroom and extra curricular activities, programs, equipment and educational enhancements. (See page 9 for details on fund development at EPSB.)
- The bulk of fund raising efforts are locally driven (individual school level), with limited broad planning, coordination or prioritization at the district level.
- The vast majority of the fund raising initiatives currently undertaken are time and labour intensive with many providing a limited return, e.g., special events, product sales. Campaigns are seldom undertaken, particularly major gift or capital campaigns, and while bequests are received, there is no planned giving program in place.
- While there are numerous successful long term partnerships, it is not evident that time is taken to determine the ultimate potential of partners and individual contributors, in an effort to determine their capacity and willingness to give.
- The systems and processes necessary to nurture and grow donors' potential are not in place, e.g., recognition program, database to track potential and current donor behaviours, preferences, etc.
- Integration of special needs students, children living in poverty, high immigrant and first nations populations, particularly in large urban areas, and parent expectations that school boards and individual schools offer a wide range of programs and choices are putting increasing demands on the EPSB.
- Edmonton Public Schools is currently struggling with a \$10.5 million deficit and would see a larger deficit in future years if significant changes were not made, including a reduction in the number of teachers.
- Most people feel government funding for public education is not keeping pace with growing needs and expectations. This, combined with increased demands, means less resources for available for “extras” and “enhancements.”
- There is considerable fear by some, particularly teachers and parents, that institutionalized and/or increased fund raising could relieve government of its

responsibility to appropriately fund public education. Other Canadian foundations and fund raisers interviewed did not express this concern, but two acknowledged that some of their constituents share this concern. In a survey of 179 district education foundations in California and New York, none "thought that their existence had a negative effect on their ability to pass budget and bond measures." In fact, many felt their foundation leveraged receipt of additional resources from the community and government.

- Concern was expressed, mostly by teachers, that increased fund raising could open the door to privatization of schools. However, others felt that the enhancements provided by fund raising made private schools less attractive and are concerned that if funds are not raised for enhancements, private schools would become a more attractive alternative for the well-to-do, taking dollars away from public education.
- There is concern by some that fund raising exacerbates the gap between have and have-not schools. A greater percentage of people, however, believe that organized and prioritized fund raising could narrow that gap.
- Compromising EPS values or priorities to meet donors' needs is not considered acceptable. Nor is the raising of dollars for projects that will drive operating costs, without this being known and considered in advance.
- There is general support for soliciting gifts to enhance the learning environment and the quality of education. Indeed, there is much greater acceptance for fund raising for this purpose than for charging parents fees. However, some individuals do not support any fund raising activities for any purpose related to public education.
- Those consulted are unanimous in their agreement that funds should not be raised for "basic instructional needs." However, many of the items/activities now provided through fund raised dollars are considered to be basics by a considerable number of parents, teachers and principals.
- There is almost unanimous opposition to raising funds for staff salaries and reluctance to raise funds for constructing or renovating schools or making system repairs, i.e., electrical, plumbing.
- Some parents view fund raising as a positive opportunity for meaningful involvement in their children's education.
- The Alberta government is encouraging school boards to investigate public-private partnerships for major infrastructure projects, P3s.
- Many educators feel that reducing or eliminating fund raising would negatively impact the overall quality of education provided and could, in some cases, impact the delivery of basic education.

### **Leadership/Volunteer Capacity**

- Attracting individuals with the necessary attributes, skills, knowledge and know-how to lead an EPSB foundation should not be an onerous task, but it will take time to identify and engage the right mix of people. The prevailing view is that

- positions on an EPSB foundation would be seen as desirable if the "case" is compelling and the appropriate structures and supports are in place.
- Attracting leadership to a new entity is a greater challenge than attracting leadership to an entity that has already proven its value.
  - A number of business/community leaders believe the "next generation" of community leaders and philanthropists are ready and capable of making a significant contribution in a leadership capacity.
  - Edmonton Public Schools, at the district and local levels, have engaged and built sound relationships with many individuals, organizations and businesses, who now have an enhanced understanding of the organization and a commitment to it. This pool is one from which leaders and volunteers could be identified.
  - While there are countless volunteer opportunities in Edmonton, a well run program for a clearly articulated and compelling cause that offers meaningful volunteer opportunities, has a very high probability to succeed. According to the 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, approximately 40% of Albertans volunteer their time and skills to groups and organizations. Albertans are also more likely to volunteer than other Canadians (31%), with the second highest provincial volunteer rate. 35% of citizens in the Capital region volunteer for a charitable or nonprofit organization.
  - It is important for a foundation board to reflect the community served, but the emphasis must be on attracting individuals with the knowledge (e.g., business, financial, fund raising, legal, public relations, education), skills (e.g., communication, fund development, planning) and attributes, (e.g., committed, willing to work, well connected, influential, capacity to give and/or get) necessary to be successful.
  - A board should include representation from the Board of Trustees and administration. Some believe it should also include a representative of organized labour.
  - A number of fund raisers indicated that talented fund raisers with proven skills are hard to find, but retain such an individual will be very important to the success of a potential foundation.

