

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 22, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Response to Presentations by Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37, CUPE Local 3550, CUPE Local 474, and CUPE Local 784

ORIGINATOR: B. Holt, Executive Director, Instructional and Curricular Support Services

RESOURCE  
STAFF: David Fraser

### INFORMATION

This report is provided in response to budget presentations made to the board of trustees on February 22, 2005 by four of the five district staff groups: Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37 of the ATA; CUPE Local 3550 representing support staff; CUPE Local 474 representing custodial staff; and CUPE Local 784 representing construction and maintenance staff. Exempt Staff are presenting at the March 22<sup>nd</sup> board meeting. All principals and decision unit administrators will be provided with copies of the written submissions provided by the staff groups.

The view that the board must continue to advocate for adequate funding for public education was a recurrent theme across all presentations. Each group talked about the long-term impacts insufficient funding has had upon their members, our staff. This impact was voiced in terms of increased workload, diminished family time, increased benefit costs and interpersonal conflicts over resources, and the on-going sustainability of present models and processes. Advocating for sufficient funding through Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure to provide a quality and sustainable education system has been and will continue to be a focus for the board and the district. The Chairman has met with the Ministers of Education and Infrastructure on several occasions to put forward a public education agenda that stresses the need for adequate funding to support teaching and learning, whether this is directly in the classroom in terms of additional teaching staff and teacher assistants or in support of school operations and facilities maintenance.

#### Edmonton Public Teachers, Local 37 of the ATA

This year's presentation by the Local highlighted several issues. The Local began by acknowledging the ongoing excellent relationship between the Local and the board, district and superintendent and indicated that two factors contributing to this respectful relationship were the long history with site-based decision making and the determination that all of us are working toward making sure classroom teachers are able to provide each child with the best opportunity to learn. The board also appreciates and values the strong relationship between the Local and the district, as well as the continued commitment to support classroom teachers

and enhance learning. It also expressed support for continued local bargaining and the board is striving to achieve this outcome through discussions with the Minister of Education and the ASBA.

The Local outlined the success that has been achieved in the district by principals and teachers utilizing the jointly developed document, *Framework for Involvement in Site-Based Decision Making*. The district is also very proud of how this document has been and continues to be used in the district to involve teachers in the decision making processes that impact their work. The superintendent of schools will remind principals and central services administrators to review this document prior to beginning the budget planning process for next year. The board also looks forward to receiving the report of the Joint Working Committee that is examining the relationship between Professional Learning Communities and the district's AISI initiative on supporting teaching and learning.

The Board appreciates receiving the results of the Local's Class Size Census. The board recognizes that, while the infusion of new provincial funding to reduce class sizes has had a positive impact in many of our classrooms and schools, there is still more improvement needed. The board anticipates that the increased new funding we will receive next year and the year after will continue to improve class size ratios and positively impact classroom learning conditions.

#### CUPE Local 3550 (Support Staff)

The board acknowledges the issue raised by the Local regarding the desire to have an orientation and information session provided to all Locals prior to the invitation to present to trustees next year. The administration will see that this happens.

The Local has indicated that their members recognize that targeted government funding envelopes tie the hands of the district and continue to decrease the flexibility of site-based decision making. District representatives have shared and will continue to share this view with Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure officials.

The board recognizes and appreciates the valuable role that support staff have in supporting teaching and learning, either directly in the classroom or in administrative and operational support functions.

The board and administration are aware that there is a need to examine the impact of workloads for staff in schools and central services. Over the past number of years, the district has invested almost all of the new funding it has received from Alberta Education in the schools, particularly in the classroom. While this practice has had a very positive impact on teaching and learning, it has also meant that school operations have not seen funding increased and that central services continues to operate significantly below the government's administrative cap of 4%. This lack of funding for operations has occurred during the same time period when many central services decision units made significant changes to improve process effectiveness and efficiency, usually through technology enhancements. While these process changes convey the perception that more work is being downloaded to schools, the impact would have been far greater if the processes had not been changed. The board and

administration will consider several factors, including workload issues, when determining the basis of allocation and in preparing individual school and central decision unit budgets.

The board recognizes that professional development is important to all support staff. The administration looks forward to working with the Local to examine and address the complex issues related to training and mentoring through the recently negotiated the Joint Support Training and Advisory Committee.

The board acknowledges and appreciates the recognition expressed by the Local for the role school trustees have in representing the interests of parents, students and community members in advocating on behalf of public education.

#### CUPE Local 474 (Custodial Staff)

The board is aware of and values the Local's continued focus on ensuring our schools provide safe, clean and appropriate learning environments for our students, families and communities. The Local's concerns with respect to a number of issues such as staffing levels, workloads, work schedules and standards, and training and development are all issues that are recognized as legitimate, and related to adequacy of funding through the Plant, Operations and Maintenance (PO&M) allocation from Alberta Infrastructure.

The board and administration also acknowledge the impact that space utilization rates have had and will continue to have on the level of PO&M funding we receive. The administration has taken several steps to address excess space issues throughout the district and we believe these steps should have a positive impact on the PO&M funding we will receive in the next few years. The board encourages the administration and the Local to continue discussions to address common issues and interests associated with PO&M funding, including strategies to reduce school utility expenditures.

#### CUPE Local 784 (Maintenance Staff)

The board recognizes and appreciates that the work of our maintenance staff is critical to the district's efforts to maintain our schools in a satisfactory and safe condition. The expertise of our maintenance staff and their commitment to provide the best physical learning environments for our students is acknowledged and valued.

The district shares the frustration that many maintenance staff have with the increasing gap between what is needed in our schools in terms of preventative and restorative maintenance work and the level of funding received to do this work. The administration is committed to sharing the results of the operational audit currently being undertaken and working with the Local to address the common issues that are raised in the audit and the Local's budget brief.

DF/dmf