

DATE: June 12, 2012

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Response to Staff Group Budget Presentations

ORIGINATOR: David Fraser, Executive Director, Corporate Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Diana Bolan

REFERENCE: Board Meeting #13 – April 10, 2012 Staff Group Presentations
CUPE Local 3550, Exempt Staff and Edmonton Public Teachers
Board Meeting #14 – May 8, 2012 Staff Group Presentation
CUPE Local 474

ISSUE

The Board in its role as employer has committed to providing a response from the Board (Trustees) and Administration (Superintendent of Schools and senior leadership team) to the presentations by staff groups regarding the 2012-13 budget.

BACKGROUND

Presentations regarding the 2012-13 budget were made to the Board on April 10, 2012, by CUPE Local 3550 representing support staff (Attachment I), Exempt Staff (Attachment II), Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37 of the ATA representing teachers (Attachment III), and on May 8, 2012 by CUPE Local 474 representing custodial staff (Attachment IV). CUPE Local 784 representing maintenance staff chose not to make a budget presentation this year.

CURRENT SITUATION

In Edmonton Public Schools, our collective focus is on student achievement and we work together to create a culture of continuous improvement. It is important that we maintain this focus on supporting the process of teaching and learning as we navigate through these challenging times. As an employer, we are committed to our staff as they all play a crucial role in our District, contributing to the success of our students. Our challenge, then, is to balance the interests of our students, the interests of our staff groups, and the fiscal realities faced by our District.

As in previous years, there were common themes in the presentations regarding specific issues. Each staff group also identified matters of particular concern for their individual Local.

The first of the common themes again relates to ongoing implications of the economic downturn. In 2009, the economy in Alberta went through what economists have described as a recession. While positive growth in our economy is now evident, adjustments have been made by the Provincial government in the current budget to ensure that government spending is controlled over the next three years. The net result of the recession and its impact on government funding is that the District has depleted its operational reserves in developing successive budgets to carry us through difficult years and even with utilizing these operational reserves, positions were eliminated in order to balance the budget.

The Board acknowledges that lobbying for adequate, stable and sustained funding that at least addresses the rate of inflation continues to be a primary objective of its advocacy committee and all trustees.

Again this year, a second commonality in the briefs is the need for on-going district support for professional development for all employees. Given the number of impending retirements over the next several years, the need for succession planning is more critical than ever. The District remains committed to continuing the work in the area of staff development to ensure the availability of appropriate learning opportunities for all employees. This work is in direct support of the fifth District Priority, *listen to staff, honour their contributions, and support their opportunities for collaboration, growth and professional development.*

The District and staff groups share a focus on the need to promote good health and well-being. Several staff groups commented on the third commonality of workload and the need for more time for staff to fulfill their increasing responsibilities. The Board acknowledges the relationship between workload and overall health and well-being. While recognizing that issues of workload and staffing are normally brought forward during bargaining for a new collective agreement, the Board commits to advocating for adequate, stable and sustained funding in order to address workload and staffing issues in the District.

In an effort to create healthier workplaces and to encourage staff to improve their health and fitness levels the District launched the Healthy Living pilot which is a collaborative project delivered by Edmonton Public Schools and the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan and supported by the Alberta Teachers' Association and the District's three Canadian Union of Public Employees locals. The pilot involved 700 staff members in 17 schools and central departments and was launched in February 2012. The second phase of the pilot will begin in September 2012. The Healthy Living Initiative supports District Priority #4, which *promotes health and wellness of all students and staff.*

The Board commends and thanks the staff groups for their interest in working collaboratively with Trustees and the Administration on the many issues identified. It recognizes the important work accomplished through joint committees and the provision of input by the staff groups. The following sections outline the Board and Administration responses to the individual presentations, in order of presentation.

CUPE Local 3550 (Support Staff)

The Board acknowledges and values the important contribution that support staff make to Edmonton Public Schools through their work in offices, classrooms, cafeterias, libraries and labs.

The Board and Administration share the Local's frustration regarding the Government's decision to only increase the funding that supports the cost of living increase granted to teaching staff. This situation has persisted for several years. The Board continues to lobby the Government for adequate, stable and sustained funding. This will enable the Board to provide fair compensation to support staff members, protect them from changes in their employment status, and continue to attract and retain top-quality employees.

The Local expressed concern that given Alberta Education's *Action on Inclusion*, support staff working with special needs students within the confines of a "regular classroom" may not have the level of expertise required to provide the level of support and assistance needed. The Board recognizes the need to provide professional development opportunities that will enable Educational Assistants to successfully meet these challenges. To that end, professional development sessions will be developed for Educational Assistants as part of the ongoing work of the joint staff development committee. Further, the Board acknowledges that over the past seven years funding has been provided for two mentors to provide support and assistance to educational assistants and this work will continue. Once again, this work is in direct support of the fifth District Priority, *listen to staff, honour their contributions, and support their opportunities for collaboration, growth and professional development*.

The Local reiterated its position that additional support be provided, over and above that provided by the support staff mentors, in order to ensure ongoing professional development opportunities for all support staff. The Board acknowledges that the role of the support staff mentors is to provide support not replace training. Given the changing demographics and the need for succession planning, the Administration will continue to develop and implement annual professional development opportunities for administrative support staff, educational assistants, and science and library technicians; standardize software training for administrative support staff; and, provide support for job-family specific networks. The Board encourages the Administration to continue to work with support staff and Local representatives to maintain and enhance professional development opportunities, including participation in network groups. This is consistent with the District Plan's core strategy of enhancing staff capacity.

Further, the Local expressed concern regarding the lack of training provided to those support staff individuals who have the responsibility of administering student medication. The Administration commits to addressing this issue in the upcoming year.

In an effort to promote a proactive approach to a healthy workplace, the Local stressed the need for appropriate staffing levels, reasonable workloads, and access, on a voluntary basis, to health and wellness programs. As indicated previously, the District launched a voluntary Health Risk Assessment and Healthy Living pilot which supports the health and wellness of all staff. While the Board recognizes that decisions regarding the staffing of specific schools rest with the principal, requests relative to district staffing levels are normally brought forward during bargaining for a new collective agreement.

The Local once again requested that the District develop a permanent spare board similar to CUPE Local 474. The Local believes that the creation of such a pool of permanent staff members would allow the District to maintain a core group of trained qualified staff to staff vacancies in key positions, for example an Administrative Assistant in a single administrator school. While the Board recognizes that requests of this nature are normally brought forward during bargaining for a new collective agreement, we will continue to lobby the Government for adequate, stable and sustained funding, including the need to have adequate, sustained numbers of support staff to meet the needs of students, schools and the District.

Exempt Staff

The Board acknowledges the varied and valuable service provided by the exempt staff; it concurs that it is through this group's diversity that the intricate, unique and essential service needs of the District can be fully achieved.

As a result of a survey conducted among all Exempt staff, one of the issues of significance was a request from 10-month Exempt staff to increase their work week by 2.5 hours, which would result in increased salary and benefits costs of 7.15% per affected staff member. This increase in hours would allow for collaborative planning time with teachers and meetings with parents and the community. Survey results showed that dedicated funds for professional development and continuing education was also cited as an area of significance for Exempt staff. The Administration commits to examining these areas and recognizes that this is in support of the fifth District Priority, *listen to staff, honour their contribution and support their opportunities for collaboration, growth and professional development.*

The Exempt staff requested that the Board and Administration examine ways to promote an inclusive work environment and improve exempt staff connections where interdepartmental collaboration is enhanced and exempt staff are active participants and contributors in the decision-making process. The Administration commits to exploring this issue through discussions at the Exempt Staff Liaison Committee and reporting back to the Board. The Board commends the Administration for reviewing this situation and encourages Administration to involve exempt staff in this review, as part of the commitment under the fifth District Priority.

Given that the demands of schools are greater than what Exempt staff can supply, the Exempt staff stressed a need to ensure work-life balance and a compensation package that is aligned with other staff groups in the District. The Exempt staff's presentation also focused on the fact that 26% of the current Exempt staff are eligible for retirement and stressed the need for succession planning and staff retention.

