

**DATE:** April 25, 2017

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Strategic Plan Update: Priority 3 Goal Two—Supports for the Whole Child

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## ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update of the District’s Strategic Plan for Priority 3, Goal Two—Supports for the Whole Child (Attachment I). The report provides an analysis of 2015 District Feedback Survey data relevant to community stakeholders as summarized in the Annual Education Results Report (AERR), as well as an overview of examples of school-community initiatives that promote wraparound supports and enrichment opportunities for students across the District. This report is part of administration’s commitment to providing the Board of Trustees with ongoing updates on progress relative to the District Strategic Plan.

## BACKGROUND

In 2014, Edmonton Public Schools formally launched its District Strategic Plan for the 2014–2018 term. The District Strategic Plan has three priorities with supporting goals and outcomes. The plan serves to provide common direction and alignment between the work of the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent, and District staff. The plan provides the foundation for a District culture of evidence-based decision making, assurance, and accountability.

In 2015, the District joined Alberta Education’s Assurance Pilot Project. The Assurance Model provides a framework for the District to report directly on how we are doing relative to the goals and outcomes on the 2014–2018 Strategic Plan, which reflects provincial educational priorities while being responsive to local priorities.

## CURRENT SITUATION

Each year, Alberta Education requires school jurisdictions to submit a Three-Year Education Plan (3YEP) and an AERR by November 30. The 3YEP/AERR reports on results from the previous school year and highlights the District’s strategies to advance its strategic priorities over the next three years. This year, with the flexibility afforded through the Assurance Pilot, the District has established an Assurance and Public Board Reporting Cycle in support of completing the 3YEP/AERR. This cycle was developed to achieve the following outcomes:

- establish a planning and reporting cycle that considers when local and provincial data is available for analysis and to inform timely decisions

- use evidence to inform programming decisions that promote success for all students
- support a cycle of continuous improvement and reinforce how results and data drive District planning and reporting
- interpret and report on results in a manner that demonstrates assurance and transparency. With these outcomes in mind, for the 2016–2017 school year, at each public Board meeting, a high level overview and an analysis of results for a District Strategic Plan goal and outcome will be presented. Not only will this reporting cycle support the completion of the 3YEP/AERR, it will enable meaningful dialogue on results and strategies moving forward.

### **KEY POINTS**

Attachment 1 provides the Board of Trustees with an update of the District’s Strategic Plan for Priority 3, Goal Two—Supports for the Whole Child.

### **ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I      Priority 3, Goal Two—Supports for the Whole Child

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## Strategic Plan Update—Supports for the Whole Child

### Introduction

The entire community has a role to play in supporting student success. The diversity and complexity of need across our student population requires expertise, knowledge and opportunities beyond that of education. For all students to engage, learn and thrive in the classroom no matter their background, capabilities or circumstances, the District needs to work closely with our fellow community stakeholders who share our commitment to the success and well-being of children and youth in the Edmonton area.

The organizations and individuals with whom the District collaborates are diverse and include members of the business community, not-for profit organizations, community service clubs, volunteers and other areas and levels of government. The District strategically seeks out a broad range of community partners whose expertise and programming align with the demographic complexity and diversity of our students and families. When exploring opportunities to work with a community stakeholder, it is important that there is a shared responsibility between our organizations regarding the well-being and safety of students and shared values around how we will work together.

Working with members of the broader community looks different across District schools, as each school's principal works strategically to form relationships and opportunities with community stakeholders that reflect the needs and circumstances of their student population. Principals look at their school data, engage with staff, students and parents and assess the community assets readily available within their broader community to determine what supports will best enhance student success and achievement.

To support District leaders in their work with community stakeholders, the District has developed the School-Community Relationships document that defines the various types of school-community relationships that are possible and provides information around expectations to appropriately support and execute each type of relationship. To help principals to manage, organize and record the various community supports within their school, an electronic tracking tool was launched this year. This tool will also help sustain relationships when principals transition from one school to another. When there is a change in school leadership, this time of transition is critical to the ongoing well-being and success of students. Care and attention must be given by both the outgoing and incoming school leader. Data from the 2016-2017 operational year will support individual schools in their work with community stakeholders and will also serve as a District data source to provide information around various aspects of community supports for students at a systems level.

The work to leverage the support and capacity of community stakeholders exists at two levels within the District. Schools work directly with potential community stakeholders to bring into their school the supports and programs that align with the needs that are unique to their students and families. Schools also work first hand with each community partner to implement and maintain the school-community initiative. This work requires time to support communication and planning and is founded upon relationships that reflect the trust between the school and the community partner.

