

September 10, 2024

The Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides
Minister of Education
228 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
Via email: education.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

Timeline for Updating the Standards for Special Education

Enrolment growth of students with complex learning needs in Edmonton Public Schools is outpacing overall enrolment growth, which is at an all-time high, in the Division. Educational practices, technology and school environments have also changed significantly over the past two decades. Education has always been an exemplar of adapting as new information becomes available. This is just one more instance where such adaptation would be welcome.

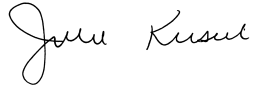
The current Standards for Special Education are now over 20 years old, whereas other standards like the Teaching Quality Standard and Leadership Quality Standard were both last updated in April 2023. Both the Teaching Quality Standard and the Leadership Quality Standard include competencies related to 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 her July 25, 2023 Mandate Letter to the Minister of Education, the Premier wrote:

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.

We heartily agree and are keen to ensure that we are offering the best, most up-to-date education with every student who requires specialized supports. With that in mind, we ask that you share the 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.

Sincerely,



Julie Kusiek
Board Chair

c: Marilyn Dennis, President, Alberta School Boards Association
Dennis MacNeil, President, Public School Boards Association of Alberta

JK:km