The Exempt staff commended the District for their work on the development of Professional Practice Competencies for Central Leaders (PPCCL).

Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37 of the ATA

The Board appreciates and values the strong relationship between the Local and the District to which the president of the Local referred. The collaborative manner in which the Board and the Local have approached a number of recent initiatives has yielded gratifying results and will continue to do so in the future.

In its presentation, Local 37 focused on several key issues where the Board and Administration could tangibly demonstrate improved working and learning conditions for staff and students.

With the reorganization of Central Services and the government focus on strengthening inclusive practices and wraparound services, the Local highlighted the need for release time for teachers and service providers to meet to plan, coordinate and evaluate the delivery of services to all students. Further, the Local stressed the need for training and support for the classroom as well

as direct and timely communication on planned changes relative to the reorganization for inclusive services. It is imperative that the Government provide funding at all levels and that the cost of these wraparound services not be paid for with educational dollars.

The Local once again reiterated its belief in reducing class sizes as the focus on inclusion expands and advocated for weighted site averages of 17 students in K 3; 23 students in Grades 4 – 6; 25 students in Grades 7 – 9; and 27 students in Grades 10 -12. By using weighted numbers, the Local believes that we can better support the needs of all students in an inclusive setting. While the Board recognizes that requests of this nature are normally brought forward during bargaining for a new collective agreement, trustees encourage the Administration to continue to explore options for addressing class size, especially at Division I (kindergarten to grade three), and to develop metrics for the Board to use in monitoring the situation. The Board supports the actions of Administration at the District and school levels, e.g., increased allocations for addressing Division I class size, examining the impact of weighted site averages, and the use of part-time teachers to address class size for certain subject areas. The Board will continue to lobby for adequate, stable and sustained funding to address class size through its advocacy committee and all Trustees.

Notwithstanding the fact that we are a District of choice, the Local stressed the need for the District to continue to promote neighbourhood schools as a first choice in an effort to reduce transportation costs, which cuts into educational dollars. It is the opinion of the Local that if parents choose to send their children to a school other than their neighborhood school that all costs for transportation should be borne by the parents. As a District of choice, the Board does not differentiate transportation costs for students who attend neighbourhood schools or other schools within the District. It should also be noted that instructional grants are not used to offset transportation costs.

The Local expressed concern about the annual staff satisfaction survey question and the confirmation surveys that ask teachers to evaluate their principal. The Board acknowledges and supports that the Administration's practice related to the two surveys does provide guidance to teachers regarding their obligations under the ATA Code of Professional Conduct. The Board is encouraged by the Administration's decision to review the need for the annual staff satisfaction survey in light of the three-year comprehensive employee engagement survey, and the proposed review of the principal confirmation survey. The Board encourages the Administration to invite staff group representatives to participate in the review. The Board also reiterates that the quality of school instructional leaders, especially in the principalship, is paramount to the District achieving its vision, mission and priorities. The Board therefore needs regular assurance that school leaders are meeting the Principal Quality Practice Standard (PQPS).

With respect to technology, while technology resources continue to impact educational budgets, the Local stressed the need for teachers to be provided with the appropriate training and release time when introducing new technology resources such as PowerSchool. Limited training and release time results in frustration as teachers attempt to complete progress reports and other professional duties. The Local urged the Board to work to influence the Government for greater funding in this area. The Board and Administration assure the Local that dialogue with Alberta Education ministry officials regarding adequate, stable and sustained funding for technology and associated professional development is on-going.

The Local once again reiterated its position that the jointly developed *Framework for Involvement in Site-based Decision Making* be fully implemented in order to ensure authentic teacher-shared decision-making in all schools. The Board acknowledges and supports the good work that has been accomplished through the joint committee on site-based decision-making. The committee identified the need for three subcommittees to address the following topics:

- Developing exemplars of successful staff engagement/involvement in schools and central services decision units.
- Providing advice and assistance related to the development of staff engagement training modules that could be incorporated into the Leadership Development Framework for School and Central Leaders over the next three years. These modules would include dimensions, competencies and strategies for developing effective relationships.
- Examining ways to create engagement at the District level. This would be consistent with the fifth District Priority, *listen to staff, honour their contributions, and support their opportunities for collaboration, growth and professional development.*

The Board is also pleased that the Committee will provide input and feedback on where the Framework can be aligned with the PQPS, the PPCCL, and leadership development for new and existing principals. While it is acknowledged that the joint Committee does present annually at a Public Board meeting, the Board requests that there be more regular updates regarding the identification and application of exemplars of involvement in site-based decision making.

The Local again requested increased supports for substitute teachers, particularly in the areas of adequate funding for substitute teacher coverage in every school, access to resources and increased professional development. The Board is pleased that Administration representatives meet regularly with substitute teachers and their representatives through the Local. The Board and Administration acknowledge the importance of substitute teacher coverage, as it provides opportunities for classroom teachers to collaborate and participate in professional development activities. The District's ability to continue to provide adequate substitute teacher coverage has been greatly hampered by the Government's decision to reduce by 50 per cent the funding provided through the Alberta Initiative on School Improvement (AISI). The Board will continue lobbying efforts to restore and enhance this funding, as it has a direct correlation to enhanced teaching practices and improved student achievement. The Board supports the Administration's decision to provide access to *StaffZone* to all substitute teachers and encourages the Administration to examine ways in which substitute teacher access to online resources and two-way communication with schools and classroom teachers can be enhanced.

The Local cited a lack of consistency from school to school relative to teacher-initiated professional development. The Board recognizes that requests of this nature are normally brought forward during bargaining for a new collective agreement. The Board also recognizes the importance of ongoing professional development for all classroom teachers and is pleased with the ongoing work of the joint committee and its annual reports to the trustees at Public Board meetings. Once again, this work is in direct support of the fifth District Priority, *listen to staff, honour their contributions, and support their opportunities for collaboration, growth and professional development.*

The Local also requested that the Board ensure continued support for new teacher induction. The Board acknowledges that the District's New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) is recognized as a best-in-class program within the Province. In light of the reduction in overall government funding and the anticipated reduction in the number of new teachers for 2012-13 (partially due to lower than expected resignations and retirements), the staff of NTIP will focus their efforts on continuing and enhancing support for beginning teachers hired over the past two years. The Board will continue to lobby the provincial government for adequate, stable and sustained funding for public education, including emphasis on the need to build capacity for districts and the teaching profession through attracting, hiring and developing beginning teachers. This will be especially important as the District examines its changing demographics over the next four years and the anticipated number of teacher retirements.

The Local proposed the reinstatement of TAG, Teacher Advisory Group, as this group would provide an opportunity for senior district staff to interact directly with classroom teachers and learn first-hand about the changing needs of the classroom teacher. The Administration commits to reviewing this issue in the upcoming year.

Finally, the Board appreciates the Local's commitment to working collaboratively to resolve issues and to nurturing a relationship based on trust and respect.

CUPE Local 474 (Custodial Staff)

The Board relies on the work of the members of Local 474 Custodial Workers to keep our buildings clean and safe for students and staff. We very much appreciate this important contribution to the success of the District.

In its presentation, the Local again expressed their belief that in order to meet the need for clean and healthy schools which will meet the health and safety needs of students and staff as well as being environmentally responsible, a comprehensive reorganization of custodial services for the District is needed. The Local strongly recommended the creation of a Custodial Services Department led by a qualified Director who would be responsible for implementing standardized cleaning procedures across the District, the staffing of custodial positions, and the development of a district-wide training and educational program for custodial staff which would include leadership training for Head Custodians. While principals expressed a strong desire during the 2010 central services review to see maintenance services become a core service with the maintenance allocations recentralized, there was no indication that school-based custodial services should be reviewed and the custodial services allocation recentralized.

As a result of the establishment of the Supervisor Custodial Support Services position, custodial supply staff receive the training, guidance, support and supervision necessary to ensure effective work practices in supporting the work of principals and custodial staff in schools. One of the key deliverables from the establishment of this position is the standardization of practices. Functions that were spread across several departments will be centralized under this position. This will alleviate some of the issues which occurred around advice and assistance, leading to ineffective and inefficient practices in some schools. It is the belief of the Administration that as this position continues to evolve, many of the issues raised by the Local will be resolved.

