

**June 30, 2020**

## **President's Summer Message: What we have been through, and What's ahead**

Now that we have finally reached the last days of this utterly extraordinary school year, I suspect that the emotion shared by the majority of Edmonton Public teachers is one of sheer relief, probably accompanied by ongoing concern about what lies ahead in September and beyond, a degree of frustration with what has (and hasn't) occurred, and even a sense of "what just happened anyway?"

As Local President, I have heard from so many individual teachers and their school representatives during these last stressful, demanding and challenging months, and I want to tell you that I have never been more proud of teachers and the work that they continue to do with children and young people despite the astonishing range of difficulties they have faced.

Please accept my personal thanks and congratulations for the professionalism, commitment, flexibility and caring that you have shown both individually and collectively in such trying conditions.

I have also heard from so many parents how much they have appreciated the terrific work that teachers have done since schools have been closed, and how much their understanding of the complex and sophisticated work of teaching has grown as they have struggled to help their children learn at home.

In terms of what we will be facing when we return to teaching at the end of the summer, there is of course a high level of uncertainty about what our classrooms, schools, and student learning will look like, and it will probably be the case that much of that uncertainty will still be around well after Labour Day, as circumstances continue to evolve.

But during the coming year, one thing will be clear – teachers will be working together with each other, with administrative and support staff, and with parents and community members to ensure that all students will receive the best education that it is possible to provide.

At the same time, teachers will continue to fight for the kinds of conditions that will allow us to ensure that each and every student receives the kind of education that allow for the development of their full potential.

In other words, we won't just be trying to "get by" in what are likely to be challenging circumstances – we will be actively advocating for the circumstances that allow us to do our **best** work with **all** children.

Alberta is facing serious problems and we have no illusions that this will be easy, but the past few months have made it clearer than ever that strong systems of public education and public health care are vital to the wellbeing of individuals and society, and they are absolutely worth fighting for.

There is no doubt that the coming weeks should be about the “3Rs” of rest, recovery and recuperation. But I also want to assure you that your Local leadership will be completely committed to working together with Edmonton Public’s 6500 teachers (and teachers from around the province) to ensure that teachers don’t merely “get by” in the fall, and instead act collectively to effectively advocate and fight for the teaching and learning conditions that our students need and deserve.

So please stay well, enjoy a good summer break with family and friends, and I look forward to working together with you in the fall.



Heather Quinn  
President