

CUPE LOCAL 474

**Edmonton Public Schools
Custodial Workers Union**



BUDGET BRIEF 2009

Presented to the Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees

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Introduction

Madam Chair, Trustees, Mr. Superintendent.

Thank you for this opportunity to share the views of CUPE Local 474 as you prepare for the District's 2009-2010 budget.

In this brief we will address the significant changes in the Alberta economy and the very important role that public education plays in securing a strong future for our students and our communities. We will also address in detail, the longstanding issues for CUPE Local 474 members in our efforts to provide essential support services for education in the City of Edmonton.

With respect to the changes in the economy, three points are critical:

1. Investment in public services strengthens the economy. In addition, high quality public education services are the key to responding to present and future economic and workforce requirements.
2. Privatization, and specifically public private partnerships, erode the quality of public services and come with a very high price tag.¹
3. Education workers have the skills and knowledge to support upgrading and innovation in school facilities to meet the "green" goals required to protect the environment in our schools and our communities. Investment in green building and green work practices is investment in a sustainable economy.

The Edmonton Public School Board has a key and leading role to play in Alberta on education issues. We respectfully make this presentation as an effort to support the best possible outcomes for education in our school District.

The Current Economy and Funding for Education

It comes as no surprise, particularly in Alberta, that with the economic downturn we are once again beginning to hear the usual calls for cuts to public spending, wage freezes and rollbacks and cancelling of public investment in infrastructure and services. ***But such an economic plan would not only be self defeating – the results would undermine essential public services and profoundly set back education in Alberta .***

Even the Federal Government has been compelled to recognize the necessity of public investment to stimulate the economy – albeit with budget measures that fall significantly short in many respects.² In this context, the Provinces will be compelled to step up if a successful economic recovery is our goal. Education funding and long term vision for the future of services and infrastructure is key.

CUPE Local 474 has addressed concerns about education funding and allocation in our budget presentations each year – and this year is no exception. Specific concerns are addressed in detail below. The more general concern is that provincial funding continues to fail to meet education priorities and often the consequences are borne disproportionately in the areas of custodial services and general maintenance.

Contrary to what we often hear from government, social spending creates a much greater stimulus to the economy than, for example, income tax cuts:

¹ See discussion of public private partnerships – Page 4-6.

² <http://cupe.ca/budget/Harper-stimulus-budg>

Social spending has strongest stimulus

<i>\$1 billion spending or cut in:</i>	<i>Output (\$billion)</i>	<i>Jobs</i>
Early learning and child care		35,000
Health care	2.0	18,000
Infrastructure	2.8	16,000
Education	1.9	12,000
EI Rate cut	1.8	8,000
Income tax cut	1.3	6,000

Source: Presentation to CUPE Alberta Union Agreement Conference, February 2009 by Toby Sanger, Senior Economist, CUPE National Office.³

Unfortunately the economic policies pursued by the Alberta Government have tended to include limited spending when large surpluses exist and deep spending cuts during economic downturns. These pro-cyclical economic policies have proven to be counter-productive, short sighted and - for essential public services – disastrous.

Even mainstream economists now recognize that new directions in economic policy are essential:

International Monetary Fund (IMF) call for countries to introduce economic stimulus measures equivalent to 2% of GDP with emphasis on public spending. (Oliver Blanchard IMF chief economist, 29 December 2008) <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2008/INT122908A.htm>

Fiscal stimulus needs to focus on social protection. (Justin Lin, World Bank chief economist, 14 January 2009 *IMF Survey magazine*) <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2009/NEW011609A.htm>

The recipe has to be trickle-up economics...cuts in the corporate tax rate can't help much... (Avery Shenfeld, CIBC economist, 23 January 2009 *The week Ahead CIBC World markets*, 23 January, 2009) http://research.cibcwm.com/economic_public/download/jan23_09.pdf

Cuts in hourly wages and salaries (and) salary freezes (can lead to a) wage price deflationary spiral (that) is very difficult to stop... (Sherry Cooper, BMO chief economist, *Deflationary Forces Accelerate*, Focus, BMO Nesbitt Burns, 23 January 2009) <http://www.bmonesbittburns.com/economics/focus/20090123/focus.pdf>

Local government and school boards have an essential role to play in securing levels of funding from the provincial government that suit the times and challenges we face. Our facilities and education services must have sustainable funding and the additional investment needed to address immediate demands, pressing environmental standards goals and active planning for the future.

³ For more information on the sources used for this table contact Bonnie Ferguson, CUPE Research – Alberta Region bferguson@cupe.ca.

In short, expanding public services is the only way we can get out of this crisis – and improve our quality of life in a sustainable and equitable way. We ask the Board to give serious consideration to these economic concerns as the debate about our economic future and the future of education unfolds in Alberta.

The False Promise of Public Private Partnerships (P3s)

It is old news - old buildings and old equipment are part of the public sector infrastructure crisis which has yet to be addressed. Our schools are failing to meet education needs and evolving standards for meeting environmental goals and are on the verge of failing to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Accountable public investment in schools is urgently needed. But the major solution offered to Alberta communities is the creation of public private partnerships for building schools.

In the past we have stated all of the reasons why CUPE and many other organizations and individuals across Canada stand in strong oppositions to P3's for public infrastructure. These include:

- P3 financing costs more than conventional public investment in infrastructure. Public private partnerships do not lower or avoid public debt.
- Negotiation and final terms of public private deals are likely to remain secret as private investors try to protect commercial interests through confidentiality agreements. Public scrutiny may be virtually impossible – or too little, too late.
- Private profit is pitted against public priorities – this may mean private interests influence the type and quality of facilities that will be built, where they will be located, and who can use the facilities, when, and at what cost.
- Public private partnership contracts are very long term. Future Municipal Councils, School Boards and Health Authorities will be bound by contractual commitments made to private sector investors for 20 to 30 years into the future.
- No contract can make provision for all possible concerns or future requirements. Restrictions set out in P3 contracts have resulted in unanticipated cost overruns, new and increased fees for services, and additional public spending to meet service standards beyond the minimums provided for in the contracts with private partners.
- Future changes in community public service needs are likely to result in additional costs to the public – impossible to anticipate in long term (20-30 year) contracts.
- The business case and value for money analysis used to justify P3's often fail to acknowledge hidden costs and exaggerate the benefits of private sector involvement - including claims about risk transfer.
- The financial information required to evaluate P3 proposals is not available for public scrutiny in a timely way and real long term costs are often unknown or distorted by inappropriate use of comparisons. Private contracts restrict rather than support the objective of accommodating community needs.
- Effective, accountable control by public authorities of privatized services is significantly reduced - in the present and long term future.

Our concerns were given strong support in an economic analysis of the risks associated with using P3's for Alberta schools. *Doing the Math, Why P3's for Alberta Schools Don't Add Up*⁴ prepared for CUPE Alberta by Hugh McKenzie in January 2008 provided clear evidence that - on top of all the other concerns with privatization in education - private financing of schools through P3's would mean that our communities would only get two schools, where conventional public financing would have allowed three school to be built.

