

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 12, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Response to Presentations by CUPE Local 3550, CUPE Local 474, Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37 and Exempt Staff

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RESOURCE  
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### INFORMATION

This report is in response to presentations made to the Board of Trustees, prior to the beginning of budget deliberations, by four of the five district staff groups. Support staff, CUPE Local 3550, Custodial staff, CUPE Local 474, Edmonton Public Teachers, Local 37 and exempt staff made presentation on January 15, 2002. CUPE local 784, Maintenance staff, declined for this year's process. As customary, all principals and decision unit administrators will be provided with copies of the written submissions provided by the staff groups.

Funding was a common theme in all the presentations. All groups spoke of the negative impact on their work of current funding levels for education. For many years now, seeking adequate funding and raising the profile of education in the community have been major areas of focus for the board and the district. The board made presentations to the Minister of Learning regarding adequate and sustainable resources for education, as well as to Caucus and the Standing Policy Committee. To inform and influence public perceptions, the board developed information booklets such as *Integral to the Community* and *Shaping the future of public education*.

#### **CUPE Local 3550**

The district appreciates that the members of the local understand the government's funding process and its implications for the district. As noted above, the board and the district will continue to advocate for adequate funding. It was disappointing to hear that many support staff still do not feel encouraged to participate in the budget process. As all district staff work toward a model of shared leadership, we hope that more support staff will be involved in their school or central office decision unit budget deliberations.

The district is committed to providing professional development that recognizes both the changing roles of staff and the demands for increased technological skills. Responsibility for professional development lies with the school or the decision unit. The district believes that the *Learning together...working together*, 2002 Conference for Support, Custodial &

Maintenance Staff, and the Support Staff Leadership Institutes are examples of the district's commitment to professional development. As well, the district offers a range of professional development options for support staff throughout the year and a focused session in the summer on the work of administrative assistants. The options offered are based on the needs identified by support staff.

#### **CUPE Local 474**

The budget brief presented by Local 474 continues to demonstrate the local's support for public education, and the work taking place in the classroom. The presentation's title "Blueprints for Clean, Safe and Healthy Schools" is a portrayal of the local's commitment to ensuring that our schools are maintained in a clean, safe, and healthy manner which is conducive to teaching and learning.

A key message in the brief is the continued recognition of the need for adequate and consistent funding for public education. The local's support for appropriate funding for public education has helped maintain the strong advocacy voice that supporters of Edmonton Public Schools are known for.

The local's comments, background information and cautions with respect to partnerships are acknowledged, and the advice for a thorough investigation of any potential partnerships is valid, particularly with respect to the district's reputation. The discussion surrounding school closures is a difficult one for all concerned, and the suggestion that the consultation process be open, with full disclosure is consistent with district intent and practice.

A key theme in the presentation is the local's desire to be supportive of the district's mission and to operate in a collaborative manner. This approach continues to deliver benefits such as:

- training programs being updated, developed and implemented
- working conditions being addressed
- support systems for custodians being developed and piloted
- other staff recognizing the positive effects of collaboration

The continued and positive support of the local and our custodial staff will ensure that, over time, outstanding issues will be jointly addressed. The local is encouraged to continue its communication through the various mechanisms available (such as liaison), in order that issues can be resolved or that good ideas can be implemented in a timely manner.

#### **Edmonton Public Teachers, Local 37**

The district values the opportunities to work together with the Edmonton Public Teachers' local and is pleased that the local is involved on the joint committee to create conditions for collaboration to support teaching and learning and will continue to be involved in the *Joint Committee on Involvement in School Site Decision-Making*. In addition to its commitment to advocate for adequate funding for education, the board and the district continue to promote the critical role teachers play in society and work to enhance the view of the teaching profession by the general public. Because the board recognizes the power of excellent teaching and the potential benefits of smaller class size at the kindergarten and grade 1 levels in high needs schools, it lobbied the province to implement a small class size project. As well, it is using AISI funds to introduce and maintain a combination of effective strategies in

a number of district schools. The district is committed to providing schools with the flexibility they require to address the particular needs of the students they serve.

### **Exempt Staff**

The district recognizes the broad range of skills represented in the exempt staff group and the contributions made by this group to the effective and efficient operation of the district. The board also appreciates the focus exempt staff place on the classroom and the commitment to aligning resources in support of teaching and learning. The dedication to finding innovative solutions and providing timely service is well known. Exempt staff members are eligible to apply for professional development leaves and to attend professional development sessions offered by the district.

GC/BF:ee