



**Summary of Board Meeting #7
Tuesday, February 12, 2002**

- A. **O Canada** – District video.
- B. **Roll Call:** (6:00 p.m.) – Trustee Bonko was absent.
- C. **Communications from the Board Chairman**

The following is the text of the board chairman's communications:

Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the entire board of trustees of Edmonton Public Schools, I want to discuss the labour dispute in which our district is currently involved.

The board and the Superintendent have said many times in many forums that we greatly respect our teachers and value the work they do. That sentiment bears repeating. Teachers play the key role in student achievement and success.

Our primary concern is for students and their learning. A disruption in students' education is a serious matter and neither the government, nor the ATA nor the district can afford to be fixed in their positions when student learning is at risk.

The district has been involved in contract negotiations with teachers for some months. To this point, we have clearly been unable to reach an agreement.

Obviously, our hope is to reach a negotiated settlement sooner rather than later. Parents rightly expect us to reach a settlement so that students can resume learning.

We continue to be available to meet with the teachers' negotiating team and will make every effort to see this situation resolved.

But as the strike continues and everyone grows more anxious for a settlement, we feel it is important to make certain realities clear.

The simple fact is that our current resources cannot begin to address the monetary requests of the ATA.

92 cents of every budget dollar goes to schools in support of classrooms.

Our budget for administration and governance is almost 1% below the provincial cap of 4%.

Any settlement above the 4 and 2 per cent allocated to us by the government specifically for teacher salaries would have an impact on classrooms. The 3.5 per cent increase to our grants has already been distributed to schools to address needs at the school level.

Each one per cent increase in teachers' salaries represents an amount of money equivalent to 50 teaching positions (\$2.6 million).

We have studied the Black Gold settlement and a similar settlement in our environment would result in a sizeable shortfall or the loss of several hundred teaching positions.

We must be mindful of our obligations to other staff groups which include support staff, custodians, maintenance workers and exempt staff with whom we will be negotiating shortly.

We believe that a settlement that is not financially sustainable compromises the high quality education provided at Edmonton Public Schools. It would impact the number of teachers we can afford, class sizes and the resources available to schools.

Having said that, we want to reach a settlement that is fair to teachers. We also want to ensure that settlement is fiscally sustainable and in the best interest of students over both the short and long term.

We are prepared to negotiate with the resources we have. We are willing to return to the table at any time. So, I am asking for the Edmonton Public Local of the ATA to commit to a timely meeting with this board to reach a settlement. Thank you.

D. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools – None.

E. Minutes:

1. Board Meeting #6 – January 29, 2002 - Approved as printed.

F. Focus on Student Achievement

2. Aboriginal Education Services - Received for information.

G. Reports:

3. Proposed Submission to the Alberta Child Welfare Act Review
 - a) Approved recommendation.
 - b) Trustee Nicholson requested that a copy of the report be provided to staff and/or placed on the district website.
4. Program Distribution Status Report - Received for information.
5. Capital Projects Update - Received for information.
6. Amiskwacy Academy Update: Completion of Renovations - Received for information.
7. Bereavement - Received with regret.

H. Committee and Board Representative Reports

- **Community Relations Activities**

Trustee Woodrow noted that she and several other trustees had attended the Smart City Awards luncheon on Wednesday, January 30, 2002. Two schools were nominated for the Edmonton Journal's Innovations in Teaching Award – W.P. Wagner School for the First Program and J. Percy Page School for Treasure the Journey – J. Percy Page won the award.

I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives

1. Mr. Steve Brodie, parent advocate, expressed appreciation for the board's comments regarding the need for more funding for public education. He expressed concern that mention has not been made of the external costs that need to be funded in addition to salaries. He noted that parents would like to see the board taking a leadership position.

Mr. Brodie then asked the following questions:

- Will the board send condolences to the Royal Family regarding the passing of Princess Margaret?
 - Will consideration be given to naming a school after Princess Margaret?
2. Mr. David Dorward, from the Edmonton Grads Youth Basketball Club, indicated that the Club has been organized and accepted by the AFA and AASA to carry on the league in the city and provincial championships. The Club is requesting use of district facilities for the Club which serves youth primarily in grades 11 and 12. He expressed appreciation for the quick response from trustees and the administration and was thankful to carry on that dialogue.

The chairman indicated that the board's position is that the district would honour its current bookings under the Joint Use Agreement and would not be able to provide access to school facilities other than under the Joint Use Agreement. He encouraged Mr. Dorward to contact the rentals department for assistance.

3. Ms Pat Kirkland, parent and advocate for public education, thanked the board for its support for increased overall funding for public education.

She asked the following questions.

- What would be the required mill rate increase (in dollars per household if possible) that would be necessary to achieve the Black Gold settlement?
- Will other workers such as support staff and custodial staff be laid off in the event of a long-term strike?

Ms Kirkland was advised that the board has no plan to lay off staff.

J. Trustee and Board Requests for Information

Trustee Hansen asked what the impact would be on the 2002-2003 budget of the rumoured 40 per cent increase in Alberta Health Care premiums.

K. Notices of Motion – None.

L. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, February 26, 2002 – 6:00 p.m.

M. Duration of Meeting: 6:00 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.