Many community stakeholders also maintain a working relationship with staff from Central to support the perspective, complexity and logistics of working as partners at an organizational level. This work includes such things as Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), grant reporting or opportunities to scale up or expand programming. Central staff also engage with community stakeholders who value an ongoing dialogue with the District around a shared concern for the success and well-being of youth.

The following provides an overview of 2015 District Feedback Survey data pertinent to the role of community stakeholders and a “snapshot” of the various ways that community enhances the work of schools and contributes towards the District’s Vision of *transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow*. This snapshot focuses on some of the many community supports and touch points that extend beyond or outside of education’s instructional mandate. When these types of supports are brought into a school in a deliberate and strategic manner, they align with, enhance and enable the conditions necessary to promote successful learning. This report also highlights next steps at a District level in support of strategic community engagement.

It must be noted that the report highlights several examples of school-community work across the District and shines a light on many community stakeholders who are invested in and committed to the success of our students. However, it is important to recognize that these are just some examples and that there are many more initiatives and community stakeholders engaged in meaningful ways across District schools.

## Priority 3:

### Enhance public education through communication, engagement and partnerships

#### Goal Two: Supports for the Whole Child

Outcome: Community partnerships are established to provide supports and services to foster growth and success of students and families.

#### Section One: Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Results (in percentages)					Evaluation
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Improvement
<b><u>PARTNERSHIPS</u></b>						
Percentage of staff that report Edmonton Public Schools has partnerships that enhance student success. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 20d)				79.9		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report that their school has access to supports and services for students with challenging circumstances. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 26c)				80.4		Baseline
Percentage of parents that report that they are aware of community partners in their child's school. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 26)				37.8		Baseline
Percentage of community agency staff that report they have a positive working relationship with school staff that enables meeting their agency's mandate in support of students. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 5a)				96.9		Baseline
Percentage of community agency CEOs that report they have a positive working relationship with Edmonton Public Schools' Central Office staff. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 7a)				91.2		Baseline
Percentage of community agency staff that report they see a direct link between school-based supports and services their agency provides and student growth and success. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 5d)				99.0		Baseline
Percentage of community agency staff that report there are processes to support effective communication and decision-making between their agency and school staff. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 5c)				89.8		Baseline

Key Performance Indicator	Results (in percentages)					Evaluation
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Improvement
<b><u>PARTNERSHIPS</u></b>						
Percentage of community and partners that report their organization understands how to navigate the various levels and departments of Edmonton Public Schools that supports how they work together. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 7c)				61.8		Baseline
Percentage of community and partners that report Edmonton Public Schools is perceived positively by the neighborhood. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 26h)				83.1		Baseline
Percentage of community and partners that report Edmonton Public Schools is actively connected to the neighbourhood. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q26i)				68.3		Baseline

## Section Two

### Analysis of Results

In the 2015 District Feedback Survey, community, staff and parents were surveyed about community partnerships. Community responses include feedback from both community agency staff and CEOs. The 2015 implementation was the first reach out to community stakeholders to provide feedback to the District through a survey. Participation numbers reflect a small sample of the total number of community stakeholders engaged with the District.

The data from the District Feedback Survey reflects input from 243 community members invested in the well-being and success of District students. The majority of these participants would have been invited to participate in the survey by a school principal or by a key Central staff member, who had a working relationship with them. This data indicates the following strengths and opportunities for further growth or development as presented in spring 2015.

There is high satisfaction from community agency staff who work directly in the school setting, with 99 per cent indicating that they see a direct connection between the work they do with children and youth in the school setting and the goal of student success. This same group indicated 96.9 per cent satisfaction with the working relationship they have with the staff of the school where they work. This same group also responded with 89.8 per cent positive satisfaction regarding communication and decision-making processes between themselves and the school staff. Overall these figures indicate that community agency staff feel positively about the opportunity to work directly in the school setting and the level of collaboration with the school staff they work alongside.

- While staff working front line or directly in District schools expressed a high level of satisfaction, so did the respondents who identified as an agency CEO, with 91.2 per cent indicating that they have a positive working relationship with the District.
- Where the data indicates there is opportunity for the District to strengthen its work with community stakeholders is in the area of clarity around how to navigate working with the District; 61.8 per cent of respondents indicated that they understand how to navigate working with the various levels and departments across the District.

The survey also captured District staff perceptions around the impact and role of community stakeholders related to student success. Staff feedback indicated that 79.9 per cent are aware of and value partnerships that enhance student success. Additionally 80.4 per cent of staff indicated that their school has access to supports and services for students with challenging circumstances. Many of these supports would be provided by an external service provider.

