

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 9, 1999

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

ORIGINATOR: A. McBeath, Department Head
Gary Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE

STAFF: Manfred Malzahn, Simon van der Valk, Stuart Wachowicz, Stephen Wright

INFORMATION

REQUEST #137 SEPTEMBER 14, 1999 (TRUSTEE NICHOLSON): PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING WHETHER ANY DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL IS OFFERING OR CONSIDERING OFFERING AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE. American Sign Language is presently only being offered at the Alberta School for the Deaf. There has been initial interest in offering this program in a couple of High Schools, but no plans for implementation have been developed. (S. Wachowicz, 429-8186)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #146, SEPTEMBER 28, 1999 (TRUSTEE BONKO): PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE DISTRICT'S LUNCHROOM POLICY:

- 1. WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF MONEY COLLECTED FROM PARENTS FOR LUNCHROOM FEES?** In 1998-99, approximately \$2,584,100 was collected.
- 2. WHAT ARE THE REASONS LUNCHROOM FEES ARE WAIVED FOR SOME STUDENTS BY THE PRINCIPAL?** District-wide information is not available. A sample group of 14 principals was asked this question in late October 1999, and they indicated that they waive or reduce fees when it appears that the family is unable to pay. Some principals report that they have never had to waive fees.
- 3. WHAT IS THE TOTAL SUBSIDY FOR THE STUDENTS WHOSE FEES ARE WAIVED AND WHO IS PAYING FOR IT?** Schools do not keep consistent records of the fees that are waived, but the amounts involved are relatively small, ranging from zero to about \$250 per year. This cost is covered by the school budget in most cases, and occasionally from other sources such as vending machine profits, or the lunch program itself.

In general, inability to collect unpaid fees is a bigger concern for principals, because this can amount to several thousand dollars in some cases. In most cases, the school absorbs these deficits.

4. **HOW MANY STUDENTS DOES THE POLICY AFFECT?** Board policy IH.BP Student Welfare and administrative regulation IH.AR Accommodation of Students During Lunch apply to all students who stay at school for lunch, in that the principal is responsible for provision of an adequate level of supervision. The number of fee-paying elementary students in 1998-99 was approximately 17,000; most senior high and junior high students receive a lower level of supervision and are not required to pay a fee. In addition, 4,528 students of all ages attending their designated receiving schools were supervised at no cost to parents.
5. **WHAT IS THE RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY?** The rationale for the policy on lunch-time supervision is that the lunch hour is not part of the instructional day, so parents should be responsible for supervision during that time. Some students go home for lunch, while those who choose to stay at school are expected to pay for supervision.

Two categories of students are exempt from paying fees, on the assumption that they do not have the option of going home for lunch. The school covers the cost of supervising these students:

- Those residing in areas where schools have been closed or where schools have not been built
- Those with moderate or severe disabilities (M. Malzahn, 429-8003)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #149 OCTOBER 12, 1999 (TRUSTEE WILLIAMS): PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE REASONS FOR THE DECREASE IN STUDENT MOBILITY AS DESCRIBED IN PAGE 3 OF THE FOURTH QUARTERLY REPORT.

Mobility of district students fluctuate from month to month depending on many factors such as family movements, the spring registration process, end of semester and the timing of major holiday periods. The decrease in mobility for the month of June 1999 was due largely to a drop in transfers between schools. This was caused by the completion in April – May of the widely advertised pre-enrolment process for the 1999-2000 school year. This process has now been in place for the past 6 years and is very well known and accepted by parents and students. (S. van der Valk 429-8437)

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