

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 30, 1999

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee D. Fleming

SUBJECT: Motion Re: Funding for Students with Significant Language Development Delays

RECOMMENDATION

That the chairman send a letter on behalf of the board to the minister of learning urging that the minister extend the age for funding of children experiencing significant delays to their language development, such as those in the Tevie Miller Heritage School Program and Alberta School for the Deaf, so that those students can complete their high school requirements within the public school system, rather than the post-secondary system.

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Notice of the above motion was served at the November 9, 1999 board meeting.

Background

On October 19, 1999 at a Council of Councils Meeting for Ward F, Minister of Learning, Dr. Lyle Oberg heard a presentation from the school councils of the ward. In the presentation by Alberta School for the Deaf and the Tevie Miller Heritage School Program a request was made that the Minister of Learning amend the School Act to accommodate the extended time necessary for students who have special needs to complete Grade 12.

At present, these students only receive funding to age 18. However, children in both the Alberta School for the Deaf and the Tevie Miller Heritage School Program have significant delays to their language development. These students often enter school with almost no language skills. While other students may have five or more years of language development and reading, deaf students and those with significant language development delays do not.

It is the strong desire of parents in both programs to have their children complete their high school requirements within the public school system, rather than the post-secondary system. They believe that it is more cost effective for students to complete their studies in the public school system where the programming is already in place, than to do so in other institutions. Furthermore, the long-term advantage is to all Albertans if these students can become financially independent, productive and functioning members of our society; the rationale being that high school graduates have greater educational and employment opportunities. At the October 19, 1999 meeting, Dr. Oberg expressed support for funding being extended beyond age 18, saying that it was an idea that made sense to him.

The parents and principal of the Alberta School for the Deaf and the Tevie Miller Heritage School Program would appreciate the Board's support in requesting an extension to the age for funding for special needs students experiencing language delays so that they may complete their high school requirements within the public school system.

DF:mmf