The debate about P3's for schools continues while Alberta Learning makes claims to value for money (but without producing any evidence) and school projects are delayed as a result of the P3 timelines and burdened by the costs of complex negotiations. A serious concern is that the real cost and consequences of the Alberta Government decision to use P3's may be a problem that is only fully understood by the next generation of citizens and taxpayers.

But the problems of risks, cost and future consequences of P3s are becoming more serious, day by day. The current economic climate has clearly revealed the weakness and dangers of the P3 strategy for public infrastructure.

The financial crisis has shown that there is a real need to move away from complicated and risky financial deals and get back to basics. Public services are best financed and delivered by the public sector. Private financiers should focus real productive investments to get industry and the private sector economy growing again.

Private financing is more costly and more risky: the relative financing cost for P3s has increased and will continue to stay higher for some time.

Despite trillions in public bail-outs and subsidies to the financial industry, the difference between private and public sector borrowing rates has increased significantly during the past year.

(Economic and financial crisis exposes risk of P3s - A CUPE backgrounder, **November 21, 2008**)⁵

With the changes in the economy in Canada and around the world, evidence of risks associated with P3's is piling up. Despite all evidence and argument, the Federal Government and the Province of Alberta continue to pursue public private partnerships.

The costs and risks associated with P3 financing are only part of the problem. With several Edmonton schools currently being built as P3's, additional concerns are evident. Some of EPSB departments and staff have been involved in planning these schools, but CUPE Local 474 was never consulted. When planning for school renovations or building of new schools, custodial knowledge and experience provides critical input.

Custodial input can ensure:

- Appropriate locations for plug ins, for custodial equipment,
- Outlets with sufficient amperage to meet equipment requirements,
- Sufficient utility rooms for custodial equipment and supplies,
- Sufficient floor based utility sinks for Custodial Staff to use,
- Adequate school storage space to ensure, for example, that there are a sufficient number of rooms, that the layout of utility rooms is appropriate and that the boiler room is not used for custodial storage.

⁴ http://cupe.ca/updir/cupe_alberta_doing_the_math.pdf

⁵ <http://cupe.ca/economics/economic-crisis-public-private-partnership>

In addition, the P3 schools pose serious problems for planning and staffing. We still do not know who will be expected to clean and maintain the P3 buildings after they are built. Our members expect to be working in the schools, however, we are very concerned that EPSB maintenance staff will not be maintaining them. This would require that our Custodial Staff work with non District maintenance staff. Our questions include:

- What procedures will be used for repairs and maintenance with non District maintenance staff ?
- Who will supply the school with equipment required for maintenance - the District, province or the private owner?
- How will working relationships for custodial and maintenance work be established?

Had we been in the loop, the importance of these issues could have been taken into consideration. Once again key stakeholders in our District have been left out of key decisions being made by the administration and the government – and by private consortium whose priority is ensuring the P3 profits shareholders.

CUPE in Alberta will soon be releasing an updated version of our resource binder – *The Case Against Public Private Partnerships for Public Infrastructure*⁶. This update will include recent research and evidence related to the problems with P3s in the current economy. CUPE Local 474 will provide copies of the resource binder to Edmonton Public School Board Members as soon as it is available. We have only been able to address a limited number of our concerns with public private partnerships in education. We would welcome any future opportunity to discuss these issues.

Going Green – Healthy Schools, Healthy Workplaces

Our schools have a leading role to play in education on environmental issues and the urgent responsibilities we have now and for the future to create communities that are healthy, clean and sustainable. School boards, school administrators and education workers have a broader role to play showing how it can be done – in our classrooms, in our school upgrades, in the products we use and the priorities we set for creating healthy schools and healthy workplaces.

There are well known, respected resources available to support environmental goals and future plans for Edmonton Public Schools. The David Suzuki Foundation website⁷ for example, includes a wide range of workplace strategies for green facilities.

Within CUPE, there are a number of resources available and new ones currently under development to support the work of Local Unions in their efforts to advance environmental goals in our workplaces. Healthy, Clean and GREEN - A Worker's Action Guide to a Greener Workplace⁸ has been prepared to support CUPE Locals efforts in improving workplace environments.

At least one of our new schools, Lillian Osborne Senior High, built using conventional public financing, will be meeting the *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED) standards, however we could be doing much more to green our schools. Once again input by CUPE Local 474 has been lacking.

Custodial Staff have the work experience and knowledge of facilities that can provide a great resource in EPSB work on environmental goals. Energy efficiencies and utility costs have been our concern for over two decades.

⁶ <http://cupealberta.ca/03news/thecaseagainstp3financing.pdf>

⁷ www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/at_work.asp

⁸ http://cupe.ca/updir/Green_booklet.pdf

Schools need to implement green energy, cleaning, and learning opportunities. A holistic approach is required. This would mean that energy reduction is not just done in the boiler room but in the class room as well.

Learning about utility costs, about the nature of heat and energy, and the work we do as Custodians in maintaining the heating plants of our schools, can be transformed into a learning opportunity in the classroom.

For example: Are schools using natural lighting? Use of natural lighting will improve not only energy costs but student learning. If so what facility plan is there for increasing use of glass/natural lighting? These are challenges that architects and planners forget about when designing schools on paper and as models.

These are also key reasons why our input is needed, but sadly has not been asked for.

Custodial work is a Green Job, and should be promoted as such when recruiting staff. Cleaning our schools reduces illness and absenteeism. Cleaning with less toxic chemicals helps improve the indoor air quality and reduces allergic or chemical reactions of students and staff. Custodial input on design, energy use and green goals based on our experience and knowledge of school facilities is an important part of creating a healthy, clean and green future.

Custodial Service in EPSB – Meeting the Challenges

You will find that many issues discussed in the discussion that follows remain unfinished, unresolved or unaddressed. Our Brief will address the following concerns of CUPE Local 474;

- **Staffing Levels**
- **The Need for a *Custodial Department***
- **Custodial Training Centre**
- **Standardization and Modernization of Custodial Equipment**
- **Appropriate Technology and Training**
- **Training, Coaching and Mentoring for Head Custodians**
- **Green Cleaning**
- **Carpet Cleaning**
- **Window Cleaning**
- **Joint Hiring Committee**
- **Community Use**
- **Energy Management Plan**

Local 474 and Edmonton Public Schools relationship is rooted in our use of the principle of Win-Win bargaining. This principle has served us well not only during negotiations, but also, throughout the terms of our collective agreements.

We are partners in education and our work is crucial to the success of students in this District. Studies have shown that the cleanliness of schools has a direct impact on student achievement.

History demonstrates that when an employer partners with the union, its employees, to develop strategies and share accountability, there are better outcomes for staff and students.

Staffing Levels

While Custodial Staffing levels were agreed to in our last collective agreement, CUPE Local 474 has been largely left out of the formulation. The District's Personnel Department has taken on this project. Despite our efforts to pursue meaningful consultation, the opportunities have produced only modest results. This is contrary to the spirit of the letter of intent we agreed to during the last round of collective bargaining.

