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June 25, 2021

Edmonton Public Schools Support Staff
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3550
14207-115 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5G 4G9

Attention: Jorge Illanes, President

Dear Jorge:

Thank you for your recent presentation made on behalf of all Local 3550 members. The Board always learns a great deal from our staff group presentations and I would like to acknowledge the time and effort that you and your Local put into the presentation. I also appreciate and acknowledge your description of the important contributions your members make in support of our students and schools.

You spoke about a number of significant items felt to be of particular importance or concern to the Local. The first centered on the level of provincial funding. You referred to the relationship between funding levels and the COVID pandemic, the impact of the temporary funding cuts that occurred during the final months of the 2019/20 school year, as well as the potential for further reductions in public education funding going forward. The Board certainly recognizes the impacts of last year's funding decisions on both your membership, as well as to the students and families of the Division. We can appreciate the challenges many of your members experienced, including those directly affected by temporary layoffs, as well as those who remained active, but had to adapt to changes in their work. Your comments have certainly been noted and I can assure the Local that our entire Board will continue to advocate for necessary and sustainable funding levels to facilitate the highest quality of public education.

You also commented on systemic racism and the Local's interest in supporting efforts to eradicate it. The Board of Trustees and Administration acknowledge that systemic racism exists in our schools

and workplace and are committed to taking intentional and meaningful action towards the elimination of racism across the Division. Several initiatives in support of this objective have been initiated; including development and updating of Board Policy *HAAB.BP Anti-Racism and Equity*, the establishment of an Equity Advisory Committee to provide input into the collection of race-based data, and the identification of training to support continued knowledge growth in this area. The Superintendent is developing a multi-year action plan to direct the Division's efforts in support of anti-racism and equity. Targeted resources have been identified to support his work. The Board recognizes the work to eradicate racism in our schools, workplaces and communities will require a long term strategy and involve partnerships with many stakeholders along the way. We look forward to working with you as this important work continues.

Finally, you highlighted professional development and the strong emphasis that the Local places on this for your membership. You specifically identified the more recent changes to the collective agreement, questions related to funding, and also your interest in the Joint Support Staff Training and Advisory Committee. The Board reached out to administration to obtain further clarity on these items. I am informed that your members (14 in the current school year) have received funding through Staff Development Human Resources Consulting for work that falls within the scope of the bargaining unit, as set out in the collective agreement. You mentioned the Local's interest in additional work in this area through the Training and Advisory Committee. The Division would welcome discussion at this committee although it is my understanding that, to this point, meeting dates and committee representation had not yet been finalized by the Local. We would therefore encourage you to reach out to Staff Development Human Resources Consulting in this regard so that the committee work could be undertaken.

Thank you again for your input. On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees, I would like to express our appreciation for the commitment and contributions made by both the Local and all its members toward the success of all students and staff.

Sincerely,



Trisha Estabrooks
Board Chair

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