The Local once again recommended standardized purchase of custodial equipment in order to ensure equity for all school sites. The Administration notes that the Purchasing Department negotiates the best possible prices for equipment, and that schools and decision units are required to make any major purchase through that department. The Administration commits to further reviewing the issue of standardized purchase of custodial equipment over the next year as the Custodial Support Services function continues to evolve.

The Local also requested that the District improve hiring practices to attract qualified applicants, including students, for custodial positions. The Supervisor of Custodial Support Services has been actively involved in working with Recruitment and Staffing personnel relative to the hiring of custodial staff.

The Board acknowledges the Local's concern regarding the application of the custodial staffing formula in schools, particularly in those instances where rooms designated as decommissioned space are continuing to be used. The Administration commits to investigating and resolving issues as they arise.

CUPE 784 (Maintenance Staff)

While Local 784 did not make a budget presentation to the Board of Trustees, the Board would like to reiterate the important contribution that Local 784 Maintenance Workers contribute relative to the success of the District.

In past years the Local has stressed that students and teachers in smaller schools deserve to have their schools maintained to the same standard as that received by larger schools with higher enrolments. As a result of the recentralization of the maintenance budget and the identification of maintenance services as a core service, principals are now able to concentrate on their core work of instructional leadership, while ensuring greater effectiveness, efficiency and equity across the system.

KEY POINTS

- All Decision Unit Administrators and Principals will be provided with copies of the Board report and written submissions provided by the staff groups.
- A report outlining the status of actions taken will be presented to Board during the 2012-13 school year.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I	CUPE Local 3550 (Support Staff)
ATTACHMENT II	Exempt Staff
ATTACHMENT III	Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37
ATTACHMENT IV	CUPE Local 474 (Custodial Staff)

DB:cls

Canadian Union of Public Employees
Local 3550

Budget Presentation to
Edmonton Public Schools
Board of Trustees

April 10, 2012

Mr. Chair, Trustee Colburn;

Trustees;

Superintendent Schmidt;

Staff Members;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning. I am Carol Chapman, President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3550, also known as CUPE Local 3550.

Thank you for this opportunity to share what we, the non-teaching staff of Edmonton Public Schools believe to be important points for schools, central departments and the Board to consider when developing the 2012 – 2013 Proposed Budget and for long term planning for Edmonton Public Schools.

Normally, some of the elected executive officers of CUPE 3550 join me for this presentation. Due to the change in the time when public board meetings are held, they are not here with me today. Their priority is to support student learning so they are in their respective workplaces. Sorry, their kids are more important!!

Educational Assistants, Administrative Assistants, Clerks, Secretaries, Food Preparers, Science, Library and other Technicians and Interpreters are the Support Staff of Edmonton Public Schools. These people play critical roles in support of student learning, student safety and business administration in our district sites every day. CUPE Local 3550 is proud to represent approximately the 2,300 permanent full-time, part-time and hourly dedicated non-teaching education workers who are an important part of the team of Edmonton Public Schools support staff, maintenance, custodial, teachers, and exempt staff.

The points I am going to present to you either directly or indirectly relate to the recruitment and retention of qualified support staff workers with Edmonton Public Schools.

- Inclusive Education
- Staff development
- Bargaining

Alberta Education's *Setting the Direction* and now the *Action on Inclusion*, to some degree, will change how Edmonton Public Schools delivers educational programming for some of the students in this district. The benefits of Inclusive Learning can be tremendous for the school community but only if the supports are in place to make this successful. Early in my career with Edmonton Public Schools, I had the opportunity to work in an elementary school that firmly supported inclusive education. Students with mild, moderate and severe learning needs were integrated into regular classes with their classmates from the neighbourhood. The social and intangible benefits are virtually immeasurable for the school community. However, delivering program supports in a 'regular' classroom is much different than in specialized sites. Teachers, support staff and paraprofessional staff in district sites have had targeted training and are specialized to a high degree. The reality is that all staff who are working with a special needs student in their regular classroom may not have the same level of expertise. The number and FTE of support staff required to adequately support successful integration of students will need to be considered. Students do not just have learning challenges in the mornings. Or a student is not FAS in the morning and normal in the afternoon. Adequate supports need to be in place for **all students** to do their best work.

Financial restraints will affect how schools will be able to do this. The Provincial Government needs to take this in to consideration when the allocations are determined. Edmonton Public School administration and the Board of Trustees has a difficult task ahead given the uncertainty in our current political climate. In times of fiscal restraint, we are all expected to do 'more with less'. What keeps CUPE Local 3550 members on the job are the children in our schools and knowing that as partners in their education, we are making a difference in their school experiences and achievements. Support staff are willing to go the extra mile in support of the quality teaching and learning that takes place every day in this district.

With increased workloads and high expectations, some staff feel they are not able to do a great job and are feeling frustrated being just 'good enough'. Our Employee Health Services department does a wonderful job supporting our workers who are on medical leave. It is a well-known fact that the results of overwork and burn-out mean that very valued and experienced staff members may be unable to perform their duties due to increased medical appointments, sick leave, and in extreme cases, long-term disability or WCB due to life-long health difficulties that were contributed to or created by their work at Edmonton Public Schools.

Stress is often an underlying cause for personal illness. Appropriate staffing levels, reasonable workloads, and health and wellness programs would certainly be a proactive approach to a healthy workplace.

The District is rolling out the ASEBP Healthy Living Initiatives program at several pilot sites this year. The long term goal of this project is to create a healthier workforce. I suspect that, as this program is fine-tuned and offered to all district staff, it will become more of a culture than a program much like the success of Occupational Health and Safety in creating safe worksites. We do need to respect every staff member's choice to participate according to their own comfort level.

The increasing pressure is taking its toll as our members feel their positions or hours are sacrificed and are at the mercy of the budgets. Professional development and training needed to prepare staff to do their best work is often sacrificed as well. Some of our support staff members have access to PD but others are denied or are severely restricted.

Our demographics are changing. The need for succession planning is more critical now than ever. Retiring support staff are beginning an exciting new time in their lives. Unfortunately, they are also taking with them their many years of experience, skills and knowledge. New staff to this district have huge shoes to fill. Many of the administrative assistants who are retiring had the luxury of learning and evolving with the change in demands for the position. New staff do not have that luxury and their learning curve is often straight up a mountain. Edmonton Public Schools is absolutely a district of choice for parents looking for superior supports for their children with learning challenges. Educational assistants are working with a higher level of students with special needs than they did twenty years ago.

The mentorship program for administrative assistants and educational assistants has been successful in offering support to staff who are new to the district, new to their positions or are struggling in their positions. However, as the experienced staff leave and new hires take on the rewards and challenges that face them in their roles, we as a district will need to continue to offer supports to ensure they will be successful.

The role of the mentor is to *support training, not replace training*. The administrative assistant training program is currently underway with seven participants. These staff are being groomed for positions in our school offices. After completion, they will be better prepared for assuming their responsibilities. We would be I to believe that they will hit the ground running and immediately work at the same level as the staff they are replacing.

Administrative Assistants, Educational Assistants, and Library Technicians now have opportunities to meet to share best practices. Network groups have been formed and are another valuable avenue for staff to grow, learn and provide peer-to-peer support. Participation needs to be supported by school administration.

The District has developed a policy for the administration of medication to our students. Part of this policy ensures that all staff tasked with the responsibility of managing medications administered to some of our students have been properly trained. This training has not been offered to date. I believe that discussions are taking place to ensure training will be offered to district sites soon. This training needs to happen as many staff are being asked to do this task but have not had the training as required by Board policy

The Staff Development department in Human Resources has been doing a tremendous job with limited resources and personnel. In previous years, professional development days have been offered for educational assistants, library technicians, science technicians and administrative assistants. These have been well received by participants and they would like to see these continue. Discussions at the Joint Support Staff Development Committee recognize the limitations of what can be coordinated by this department with staff reductions. We are asking that more resources be provided for staff development to ensure district staff will receive necessary professional development support. As an educational institution, we need to acknowledge that learning does not just happen in classrooms for students. In order for students to do their best work, staff need to be supported with ongoing professional development.