EPSB Personnel Department decided that Custodial Staffing could be addressed in two ways: by increasing staff, or by closing classrooms or unused areas of the school. This latter idea was not part of the letter of agreement. It is, in fact, an arbitrary decision of the administration in order to avoid the need to increase the Custodial Staff or hours of work in our schools.

Closing unused sections of a school does not reduce the cleaning required, since the whole school is still used. Reducing square footage does not translate into less cleaning demand on Custodial Staff. Students, other staff, parents and volunteers as well as leasee's all contribute to the dirt brought in. That dirt is then spread throughout the school whether a room is open or closed. Even closed rooms as well as mechanical, lights and filters collect dust and dirt over time.

The square footage formula of our schools does not reflect the real square footage that we clean. It fails to take into consideration the exterior areas of the school, stairs, exterior windows, sidewalks, parking lots, grass areas, flower beds, tarmacs, security, heating and cooling plants. All these areas are cleaned usually by the Head Custodian or another custodial worker.

By having site based staffing, the District leaders choose not to plan for Custodial Staff replacement nor provide adequate replacements for Custodial Staff missing from schools due to illness, vacation, leave of absence, WCB, overtime or time in lieu, or for any other absence covered under the collective agreement.

Because Custodial Staffing is not District-wide nor assigned by a Custodial Department, each school Custodian is at the mercy of the availability of a replacement in order to get training, professional development or to take time off work as covered under the collective agreement.

Some schools have imposed a "no overtime" rule when it comes to replacing Custodial Staff, meaning that the other Custodial Staff have to do the extra work, which places them in a stressful and ultimately unhealthy work situation.

In order to fully understand Custodial Staffing issues in the District, we also have to look at what the roles and responsibilities are for each component of a school's custodial department. The Head Custodian, for example, is responsible for the total building operation including the heating and mechanical plant. Their Power Engineering certification is on the line if problems in a building's physical plant should occur.

By this definition, the certified operator has major responsibility for the physical plant of the building - not the Principal, the Administrative Assistant, or even Facilities.

The importance of proper maintenance and supervision of a school's heating plant cannot be exaggerated. Low water condition in overworked boilers can be considered bombs waiting to explode. Conditions such as this can occur if a computerized monitoring system fails. Mistakenly adding water in such an instance does cause explosions. Eighty per cent (80%) of all such boiler accidents are due to the failure of having trained operators to deal with this type of situation.

Our District recommends the best practice of checking on our boilers every two hours. In the case of extreme cold weather the union recommends that Custodial Staff check boilers in their schools at least once during the weekend. This is not regularly practiced in our District where, to cut costs, administration has attempted a twice daily check of boilers and replaced boiler operator checks with internet computer monitoring. When the site has no coverage, the employer is only supervising a heating plant once a day.

The Head Custodian is also responsible for a wide variety of non-cleaning work and duties in the school and exterior cleaning of areas around the school. The afternoon custodial have non-cleaning duties as well with community users. These are not usually defined as daily cleaning requirements. The actual classroom, washroom and daily cleaning that any Head Custodian on duty can do, regardless if they have other staff or not, is approximately two hours daily.

Without consultation we cannot know if these facts have been considered when the District calculated a staffing formula to address Custodial Staff reductions in our schools. In some schools which have a single Head Custodian, the work day has been simply cut from eight hours to six hours. Cuts were made to satisfy a bottom line and nothing more. CUPE Local 474 is willing to revisit the staffing formula issue to resolve this in a mutually beneficial manner.

Eight hour Division A Custodians who work on afternoon shift as well as part time Division B Custodial Assistants were seen as interchangeable over the past two decades. Cuts in Custodial positions were made and afternoon Custodians were replaced with less expensive Custodial Assistants. A Division A Custodian does heavy duty cleaning, works eight hours a day, and does the majority of cleaning during an afternoon shift. It is the afternoon shift that does the majority of cleaning in our schools.

Consultation would have helped in accurately calculating the real cleaning needs in our buildings. Cleaning time needs to be calculated based on the afternoon shifts, not the day shift. Ultimately the accurate cleaning needs of our schools should be the issue; not the bottom line of saving schools money in salaries and benefits. It is puzzling why administration feels they alone can develop staffing formula to support the cleaning needs of any school without consultation. CUPE Local 474 would not presume to tell teachers or Principals how to teach students. It makes no sense to send a painter to perform heart surgery and equally no sense to develop staffing formulae for our schools without our Local's input.

To properly clean and maintain our schools each school less than 50,000 sq. ft. requires 2.5 FTE Custodial Staff. That is a Head Custodian, an afternoon Custodian and a Custodial Assistant. The current staffing formula letter that has gone out to Principals from Personnel does not approach these numbers. Money is cited as the issue when we raise the issue of minimal staffing levels. The results of these cuts put cleanliness standards in our school at the mercy of the bottom line.

The local annually has to address arbitrary and non-consultative cuts in Custodial Staff in our schools. The majority of Principals do not consult when cutting Custodial Staff; they simply do it and announce it.

Our District practice seems to be the use of the Custodial Staffing formula to find ways *not to* increase Custodial Staff. Principals are trying to do anything but the right thing which is; meeting minimal staffing standards which was the purpose of the letter of intent in the collective agreement.

Bearing in mind the model employed in our approach to Personnel Services, our District needs to seriously consider developing a District wide cleaning standard that is centrally staffed and delivered with qualified personnel.

According to the 2007 Kinnaird Planning and Research Ltd. Study of Operations and Maintenance Expenditures of Alberta School Districts:

EPS custodial workers ranked as cleaning the most square footage per hour compared to all other school districts in the province. Total cleaning area was 3098.47122 per hour per FTE for EPS custodial workers. The provincial average was 2608.063379999999625 per hour per FTE.

In 2007 Calgary Board of Education had 571.55 FTE custodial for their district. EPS had 480.20 FTE CBE had 91.35 FTE more Custodial Staff than our district which meant they cleaned fewer sq feet per hour than our staff did. CBE custodial clean 2870.637705 per hour.

Expenditures on cleaning and custodial new equipment and tools were also well below the provincial average of \$0.22 per sq. m. EPS spent \$0.14 per sq m. (a sq. m is 10.764 sq.ft). When it comes to cleaning and custodial supply expenditures per unit area EPS comes second from the bottom spending only \$0.77 per sq m. while the provincial average is \$1.68 per sq.m.

Only two other school districts the much smaller Elk Island and Peace River public schools spent less than a dollar per sq m for cleaning and custodial supplies.

Total cleaning cost for our district is also below the provincial average; which is \$25.52 per sq.m. EPS cost is \$24.76.

