

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 12, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Submission to Alberta Commission on Learning by Edmonton Public Schools

ORIGINATOR: A. Habinski, Executive Director School and District Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Donna Barrett, Jenise Bidulock, Gloria Chalmers, Elaine Decker, Norm Diemert, Bob Holt, Faye Parker, Dean Power, Alva Shewchuk, Victor Tanti, Stuart Wachowicz

RECOMMENDATION

That the attached report (Appendix I) be presented as the board submission to the Alberta Commission on Learning

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On October 8, 2002, the board received for information a discussion paper that formed the initial draft of the board's submission to the Alberta Commission on Learning. This draft served as the basis for an extensive feedback process that took place during the month of October. Trustees and district administrators met with education stakeholders who shared their views and provided input on the different issues and recommendations. More than 650 individuals participated in the feedback gathering process. They included:

- 10 business representatives
- 40 community representatives
- over 150 school council representatives including some principals
- 25 high school students
- 208 teachers who serve on the Superintendent's Teachers Advisory Group (TAG) and represent every district school
- 10 union representatives from the district custodial, maintenance and support staff groups
- 11 representatives of exempt staff
- over 200 individuals who responded via the internet

Feedback from stakeholders was incorporated into the revised document presented in Appendix I. For example, following the input received, the number of recommendations was reduced from 38 to 24 and the order of the different sections was revised by addressing the students, the classroom and the curriculum earlier in the document. The wording was strengthened and the rationale clarified.

Some highlights of the revisions undertaken following the consultation include:

1. Students and the Classroom:
 - Recommendation #1 was amended by adding a reference to other staff groups. The rationale now highlights the importance of maintaining special services such as speech therapy.
 - The background to Recommendation #2 was revised to highlight challenges associated with the mild and moderate categories of special needs.
 - The background to recommendation #4 was revised by adding a statement that emphasizes the significance of involving all stakeholders in the development of a graduate profile.
2. Curriculum in the Global Context:
 - The number of recommendations in this section was reduced from 13 to 6 by consolidating ideas under common topics. In response to the input received, the content was reorganized under 3 categories: curriculum development process, career preparation and curriculum content and implementation. This change has made the section much easier to read.
3. Support for Exemplary Staff:
 - Recommendation #11 and the rationale for recommendations 10 and 11 were revised to emphasize the importance of professional development opportunities for all staff groups.
4. Responding to Societal Issues:
 - Further to the input received from the community, reference has been made to the significance of early intervention and the importance of having students ready to learn when they reach school age.
 - Mention is now made of the need for a legislative framework to ensure collaboration among government departments and agencies providing support services to children.
5. Governance of Public Education:
 - Recommendation #13 strengthened the statement in support of locally elected school boards and the rationale for the recommendation.
 - Recommendation #14 combined two recommendations to emphasize the unique issues confronting large boards and ensure that they are offered appropriate representation in decision-making at the provincial level.
 - Recommendation #15 added the need to define the relationship between school boards and other agencies serving children and families.
 - Recommendation #16 refers to the strengthening of the critical role of parents as partners in education instead of just recognizing such a role. The rationale related to this recommendation now suggests including other staff groups in addition to teachers on school councils.
6. Sustainable and Sufficient Funding:
 - The number of recommendations was reduced from 9 to 6 and the recommendation to eliminate the administrative cap was deleted in response to input received. The rationale for the recommendations was strengthened.

A concluding paragraph was added to underscore that education is an investment in our future.

The document will be presented by the board to the Alberta Commission on Learning on November 15, 2002.

AH:cg

Appendix I: Submission to Alberta Commission on Learning by Edmonton Public Schools