

DATE: May 28, 2024

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Saadiq Sumar

SUBJECT: Request for a timeline to update the Standards for Special Education

REFERENCE [Standards for Special Education Summary](#) of Standards for Special Education
[Edmonton Journal Article](#) dated June 18, 2021
Minister of Education [Mandate Letter](#)
[Teaching Quality Standards](#)
[Leadership Quality Standards](#)

ISSUE

The Standards for Special Education have been identified as being in need of an update, but there has been no mention as to when the Ministry of Education will be updating this document.

BACKGROUND

At the April 16, 2024, meeting of the Board of Trustees, Trustee Sumar served notice of motion that the Board of Trustees write a letter to the Minister of Education requesting a timeline for an update to the Standards for Special Education.

During the 2019 Alberta provincial election, the UCP campaigned on updating the Standards for Special Education, which were last amended in June 2004. In the interim, both the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) and the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA), the provincial associations of which the Edmonton Public Schools Board is a member, have expressed support for an update to these standards. Despite the UCP's campaign commitments and advocacy from stakeholders and provincial associations representing school boards, the Standards for Special Education have yet to be updated.

Enrolment growth of students with complex learning needs in Edmonton Public Schools is outpacing overall enrolment growth in the Division. The current standards are almost 20 years old, whereas other standards like the Teaching Quality Standard and Leadership Quality Standard were both last updated in April 2023.

Both the Teaching Quality Standard and the Leadership Quality Standard include competencies related to inclusive learning and student learning experiences. An updated version of the Standards for Special Education could play a greater role in supporting these quality standards, educators and students with disabilities in our division and across the province.

Finally, in the Premier's Mandate Letter to the Minister of Education, the Premier wrote the following statement:

And importantly, as we grow new opportunities for students, we must address the growing needs of students with mental health and other learning challenges. These children must be provided with every opportunity to flourish in our education system and economy. We need them to be successful, fulfilled and fully participative in building our province.

RELATED FACTS

- The Standards for Special Education were last amended in June 2004
- The UCP campaigned on updating the Standards for Special Education during the 2019 campaign
- Both the Teaching and Leadership Quality Standards were updated in April 2023
- The Mandate Letter from the Premier references the growing needs of students with disabilities

RECOMMENDATION

That Board of Trustees write to the Minister of Education requesting a timeline as to when the Standards for Special Education will be updated, including when consultations with stakeholders (e.g., school divisions, families of children with disabilities, and professionals who support students with disabilities) will take place and when the new standards will be released.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval, the Board Chair will submit a letter to the Minister of Education. Both provincial associations (ASBA and PSBAA) will be copied on this letter.

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