Recommendations:

- *The majority of cleaning is done on afternoon shift and this is where staffing needs to be increased in all schools.*
- *All District schools 50,000 sq. ft. or less require at least 2.5 FTE Custodial Staff.*
- *District schools between 50,000 and 75,000 sq. ft. require at least 3 or 4 FTE Custodial Staff.*

Custodial Department

While other school districts across the province and across Canada have adopted some aspects of site based management, no school district has allowed for site based assignment of Custodial Staff except Edmonton Public. The reason other Districts/Regions assign staff centrally is clear, schools need to be cleaned and the best way to assign staff for cleaning is by the size of the plant. When site based management is used to make staffing decisions, Custodial Staff are seen as expendable to meet the bottom line, cleaning thus suffers, and schools become run down.

Under the current model, we are failing to serve the families of this District and failing to deliver the quality of cleaning standards that are required for the health and safety of students and staff, and the longevity of our physical plants. After twenty years of site based management, we see the need to review the delivery of custodial services.

CUPE Local 474 believes it is time to remove custodial services from the school line budget, and return to a central department of custodial services. Facilities as well as the carpet cleaning operations have a custodial consultant. They also provide the Mechanical Consultants who do custodial training around the 5th Class Power Engineering course.

Consulting Services provides custodial consulting and training. Personnel have the Spares Board, a custodial mentor, hire Custodial Staff, provide health recovery for Custodial Staff, and have Health and Safety consultants who work with the joint Health & Safety committee. Now the department also provides custodial training through Staff Development. Purchasing and the Distribution Centre coordinate the purchasing of custodial supplies and Equipment.

Each of these departments has different approaches to financing custodial services. Some are centrally funded with no cost to schools. Others charge for services under the maintenance agreement and Consulting Services is cost recovery. Schools may or may not choose to purchase custodial supplies and equipment from the Distribution Centre. There is absolutely no consistency throughout the District in funding custodial services. This is wasteful and inefficient.

Along with a lack of fiscal consistency, there is a lack of consistency in coordination and delivery of custodial mentoring, training, and consulting services. Principals are at a loss as to who to call for which service. Supervision of custodial consultants and services are not done by those qualified in our field, but rather by Principals promoted into central administration.

Once again, we recommended the need for a single central Custodial Department with a qualified Director who had a custodial services background who can work closely with site administration. That recommendation was accepted but not acted upon. We draw this issue to your attention again this year with the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

- ***Custodial services need its own department which the District has agreed to in principle.***
- ***This department needs to have its own qualified director who has experience in custodial services.***
- ***The Custodial Department should include custodial, mechanical, health and safety, staff development consultants, mentors, Spare Board Supervisor and Spares.***

Custodial Training Centre

The Edmonton Public School District prides itself as a world leader in education. Why not build on this concept on all areas of the District. CUPE Local 474 would propose the creation of a world class Custodial Department and Training Center.

Training in custodial cleaning procedures, boiler and mechanical operations and maintenance, central purchasing and storage of cleaning equipment and supplies, and a location for the two carpet cleaning trucks, would all be best facilitated out of one location. Consideration could be focused on one of our District's unused schools.

A school that housed a steam boiler, as well as having a variety of types of flooring would aid in the training and upgrading of District Custodial Staff. Having custodial, mechanical, health and safety consultants and mentors in one location would allow for better efficacy for schools in accessing services they require.

This option would create a multi use facility that custodial services could operate out of. It would allow for actual work related testing of the latest equipment as well as cleaning products. Our District could become a world leader in its approach to custodial support for education.

Recommendations:

- ***CUPE Local 474 recommends the creation of a Custodial Services Department in an unused school to take advantage of a vacant building as a teaching centre for Custodial Staff.***
-

Standardization and Modernization of Custodial Equipment

While Edmonton Public Schools have made every effort to incorporate the latest teaching related technology, this has not been the case with custodial equipment. Schools have been allowed to buy their own equipment without a professional assessment of school needs.

Schools continue to be dependent on old outdated custodial equipment. Custodians have been recycling used equipment among schools for twenty years. Custodians at individual sites have been told there is no money for custodial equipment so they have given up asking for it. This is clearly not a best practice!

In an era where attracting and retaining talent in every staff group is an identified priority of CEO's globally, treating custodial in the manner this administration has chosen is just bad business. A culture of learned helplessness has been fostered.

Imagine a school trying to access the internet and District technology services using a Commodore 64. This is the state of our custodial equipment. Modern cleaning technology has changed in the last decade. While in our schools, chemical delivery systems as well as cleaning equipment remain from the 1980s and 1990s. In some extreme cases equipment may even be from the 1970s. Modern advances in cleaning equipment reduce labour time, increase cleaning ability, and are more portable and light weight. Modern chemicals are more concentrated and use dilution pump systems that are wall mounted. Many of our schools have these units, many, however, do not. Chemicals are still poured out by hand using the old eye ball measuring method. Efficiency is lost and safety is compromised.

OH&S considerations should have carpet cleaning done using small dry vacuums that have bags and triple filtration. Our schools, however, are still using wet/dry vacuums that are large, cumbersome and hard to empty. They are also noisier than modern dry only vacuums.

Companies developing cleaning equipment are out there selling their products as the best, *but our District has no program in place to assess what is best for our schools.* Instead we use the word of mouth assessment method; a Custodian in one school gets a new auto scrubber and promotes it. Whether this is the best auto scrubber for the school or for other schools is not reviewed. The decision is based on which salesman visited what school and who bought it.

District assessments of what schools need for cleaning equipment and the provision of said equipment is what is needed to streamline this practice. Not all schools, for example, need propane burnishers. Many that do use them have equipment that is dangerous and harmful to students and staff as well as the environment because they are old and do not meet the current industry and environmental standards.

Many schools do not have auto scrubbers, and some have auto scrubbers that are twenty years old. Modern floor cleaning is no longer done with a mop and pail, except in many of our schools. Auto scrubbers clean floors, damp mopping merely spreads the dirt around. This is neither conducive to a healthy learning environment nor a healthy workplace.

The latest technological advances in auto scrubbers have produced a wide variety of sizes and capabilities that did not exist ten or twenty years ago. Today, Gel Pac battery-powered high speed burnishers are available that are less environmentally harmful and can be used on a wider variety of flooring.

We have schools reluctant to invest in this much needed cleaning technology. A centralized program could look at equipment testing and determine the school's assessed needs. It would allow for a more uniform provision of equipment across the District. It would also allow for better familiarity for Spare Custodians and other Custodial Staff who move from one school to another in their careers due to uniform equipment usage. The creation of a central inventory of custodial equipment would provide access for other schools or district departments. In addition, this would be more cost effective for the District in the long run.

Recommendations:

- ***Purchasing and supplying of custodial equipment needs to be standardized in order to supply all schools with the appropriate modern equipment.***
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Appropriate Technology and Training

Edmonton Public is a District that embraces computer technology for teaching, internal and external communications. In fact we are a wired district. Some Custodial Staff have access to appropriate computer technology but adequate training is lacking. Custodial Staff, in many schools, do not have access to computers in their offices. Some may have computer access but no printers. Some custodial offices don't even have a phone.