The 2006 – 2009 collective agreement signed between CUPE Local 3550 Support Staff and Edmonton Public Schools was extended until August 31, 2011. Our members were pleased with the fact that all employee groups were aligned with the ATA collective agreement rates and received the Alberta Average Wage Earnings Index. Bargaining surveys sent the bargaining team the very clear message that parity with the teachers should continue. They feel less valued by the district when, in times of fiscal restraint, support staff seem to suffer with lower wage increases, reduction in positions and FTE. We are nearly one year into bargaining and they are patiently (and some not so patiently!) waiting to hear they will be again have parity with the teachers for the 2011 – 2012 school year. It has been said here before and it has not changed: CUPE Local 3550 members always place a great deal of importance on Trustee participation in the bargaining process and count on their understanding of Support Staff issues.

When support staff are first hired to Edmonton Public Schools, they typically start with Supply Services and work as hourly on-call staff. Many use this opportunity as their stepping stone in to a permanent position. However, maintaining a core group of trained qualified staff has historically been a struggle. In our recruitment and retention discussions with administration, we presented the concept of creating a permanent spare board similar to CUPE 474 Custodial Workers. We hope to be able to discuss the feasibility of permanent spare supply support staff workers and the creation of such a pool in the very near future.

As the economy of the province climbs out of the recession, we believe that recruitment and retention will again be a challenge for our Human Resources Recruitment and Staffing Department. Many factors contribute to the decisions people make when deciding where they will spend their working time. We sincerely believe that Edmonton Public Schools will continue to strive to be an employer of choice.

The future of K-12 public education for Alberta's children depends on today's Public School Trustees.

At a recent forum, the current Minister of Education provided data and advised us that funding to education had in fact not suffered cuts. For our support staff members who are still on the recall list, they would be surprised to hear this. As front line staff, we believe that Public School Trustees are the last line of defence against forces that would weaken public education and what it stands for. We are all here to support the best interest of student learning. Community members, parents and district employees and CUPE Local 3550 members are counting on this Board to continue to join with other Boards and lobby Alberta Education to ensure our schools are provided the adequate sustainable funding that all public school students so rightly deserve.

Thank-you very much for your time and your attention. Some of what I have shared this morning you have heard before. The Local is optimistic that the Board and administration will seriously consider CUPE Local 3550's suggestions in the development of the 2012 – 2013 Budget.

Thank you again for your time.

Carol Chapman,
President, CUPE Local 3550

EXEMPT STAFF PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APRIL 10, 2012

Mr. Chair, Trustees, Superintendent Schmidt, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning. My name is Kris Uusikorpi. I am a member of the Exempt Staff Liaison Committee and I am here again today representing the Exempt Staff group. I would like to acknowledge members of the committee who are in attendance today; our Chair, Joanne Bergos from Human Resources, Tracy Green from Communications, and Sarah James from Employee Engagement.

It is remarkable to me that more than a year has passed since I was last here speaking on behalf of the Exempt Staff group. Last year, our presentation offered an orientation for the new trustees about the role Exempt staff play within the District. It also highlighted areas of employment we feel are unique to our staff group and the challenges this diversity can create that has a direct effect on the District. Today, I would like to provide a status update to the issues discussed last year, address some of the outcomes of the significant changes that have occurred in Central Services and offer suggestions we would like you to consider for both the budget process and equally important, future priorities.

Based upon District demographic information compiled last June, there is not a notable difference in the number of Exempt Staff working here over the past year. Our staff group is roughly 620 employees and continues to be the second smallest staff group at Edmonton Public Schools. Approximately 70 individuals are Exempt management, the remaining 550 are non-management and just under half of that figure is made up of 10-month employees whose workday schedule follows that of the school calendar. The aspect of our staff group that makes us so unique and is possibly our greatest strength is also one that creates the greatest level of challenge; our diversity. At the management level, we are represented in positions such as Executive Directors, Managing Directors, Managers, Supervisors and the like. In a non-management capacity we are Graphic Designers, Project Coordinators, Business Managers

Technical and Network Analysts, Psychologists, Occupational and Physical Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists (OTs, PTs and SLPs) and other professional staff who work in Corporate Services, Finance & Infrastructure and Student Learning Services, as well as in our schools. All of whom work together to achieve the Board's vision

The Exempt Staff group is not a collective and has no formal bargaining process and at this time we do not have a current Terms and Conditions of Employment. Several of the topics included in last year's presentation remain active and will be part of the terms and conditions proposal and recommendations that are being put forward to Administration for consideration in the very near future. Last year our topics of discussion included Professional Development and continuing education; 10-month employment amongst the OT's, PT's, SLP's, and other 10 month staff in Student Learning Services; an inclusive work environment; and improving exempt staff connections.

TEN MONTH EMPLOYMENT & OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION:

Presently the Exempt Liaison Committee is conducting a survey among all Exempt staff that will help inform the proposal and recommendations we will put forward to Administration. One of the points the committee regards as significant is getting direct comment from 10 month Exempt staff regarding a review of the length of the present work week and a consideration of an increase of 2.5 hours per week. This is to accommodate work load that directly impacts students, that is collaborative planning time with teachers and meetings with parents and community. With regard to dedicated funds for professional development and continuing education for all Exempt staff, this matter is also part of our survey and remains an active point of discussion as we go forward with our suggestions for compensation. Both of these topics also address issues surrounding staff attraction and retention.

AN INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT & IMPROVING EXEMPT STAFF CONNECTIONS:

In considering the last two items of last year's discussion; the movement toward an inclusive working environment and improving exempt staff connections, we would be remiss in not first addressing what happened within the District this past year. Upon reflecting on the changes that

have occurred, we can truly say it has been a year of flux, a year of momentum, a year of substantial staffing changes, a year of committing to a common vision and investing in the foundation for what is to come. And whether the change has been driven by the restructuring of Central Services, or the changes made to establish core services, or the considerable number of staff retirements, or the consequence of external factors, the effect has been tremendous on how we do our work. These changes have touched all staff who work in the District and we believe Exempt Staff in particular. With the Central Services redesign and the revamp of Student Learning Services many staff have been reassigned to another unit or now have a different reporting structure. The change of process for service delivery in Communications, District Technology, Facilities and Student Learning Services has had a tremendous ripple effect on both the Exempt staff in Central and the Exempt staff in our schools. It is important too, to recognize that all of this change began at a time when the District has been under extreme uncertainty for funding.

Having said that, how does it relate to an inclusive working environment and improving staff connections? I work in the Financial Services Department and can confirm that the complete replacement of the department's management due to the retirement of all senior staff has played a role in the dramatic changes in our business processes. Some changes have been driven by external factors such as financial reporting requirements and some internally driven where the work we do is viewed through fresh eyes and with the desire to obtain efficiency in processes. This has been pursued with vigor. And although we've had moments of breathlessness due to the pressures brought on by the changes, it has also created an environment where inter-departmental collaboration has been greatly enhanced and the beneficiaries are our schools and ultimately our students.

The Exempt Staff have always strived for equity, visibility and to be an active participant and contributor to the decision making process. Financial Services is not alone in discovering the by-products of change. In the redesign of Central Services and the deliberate focus to actively decrease the duplication of services, a stronger commitment to collaboration is happening. And with it, we've seen a noticeably greater willingness to include Exempt Staff in the conversations to help shape the inclusive environment that is being striven for.

