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WARD C Shelagh Dunn  
WARD D Trisha Estabrooks  
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December 15, 2020

Dear parents and families,

We hope you are well and want to thank you for your support during this challenging year. This truly is a year like no other. We know the return to school, in-person or online, meant change for your family. We also know that COVID-19 continues to impact children and families in our city, their loved ones and all of our lives.

Our Board is so proud of the work of staff in our Division to reduce the spread of COVID-19 as much as possible. Our staff's hard work, care and compassion is a source of inspiration for our Board and I know for many students and families as well. Everyone, including our students, is working hard to help curb the spread of COVID-19.

In our Division, we are doing everything in our power to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and keep our students and staff as safe as possible. Our administration anticipates [the cost of COVID-19 safety measures for Edmonton Public Schools will be about \\$68 million](#) for this school year. This includes additional learning supports for our students, personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and sanitization, and remote learning supports. The federal "Safe Return to Class Fund" will help to cover some of these costs, but not all. We expect to spend about \$28 million of \$44 million we have in reserves to cover the remaining costs. We are fortunate to have more reserves than we had originally anticipated, as a result of staff working hard to find efficiencies throughout the year.

Our Division continues to work closely with the provincial government as we navigate this global pandemic together. We have asked the government to share in-school transmission data with us as this information could help improve our protocols and transparency.

As a Board of Trustees, we will continue to advocate on your behalf. We are concerned about the way school divisions are now funded, with funding based on a percentage from the previous two years enrolment and a percentage of our projected enrolment, rather than on the current year's actual enrolment. We have seen an unanticipated drop in enrolment this year, likely due to the impact of the pandemic, which will affect our funding for the following year when students return to classes. We are advocating for a "hold harmless" year, to help cushion the impact of this year's unexpected drop in enrolment.

We also continue to speak up about cuts to Program Unit Funding (PUF), funds needed for our earliest learners who require specialized supports. We are pleased to share that Trustees from across the province have joined us in advocating to the provincial government to reinstate PUF to previous funding levels.

We know there is a lot happening in everyone's lives right now. It is our hope that your family can find time to rest, relax and reflect on the promise of hope that a New Year brings.

Warm regards,

Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees