

April 27, 2023

Marilyn Dennis, President
Dr. Vivian Abboud, Executive Director
Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)
1200, 9925 109 St
Edmonton, AB T5K 2J8

Dear Marilyn and Vivian,

Request to partner on carbon tax relief advocacy

At Edmonton Public Schools, we strive to be good stewards of our planet and of public dollars. We know that ASBA operates the same way. Because of this, and because of the existing ASBA advocacy resolution 8.15 “that school boards be fully rebated the cost of the carbon tax or levy,” we are asking for your support in advocating to the federal government for a proposal that would both decrease the carbon tax paid and the carbon footprint of school divisions.

Currently, school divisions in Alberta do not receive a percentage of the federal carbon tax back like they do in other provinces. 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.

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.

As with other rural, urban and metro school divisions across the province, we continue to see growing deferred maintenance with mature buildings resulting in higher carbon emissions and utility costs. Some of our older buildings use approximately four times the amount of energy as our newer, larger schools.

We are proposing inviting the federal government to discuss alternatives for carbon tax payments made by Edmonton Public Schools (and by extension, ASBA member school authorities). For example, similar to how school authorities 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 of inefficient buildings, so that maximum operational dollars can be directed to the classrooms rather than utility bills.

To be clear, what we are proposing is not eliminating the carbon tax or saying that school divisions should not pay it. The carbon tax is an effective tool to help transition organizations and households to a lower carbon future. We are simply saying that although schools are not receiving the funding that would make possible large carbon tax payments, a win-win alternative can still be found.

Our Board will be advocating to the federal government for direct relief and mitigation options for school authorities related to the federal carbon tax. We note that the Alberta School Boards Association has a position statement (8.15), “that school boards be fully rebated the cost of the carbon tax or levy.” This aligns perfectly with the concept we are proposing. Therefore, we ask that you:

- write a letter to the Alberta provincial government to support this alternative to school authority payment of carbon tax, and
- connect with the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA) to request that they advocate directly to the federal government in support of this proposal and encourage other provincial school boards to do the same.

We would be happy to work together with you to answer any questions you may have and to draft materials.

We look forward to collaborating with ASBA on this important initiative,



Trisha Estabrooks
Chair