The parent survey also asked if they were aware of community partners at their child's school. In 2015, only 37.8 per cent of parents responded that they were aware of the community partners. This is an indication that the District can better celebrate and acknowledge the role and contributions of community stakeholders towards student success.

Finally, the survey asked questions that provided feedback related to the community's awareness and perception of Edmonton Public Schools. The District is generally perceived positively by the broader community (83.1 per cent) and additionally 68.3 per cent of respondents indicated that they feel the District is actively connected to the broader community.

### **Overview of Community Stakeholder Engagement**

Though the work with community stakeholders is diverse and responsive to the unique needs of each school community, a significant portion of community supports and involvement can be categorized into two areas of impact: wraparound supports and services, and enrichment opportunities. The following provides an overview and exemplars of community impact across District schools in these two areas.

**Wraparound Supports and Services:** *wraparound refers to a philosophy of care designed to assist vulnerable children, youth and families whose needs extend beyond what the school or another service partner alone can provide. It is a collaborative and definable team-driven planning process that results in creation and implementation of an individualized support plan built on child/youth/family strengths and designed to address identified needs to improve success at home, at school and in the community.* (Wrapping Supports and Services around Alberta's Students: Research Summary, 2010, p. 1)

Schools across the District work to support all students, including our most vulnerable or at-risk. Students come from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances and face a range of challenges or barriers on their learning journeys. Wraparound supports address the nature of a student's area of risk or need and often remove significant barriers to a child or youth's ability to engage in learning in a meaningful manner. Examples of wraparound supports across the District schools include, but are not limited to, the following initiatives and areas of support:

- The Star Program at Jasper Place High School and the Way In program at Dan Knott, T.D. Baker and Edith Rogers Junior High schools are both Mental Health Building Capacity funded projects through the Government of Alberta. These projects use a wraparound approach to ensure there are mental health supports and programming available to students and families directly within the school setting. Staff from the various community agencies work directly in District schools to provide supports and programs that range from proactive to therapeutic in nature. Alberta Health Services, The Family Centre, Boys and Girls Big Brothers Big Sisters, Edmonton Police Service, the YMCA and Edmonton & Area Child and Family Services are some of the key service providers partnering with the District in support of these two programs.
- All in for Youth is another community funded initiative that sees wraparound supports and services delivered in varying degrees of implementation across 16 District schools serving students impacted by the complexity of social vulnerability. The model is built upon five areas of practice—in-school supports, family supports, out-of-school time supports, teaching excellence and system responsiveness—and reflects a shared goal of high school completion for every child. Four of the 16

District schools supported by the model are part of a three-year demonstration site initiative being evaluated to inform practice, future funding and impact of the approach. The four schools are: Delton, Eastglen, John A. McDougall and Spruce Avenue. The additional nine District schools receiving components of the model are: Abbott, Balwin, Beacon Heights, Edith Rogers, Highlands, John D. Bracco, Lawton, Montrose, Norwood, R. J. Scott, Rosslyn and Rundle. All in for Youth is a partnership between the District and Boys and Girls Big Brothers Big Sisters, the City of Edmonton, E4C, Edmonton Catholic Schools, the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Family Centre, Mental Health Foundation, Reach Edmonton—Council for Safe Communities and the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region.

- Braemar School and Terra Centre work together to ensure students who are young parents can continue to participate in their K to 12 education while fulfilling their parenting responsibilities. Terra Centre provides childcare services and a wide range of parenting supports and programs, such as financial literacy, cooking skills and family literacy, directly in Braemar School. School staff and Terra staff work together closely in support of each Braemar student and her family.
- School nutrition: Research has proven that hunger is a significant barrier to a student being able to participate in and benefit from schooling. Many children and youth in the Edmonton area come to school hungry. There are several community stakeholders invested in supporting District schools to address the issue of student hunger. Community support ranges from the provision of food, to agency staff working directly in the school to coordinate and deliver a school nutrition program. Some of the key community stakeholders currently supporting our schools include: Breakfast for Learning, E4C, The Edmonton Food Bank, Food for Thought and various service clubs in the Edmonton area. There are also many grocery stores, community groups and private citizens in the Edmonton area who donate food or funds to local schools to support their efforts to ensure students have access to adequate nutrition.
- Supports for families new to Canada: As schools work to support and engage students who are new to Canada, language and culture sometimes present as a challenge. The District works closely with many immigrant-serving agencies across the city to provide support and services to families who are adjusting to life in Canada and the Alberta public school system. These services include such things as translation support, settlement services for parents, and cultural youth mentorship. The Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative are key stakeholders in the Edmonton area working closely with District schools in support of students and families new to Canada.
  - The District's relationships with the many immigrant-serving agencies are fostered by both individual schools and the Diversity Education Unit.
- Supports to enhance First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education: As the District works towards eliminating the achievement gap for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, working with community is essential. Schools are striving to create environments that are culturally responsive and honour the history of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people; they can do so with the support, guidance and involvement of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Cultural Advisors and community agencies. Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, the Canadian Native Friendship Centre and Métis Child and Family Services are all community agencies that share in the responsibility for wellness and thriving for the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth served in the Edmonton area.
  - Again, these relationships are supported by both schools working in partnership with one or more of these agencies and by the District's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Unit.
- Inclusive Learning works in partnership with Alberta Health Services to provide specialized supports and services for students. Through this partnership, under the model of Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD), schools have direct access to Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists and Mental Health Therapists that are aligned through Inclusive Learning School-Linked Teams.

