

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 7, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: L. Thomson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Executive Director  
C. McCabe, Executive Director

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Dennis Huculak, Colin Inglis, Dorothy Sombach

INFORMATION

**RESPONSE TO TRUSTEE REQUEST #228 (COLBURN): PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES THAT GUIDE THE DISTRICT WITH RESPECT TO SCHOOL FEES.** Section 60(2)(j) of the School Act states that a board may charge a parent of a student fees with respect to instructional supplies and materials. Section 21(4) gives boards the authority to charge fees for alternative programs and section 51(3) provides the authority to charge to offset transportation fees.

The board's policy on school fees, entitled "School Assessed Fees" is attached (Appendix I). The district's administrative regulation INB.AR "School Assessed Fees" (Appendix II) provides direction to schools in terms of the types of fees which may or may not be charged.

Each year as part of the internal audit process, school fees at audited schools are reviewed. When concerns surface, the auditor reviews these with the principal and executive director as appropriate.

The following information forms the basis for advice and information provided by Leadership Services to inquiries regarding school assessed fees:

- The board is committed to minimizing the school fees charged to parents.
- The board has set maximum amounts that may be charged for the rental of textbooks and musical instruments.
- The charges for bus passes are established by the district, but many of the other fees vary from school to school.
- Although some school fees are mandatory, most school fees are optional.
- Mandatory fees are charged for some items, such as rentals of textbooks and musical instruments.
- Mandatory rental fees help the district to maintain and update valuable resources such as textbooks, so they are in good condition for the following year's students.

- Optional fees may be charged for some items, such as yearbooks, student agendas, or consumable materials for certain courses.
- Notwithstanding these provisions, the school principal has the authority to waive school fees in certain circumstances. However, this expense would have to come out of the school's operating budget because there is no special fund that provides for reimbursement.

Revisions to the district's policy, regulations and practices have been delayed pending new information from Alberta Education regarding the Alberta Commission on Learning's Recommendation #95. The Minister recently provided an update indicating that he had asked the Alberta School Board's Association "to review its 'Policy Advisory on School Fees and Fundraising (2000)' with respect to providing further guidance to school boards on the development of local policies. ASBA's review is scheduled to be completed by February, 2007." (D. Huculak, 429-8394)

**TRUSTEE REQUEST #229, OCTOBER 10, 2006 (TRUSTEE GIBSON) PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON WHERE THE DISTRICT IS IN THE PROCESS OF REOPENING THE JUNIOR KINDERGARTENS.** Late in September the district decided to proceed to offer junior kindergarten programming on the basis of our ability to apply to Alberta Education for mild and moderate funding for some of the children and with the pledged additional support of a private citizen. On October 2, 2006, junior kindergarten programs opened at Delton and Norwood, but not at Spruce Avenue. Due to the late start some of families had to make alternate arrangements for their children and did not register in the programs. There are currently 12 students attending each of the programs. (Class size for these programs is fifteen.) The needs of students are currently being assessed to determine funding. (C. Inglis, 471-2630)

**TRUSTEE REQUEST #230, OCTOBER 10, 2006 (TRUSTEE ESSLINGER) PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON STUDENT TRANSPORTATION WITH RESPECT TO THE SHORTAGE OF DRIVERS AND THE INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO ADDRESS THIS.** At the start-up of the school year, the school bus contracted carriers were short approximately twelve bus drivers in total. Since that time, contractors have been successful in hiring a bus driver for each route. They continue to experience a shortage of spare drivers which causes problems when the regular driver is ill or on vacation. The contractors reported that school start up for this year was much better than last year due in part to the driver minimum wage clause included in the contract. Last year, a camera ready advertisement for bus drivers was included in school newsletters across the district which generated new applicants for the carriers. They continue to receive new applications and have a few people being trained each week. (D. Sombach, 429-8326)

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APPENDIX I            Board Policy, INB.BP, *School Assessed Fees*  
 APPENDIX II        Administrative Regulation, INB.AR, *School Assessed Fees*

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# Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

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CODE: INB.BP  
TOPIC: School Assessed Fees

EFFECTIVE DATE: 08-10-1996  
ISSUE DATE: 16-05-1997  
REVIEW DATE: 10-2001

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The board believes that public schools should provide high quality instruction including those in kindergarten, at no direct cost to parents

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Reference(s):

INB.AR - School Assessed Fees

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# Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

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CODE: INB.AR  
TOPIC: School Assessed Fees

EFFECTIVE DATE: 22-04-1996  
ISSUE DATE: 27-09-1996  
REVIEW DATE: 04-2001

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1. Schools shall not charge fees for instruction.
2. Schools shall not charge students or their parents for the use of instructional materials except:
  - a. senior high schools may charge a fee for textbook rental.
  - b. junior high schools may adopt a security deposit system for textbooks.
  - c. junior and senior high schools may charge a fee for music instrument rental.

Maximum fees shall be established each year by the superintendent of schools and identified in the budget manual.

3.
  - a. Schools may charge students or their parents fees to cover costs such as field trip transportation, admissions, subsistence, and use of facilities.
  - b. Schools shall provide programming for any student not attending a field trip conducted during school hours.
4. Schools may offer to sell goods and non-instructional services provided that:
  - a. all goods and services offered for sale may be purchased on an individual basis;
  - b. fees are paid only by the students receiving direct benefits;
  - c. charges do not exceed direct costs; and
  - d. fees for services provided over time (for example student council membership) are assessed and refunded on a prorated basis.
5. Schools may charge fees for food and snack programs.
6. Schools shall not collect damage deposits or charge for use of lockers or mandated locks.
7. Funds collected to pay for field trips shall be itemized and accounted for separately

from other fees.

8. The principal may waive any school assessed fee on an individual student basis. The school shall be responsible for covering any costs resulting from the waiver and shall maintain a record of the amount and circumstances of the waiver.

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Reference(s):

INB.BP - School Assessed Fees

HICA.BP - Field Trips

HICA.AR - Field Trips

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