

June 28, 2023

Honourable Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
204 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
Via e-mail: aep.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister Schulz:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Environment and Protected Areas. This is a critical portfolio at this time and it is reassuring to have someone with your experience leading the Ministry.

The safeguarding of our environment and finding ways to reduce our carbon footprint are areas of intense interest for our students and for our Division. Given this, we have included it as an element in our [Strategic Plan](#) (Priority 1, Goal 3) and have developed a Division Energy and Environment Strategy (attached).

At Edmonton Public Schools, we strive to be good stewards of our planet and of public dollars. Because of this, we recently proposed an innovative carbon tax payment option to the federal government. I'd like to share the proposal, as I believe it may be of interest to you and many of your colleagues and constituents. It is also just one of the many areas we see on which we could collaborate.

In the Edmonton Public school division, the total carbon tax paid from 2016 through to 2021 was \$8 million. It is estimated that by 2029, the Division will be paying \$8 million *per year* in carbon tax. By 2035, it is anticipated that the Division will have paid \$102 million in cumulative carbon taxes.

School authorities in Alberta, as well as municipalities, pay carbon tax directly to the federal government and are not eligible for a carbon tax rebate similar to that of small businesses or individual households. This means we are having to use scarce dollars intended for our classrooms and for the education of children to pay the carbon tax.

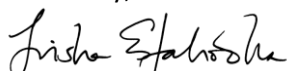
What we are proposing is that, similar to how school divisions account for GST, the carbon tax expense could be tracked and school authorities could submit a carbon tax quarterly statement resulting in a carbon tax rebate payment being issued. The rebate payment would then be directed into a restricted reserve type of fund. This fund would then be used for direct climate actions for our buildings that reduce carbon emissions, such as energy retrofits, solar installation or greening our electricity.

Under this proposed solution, these investments would accelerate reduced carbon impact to school authorities, the environment, and directly reduce utility costs. This will help to ensure future generations of students (and taxpayers) are not burdened with the costs and carbon emissions of inefficient buildings, and that maximum operational dollars can be directed to the classrooms rather than utility bills.

As you can see from our Energy and Environment Strategy, we have set ourselves ambitious yet achievable targets. We view our efforts as not only ways to save utility costs and the environment, but also as demonstration projects for the communities surrounding our schools, and our responsibility to the students who will inherit our world.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss this proposal, our Energy and Environment Strategy, or anything else of interest to you.

Sincerely,



Trisha Estabrooks
Chair, Board of Trustees
Edmonton Public Schools

Attachments: [Division Energy and Environment Strategy](#) (April 4, 2023)
[Letter re: Carbon Tax Alternative to Federal Government](#) (May 25, 2023)

c: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent, Edmonton Public Schools