Another initiative of note is the creation of a project team to work on the Development of Professional Practice Competencies for Central Leaders (PPCCL). It is both an honor and a privilege that I was asked to be on this project team with such a diverse group of Central Services representatives, many of whom are Exempt staff. We have been given the opportunity to evoke present and future change on Central leadership through the deliberate recognition of who a leader is, what a leader does, and how it relates to the work of the District. This is a move to greater transparency in career development as well as recognizes how the world around us has changed and paves the road for how the District will remain relevant as we embrace the future.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE BUDGET PROCESS AND FUTURE PRIORITIES:

An essential need of the Exempt Staff and indeed all staff here at Edmonton Public is work-life balance. It is critical to be aware of staff wellness, performance and retention as all of these factors directly impact our students. Much of that awareness is also related to Exempt staff compensation and the recognition that it be aligned with the other staff groups here at the District. The changes that have occurred within Central have highlighted areas where demand from our schools is greater than what we can supply and the reality is even if the District's hands are tied economically, the work remains. The Exempt Staff are all working hard to ensure that the way we support all of our schools is equitable, efficient, and effective and we need support. As of last June, District data indicates 26% of Exempt Staff are eligible to retire today. If those folks stay on for the next five years, that number jumps to 42% of Exempt Staff.

This is alarming considering how quickly a year can pass, and the next five will happen before we know it. With the certainty of staff retirements and given the Alberta economic climate the District has a tremendous need for succession planning and staff retention and we ask that this consideration be a significant part of budget planning.

As a committee, we feel it is very important to ensure that the areas of interest and concern from such a diverse group of professionals are brought forward. We hope this presentation has provided you with the key points we feel are significant for your consideration.

With these changes the year of flux has created a year of momentum and has also shown us a year of both strain and resilience among our staff. And for the Exempt Staff it is exciting indeed to see what the next year will bring. In closing, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to address the Board. We very much look forward to working with you.



**Edmonton Public Teachers Local No. 37
of the Alberta Teachers' Association**

**Budget Presentation to the
Edmonton Public Board of Trustees**

April 10, 2012

April 10, 2012

Mr. Chairman, Trustees, Superintendent Schmidt:

Thank you for this opportunity to share the views of Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37 of the Alberta Teachers' Association as you prepare for the District's 2012-2013 budget.

At this time in Alberta, the wealthiest of provinces, we are hearing the familiar noise from the right-wing political parties and followers. Expressions like "wage freeze" and "privatization" keep rearing their heads. I will leave the issue of wages for the bargaining table – since that process is now upon us after 5 years of an extended agreement.

However, the noise from the right is a real threat. The government has refused to reduce funding for charter and private schools and the Wildrose are clamoring for a voucher system, which has failed miserably everywhere it has been tried. Hurt in the movement is the very public education system we have worked so hard to build in an Alberta where we believe every child should have the opportunity to reach his/her fullest potential – regardless of the additional wealth parents might have.

It is imperative that the Board, the Senior Administration, and all staff groups continue to be vigilant and to work independently and collectively to protect the interests of public education.

As I stated last year, the best way to stimulate the economy is to have an educated public. We must all advocate for funding support and educational policies which will ensure that our public education system is able to deliver the brightest future for every child.

In this brief I will outline a number of areas where we believe improvements can be made which would enhance the quality of service teachers are able to provide so as to ensure the brightest of futures begins in Edmonton Public Schools. Some of the concerns you will hear come up each year as they have still not been resolved. Other concerns are new as times change and new issues arise.

1. With the reorganization of Central Services and with the District and the province working to support and strengthen inclusive practice and wraparound services – it is imperative that the funding be in place at all levels. While wraparound service appears to be the best way to go – it is imperative that the government fund these services fully without taking money from existing educational dollars. It is also important to note that as inclusive practices expand – class sizes must decrease. In addition the teacher must be recognized as the educational leader by all parties. The use of wraparound services also highlights the need for release time for teachers and service providers to meet to plan, coordinate and evaluate the delivery of services to all students.

It is absolutely critical that the new way of doing things cannot become an add-on to a teacher's already full plate.

Another issue which has emerged, related to the reorganization for inclusive services is the communications about change. Teachers most directly impacted by the changes to consulting services to support the learning of all students in an inclusive setting needed more direct communication on the planned changes and what they would mean to their classroom. I hope as we move into year two that training and support for the classroom teacher on these changes will be provided to create a better understanding of new processes and the reasons for the changes.

In reference to class sizes – we continue to support the sizes referenced by the Alberta Commission on Learning in October of 2003, however, the Commission refers to district averages which have not proven effective for the average teacher. We would advocate weighted site averages for Grades K–3 of 17 students; Grades 4–6 of 23 students; Grades 7–9 of 25 students; and Grades 10–12 of 27 students. By using weighted numbers we can better support special needs students and their classmates in an inclusive model.

2. Alberta Education advocates parental choice. Edmonton Public offers a whole range of choices. However, choice often includes subsidized transportation – which cuts into education budgets. If choice is being advocated by the province, the province should provide the dollars to support this choice. If the District is providing additional choices the transportation costs should be borne by the parents so as not to cut into dollars available to the classroom. It should be noted that our community schools should continue to be promoted and all that is possible should be done to have choices within the neighbourhood community schools to reduce the dependency on transportation.
3. We continue to be concerned that in spite of the Respectful Workplace Initiative the District asks teachers to evaluate their principals. This happens to new principals in the confirmation survey and annually to all principals on the District Attitude Survey.

We have a Code of Professional Conduct that states “the teacher, when making a report on the professional performance of another teacher, does so in good faith and prior to submitting the report, provides the teacher with a copy of the report, subject only to Section 24 of the Teaching Profession Act.” Our principals are certificated teachers and members of our Association. We see no reason for the question. It creates stress for teaching staff and is a “no cost fix.” Responsibility for supervision and evaluation of the principal lies with the Superintendent who has delegated this to the Assistant Superintendents. They are in schools often and can provide the supervision and evaluation in the same manner that a principal provides for the rest of the teaching staff.

4. Technology resources place a large stress on educational budgets. This is an important area because the proper technology with the proper training and release time for teachers to take this training will ease stress for teachers as they develop their ability to make the most of these resources. If in-house training is used – release time still needs to be considered for both teachers and the in-house coach.

An example of the struggle referenced above was with the initial roll out of power school. We heard numerous comments about the program appearing without the training for use. Teachers were chosen to go to in-services and then immediately begin training of their colleagues. Often release time was limited and teachers became frustrated as they had to do report cards and other professional duties. The report cards required the use of this new skill they had not had time to learn and problems with the system arose – as teachers discovered a variety of glitches. A longer phase in for this initiative would have lessened the frustration and would have given ITS staff more time to address the glitches.

On the other side of this issue – it is important to remember the human factor. Our budgets are always going to struggle to keep up with new technology – but a balance is needed. Investment in human resources leads to the forging of strong relationships – more one-on-one time can make the world of difference for a child and will create relationships which often last and build capacity in our future leaders.

5. Our joint committee on site-based decision-making has done good work, however we have still not achieved after many years – full implementation of site-based decision-making models. This work needs to be an important part of training for all leaders in the District and an expectation of process at each site.

When school based budgets first evolved there was a great amount of formal involvement by all staffing units within a school. This often involved working together to develop priorities and to allocate funds. Gradually this has shifted and in some schools teachers are totally left out of the budget process and in some cases never even see the budget. Teachers in these schools feel they are not empowered with information nor given any decision-making power. The District needs to ensure that the budget process is both accountable and transparent with authentic teacher-shared decision-making involvement in all schools.