For ten years the District has developed and promoted technology. CUPE Local 474 was involved in the early discussions on District-wide computer use. Since that time, change in technology throughout the District has flourished. For Custodial Staff, technology improves at a glacial pace. Budgeting for custodial access to technology in schools is at best an afterthought. Schools will get the latest in Smart Board technology, while demanding that Custodial Staff access their email and the District's electronic information through the General Office or from a location like the school library where they compete with students for computer access.

All custodial offices should have appropriate technology: computers, monitors, printers, and, yes, even telephones. All Custodial Staff, not only the Head Custodians should have access to the computer and email. So much information is communicated directly to schools via the District's Infozone and email that anything less is unacceptable.

Three years ago in our budget brief, we recommended that Spare Custodians be equipped with the latest cutting edge technology, the Blackberry. They remain a group with no computer access in the District because they travel from school to school and may be in a different school each day. They have never been provided with any technological access to the District's website or email. At the time we recommended the use of Blackberry technology, but this proposal was dismissed as too expensive.

Within a year Blackberry use was more prevalent in the District. Today many central services staff have Blackberries but our spares do not. All spares should be provided with Blackberries which act as cell phones, as well as being able to access email and the District's web site.

Having the technology is not enough, however, a comprehensive training program for use of the Internet, email and Blackberry technology should be provided to all Custodial Staff District wide at no cost. This would

greatly assist with many issues including red alerts, health and safety, working alone, internal communications from Personnel, and Superintendent communications.

Recommendations:

- *All custodial offices need to be equipped with telephones, computers and printers, internet access and email accounts and custodial should have adequate computer training.*
 - *Custodial Staff who work alone need to be supplied with cell phones.*
 - *Spare Custodians need to be supplied with Blackberries and trained on their use.*
-

Training, Coaching and Mentoring for Head Custodians

Advances in custodial training over the past eight years have been significant. These are the result of recommendations from our joint committee on custodial education. During this time the joint committee has addressed many of the training needs of Custodial Staff. Examples include training provided for Custodial Staff new to the District and Custodians requiring their 5th and 4th Class Power Engineering certification.

Currently the education and training needs of Custodial Assistants are under review. Head Custodians however have no comprehensive training program. Consulting Services has provided Head Custodian in-servicing opportunities, but this is not the same as a comprehensive education program applied District wide for all Head Custodians. Those members of CUPE Local 474 who aspire to become Head Custodians have no educational opportunities that focus on the work or the responsibilities of a Head Custodian. Our concerns include the following:

- Head Custodians not only require education defining their roles and responsibilities but also on District cleaning standards.
- Head Custodians do not know what the District standards are for newly trained Custodial Staff.
- Head Custodians are leaders and supervisors but basic supervision and evaluation training is not comprehensive nor is it available.
- No systematic course of supervisory training has been developed.

Since Blueprints For Leadership began, leadership skills have been financed and delivered to all Principals in the District. Our current Superintendent, Edgar Schmidt benefited from this leadership training and so can our Head Custodians. Our district has promoted leadership models for Principals, who are now department heads, as well as being promoted to administrative positions. Such opportunities should be afforded to our Heads to develop their leadership skills using the training available in the District. It remains the core of the District's leadership training, coaching and mentoring. The development of school and central services leadership teams, have all been paid for and extensive training given to Principals and select staff. Head Custodians, who themselves are responsible for custodial leadership in this District have been neglected.

Head Custodians who are responsible for million dollar facilities and thousands of dollars in staff and equipment are treated as an after thought when it comes to school leadership teams. They are not seen as the building or plant operator and manager but as the day shift cleaner. Yet as stated previously, with their power engineering certification on the line, the Custodian, not the Principal, is responsible for the well being of the physical plant.

Many Head Custodians still are not allowed to manage their own budgets or work orders. Head Custodians are often given less responsibility than a teacher Department Head. Some Custodians are not included in the evaluation process in our schools. School administration and in some schools the Administrative Assistant do this work. A work environment that fails to give Head Custodians autonomy or control receives a failing grade from our Local regarding engagement and retention.

Head Custodians require access to basic training in supervision as well as cleaning; they also need access to leadership skills such as mentoring and coaching. We require Head Custodians to be responsible for much more than just cleaning, and yet their opportunities for training and education in these areas are haphazard and limited by their school's PD budgets. A central training program for all Head Custodians paid for by the District is required.

Finally, we still engage in the practice of hiring Head Custodians and not giving them time to train with outgoing Head Custodians. We acknowledge that often the existing Head Custodian has already left the position. We would like to see mentoring opportunities put in place where, for at least ten days the newly appointed Head Custodian is able to work with the outgoing Head Custodian so they become familiar with the operations and protocols of the new school.

Recommendations:

- ***A training program for Head Custodians be implemented in the next year.***
- ***Head Custodians leaving their schools be given time to mentor their replacements.***

Carpet Cleaning

Carpet cleaning is a specific type of cleaning which requires training. Simply purchasing an extractor for a school does not mean the Custodian knows how to clean carpet. Stain removal, the nature of the carpet; wool or synthetic, type of pile, type of backing, etc. all are part of the training required of Custodians who carpet clean. Several of our members as well as the Custodial Consultants and the Carpet Technicians are trained and certified Carpet Technicians.

This training should be required of all Custodial Staff who maintain carpets with an in-house carpet care program using extractors.

The misuse of extraction can result in, for example, oversoiling, overuse of chemical, or staining. Sometimes the problems with carpet cleaning are blamed on the Districts Carpet Technicians, when the problem is actually that the carpet in the school has not been properly maintained over the years. Studies done by the Carpet and Rug Institute show that a proper carpet care program can extend the life of carpets by as much as ten years.⁹

Mandatory standards should be imposed by the employer for a minimum of once a year carpet cleaning for all sites. High Schools, Centre for Education and larger sites of Elementary, Junior High where there are higher amount of traffic from students, community users, staff, can require carpet cleaning of up to three times per year.

Last year the District acquired a second truck-mounted carpet cleaning unit in order to meet the needs of schools for carpet cleaning. Unfortunately, the Facilities Department decided to replace the custodial consultant

⁹ The Carpet and Rug Institute www.carpet-rug.org/commercial-customers/cleaning-and-maintenance/index.cfm

responsible for the supervision of carpet cleaning with a non-custodial tradesman. The results included a backlog of service requests and increased customer complaints. In addition, and without consultation or any formal announcement, prices were increased. We are pleased to see that Facilities responded to school as well as union complaints and returned the supervision of these services to the Custodial Consultant.

Even with the price increase, our District carpet cleaning services are cheaper than any commercial competitor. As well, our carpet services use an advanced cleaning technology that deep cleans school carpets rather than just using wand extraction which is done by the commercial companies.

The elimination of centralized carpet cleaning in the eighties resulted in schools relying on their own Custodial Staff to do the carpet cleaning using hot water extraction. Schools purchased hot water extractors for custodial use but did not provide a training program to support the work. This in turn resulted in many carpets being damaged due to chemical residue being left in them.

