

DATE: November 3, 2015

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week

ORIGINATOR: Sandra Stoddard, Executive Director, Governance and Strategic Support Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Marlene Hanson, Debbie Jackson, Heather Raymond

REFERENCE: [HF.BP](#) – Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments
[HFA.BP](#) - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
[HA.BP](#) - Inclusive Education
[AEBB.BP](#) – Wellness of Students and Staff
[HG.BP](#) – Student Behaviour and Conduct
[School Act](#)

ISSUE

To provide an update to the Board of Trustees regarding the District's planned support for Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

BACKGROUND

National Bullying Awareness Week is November 15 to 21, 2015. This year's theme is Stand Up! (to bullying). National Bullying Awareness Week originated in the year 2000, with the launch of a Canadian educational [website](#). Since then, the movement has spread internationally, as an opportunity for communities to become involved in preventing bullying at the grassroots level through education and awareness.

In Alberta, the revised *School Act*, June 2015, declares the third week in November each year to be Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week (Section 43.1(1)). Its purpose is 'to promote awareness and understanding of bullying and its consequences in the school community.'

CURRENT SITUATION

According to the 2015 District Feedback Survey, a high percentage of students feel safe in their school buildings (94 per cent for Grades 3-6, and 92 per cent for Grades 7-12), and slightly less safe outside of the school building (90 per cent for Grades 3-6 and 86 per cent for Grades 7-12). As well, 91 per cent of parent respondents indicated staff at their child's school provide a safe and caring learning environment, and 88 per cent of community respondents indicated District schools are safe places. While students feel safe, 54 per cent of students in Grades 3-6; and 50 per cent of students in Grades 7-12 have observed bullying. Additionally, 35.7 per cent of students in Grades 3-6 and 21.9 per cent of students in Grades 7-12 indicated they have been bullied (threatened or harmed). Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week is something Edmonton Public Schools is actively promoting, however there is a recognition that providing

safe, caring, respectful environments for all students and staff is something that needs to be a focus each and every day in the District. As part of this effort the District has identified a variety of support material to help staff, parents and students develop a school culture that fosters a positive school climate and addresses bullying behaviour.

There are many resources that are readily available for principals to use for Bully Prevention Awareness Week, and throughout the year. Resources include:

- The District’s Bullying Prevention Toolkit, developed in 2012 is currently being revised to align with the District Strategic Plan, the amendments to the *School Act* (June 1, 2015), and recommendations outlined in Alberta’s Plan for Promoting Healthy Relationships and Preventing Bullying. The new District toolkit titled Promoting Healthy Relationships to Prevent Bullying - A Toolkit includes links to current resources.
- Building Safe and Caring Schools and Communities: The Alberta Teacher's Association and Alberta School Board Association have created resources to support school boards and school communities to meet new responsibilities under the revised *School Act*. Tools, such as Creating Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments – a Process Guide for School Leaders; information sheets for parents, students and staff; resources on how to evaluate school climate; and choosing school-based programming interventions, can be accessed on [The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities Website](#).
- Alberta Education has created an information sheet: [WATCH AND LISTEN](#).
- [The Bully Free Alberta Website](#) sponsored by the Alberta Government, contains resources that schools, parents, teens and community members can use to help build a bully-free province. It provides information and tools to understand relational aggression, homophobic and transphobic bullying, and ethnic bullying.
- A bullying toll-free helpline, 1-888-456-2323, is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Trained staff can help in more than 170 languages.
- [National Bullying Awareness Week Website](#), including Rick Mercer’s ‘rant’ about the importance of this annual week.
- Numerous resources are available to schools on the District’s [Bullying Prevention Website](#). These include school climate assessment tools, bullying prevention programs, literature lists, videos, and links to community resources.

KEY POINTS

- Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week creates the opportunity to work together to create learning and working environments that are welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy (District Priority 2: Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments; Goal One: A focus on well-being and student citizenship).
- Key messages were shared with principals in October 2015 highlighting resources for school staff.
- A professional learning opportunity will be organized for school administrators and their leadership teams, featuring Rick Phillips. Rick Phillips is a nationally recognized educator and is the Executive Director of Community Matters. He is the creator of Safe School Ambassadors®, a youth-centered, violence prevention program that has been implemented in more than 1,500 North American schools.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES – n/a

MH:ls