6. Substitute teachers are a diverse and valued part of our teaching and learning teams. The Local acknowledges and appreciates the time spent by Director, Bonnie Zack and Manager of Supply Services, Johanne Tarleton in meeting with our substitute teachers. It is important that all schools maintain an adequate budget line to allow for appropriate substitute service rather than internal coverage. When internal coverage is used – administrators lose valuable admin time or teachers lose much needed prep time. This creates unnecessary stress and may create issues around instructional minutes. Increasing access to paid professional development is another way to show that these teachers are valued and remain current so that they continue to deliver high quality instruction in every classroom they serve.
7. We are supportive of the tremendous work done by the joint committee on Professional Development. We look forward to this committee resuming its work as there is still much to do. There is a lack of consistency in what is allowed for PD from school to school. While we understand that schools and the District have PD expectations, these should not prevent teachers from accessing what they, as individuals, need to reach the goals outlined in their personal Professional Growth Plans. A fair distribution of PD resources would also enhance the sense of value and respect for employees as professionals. Different solutions to this dilemma may be available, but at this time that discussion might best be left to the bargaining table.
8. New teachers continue to need significant support and nurturing as they develop their own professional expertise. Significant work continues to be done in this area through our Joint Steering Committee, our consultant members, and the New Teacher Induction Program. It is hoped that we can continue this work together to strengthen the start new teachers get in their career which will lead to better teaching, longer careers and successful learning environments for students.
9. It might be useful to reinstate some form of TAG (Teacher Advisory Group). This program provided a real opportunity for senior district staff to interact directly with active classroom teachers. It would provide opportunity for senior staff to learn first-hand about the changing needs of teaching and learning and reciprocally it would provide classroom teachers an opportunity to hear first-hand about District initiatives and issues.
10. Work life balance is a major issue raising its head in new ways every day. Technology has made it easier to work from home and to provide additional after-hours services. New demands are being put on our members all the time. Our members want to always provide the best of service – but they also want the best of life away from work as well. In today's world it is more important than ever that employers and employees work together to ensure a positive work/life balance for all employees.

Thank you for allowing us this platform to share our ideas for consideration as District plans are developed for 2012/13.

Our Local is proud of the opportunity joint committees have afforded us to work together. We are honoured to work alongside our colleagues from Support, Custodial, Maintenance and exempt groups. We are in a complex business. We all want to do our best. We all want what is best for children and we all want to work in a healthy and caring environment. The District continues to make significant strides in this regard – but to maintain the loyalty of staff and the high quality of public education that we strive for – we must continue the work.

We also want to thank the Board and the District for the ongoing opportunity we have to work together, to share our input and to make our concerns known. This only works in a trusting relationship. When personal agendas are set aside and decisions are made to benefit all employees, when the workplace atmosphere is highly respectful – our students flourish and we truly are the Best of the Best – an Act to Follow!

Edward C. Butler
President
Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37 of the ATA

Edmonton Public Schools Needs a Centralized Cleaning Program

**CUPE 474
BUDGET BRIEF
May 8, 2012**

Canadian research identified a correlation between that building conditions had on student achievement. The preponderance of evidence shows that facility conditions have an impact on student performance; however, the studies vary in the magnitude of that impact. Typically the facility effect is in the range of 5-10 percent. (School Facility Conditions and Learning Environments: Canadian Evidence. Roberts, Lance, Sociometrix, Inc., March 200.)

CUPE Local 474 proposes that in order for Edmonton Public Schools to meet its health and safety needs that there is a comprehensive reorganization of custodial services for the District. With all the pressures placed on custodial to maintain District sites, CUPE 474 reiterates its recommendation that a Custodial Department be created so that custodial staffing, supplies and equipment be managed centrally instead of having some custodial services managed by Facilities and leaving schools to determine custodial staffing, supplies and equipment.

We believe that there is an opportunity to widen the conversation about what kind of custodial services and their delivery we should be planning for in the district. That conversation must begin with what is happening now in regards to the district reorganization and the creation of a Custodial Support Services department. That was recommended two years ago but has since not occurred. We believe that such a service should encompass more than what the administration has recommended. In this brief we will review issues that a Custodial Services department should be addressing in the district.

Recently, the CBC investigated the unsanitary conditions in hospitals that sparked a change in policy in hiring and cleaning. One of the problems that hospitals and Edmonton Public share is the pressure to do more with less money. Unfortunately, in a climate of fiscal restraint, less money is devoted to cleaning and maintenance. Using the example of the CBC investigation, the result was that staff was reduced, expected to fully clean and disinfect a room in 10 minutes, cleaning was rotated, cheaper diluted chemicals were used and that cross-contamination was a common occurrence due to poor training and need to contain costs.

In our schools cleaning time in classrooms has been reduced from twenty minutes to fifteen minutes, and this has resulted in less cleaning time, and has been used as a reason to reduce custodial staff.

Just as student achievement is affected by how schools are cleaned, studies have shown that student absenteeism due to illness is reduced in well cleaned and maintained schools. During the recent H1N1 concern, schools were forced to clean and sanitize more frequently to reduce the impacts of this potentially dangerous influenza outbreak. These procedures take time and staff to ensure that proper cleaning and sanitation are maintained.

Using the example of the CBC investigation, they found that "sometimes, only one cleaner would be on staff in an entire hospital during night shifts. "That kind of day-night difference is very common, and it makes no sense," says Dr. Michael Gardam, an infectious disease expert at the University Health Network in Toronto."

Only having one custodian and / or one custodial assistant to properly clean a school during the afternoon shift, also makes no sense. Worse yet we still have schools that rely upon a single Head Custodian during day shift to clean the school, which again results in lowered cleaning standards.

CUPE Local 474 encourages the District to strengthen the understanding and language of the square footage formula in schools. While Edmonton Public has a square footage formula that should ensure that schools keep the standard of cleanliness that has kept schools and staff safe and healthy; CUPE 474 has concerns about the understanding by schools of how they apply that formula. There are instances where schools close rooms to reduce the square footage to be cleaned. This allows a school to reduce the number of custodial staff required. Unfortunately, these same schools seem to misunderstand that once a room is closed, it cannot be used as this impacts the formula. Closing rooms does not avoid the impact of reduced cleaning because the school reduced custodial staff, this impact, as studies have shown is a reduction in cleaning and thus an increase in potential health impacts on students and staff.

CUPE Local 474 would encourage the District to seek an increase from the province of the Plant Operation and Maintenance (POM) funds. During the past three years, this funding has not increased, but the costs associated with cleaning and maintaining schools has. It would be prudent that Edmonton Public Schools be at the forefront of this issue and ensure that POM is given the proper resources from the province.

Sustainable Cleaning Program

Because we have a cost recovery model for custodial services, where funding for custodial supplies is given to the schools, this has resulted in have and have not schools, which defeats the purpose of having a district cleaning standard. We have custodial equipment in the district that is thirty years old in some schools, while the same school has the latest in smart boards, Xerox copies and computer technology.

In order to implement its Green Cleaning program, the district has returned to centralized purchasing and distribution through its Distribution Centre. For the past two decades schools have been allowed to purchase their own cleaning supplies. Now that this has changed we would suggest that Edmonton Public also apply this model to all custodial supplies.

In order to effectively create a sustainable cleaning program in our schools, custodial staff need the latest in cleaning equipment. Outmoded auto-scrubbers, swing machines, propane burnishers and vacuums, etc, contribute to a toxic environment in our schools and reduce labour effectiveness when cleaning.

By actually purchasing and assigning common equipment across the district, cost savings will be made in reducing bulk purchasing costs. Issuing and assigning equipment will mean that like Green Cleaning Chemicals, a standard form of equipment being used by all custodial staff will be trained in using the equipment. It also means the ability to inventory and track the equipment and make sure that a cost effective preventative maintenance program is put in place to make sure the equipment is maintained until it is replaced either at the end of its life, which is usually 10 years, or if more efficient equipment is found, to replace it.

As the district adopts LEED standards, which are required by Alberta Infrastructure for its P3 schools, these include not only the greening of cleaning chemicals, but having a green equipment program as well. It defeats the purpose of having a sustainable green cleaning program, if you are using less toxic cleaning chemicals, but are polluting the school indoor air quality with exhaust fumes from propane burnishers, or dust exhausting from outdated vacuums.

Custodial Hiring and Training

“Colleges and institutes have played a central role in facilitating Aboriginal learners' transitions into the labour market or on to further postsecondary education. The impact of the contribution of colleges and institutes in this area is substantiated by the fact that based on the analysis of 2001 Census data; the Aboriginal population 15 years of age and over is close to parity with the non-Aboriginal population for the completion of non university postsecondary education, which includes trades and college certification.”