The combined cost of damage and cost of labour created the perception that carpet cleaning was too expensive. School administration also incorrectly determined that because carpet cleaning is labour and time intensive, it could only be completed in the summer. Since we began to deliver a centralized carpet cleaning service, administrators have been resistant to hire this service because they believe their carpets can only be cleaned during the summer. The District has done little to promote year-round carpet cleaning or the carpet cleaning service in general. In fact, CUPE Local 474 has done more to promote this service, including funding the initial truck purchase. As a result, some schools over the past years have continued to contract out this service or they have opted to have their own Custodial Staff manually clean carpets to save money despite the collective agreement.

Carpet care saves the District money by increasing the longevity of school carpets. Done correctly as a program, carpets will last longer. Health problems or health concerns around carpet cleanliness are reduced with a proper cleaning using the truck mounted method. Manual carpet extraction and cleaning by school Custodians is not the same as the deep steam cleaning process we use with truck units. Schools need to have annual carpet cleaning done by the truck mounted units, regardless of other carpet cleaning methods they may use. We would encourage the District to mandate such a program.

We would further suggest that in order to recover costs of the carpet cleaning units, the District look at providing this service to other school districts interested in contracting our services. This would go a long way in reducing costs to district schools.

To date, CUPE Local 474 has been promoting this idea and has only met with resistance from the Director of Facility Services and this current administration. This is further grounds to support the need to form a District Custodial Department; Facilities treats custodial services as an after thought.

Recommendations:

- ***All schools will have their carpets cleaned annually by the District truck mounted unit in order to provide for their longevity as well to reduce the potential health affects dirty carpets can have.***
- ***Carpet cleaning services will be offered to other school Districts.***
- ***Schools using carpet extractors ensure their Custodial Staff are trained in carpet cleaning principles.***
- ***GPS for the carpet vehicle to support ease of locating facility sites.***

Window Cleaning and High Dusting

There was a significant cost to the District to have selected Custodial Staff in the District trained on Genie and Scissor Lifts in order to facilitate a school window cleaning program. Such a program, however, has not been developed. School Custodians are expected to clean school windows and in some cases climb ladders and scaffolding in violation of Occupational Health and Safety Standards.

A school window cleaning program using the spare board needs to be developed and run from spring through to the fall. Window cleaning is an industrial operation, not at all like cleaning your windows at home and needs to be addressed as such. Like carpet cleaning, it is a specialized cleaning operation that is labour and time intensive. It cannot be adequately or efficiently completed by school Custodial Staff assigned to the school.

Schools and buildings with large interior and exterior glass paneling need to be specially cleaned. This can be accomplished by District Custodial Staff trained as window cleaners.

Currently, the District has only taken tentative steps in addressing this cleaning need. The District has been contracting out this work in violation of the collective agreement. Despite all the evidence that in-house Custodial Staff do better quality work more cost effectively, window cleaning has been assigned to outside contractors. Even this building has failed to take advantage of our own custodial services to clean the atrium, instead opting to contract out.

As well as window cleaning, high dusting of gyms and areas higher than ten feet is a challenge for Custodial Staff in our District. Proper equipment, whether it is scaffolding or genie/scissor lift is required, as well as at least two workers per platform. This cannot be done by Custodial Staff in a particular school, as it requires safety training in fall protection and equipment use.

For this reason we have several trained spares, and a District wide program is required to meet the high dusting need in our district schools

Recommendations:

- ***The District will implement a window cleaning and high dusting programs using spare Custodians.***
-

Flood and Fire Clean Up

Two years ago, District schools faced major clean ups after record flooding. Custodial Staff in the district, along with the use of the truck-mounted carpet cleaning units, met these challenges.

Disaster clean up of both fire and flood is an extension of custodial services. Both are based on the same cleaning principles and we have District staff trained in disaster clean up both post flood and fire. Yet last year, we had three fires in District schools, and Facilities Services flagrantly violated the collective agreement by contracting out the post fire clean-up to an outside contractor. The contractor merely supervised the clean up, which was done by District Custodial Staff, and in some cases, Parent volunteers.

The local grieved this and won its grievance in interpretations. We would encourage all the Trustees to review this grievance. As a result, a post disaster clean up protocol was to be put in place. The slowness in the process of addressing this issue by Personnel resulted in another situation where Facilities contracting out fire clean-up supervision six months later at Delwood School. This situation happened despite CUPE Local 474's efforts to mobilize Custodial Staff for clean-up.

The point is; this District paid two times to have an outside company supervise our staff. This company did not clean - they merely supervised.

We have trained Custodians, trained Union Executive, and district Custodial Consultants/Mentor as well as Health and Safety Consultants who are all capable of doing this kind of supervision. There is no need in this district to contract out post flood or post fire supervision for clean-up. This is an extreme waste of District resources and shows the need for widening our training for post flood and post fire clean-up for all district Custodial Staff.

A firm protocol needs to be in place that cannot be ignored by senior administration in the case of future events. There should be significant consequences to either party for flagrantly disobeying the protocol and/or the collective agreement.

Recommendations:

- ***Post flood and fire clean up will be done in-house using custodial and Health and Safety Consultants as Supervisors, and Spares and school Custodial Staff.***
 - ***District Custodial Staff will be trained in post disaster clean-up.***
-

Joint Hiring Committee

The District finds itself challenged to fill Custodial positions with the current labour shortage in our city and across the province. Whether those positions to be filled require power engineering certification or day to day temporary Custodial, we remain dangerously short staffed. This situation has been compounded by two decades of District cuts to Custodial Staff.

We have done more with less for too long and the results have been devastating to our staff group. Increases in health related problems, personal stress and injuries on the job are more common than at any other time in our history.

The routine cutting of utility and charge hand positions by Principals to save money has not paid long range dividends. Without these cuts, we would have had Custodial Staff in the District to fill them. By cutting these positions, there was no incentive for anyone to want to advance. Recent requirements under the collective agreement however, see some of these positions being reluctantly replaced. The District though, now finds itself unable to fill these positions either internally or externally.

Why would someone want to work for a District that is perceived to undervalue its work force? Why would someone who, with their power engineering certification and is able to work in the surrounding chemical industry as a process engineer, take a position with greater responsibilities such as, managing a school and cleaning staff for example, for the pay and benefits the Edmonton Public School District offers?

We face a similar situation with Head Custodians in larger schools and many schools throughout the District. When the pay differential is so minimal, afternoon Custodian are reluctant to give up their position to take on more responsibility?

When Head Custodians are subject to the whims of site-based decision making that cuts their staff continually year after year and still expects the same level of cleaning to be done, it is not a challenge to be creative; it's an impossibility.

We suffer a lack of sufficient spare Custodians to replace Custodial Staff who are ill, absent, or out looking for other work. The failure of this District, to hire the 50 Spares we recommended over the last decade would have addressed this need. Now the District cannot reach this target even if it wanted to.

Temporary workers, who work day-to-day with no benefits and were knocking on our door two years ago, are now working elsewhere. Perhaps they are taking Tim Horton's offer of equivalent pay and benefits in positions with far less stress and expectations.