## **Community Capacity**

- The majority of those asked, indicated they would support an EPSB foundation if the case met their personal or business criteria. A small number of study participants feel the EPSB will fall behind if it does not initiate such a venture in the near future.
- Parents, businesses and community organizations have already shown their support for Edmonton Public Schools, with about 880 receipted donations in 2001-02, and numerous others participating by purchasing products and providing time and expertise.
- Most study participants were unable to give any indication of how much an EPSB foundation might be able to raise each year. Some fund raisers and philanthropists felt that \$3-5 million each year was not unreasonable, but that it would take time to reach and maintain that target.
- Edmonton is home to more than 1,500 charitable organizations, according to the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency. While most do not raise significant funds, many do. Post secondary educational institutions, hospitals and, social and health related causes in Edmonton together raise tens of millions of dollars each year.
- Edmonton can expect a number of multi-million dollar capital campaigns to be running at any given time, particularly in post-secondary education.
- Some study participants point out that Edmonton does not have a significant business and industry base on which to draw.
- The market for giving has not reached its capacity. The number of donors and the amount donated in Alberta continues to increase at a much faster pace than in the rest of Canada.
- "Last year, Canadians gave \$5.5 billion to worthy causes, and that number is predicted to explode to \$1 trillion in the next 20 years," according to a Boston College professor who has been studying philanthropy in Canada and the United States for the last 20 years.
- The projected transfer of wealth over the next decade from parents to children and/or causes is estimated to be in the trillions. Many believe this transfer represents an opportunity for charitable organizations to present giving opportunities to the wealth holders and the recipients.
- A recent study by two education fund raising executives from Alberta concludes, "there is a significant unasked capacity in Canada's bequest market."
- People who give once are more likely to give again. A recent study on the profile of philanthropic giving in Canada found that, "seventy percent of those who had given in the past week had given more than \$10,000 in the past year" and "the more money a donor gives, the more likely it is that he or she will know where their next gift will go."

- That same study found that "the more entrepreneurial you are, the more likely you are to donate to charity." Entrepreneurial was not defined as owning a business, but by individual characteristics. Albertans are often described as entrepreneurial.
- Competition for funds is identified as a concern by some study participants and it is felt that mobilizing resources presents an increasing challenge. At the same time, the perception is that most Edmonton organizations meet their fund raising goals, even with a number of multi million dollar campaigns underway at almost any given time. For others, competition is not seen as a deterrent. They believe a new cause simply presents new options for those choosing to support their communities, with some giving for the first time, "growing the pie," and some giving more.
- Donor fatigue was identified by a small number of study participants as a concern that should be considered. While a small number of others felt there are segments of our population who have the capacity to give, but have not necessarily been identified as philanthropy leaders and presented with giving opportunities that meet their individual objectives.
- Most recently, a volatile investment market has negatively impacted organizations dependent on interest from endowment funds, making it more challenging for some of those organizations to meet their giving commitments.

