

DATE: April 28, 2020

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Impact on the Division Due to Changes to Program Unit Funding
(Response to Request for Information #068)

ORIGINATOR: Todd Burnstad, Chief Financial Officer

**RESOURCE
STAFF:** Madonna Proulx, Natalie Prytuluk

REFERENCE: [Interim Funding Manual for School Authorities 2020/21 School Year](#)
2020-2021 Special Education Coding Criteria

ISSUE

At the March 31, 2020, public Board meeting, Trustee Draper stated that she has been receiving many questions and concerns about the changes to Program Unit Funding (PUF). She requested that Administration provide the Board of Trustees with an outline of impacts to the Division due the changes in PUF.

BACKGROUND

Currently, PUF supports pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children with severe disabilities and delays, between the ages of 2 years 8 months to less than 6 years of age, for a maximum of three years. The Division operates half-day, four-day per week pre-Kindergarten programs (475 hours of instruction) at 32 locations. As part of PUF, the Division provides family-oriented programming sessions (FOPS) to build parent/guardian capacity and maximize allowable funding per child. Families in pre-Kindergarten can access nine sessions, and families of children in half-day Kindergarten can access seven sessions.

CURRENT SITUATION

The following summarizes PUF funding and other changes effective for the 2020-2021 school year:

- Moving from a three-year to a two-year model for PUF means that Kindergarten children previously coded as eligible for PUF (codes 41 to 47, severe disability and/or mild moderate speech delay) no longer qualify for funding. This is a reduction of approximately \$13 million.
 - The province has indicated that support for specialized services for all students is now included in the Specialized Learning Supports (SLS) grant.
- The 2019-2020 maximum funding for a PUF child is approximately \$25,000, inclusive of FOPS. Looking to the 2020-2021 school year, using the weighted moving average (WMA) model, children with a mild moderate speech delay (code 47) will be funded at \$10,000 for a half-day program and children with a severe disability (codes 41 - 46) will be funded at \$15,000 for a half-day program. On average, 85 per cent of the Division's PUF children are coded 47.
- The WMA model, combined with lower funding rates reduces the grant by an additional \$11 million.
- 2019-2020 FOPS funding is approximately \$5.9 million. The new funding framework does not provide any FOPS funding.

- Under the current PUF model, our Division serves approximately 1,040 pre-Kindergarten PUF children. Under the new model, the projected number of PUF children served will be reduced to approximately 600. This is a decrease of approximately 42 per cent in terms of the PUF children that will be served by our Division in 2020-2021. However, PUF funding is expected to be reduced by approximately 76 per cent.
 - Current year one PUF children who do not qualify for year two programming under the new provincial funding criteria, but who would still be recognized as a mild or moderate special needs learner, will be grandfathered in the new model and accommodated at one of the six locations for their year two of Pre-Kindergarten programming. Families wishing to access this programming would be eligible for transportation for a fee.
 - All children eligible for year two Pre-Kindergarten programming who are currently at a satellite location will also be accommodated for September in one of the six locations operational for September 2020.

As a result of changes to the provincial funding framework, Edmonton Public Schools has had to make significant changes to the Division's pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) model for the 2020-2021 school year.

PUF funding will continue to be allocated to support pre-K children with severe disabilities or language delays for a maximum of two years preceding Kindergarten. Funding will be allocated using the three-year WMA enrolment of children ages 2 years 8 months to 4 years 8 months who have been assessed and diagnosed with a severe disability or a severe language delay.

We will be offering pre-K in six hub schools as opposed to 10 hub schools that offered programming during the current year. However, we will be keeping the four schools that are discontinuing pre-K programming on reserve should we need more space to accommodate children. The current 22 pre-K satellite locations are being suspended as of September 2020.

The Division's revised model was informed by the constraints of the provincial funding framework and new provincial eligibility criteria for PUF children. Also considered were current enrolment trends, infrastructure, capacity to support pre-K programming, and feedback from pre-K leadership staff.

KEY POINTS

- The 2019-2020 PUF budget was approximately \$39 million; funding for 2020-2021 is projected at approximately \$9.5 million. This is a variance of approximately 76 per cent.
- Under the current PUF model, our Division serves approximately 1,040 pre-Kindergarten PUF children. Under the new model, the projected number of pre-Kindergarten PUF children served will be approximately 600. This is a decrease of approximately 42 per cent.
- The Division will offer pre-Kindergarten programming in six hub schools as opposed to 10 hub schools that offered programming during the current year.
- The current 22 pre-Kindergarten satellite locations are being suspended as of September 2020.

TB:ja