The District has failed to address the Custodial Staff shortage in any meaningful way because it has failed to adapt to the changes in the labour market. Instead of aggressively advertising in the Edmonton Examiner for Custodial Staff, they continue to put expensive ads in the Edmonton Journal Career Opportunities section on the weekends. This section is for corporate and executive positions, for professional careers. This is not the section of the paper someone looking for a Custodial job would normally look. Papers like the Edmonton Examiner and the Edmonton Sun reach folks who are looking for work in Custodial positions. There are even specialty newspapers available for jobseekers distributed free in boxes around the city. But you will not find Edmonton Public advertising in their pages. These are lost opportunities to reach potential workers. No real staffing strategies have been developed or proposed to this Local to address the changing nature of Custodial Staffing.

For instance, while the District sponsors its own career fair to expose Students to future careers, it rarely advertises itself as one of those careers. Why? The District has not advertised Custodial jobs at the University, College or NAIT. The hours of work for our afternoon shifts would be perfect for Students needing jobs. This District does not tap all its available resources.

The District needs to be more visible at job fairs and at High Schools being held around the City. It needs to be aggressive and advertise the advantages available for custodial workers. The District is a unionized workplace with a benefit plan and custodial workers have job security. This message must be sent out. The District needs to cooperate with its CUPE locals and promote itself at job fairs. Power Engineers with 4th and 5th class certification are now seeking a more stable employer.

Once upon a time, we had a building service worker program in our high schools that offered vocational training, but that was abandoned. It may be revisited and viewed as a viable alternative.

Norquest College has revived its Building Service Worker program and a member of Personnel sits on this advisory committee. We do not seem to be benefiting from the graduates of this program. If simply having someone on the advisory committee is enough, are we targeting these workers with information about the benefits of working for Edmonton Public Schools?

The District's new tag-line *Bright Futures Begin Here* was recently introduced to the employees. This message should not only apply to Students. This is the message to promote this District to job seekers.

Any solution to the labour shortage we currently face must be a new approach to hiring. Our greatest successes have occurred when we developed win-win strategies by working together. The problem is that our personnel department is not skilled in dealing with Custodial hires because its mind-set is geared to hiring teachers. Personnel views hiring Custodial Staff no differently than hiring teachers. They are two completely different professions. And the people who qualify for Custodial work do not read the careers section of the Edmonton Journal or Globe and Mail.

We need to have experienced Custodial Staff sitting on hiring committees. The District struggles to hire Custodial Staff and when they do, they too often hire unqualified people. Personnel sets the hiring bar for Custodial Staff so low and they reap the rewards. We cannot afford to have a revolving door for Custodial workers which is what occurs when people without proper qualifications are hired. We must move more aggressively training our newly hired to meet the District needs.

In our experience the following issues must be addressed:

- Advertising in community papers.
- Promotion of Custodial Staff hiring separate from other staff groups, independently at job fairs.
- Targeting existing custodial companies as well as building maintenance companies and associations for hiring (e.g. Buildings Operation and Management Association, (BOMA)).
- Promotion of evening shift work to students at NAIT , Grant McEwan, and at University, as a job that allows them to go to school during the day (especially for adult part time students).
- Promotion of custodial jobs with NAIT power engineering classes and U of A mechanical engineering department.
- Promotion of our jobs as union jobs, with job security, benefits, and a pension plan.
- Have Custodians present at job fairs to explain the work we do, this would include a union member and the custodial consultant(s).
- For hiring new staff, a union member should be sitting on the interview committee because current personnel hiring practices lacks custodial expertise.

CUPE Local 474 believes a joint hiring committee would be the best solution both for the short-term and the long-term in order to address the Custodial Staffing needs of our District.

Recommendations:

- *The District should be advertising for Custodial positions in the appropriate sections of the local print media.*
- *The District should broaden its use of local print media to advertise for custodial positions.*
- *The District should develop a job fair display in cooperation with CUPE Local 474 to do outreach for Custodial Staff.*
- *The District should encourage post secondary Students to consider Custodial work.*
- *The District should offer a building service program for High School Students.*
- *The District should review its relationship with the Norquest Building Service Workers program.*
- *Custodial hiring for the District should be done by a joint union district committee.*

Green Cleaning

We are pleased to see that our initiatives over the past several years calling for a green cleaning program for our schools have reached fruition. The District is now addressing this matter through a joint committee. However, we remain concerned that with site based management, schools will still have the option of opting out and purchasing cleaning supplies from outside suppliers.

In order to affect a real green cleaning program, all cleaning supplies need to be purchased through the distribution centre after having been subjected to proper testing as proposed by the Green Cleaning Committee.

An enhanced effective Green Program would find advantage for our District if we engaged other school districts and encourage them to supply their needs with our cleaning materials. The work we do in the promotion of this

area will save them time and money. Our efforts could go a long way in promoting endless replication by other districts.

If products we use can be shown to have been tested and properly vetted as part of a comprehensive green cleaning program, we may be able to expand the Districts serviced by our Distribution Center. In this light, it would be counter productive to allow district schools to continue to purchase non-approved alternative products or spurious 'equivalent' products from outside sources.

Recommendations:

- ***All custodial cleaning supplies be purchased through the Distribution Centre.***
 - ***Custodial Staff be provided with training around the use of Green products brought into the district.***
-

Community Use

Greater amounts of community pressure are being placed on our schools to open up gyms for community use. With changes in the booking procedures used for accessing schools after hours however, last year resulted in a lot of disruption for Custodial Staff trying to deal with both community use groups as well as rentals. The City of Edmonton now does the bookings centrally for all schools. The District is now awash in complaints, including; lack of central booking system which restricts the use in one person schools. The District is routinely requested to open up all school facilities that have afternoon shifts and with overtime for weekends or schools that have weekend shifts.

After hours use of our schools is admirable. However, it is problematic for the Custodial Staff who oversee these groups while trying to clean around them. Cleaning schedules in schools do not account for the time required to take care of rentals or community use (Another formula consideration).

The letter sent to Principals regarding Custodial Staffing, addresses this issue. The letter is sent with the notion that Principals understand the actual time it takes to care for renters and community use groups. The reality is many school administration need to be fully informed on the actual time it takes Custodial Staff to take care of rentals and community use groups combined with the disruption it causes to a cleaning schedule.

An advantage to Weekend community use of a school has the advantage of time for Custodial Staff to complete extra cleaning. Too often however, Custodial Staff are shorted on week end hours and not given sufficient time to cover weekend shifts when the school is in use. Planning needs to allot facilities for community use and direct the hours these will be used. Included in this plan must be adequate time for custodial to clean up after rentals in evenings and on weekends.

There is a disparity with some of the Christian Schools in our District. They came into our District to benefit from PMO funding, and to give them access to funding for much needed upgrades and repairs. However it is not a level playing field since several of them still maintain their own control over after hours use of their facilities.

The Christian Schools are not maintained by the District but by a non profit religious society. Cleaning, repairs, and even construction is determined not by the District but by these schools' non profit societies. These are another form of P3. Conflicts arise in these schools when it comes to after hours use of the school, since the school then reverts to the administration of the religious society.