### **Community Support**

- EPSB has a strong case for community support, particularly if this case is positioned as a means of developing more responsible and better overall citizens and investing in the social and economic future of Edmonton families and communities, as well as Alberta as a whole.
- Linking EPSB fund raising initiatives directly with student needs and benefits to society, would broaden acceptance and support.
- Initiatives that would be most strongly supported in terms of district fund raising include:
  - Enhancements to core or basic education programs, especially where those enhancements would be seen to meet the changing needs of society, e.g., new or more sophisticated computer technology
  - Health and social supports designed to minimize factors that create learning inequities between students, e.g., nutritional and literacy programs
  - Innovative, non-traditional enhancements and approaches to learning
  - Specialized programs and services, e.g., artists or scientists in residence
  - Programs that support career pathways which address current and potential future labour market shortages
  - Initiatives that would reduce inequities between schools

- Enrichment programs, e.g., music, sports, academic, particularly to provide access to for with limited financial means
- The vast majority of parents, teachers and principals interviewed as part of this study, feel very strongly that fund raising should not be required to deliver quality basic education to EPS students. At the same time, however, many also recognize that fund raising does provide the opportunity to enhance student education beyond the basics and thus are willing to accept fund raising as an ongoing and important element within public education. Others however are strongly opposed to fund raising of any nature for public education and would strongly resist increased or expanded fund raising, including the establishment of a district foundation.
- The level of support for the establishment of a foundation is qualified by concern that doing so will relieve pressure on government to meet its responsibility to adequately fund public education.
- Support for a foundation is further qualified by the concern that funds raised not be used to support "basic instructional needs." However, there is not a formal, clear or common definition of what constitutes "basic instructional needs." Therefore, many people feel that some current fund raising is supporting the basics of education. This lack of clarity hinders outright support for a district foundation.
- Business leaders expressed support for the concept of a district foundation or trust as part of this study process and in a meeting with the Chair and Superintendent of the EPSB in May 2002.
- Parents and teachers in particular generally have a fairly narrow definition of fund raising, e.g., product sales and casinos. While there is a generally negative view towards expansion of this type of activity, there is considerable support for initiatives such as, partnerships, sponsorships, receipt of unsolicited donations, which are an integral part of the broader definition of fund raising.
- Alberta Government has not expressed outright support for the creation of district education foundations, but neither have they publicly indicated opposition. However, their sensitivity to any efforts or messages that leave the impression fund raising is necessary to fund "basics" will be frowned upon and thus negatively impact the success of a foundation.
- Primary benefits of a district foundation identified by study participants were:
  - Increased profile and support for EPSB and public education
  - Ability to access larger donations
  - Ability to support programs involving more than one school
  - Ability to address district-wide needs
  - Potential to help address inequities between schools
  - Increased public awareness of issues and challenges facing EPSB
  - Increased ability to support enhancements to education
  - Increased ability to direct donations to highest priority needs of district

- More coordinated approaches to business, industry and granting organizations and reduced duplication of requests for funding support
  - Creation of a critical mass of fund raising expertise that could benefit the district and individual schools
- Some individuals saw a district foundation as an opportunity to minimize or eliminate fund raising at the school level, while others felt as strong about not interfering with local level fund raising.
- Among the primary concerns raised by study participants were:
  - Potential for the private sector to have inappropriate influence over public education programs and systems
  - Desire by businesses for inappropriate or excessive marketing of their products in schools
  - That raised funds are not a reliable source of funding and thus could impact the continuity of the programs they support
  - That individual schools not lose their ability to raise funds for site specific needs
  - The need for fair access by individual schools to funds raised at the district level and equitable distribution of the funds raised
  - The need to provide individual schools an opportunity to influence foundation priorities
  - How the operation of a foundation will be funded, with some key individuals inside EPSB believing that no school board resources should be allocated to the operation of a foundation
- Parents and families are more likely to give to schools their children attend, to programs that could assist their children or to broader initiatives in which they have a personal belief.
- Businesses are more likely to support programs or activities that are consistent with or support their overall business objectives or have the opportunity to demonstrate that they are a "good community partner."
- Individuals and businesses are more likely to give if doing so is meaningful to them and has the impact they desire. This is one reason why the fastest growing trend in giving is increased involvement of donors in directing how their investment is managed.
- A very small number of people indicated that some forms of fund raising are inappropriate and/or offensive, e.g., gambling. However, gambling is an accepted means of fund raising in Alberta and by many local schools.
- The number one reason people stop giving to an organization is its lack of accountability. Ensuring mechanisms are in place to report regularly to donors and the community is extremely important to the success of fund raising initiatives, particularly over the long term. (Entrepreneurs likely to be charitable donors - study, The Edmonton Journal, Nov. 18, 2000; based on study re profile of philanthropic giving in Canada)



## **Key Success Factors**

The following factors are identified as those critical to the success of a foundation:

