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WARD B Michelle Draper
WARD C Shelagh Dunn
WARD D Trisha Estabrooks
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July 5, 2021

The Executive Board of ASVI Edmonton
info@asviedmonton.org

Dear Executive Board of ASVI Edmonton:

Thank you for your letter outlining your work and your concerns.

As you may be aware, Edmonton Public Schools' Specialized Learning Supports unit consists of nine school-linked teams to provide multi-disciplinary support to schools and students across the Division. Each school-linked team also has access to a highly specialized team who specifically work with blind and visually impaired (BVI) students and their teachers to assist them with instructional strategies, materials and resources for classroom learning, including access to the curriculum. This team includes three full-time teachers of the visually impaired (TVI) consultants, two braillists, and a new Orientation and Mobility specialist position for the fall. For the 2020-21 school year, TVI consultants supported approximately 100 requests for service for BVI students and their teachers. The TVI consultants work closely with other specialists such as three full-time Assistive Technology for Learning (ATL) teacher consultants to provide additional support for student learning in the classroom as needed.

With the dissolution of the Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD) model, our Division has maintained the number of TVI and ATL Consultants, and braillists. We are able to continue to provide services to other school Divisions who do not have access to resources and/or specialists for blind and visually impaired students. School Divisions may choose to contract services from our Division to support students outside of Edmonton Public Schools if they are unable to provide these services due to limited resources or access to TVI specialists. Of course, this year was unusual, with some students accessing learning online while others were in-person, so service delivery looked very different than previous years. The TVIs developed specific COVID re-entry guidelines to help schools keep BVI students safe during the pandemic, including strategies for physical distancing, safely using a sighted guide, planning for fire evacuations and drills, and a plan for accessible equipment and resources for home use.

Thank you for sharing the *2020-21 report: Supports and Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Students*. The report contains important data that can help inform plans for students to access new curriculum, including resources and support for BVI students alongside their peers. Staff from Specialized Learning Supports work collaboratively with Curriculum and Learning Supports staff to develop resources that include adaptations, modifications and access to curriculum and assessment for

all students in Grades 1 to 12 using a Pyramid of Intervention and Instruction Model. Consideration for the nine essential components of the expanded core curriculum will be reviewed to help improve the level of instruction for BVI students.

Again, thank you for your advocacy for BVI students. We will take your recommendations into consideration and certainly encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning. Parents can speak to the school principal with any concerns or questions they may have regarding their child's education. Specialized Learning Supports multidisciplinary teams including TVI and ATL Consultants are available to all schools to request services as needed for students who require specialized support in their schools including BVI students.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please reach out to me directly or you may contact Natalie Prytuluk, Director, Specialized Learning Supports, who is responsible for this area. Natalie can be contacted at 780-429-8989 or via email at natalie.prytuluk@epsb.ca.

Sincerely,



Trisha Estabrooks
Board Chair

c. Natalie Prytuluk, Director, Specialized Learning Supports