A review of our relationship with these schools is required. They benefit by accessing public funding for their schools maintenance and cleaning, but they retain their private school administration of the buildings after hours and when it comes to new construction.

Again, this situation for District-wide standardization and centralization of planning to meet our responsibilities to ensure community use and access. The District has an obligation to meet its commitment to the Joint Use Agreement. This is not a school by school agreement, but a District obligation. The District needs a standardized plan to look at which schools can be used and which cannot. Schools with no full-time Head Custodian, for example, or with only one Head Custodian, would not be available for after-hours use.

We know which schools have the most use, schools which currently may not be offering after hours use but could etc. We need our own Joint Use Committee in this District to review this and to advise Planning. That committee should be made up of the Custodial and Athletics Consultants as well as members of Leasing and Rentals in facilities, a Principal's representative and a member of the Local. Since the Athletics Consultant and the Leasing Director sit on the City Joint Use Committee, they would facilitate two-way communications. They would come up with a plan over the next year on how to deliver community access to our schools after hours, and to list which schools could or could not be used.

Like everyone in the educational community, CUPE 474 believes schools are community institutions. Opening our doors to community groups and activities are an essential part of making a school a part of its community. CUPE Local 474 supports the policy of broad community use. This is not to say there are no issues.

The District has altered its policies regarding community rental, and as a result community use continues to decline. Costs are higher for community groups, and Principals are often reducing access due to reduce Custodial service costs for night functions. This is short-sighted and damaging to the District's reputation in the community.

A decision by the Principal on community use of schools, rentals, etc. create a state of unease. Whether or not a school is open for community after hours use is not a matter of Custodial Staffing, except in those schools where there are only Day Shift Custodians.

The benefits of community and outside use of schools are clear – but there are costs and responsibilities associated. Our research in 2003-2004 found a number of significant concerns related to community use of schools. These include additional work requirements, security, wear and tear, and damages.

Security concerns include: open doors and windows, unauthorized entry into the school areas, exit doors not closed properly, problems with alarm systems and vandalism. Additional work and damage concerns include: black marks on gym floors, wear and tear in washroom areas, toilets blocked and breakage and equipment damage.

It is the position of CUPE 474 that many or most of these problems could be addressed by adequate staffing using our members to do the work in EPSB schools.

Unfortunately, that is not always the case, and related problems abound:

- Frequently weekend shifts are not covered by EPSB Custodial. Where work is scheduled, the shifts are unrealistic, staff is expected to end shifts at the same time as rentals and community users leave.
- This year, schools cut rentals and community access to coincide with cuts to afternoon Custodial hours of work. This is unrealistic and leads to our inability to honour the Joint Use Agreement.

- Schools are allowing unsupervised use of the school, which violates the Boilers Act and is a security and safety concern.
- Vandalism has increased because our schools are not being staffed at night. Schools used to be cleaned until 11:00 p.m., now they are closing earlier, making them more insecure and vulnerable to vandalism.

REPORTED INCIDENTS AND REPAIR COSTS (by year) Year	Reported Incidents	Repair Costs
1991/92	624	\$375,636
1992/93	966	359,286
1993/94	775	311,648
1994/95	492	269,961
1995/96	467	276,955
1996/97	410	321,213
1997/98	308	311,567
1998/99	562	186,030
1999/00	206	37,440
2000/01	467	96,174
2001/02	440	124,912
2002/03	1,193*	259,377
2003/04	1,135	293,603
2004/05	1,115	304,600
2005/06	1,089	\$311,943
2006/07	1,054	\$202,515
2007/08	1,123	\$675,977

*** NOTES: The number of incidents for 2002/03 (1193) reflects a change in the recording system to include all glass breakage as vandalism unless proven otherwise. Removal of the glass breakage from 2002/03 would result in 447 reported incidents (i.e. - there were 746 glass breakages reported.)**

The previous chart documents incidents of vandalism with the addition of statistics on breakage in the last year: (School maintenance budgets to cover these costs were decentralized in 1995-96 and recentralized over the past two years - schools were not paying for vandalism out of maintenance money unless it was for windows - maintenance money was being used to shore up classroom costs.)

Incidents of vandalism are more likely to occur during times when there is no staff on site. The physical presence of a person working in the building is effective in deterring many potential acts of vandalism – as it increases the risk of being caught, identified or seen. A number of staffing decisions have resulted in an increase in vandalism in the past couple of years. While Custodians are not security personnel, their increased presence in the school can help deter vandalism and reduce costs to the District accordingly.

Using host/hostesses for rental groups does not allow custodial to get extra required cleaning done. As a result, cleaning must be done, in addition to all regular responsibilities on a regular shift after the groups have used the school.

Lack of Custodial Staff cleaning lease and rental areas, and day cares creates additional costs in overtime cleaning and use of supplies to bring these areas up to standards. The standards of cleanliness, safety and

security are best serviced by having ESPB Custodial Staff responsible for the work and the costs incorporated as part of the lease/rental cost.

Recommendations:

- *Custodial services be included in rental and leasing agreements.*
 - *A Custodial Staff member be on duty during all rentals and community use of school.*
 - *Custodians be provided time outside regular hours to perform custodial duties arising from the community use.*
 - *Create a Joint Use Planning Committee for the District including representation from the Local.*
-

Energy Management Plan

Despite Facilities Services having hired an Energy Management Consultant, there has been little progress made in addressing our concerns and recommendations around this issue.

“We still do not have an energy management plan for reducing utilities costs. Such a plan would expand on the ‘greening of schools’ goal. An energy management plan needs to be put in place through a joint union management committee made up of teachers (doing environmental education), custodial and facilities. We would hope to introduce a Destination Conservation like program into the schools involving all the school community. Our aim should be to make all stakeholders environmentally aware.

While the Utility costs have been returned to Central Services after being decentralized, these POM costs are still not resulting in energy conservation and savings to the schools. While the centralization of these funds is a first step, a full training program for all staff and students in Energy Conservation is a necessary next step.

Training Custodial Staff in Energy Conservation methods is the first step in a District-wide training program. During the 1990’s, Custodial Staff engaged in a voluntary Energy Conservation effort that saved the District \$19 million dollars. A new program could save the District millions more if Custodians have the proper training, support and resources to make it effective.

Recommendations:

- *An Energy Conservation course be provided for all Custodial Staff in the 2008-2009 school term. The course be provided at no cost to schools, with funding from the Utilities budget. Any money saved by the District Custodial Staff in energy conservation should be reinvested in the hiring of more Custodial Staff.*
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In Conclusion:

The budget process provides an opportunity to take on the challenges we face in creating healthy school environments, creating good working relationships ensuring effective future planning. We ask for your consideration of the recommendations we have presented as important steps in achieving these goals in our school District.

Madame Chair, Trustees, Mr. Superintendent, thank you for the opportunity to present this brief tonight on behalf of the Custodial workers of CUPE Local 474.