

CODE: AA.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (28-01-2020)**TOPIC:** Stakeholder Relations**ISSUE DATE:** (29-01-2020)**REVIEW YEAR:** (2022)

PURPOSE

- To reflect the Board of Trustees' (the Board) mandated responsibility and expectation for providing meaningful opportunities for stakeholder engagement in addressing the needs of students.
- To establish a stakeholder relations policy framework to guide a consistent Division approach to the development and maintenance of strategic relationships that support all students in achieving the learning outcomes of a public education.
- To reflect the Board's mandated responsibility and expectation for providing a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environment throughout the Division.

DEFINITIONS

The **Division** is Edmonton Public Schools, which includes the Board of Trustees, central service departments and all schools.

Stakeholders are people who contribute to, and have an interest in public education and supporting student achievement and well-being within the Division. The *Education Act* uses the phrase "partner(s) in education" to describe stakeholders. Stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- students, parents and/or guardians, and staff;
- all members of the Edmonton community including citizens, businesses, agencies, not-for-profit organizations and service groups;
- other school boards and educational institutions; and
- municipal, provincial, federal and international levels of government.

Stakeholder Relations is how the Division relates to, and interacts with, our stakeholders. The Division's approach to stakeholder relations focuses on best practices in communications, engagement and collaboration to support meaningful stakeholder participation, as well as strategic and mutually beneficial relationships between the Division and its stakeholders. The Division relies on recognized standards for public participation practice, such as the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum for Public Participation. It provides a framework for increasing levels of public engagement depending on the purpose of stakeholder participation and degree of impact a decision or initiative may have on stakeholders. The levels of engagement from IAP2 are: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

Stakeholder Relationships are defined by the manner or role in which stakeholders engage with the Division. There are different expectations and parameters for interactions with a student, parent, staff member, community connection, donor, funder, partner, sponsor, school council, tenant, vendor or volunteer. However, all stakeholder relationships require varying degrees of support and communication, and a common understanding of each party's role and responsibilities.

Definitions for the following terms and for terminology for all other policies related to AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments are found in a Glossary of Terms (linked in References).

- **community connection**
- **donor**
- **funder**
- **parent (or guardian)**
- **partner**
- **school council**
- **community connection**
- **staff member**
- **student**
- **sponsor**
- **tenant**
- **vendor**
- **volunteer**
- **staff member**

POLICY

The Board believes education is the foundation for a democratic and civil society, and that everyone has a vested interest in education. A thriving education system that engages all students to their capacity is a shared responsibility between the Division and members of the community. In order to serve the diverse needs of students and support their full development and well-being, the Division needs the help of all education stakeholders in:

- supporting our Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities;
 - enhancing the educational opportunities and supports available for students;
 - supporting early childhood development and preparation of children for success in school;
 - supporting the smooth transition of students from high school to the next phase of their lives;
 - creating school environments that provide additional supports for children, families and communities;
 - contributing ideas and perspectives to inform Division decision making at the system and school level;
 - creating efficiencies in the use of public and community resources through the coordination and integration of services; and
 - advocating support for the Division, publicly funded education, and community initiatives focused on students and families.
- A. Stakeholder relationships require an investment of time and effort to build mutual understanding, respect and trust. The Board believes that a consistent approach to stakeholder relations will encourage the establishment of strategic stakeholder relationships throughout the Division that help to translate our Vision, Mission, Values, and Priorities into positive actions for its students.
- B. The Board believes that the greatest impact on improving student outcomes can be achieved by working collaboratively with stakeholders to:
- identify areas where support is needed in the school and/or community to improve student outcomes;
 - explore and develop strategic relationships and partnerships to leverage required expertise and resources;
 - identify evidence-based approaches that have the potential to address targeted needs;
 - develop the strategies to support implementation of the initiative; and
 - maintain and evaluate the results to inform next steps and ensure continuous improvement.
- C. The Board holds the Division accountable for working with stakeholders in a way that maintains welcoming, and safe learning and working environments, and that recognizes the value of diversity, dialogue and the right of all persons to be treated respectfully.

D. The following principles shall guide stakeholder relations processes and practice for engagement and communication:

- Accessible:** Ensure equity by striving to remove barriers to understanding, input and participation.
- Appreciative:** Acknowledge stakeholder contributions and collaboration.
- Collaborative:** Promote the exchange of information, ideas, perspectives, professional expertise, resources and effort.
- Inclusive:** Respect the diversity within school communities.
- Proactive:** Anticipate and respond to the information needs of stakeholders to support and maintain their collaborative relationship with the Division by providing accurate and timely information about decisions to be made, opportunities to be involved and how stakeholder input informed the final decisions.
- Relevant:** The level and extent of stakeholder engagement should be aligned with:
- the scope and complexity of the issue or decisions being made;
 - how the issue or decision may affect stakeholders; and
 - available Division resources (time, funding, people).
- Respectful:** Honour stakeholders' experience, skills, talents, knowledge, expertise and authority.
- Transparent:** Be open and clear about purposes and processes, issues, constraints and implications, efforts and results.

E. The Board supports and encourages the pursuit of strategic stakeholder relationships that:

- align with our Vision, Mission, Values, and Priorities;
- preserve the Division's reputation;
- reflect the objectives and goals of all parties;
- clearly define and appropriately communicate and/or document expectations, roles, responsibilities and authorities of all parties;
- provide conflict resolution processes to address issues;
- provide resources and services to complement, not replace, public funding for education;
- do not require an exclusive endorsement of products or service, nor exploit students or the Division commercially, politically or otherwise; and
- ensure the Division's responsibilities are acknowledged with respect to student safety, personal information, management of financial resources and infrastructure, and compliance with legislation, staff collective agreements, board policy and administrative regulations.

EXPECTATIONS

The Superintendent of Schools shall implement this policy by assigning roles and responsibilities, and developing administrative regulations, processes and best practices aligned with recognized standards of practice for public bodies. This work must include Division standards and guidelines for:

1. exploring, establishing, maintaining, evaluating and reporting on stakeholder relationships;
2. using data on stakeholder engagement and its impact on student achievement to inform practices;
3. communication practices;
4. responding to inquiries and vetting requests from stakeholders such as how to: establish a scholarship or sponsorship; make a donation; offer a program; or distribute materials through Division distribution mechanisms;
5. stakeholder engagement processes; and

6. establishing, maintaining, reporting and recognizing sponsorships and partnerships.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Division shall report on strategic initiatives with stakeholders through the Annual Education Results Report to Alberta Education and the Division's annual results review process.

REFERENCES

AD.BP - Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities
AE.BP - Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments
AGA.BP - Recognition of Students, Staff, Parents and Community
CH.BP - Framework for Policy Development and Review
CNA.BP - Information Security
CO.BP - Fiscal Oversight and Accountability
EA.BP - Infrastructure Planning Principles
FAA.BP - Human Resources Framework
GA.BP - Student Programs of Study
GAA.BP - Delivery of Student Programs of Study
GGAB.BP - Multicultural Education
GGAJ.BP - Early Years
HA.BP - Inclusive Education
HAA.BP - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education
HG.BP - Student Behaviour and Conduct
IA.AR - Parent and Community Involvement
IAA.AR - Educational Partnerships and Sponsorships
IBD.BP - Protocol for Trustee Recognition at School or Public Events
IJ.AR - School Participation in Charities: Canvassing in Schools
IJA.BP - Electioneering and Politically Motivated Communications
International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation
Glossary of Terms
Education Act Sections 31, 33(1)(d)
Trustees' Handbook