Pan-Canadian Study of First Year College Students - December 2008.
http://www.rhdcc-hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/publications_resources/learning_policy/sp_890_12_08/page07.shtml

The local is encouraged by the hiring of Doug Luellman as the Custodial Supervisor – Supply Services. This local has advocated for such a position for many years. The ability of Edmonton Public to hire qualified staff for supply services impacts on the District’s ability to maintain staffing levels and cleaning standards. In summary, the local recommends the hiring of a qualified Director, responsible for cleaning standards across district schools and buildings and for staffing, supplying and equipping those schools, as well as developing a district wide training and educational program for custodial staff. This will ensure the District’s ability to clean our schools in an environmentally sustainable and healthy way for students, staff, and the public.

LEED also requires school districts to adopt cleaning standards for training and monitoring custodial services. Custodial hiring and training remains problematic as we have no Custodial Department unlike all other school districts in Western Canada. Because custodial services have only been partially centralized, hiring and training remains under Human Resource, as does Health Recovery and Occupational Health and Safety.

These services should be consolidated in a Custodial Department under an experienced, qualified Director of custodial Service, who has experience in the custodial services field.

We are not targeting our hiring of new custodial staff. The average age of custodial staff in the district is over 40 years old. We are hiring retirees and older workers more than we are hiring young people. We need to address this short coming. We have our own students who could be a source of potential custodial staff. In particular, we have an opportunity to employ more Aboriginal workers, as recent studies have shown; Aboriginal students are having a greater success rate at trades education and job embedded education.

Custodial consultants should be attending job fairs and seeking other targeted recruitment strategies with Human Resource staff, in order to promote our trade. As program of promoting custodial work in the district as a career path needs to be developed, that would be aimed at both our own students as well as the general public.

The District should be promoting Custodial work as a career path, reintroducing the Building Service Work Program we used to have in our High Schools and promoting certification of Custodial work as a trade. There must be a paradigm shift in what is perceived as custodial work – it is not just cleaning. Custodial services are a core service. Buildings need to be cleaned and maintained; boilers and mechanical systems need to be maintained and monitored daily when schools are occupied. The public face of many schools for after hours users are the custodial staff.

A Custodial Department would be able to more effectively develop and deliver custodial training programs. While we currently train new staff, we have left behind training for existing staff. Leadership training for Head Custodians is cost recovery and not mandated as it is for other leadership staff in the district. Yet we have a record number of new Head Custodians appointed to positions in the district that have little or no experience in their positions.

Cleaning standards and procedures are also not standardized. We have relied upon training by Head Custodians for their custodial staff. This has resulted in a wide range of cleaning practices which may not meet district standards or practices, and has sometimes resulted in clashes between newly hired staff who do get BOC training in district cleaning practices and Head Custodians who have neither been trained in these practices, nor have they had training in mentoring and supervision.

When schools control their custodial budgets they have cut custodial services when budgets are tight, without consideration of the impact on student and staff health or student achievement.

In order to actually create sustainable green schools, custodial services need to be delivered differently then they have been.

The District's reassessment of site based management and cost recovery model of service delivery offers an opportunity for Trustees to do something that has been needed for thirty years; a reversal regarding site based custodial services and a centralization of these services within a Custodial Department.

Since the district has still not implemented its proposed Custodial Support Services department, gives us an opportunity to look at creating a centralized custodial services department that would centralize purchasing and staffing, freeing up schools to concentrate on delivering services in the classrooms for our students.

In summary, the local recommends an increase in POM funding, the hiring of a qualified Director, responsible for cleaning standards across district schools and buildings and for staffing, supplying and equipping those schools, as well as developing a district wide training and educational program for custodial staff. This will ensure the District's ability to clean our schools in an environmentally sustainable and healthy way for students, staff, and the public.

Edmonton Public Schools has faced many challenges and has a long history of meeting of those challenges in an innovative manner. The challenge we face today is how we can create sustainable healthy school environments. The model we are using today in delivering custodial services does not meet that challenge. The Local believes that this District can meet this challenge by working with us to create a dynamic Custodial Department that will be a model for sustainable cleaning practices in public education.

CBC's 'dirty hospital' report sparks changes

A CBC investigation into unsanitary conditions at the nation's hospitals has sparked a change in policy by Canada's biggest health authority and a flood of email messages from concerned viewers.

With hidden cameras, including Canada's first hidden camera glow-gel test, the consumer show *Marketplace* [visited several hospitals](#) in Ontario and British Columbia, secretly applying a harmless gel to high-touch surfaces, then returning 24 hours later to see whether the gel had been removed, which would indicate the surface had been cleaned.

The program revealed many instances where cleaning had not been carried out, and that sparked a response from the Niagara Health System (NHS), the biggest in the country, whose hospitals have suffered a recent *Clostridium difficile* outbreak. It has decided to end its relationship with the private U.S. cleaning company Aramark.

NHS authorities wouldn't specify why they made the move, but did tell CBC News they will be adding "the equivalent of 18 new full-time cleaning positions." It has been suggested that Aramark was at least partly to blame for the *C. difficile* outbreaks.

"They made decisions around staffing levels," Eoin Callan of the Service Employees International Union told CBC News. "They made decisions around what was cleaned, what was not cleaned — how frequently things were cleaned. And they also had an incentive to use cheaper diluted cleaning chemicals that were not as effective because it allowed them to pad their profit margins."

Ontario Minister of Health Deb Matthews wouldn't talk on camera, but told *Marketplace*: "We expect our hospitals to make the best decisions to protect patient safety in their communities."

The NHS decision may be good news for those awaiting a hospital stay, but cold comfort to people such as Ken Hough, who returned home three weeks ago after a stay at St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital in St. Thomas, Ont.

"You really wouldn't believe it, unless you've seen it," Hough told *Marketplace* reporter Erica Johnson, describing rooms where he says dirty bandages and plastic needle covers littered the floor.

The bathroom was the worst, he said.

"Feces on the back of the toilet," he recalled. "You'd go in to use it, and you'd pivot. I put on rubber gloves to use the toilet seat and just thought, no, I'm not doing this."

Emails from across the country echoed Hough's observations.

"The waste baskets in the bathroom were overflowing," an email from Vancouver read. It took "three days to clean up vomit," a Calgary viewer wrote. And an email from Winnipeg described "feces left on the floor" for days.

About one-third of hospitals in Ontario outsource their janitorial services, CBC News has learned, and that figure is higher in British Columbia and some other provinces.

Poor hospital cleaning revealed as major problem

'Some hospitals are a real freaking disaster'

The health of hospitalized Canadians and their visitors is being seriously put at risk by hospitals that have cut corners in cleaning budgets to save money, a *Marketplace* investigation has revealed.

The program took hidden cameras inside 11 hospitals in Ontario and British Columbia. What they found in many of them were surprisingly inadequate cleaning regimens – in short, dirty hospitals that could make you sick.

In many hospitals, *Marketplace* staffers applied a harmless gel to places that many people would touch – hand rails, door handles, light switches, elevator buttons.

DIRTY HOSPITALS, The full story, [Dirty Hospitals](#), can be seen on CBC-TV's *Marketplace* tonight at 8 p.m., 8:30 in Newfoundland.

The gel glows when seen under an ultra-violet light. But most of the time – and this was true in every hospital where *Marketplace* carried out gel tests – the gel was still there more than 24 hours later, meaning the surfaces had not been cleaned at all.

The program talked to cleaners, supervisors, nurses, doctors, and hospital administrators to get a handle on what has become a major problem at Canadian health-care facilities – a shocking number of hospital-acquired infections.



While Canadians love to crow about their first-rate health-care system, it also leads in one area that doesn't get the same glowing reviews.

Gary Ball was admitted to Niagara General Hospital for treatment of pancreatitis in 2011. While there, he contracted C. difficile and never recovered. (Family photo)

About 250,000 Canadians come down with life-threatening infections while in hospitals every year. That's the highest rate in the developed world. As many as 12,000 people a year die.

Denise Ball's husband Gary became one of those statistics last year.

He was admitted to Niagara General Hospital for treatment of pancreatitis. While there, the 63-year-old retired school teacher contracted *C. difficile* – a life-threatening illness that is all too common in Canadian hospitals. It ended up playing a role in his death a few months later.