- **Leadership** - from inception, who leads a foundation and how it is led is a critical factor to its success. Foundations result from the vision and drive of a few with the ability to influence the many. They are dependent on relationship building to be successful in soliciting loyal donors and major gifts. As such, those leading must engender trust and respect, be known as generous and be committed to the well being of public education. Whether someone gives often depends on who is asking. Foundation leaders should be well connected to one or more target audiences.
- **Vision & Mission** - painting a picture of a desirable future and clearly articulating the purpose of the foundation are fundamental to attracting leaders, garnering support and securing donations. Supported by a strategy and plan, a clear vision and mission will enable the foundation to focus its efforts and achieve its objectives.
- **Community Capacity** - the extent to which a foundation can be successful is dependent on the base of wealth in the community and the willingness of those who live and work in the community to share their fortunes. A district education foundation is more likely to be successful in a community where: residents and businesses have demonstrated a commitment to their community through financial contributions and volunteer time; the population and the economy are growing, and; a significant portion of residents have “reasonable” financial capacity, coupled with a number of more affluent residents.
- **A Clear and Compelling Case**- community support is a fundamental underpinning of a foundation. Without it, a foundation will not thrive and indeed could fail. Building awareness and understanding of the purpose and intent of a foundation from the start is essential. Creating and communicating a clear and compelling case for support is also critical. The case must be easily understood, credible and convincing. Lack of clarity can mean the loss of current and potential donors, and impact the organization's reputation.
- **Support of Key Stakeholders**- while it is not necessary to receive expressed support from all stakeholders, e.g., trustees, unions, staff, business partners and parents, it is important that there is buy in from the majority and that these parties do not feel obliged to express opposition. Many of these individuals are an organization's face to the community and thus influence the views and perspectives of potential supporters throughout the community. Ensuring clear, consistent and open communication with stakeholders is critical to demonstrate accountability, not only of how donations are managed but also of how budgets are managed.
- **Finding Focus** - the need is to grow the community's investment in Edmonton Public Schools. To do so, the focus must be on developing strategies that grow the investment made by current donors, involve new donors and create new opportunities. The focus should not be broadened to coordinate and manage the wide range of successful fund raising already undertaken by friends of Edmonton Public Schools, however key systems and processes can be developed to support all fund raising efforts.
- **Professional Staff and Operations** - Building an infrastructure is an important early step in getting a foundation off the ground. An office and professional staff are necessary to ensure the foundation has the support necessary to enable it to build and create momentum. An experienced, successful, connected fund raiser who can exude a passion for public education is extremely important.
- **Stable Operational Funding** - a foundation is an investment that will pay dividends, but like any investment, money must be spent before money can be made. Without the appropriate financial resources, a foundation can flounder, taking much longer to get off the ground, if indeed it even does, and is less likely to meet the organization's expectations.

## Conclusions

Based on an objective evaluation of the study findings, Downey Norris & Associates feel the following conclusions are valid and in the long-term interests of building on the

strengths of Edmonton Public Schools and the desire of the vast majority of those involved in the study to protect and enhance the role of public education.

1. The vast majority of interviewees wish to protect public education by first securing adequate base funding from the provincial government, but also by enhancing and broadening the educational experience of each child and providing equal opportunities to every child. An Edmonton Public Schools Foundation could play a significant role in promoting public education and mobilizing the resources necessary to enhance its offerings.
2. EPSB has a strong case for support, particularly if efforts undertaken are seen to develop more responsible and better overall citizens and invest in the social and economic future of Edmonton families and communities, as well as Alberta as a whole. Linking fund raising initiatives directly with student needs and benefits to society, will broaden acceptance and support.
3. An EPSB Foundation can be successful if time is taken and resources are invested to ensure the appropriate leadership, structures, systems and processes are in place to ensure the entity is credible and to permit the building of momentum in the shortest time possible following its launch.
4. The Edmonton community has already demonstrated its support for public education and the EPSB. It has also demonstrated a commitment to invest in it through gifts of time and money. This is a solid base on which broader support can be garnered.
5. It will be very important that all key stakeholders understand that more of the same, e.g., lotteries and product sales, would not be the focus of a foundation, and that efforts would be designed to not place additional burden on parents and teachers.
6. Resistance to the establishment of a foundation and/or any expanded efforts to mobilize community resources can be expected, possibly from organized labour, but more likely from EPSB teachers and parents. Some individuals are simply opposed to fund raising of any kind.
7. An EPSB foundation can be designed to broaden support and ensure efforts focus on district priorities, and it is very important that a foundation be focused on broadening the base of support, not simply creating more opportunities for those who already invest.
8. The greatest barrier to increasing investment in Edmonton Public Schools is the strongly held perception, particularly by EPSB staff, that to do so takes the pressure off the provincial government to adequately fund public education. This is exacerbated by the lack of a definition of what constitutes a "basic instructional need." It will be very important to reassure internal stakeholders that EPS is committed to actively seeking adequate government funding and that funds will be raised for enhancements only.
9. Recent events, public budget debates and questioning of EPSB's financial management, a teachers' strike and staff reductions, will continue to influence public and staff perceptions about Edmonton Public Schools ability to manage, particularly if public debate continues.

