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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Darrel Robertson

Centre for Education
1 Kingsway NW
Edmonton AB T5H 4G9
T 780-429-8000
F 780-429-8318
E info@epsb.ca

May 23, 2025

The Honourable Mandy Gull-Masty
Minister of Indigenous Services
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Via email: mandy.gull-masty@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Gull-Masty:

Request to restore Jordan's Principle funding to off-reserve public schools

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Indigenous Services. This is a critical portfolio, and one in which your leadership skills, lived experience and connection to community will be such assets.

I'm writing to bring to your attention the impact to First Nations children in Edmonton Public schools resulting from delays in processing Jordan's Principle applications and the recent decision to no longer provide Jordan's Principle funding to off-reserve public schools.

Edmonton Public Schools is the sixth largest school jurisdiction in Canada and second largest in Alberta, serving over 122,000 students. Our Division submitted individual and group applications under Jordan's Principle for 455 students in May 2024. The supports requested through these applications amounted to \$8.1M. To date, funding applications for 73 students have been approved, totaling \$1.8M in funding for supports, with approximately \$560K of this total still to be received. It's important to note that 365 Phase II applications were forwarded for national level approval in mid-December, but no updates have been received on these applications. These applications amount to an additional \$5.6M in supports.

These dollars translate into supports such as educational assistants, occupational and physical therapists and family support workers who empower students with agency, self-confidence and a love of learning that they can carry not just through their K-12 education journey, but through their lives. Many times, these supportive individuals become the trusted adult who turns coming to school from what can feel

like a negative or anxiety-laden experience to a joy-filled reality through the time and training they are able to invest in the student.

As responsible stewards of public dollars, we push every dollar we can into the classroom. However, our provincial funding simply doesn't allow the level of supportive services that can be provided through Jordan's Principle funding. The delays in application processing are therefore very concerning.

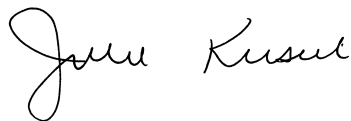
More concerning, however, was the announcement in February that off-reserve schools would no longer be eligible to apply for Jordan's Principle funding and that supports to school boards off-reserve will be redirected to provincial school boards or other existing provincial and federally-funded programs. This scenario recreates the very situation that Jordan's Principle was created to eliminate: children suffering while the adults disagree about who is responsible for funding. To put students' academic achievement and well-being at risk in this way is not acceptable.

Therefore, the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Public Schools requests:

1. a timeline as to when the Division's remaining applications will be reviewed and any outstanding commitments will be met, and
2. that changes to eligibility criteria that exclude off-reserve school boards be reversed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the positive impacts that Jordan's Principal funding has on the students of Edmonton Public Schools, and our request for this direct federal funding to our school division in support of First Nations students to continue. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact me directly at trustee.julie.kusiek@epsb.ca or 780-429-8087.

Sincerely,



Julie Kusiek
Board Chair

c: Mark Carney, Prime Minister
Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Education and Childcare
Marilyn Dennis, President, Alberta School Boards Association
Dennis MacNeil, President, Public School Boards' Association of Alberta