Denise Ball remembers the cleaning regimen in her husband's room was less than adequate, saying the cleaners would spend only 10 minutes on a room everyone knew was infected with *C. difficile*. She says a proper cleaning would have taken much longer.

"This has to stop," she says. "This is Canada."

More with less Time and again, hospital insiders told *Marketplace* that cleaners were being asked to do more with less. "We used to have one person to one wing of a hospital to clean," one cleaner said. "Now, we have three floors to clean."

A cleaning supervisor at one hospital told *Marketplace* host Erica Johnson that it's "common practice" for cleaners not to change the cleaning solution in the bucket when mopping up. "They just don't have the time," the supervisor said.

'Some hospitals are a real freaking disaster.'—*Infectious disease expert Dr. Michael Gardam*

Sometimes there aren't enough cleaning supplies. A nurse, whose identity *Marketplace* protected, said she's seen a cleaner mopping common areas after having mopped the rooms of infected patients because she didn't have enough mops to change. "She's just cross-contaminated the whole area, so there's no area that was actually clean."

Sometimes, only one cleaner would be on staff in an entire hospital during night shifts. "That kind of day-night difference is very common, and it makes no sense," says Dr. Michael Gardam, an infectious disease expert at the University Health Network in Toronto.



Dr. Michael Gardam, an infectious disease expert at Toronto's University Health Network, told Marketplace he's seen some hospitals so dirty they're 'a real freaking disaster.' (CBC)

Gardam has seen enough in his time looking at hospital cleaning practices to know that some hospitals are worse than others – much worse.

"Some hospitals are a real freaking disaster," he told *Marketplace*. "They've been told to actually cut their number of housekeeping staff by outside auditors who are trying to help them balance their budgets."

In recent years, many hospitals have cut the portion of their budget that is devoted to cleaning. Sometimes, they've done that by contracting out cleaners or their management.

C. difficile outbreaks common

It's not like we haven't seen the devastating results of hospital-acquired illness. Newscasts and newspapers have been filled with stories of hospitals under quarantine because of *C. difficile* outbreaks. In the last decade, outbreaks have hit hospitals in most provinces. A huge outbreak in 2003 and 2004 led to as many as 2,000 deaths in Quebec.

Last year, there were outbreaks in at least 10 hospitals across Ontario alone. One of the worst was the Niagara Health System in Ontario. More than 100 cases were diagnosed and the infection was a factor in the deaths of 37 patients, including Gary Ball, the patient mentioned earlier in the story.

The man appointed by the Ontario government to get the Niagara outbreaks under control, Dr. Kevin Smith, denies that hospitals have been cutting back on cleaning. "I think they're experimenting with new models of cleaning," he says.



Marketplace used an ultra-violet flashlight to find hospital surfaces that hadn't been cleaned in at least 24 hours. (CBC)

When informed that workers in the Niagara hospital system told *Marketplace* that they still don't have the time or resources to do an adequate cleaning job, he says, "I haven't heard that message," saying "everybody" feels rushed in health care these days.

The outbreaks are officially over in the Niagara Health System. But when *Marketplace* showed Smith several areas where researchers had applied test gel in three hospitals he supervises, most of the surfaces showed no evidence of cleaning. The ultra-violet light showed uncleaned hand rails outside an isolation room, uncleaned support rails in a public washroom and uncleaned hand rails in a ward with highly contagious patients.

"I'm obviously very disappointed to see that. That is a less than optimal cleaning opportunity. We need to fix it," Smith said.

There's something else that some observers think is helping to drive the pressure to skimp on cleaning. In Ontario and British Columbia, for example, hospitals are given bonuses for turning over beds quickly – hundreds of extra dollars each time a hospital gets a patient out of a room before a certain time. More money is dangled for quickly transferring a patient from the emergency ward to a room. Hospital CEOs, already well-paid, receive bonuses that depend, in part, on reducing wait times. While the goal of such rewards may be admirable, critics say the actual effect has been to speed up cleaning to an unhealthy degree.

"They just don't get it," says Denise Ball. "And maybe until one of their loved ones that went in healthy and ... a few months later ... they're going to their grave. Maybe that's what will wake them up."

Why Green Cleaning in Schools

<http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/programs/gcs/why.php>

Each school day, some 56 million students and six million staff attend our nation's schools, representing some 20 percent of the American population.

Yet according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), half of this population may be exposed to polluted indoor air, lead, asbestos, chemical fumes, pesticides, molds and other toxins, along with overcrowding and poor sanitation. Numerous states have passed state laws to make sure schools address this issue, and more states are likely to follow suit. A well-designed green cleaning program can help reduce these harmful exposures and yield many other positive benefits for students, custodial staff, administrators and the environment, including:

1. Green Cleaning Helps Students Stay Healthy and Learn:

Research shows a clear link between poor indoor air quality, sick students and teachers, and poor academic and occupational performance. Furthermore, [according to the EPA](#), children miss more than 14 million school days each year due to asthma exacerbated by poor indoor air quality, which disproportionately affects low-income and minority students. Green cleaning can help reduce the environmental hazards that negatively affect children's growing, developing bodies. See [Resources and Tools](#) for more information on the link between indoor air quality and illness.

2. Green Cleaning Protects the Health of Custodial Staff:

Members of the custodial staff, especially women of child-bearing age, are particularly susceptible to health problems caused by their frequent and close interaction with cleaning chemicals and equipment. In fact, [six out of every 100 custodians are injured on the job](#) each year. [Choosing safer products](#) and [training staff](#) in proper usage can help reduce the number of injuries caused by caustic chemicals, respiratory irritation and inappropriate or dangerous equipment. This can also decrease workers' compensation claims and lower insurance costs.

3. Green Cleaning Increases the Lifespan of Facilities:

[Proper maintenance](#) and effective cleaning extends the longevity and performance of school building materials and furnishings by preventing damage and premature aging, which in turn reduces waste and unnecessary spending. For example, school districts allocate a significant amount of money to carpeting, which is expected to have a useful life of 10 to 15 years. A square foot of typical carpet can hide as much as three times its weight in dirt and sand, which act like thousands of small knives, cutting and wearing out fibers in a few short years — long before its useful lifespan and before the district had budgeted to replace it.

4. Green Cleaning Preserves the Environment:

Traditional cleaning products can contain harmful chemicals. Depending on the duration, rate and extent of exposure, they can cause cancer, reproductive disorders, major organ damage, and permanent eye damage. These cleaning chemicals are also routinely washed down the drain where they find their way into drinking water, lakes and streams, adversely affecting plant and animal life, threatening public health and adding to pollution. [According to ISSA](#), the cleaning industry consumes six billion pounds of chemicals, including non-renewable natural resources such as petroleum, and generates 4.5 billion pounds of paper products, requiring the cutting of 35 million trees annually. [Buying recycled paper and plastic products](#) can help conserve precious natural resources for future generations.

Triple Bottom Line

If all parties understand the impact of cleaning on the triple bottom line, it is much easier to appreciate the changes a green cleaning program can bring about. Like a three-legged stool, which needs three stable legs to function, balancing these three bottom lines can make your program more effective and more sustainable over time. The three bottom lines, discussed in detail below, are economic, environmental and social.

Economic

The economic impacts of a green cleaning program come about in many ways including reducing actual product cost; using more durable products that last longer reducing costs over the product's useful life; energy and water savings, fewer incidents of accidents from chemical and ergonomic injury; healthier students and staff which can result in reduced absenteeism; and improvements in attracting and retaining students, teachers and staff.

Environmental

The extraction of raw materials and manufacturing for products including cleaning chemicals, janitorial paper, equipment and tools, have significant environmental impacts, as does their transportation, use, and disposal. Many of the raw materials are limited and nonrenewable, which means that once depleted, they are no longer available to future generations for their use. Additionally, the manufacturing consumes large quantities of energy and water, while producing significant emissions to the air, water and waste.

Social

For any program to be sustainable, it must take care of its people. After all, how can a school function if students and staff are always sick or don't want to be there because the building is unhealthy? This component of the triple bottom line also helps us appreciate the role that schools play as part of a larger community and the important interaction that affects the health and success of all.