10. With about seven public education foundations already active in Alberta and close to 20 in Canada, it is clear that district education foundations are increasingly becoming the option of choice for securing a broad base of support to enhance public education and address issues and opportunities that reach beyond single schools or communities. While internal fund raising structures can also be successful in garnering the necessary support, a foundation has a single focus, provides multiple opportunities for meaningful involvement by community members, demonstrates community commitment to EPS and can avoid involvement in internal and external politics and debates.
11. Prior to the acceptance of gifts, a foundation must be certain that accepting the gift will not result in activities or undertakings that will compromise EPS values or its ability to meet its stated priorities. Ongoing operating costs must also be understood prior to accepting a gift.
12. Donors are becoming more selective and strategic when making giving decisions, with a greater expectation for involvement and accountability. These are important considerations when planning fund raising approaches.
13. Securing board and staff leadership with the necessary skills and abilities to launch and lead a foundation is not considered to be a barrier, but could take time. It should be noted that senior staff and board leadership is seen as one of most important factors in ensuring success.
14. Edmonton's demographics and behaviours are generally consistent with the characteristics and behaviours of those most likely to contribute and get involved.
15. There is a reasonably strong sense that Edmonton has good financial capacity, but efforts should be taken to explore potential for creative investment opportunities beyond the tried and true and the known investor. How much EPS might be able to generate beyond what it is generating today is uncertain, but those with knowledge of the Edmonton/Alberta fund raising environment feel \$3-5 million annually was reasonable once a foundation was well established and recognized.
16. Many of the needs articulated by interviewees could now, and over the longer-term, benefit from the establishment of a foundation with a system wide view. These include enhancements to core or basic education that can impact a broad base of students, supports designed to minimize factors that create learning inequities between students or schools, specialized programs and services less likely to be initiated by a single school, enrichment programs, and programs that address current and potential future labour market shortages.
17. It is critical that a foundation not be sold as or perceived as an "anti government" initiative and/or a desperate attempt to balance the books.
18. An ESBF foundation is feasible if the above noted conclusions are taken into consideration with the appropriate plans developed to manage potential areas of concern, and if realistic short and long-term goals and objectives are set.

## Recommendations

Should EPSB wish to proceed with a district education foundation, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. Share the findings of the study with key stakeholders in September and reassure them they will be provided opportunities to offer input on the case statement and the setting of priorities.
2. Designate a current EPSB staff member with the appropriate knowledge and expertise as a dedicated resource to lead set up of the foundation.
3. Develop a detailed plan of action, including timelines and budgets, outlining the steps to be taken between now and the launch of a foundation.
4. Provide an annual operating grant to the Foundation. The amount depends on how many staff are hired and the supports EPSB is able to provide, e.g., legal, financial, public relations, space/furniture/equipment. An annual grant allows donors' dollars to be directed to enhancements. Three professional staff and one administrative employee are desirable as a starting point.
5. Plan to launch the foundation in 18 - 24 months, ensuring adequate time to:
  - Establish the processes and systems necessary for the smooth, efficient running of the foundation, e.g., donor/donation tracking database, donor recognition mechanisms, priority setting processes, financial management systems
  - Establish the foundation as independent nonprofit entity, and apply for charitable status from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency
  - Hire professional staff
  - Identify and engage board members
  - Conduct a detailed analysis of current donor patterns and areas of interest
  - Develop the initial case statement, including an acceptable definition of "basic instructional needs" and "enhancements"
  - Involve internal audiences and current stakeholders in the development of the case statement
  - Identify donors most likely to relate to the "case" and if possible secure support prior to the launch
  - Educate current stakeholders about the foundation's purpose and direction
  - Develop an easy to administer recognition program that is sensitive to the needs of individuals, businesses and granting organizations
- Develop key policies
  - Develop and approve a strategy and detailed plan to guide the foundation, inclusive of an understood vision and mission
  - Watch the evolution of and learn from other district education foundations
6. While the board of directors should be responsible to govern the foundation, it must also be an "active" fund development board, appropriately involved in efforts to build relationships and where appropriate soliciting resources.

7. To broaden the base of involvement by community leaders and supporters and to support the need to create and build momentum, the foundation should consider setting up volunteer committees as is appropriate. Most committees should be "project" or "task" specific, with end points.
8. Develop a set of "ideal" board member characteristics and demographics to ensure the board of directors:
  - Reflect the demographics, needs and sensitivities of those you serve
  - Represent and is connected to the wide range of constituencies to whom you wish to appeal
  - Is appropriately skilled and knowledgeable to fulfill its role
  - Is recognized as credible, generous and committed
  - Has a passion for public education
9. It is recommended the board include between 15 and 20 members with:
  - A minimum of 10 community and business leaders
  - A maximum of two EPSB Trustees
  - A maximum of two representatives of organized labour
10. Establish a group of 5-7 internal and external leaders, most of whom would have potential to become foundation board members, to help identify possible board members and develop strategies for inviting their participation.
11. Develop mechanisms to solicit input from internal and external stakeholders on who might be appropriate to sit on the board.
12. Develop mechanisms to solicit regular input from internal stakeholders on foundation priorities and fund dispersal processes.
13. It is recommended the foundation's case and priorities focus on addressing needs that are broader than a single school, with a priority on district-wide needs. Areas where a number of schools are addressing the same issues should be identified and possibly addressed by the foundation, eliminating some of the burden on individual schools. Specific areas of focus might include:
  - Enhancements to core or basic education programs, especially where those enhancements would be seen to meet the changing needs of society
  - Health and social supports designed to minimize factors that create learning inequities between students
  - Specialized programs and services
  - Programs that support career pathways which address current and potential future labour market shortages
  - Initiatives that would reduce inequities between schools
  - Enrichment programs
- Research, innovation and non-traditional approaches to learning

14. Develop a mandate that reflects the intent to engage citizens and school board staff in establishing Edmonton Public Schools as the standard for public education in Canada.
15. Commit to "working with" donors to develop giving opportunities.
16. Develop criteria to be used when accepting gifts to ensure EPSB values and priorities are not compromised and that projects resulting from gifts do not inadvertently drive operating dollars.
17. It is recommended that the foundation not interfere with fund raising at the school level, but it should support schools' efforts by offering:
  - fund raising advice and counsel
  - access to fund raising tools, tips and approaches
  - gift receipting
  - donor tracking
  - recognition opportunities
  - broad coordination of asks in an effort to avoid inappropriate asks and double and triple asking of the same donors
18. Focus foundation efforts on involving the broadest possible community and exploring non-traditional avenues and givers.
19. Offer a broad range of giving opportunities to potential donors, to ensure the greatest possible likelihood that donors' needs can be matched with EBSB needs. This involves developing mini "case statements" for a range of program/learning enhancements.
20. Offer a broad range of giving mechanisms (e.g., special events, planned giving, donor participation funds, and monthly contributions) to facilitate the receipt of a variety of gifts and donors' preferences in how they give.
21. Institute a range of endowment funds in support of long term funding stability.
22. Develop a distinct identity for the foundation that reflects its purpose and intent, easily identifiable, and ready to be revealed as part of the launch. This should include the selection of a name for the foundations.
23. Create a "memorable" launch that sets the tone for the foundation's efforts, stimulates interest in the foundation and most important, flows naturally into the implementation of the foundation's strategic plan. The launch should be more than a single event. Rather it should involve intimate connections with many of the foundations target constituencies.
24. Institute mechanisms that enable a high level of accountability to donors and the public by tracking the status of donations and endowed funds closely, and supporting regular reporting.
25. Learn from and utilize the expertise of local fundraising executives and other public education foundations.