Professionals from multiple disciplines work across all age groups, including in the early years, to support assessment of, and programming for, the District's most vulnerable learners, many of whom qualify for specialized supports or programming as they grow and develop physically, emotionally and socially.

- **Mental health supports:** Schools are supporting an increasing number of students presenting with or identifying as having mental health needs. Extensive work has been done to build the capacity and understanding of District staff around mental health; however, this is a complex issue and requires the professional support and expertise of those trained in the area of mental health. District leaders are working closely with community mental health stakeholders to bring their professional perspective and expertise directly into schools. Several schools have committed educational funding to purchase school-based mental health supports from a community service provider. Key stakeholders working with District schools include Alberta Health Services, Child and Adolescent Services and the Family Centre.

The work around mental health at Lillian Osborne School is an example of what this can look like in a school community. Lillian Osborne School has deliberately focused on student health and well-being for their school community. This work has resulted in them having a community mental health collaborative team. The team has staff from the Family Centre and Alberta Health Services Addiction and Mental Health. The team provides onsite individual counselling and support for students, helps students and families connect with health care providers in the community, works with teachers in the delivery of classroom health sessions and offers universal school events that promote well-being. Students at Lillian Osborne have the opportunity to participate in Chatters. Chatters is an after school opportunity for students, offered in partnership with a community speech pathologist. Participating students receive training to work one-on-one with children and youth who would benefit from enhanced opportunities to develop their language, vocabulary and social speaking skills. This partnership promotes student leadership, builds student awareness of and empathy for others who struggle with expressing themselves verbally and provides participating students experiential learning in the area of speech therapy.

- **Health and Wellness:** Many schools strive to take a proactive approach to supporting their students' physical and emotional well-being by creating a school culture that informs and promotes a healthy lifestyle. APPLE Schools is one example of a not-for-profit community organization that works in partnership with a school to take a comprehensive approach to teaching, modeling and promoting healthy life choices to students. APPLE Schools currently works in 15 District schools. Be Fit for Life, Alberta Health Services, Ever Active Schools and NStep are other Alberta-based not-for-profit organizations who partner with District schools in support of the comprehensive school health approach.
  - As well as schools working directly with health-focused service providers, the District's Comprehensive School Health team maintains working relationships with many of the health service provider stakeholders.

**Enrichment Opportunities:** enrichment can be defined as, "*when something is made more valuable*" or in the context of education, "*the many things that students choose to do beyond their academic pursuits and the normal requirements of their life.*" (vocabulary.com)

For many of the District's 95,000+ students, when they leave school each day they go home to a variety of activities and experiences that enhance their skills, expose them to new experiences and enable them to explore and develop interests and talents beyond what they would typically experience in the school setting. Soccer, piano lessons, family vacations, day trips to the countryside, attending the ballet, or going to a professional sporting event are all activities that promote curiosity and expand a young

person's understanding of the world around them. These are also experiences that serve as context and background knowledge that students draw upon and apply to their learning back in the classroom setting. Unfortunately for some students, these experiences and opportunities to explore and grow in their life outside of school do not exist. This lack of opportunity serves as a barrier or gap along their K to 12 learning journey.

Many District schools work with community stakeholders to mitigate this gap and ensure all students have access to safe, affordable and quality experiences outside of the school day that will serve as a source of enrichment.

- Literacy, as defined by Alberta Education, *“is the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living”*. Literacy is an essential life skill and is developed both in school and in a student's life outside of school. To support meaningful literacy engagement and growth in the learning environment, many schools work in partnership with other literacy stakeholders to engage students and families in literacy focused opportunities outside of the classroom that supplement and build upon the literacy learning of the K to 12 curriculum. The Edmonton Public Library (EPL), the Centre for Family Literacy and Frontier College are community stakeholders in the area of literacy that have a long history of working with District schools. The District recently signed a new five-year MOU with EPL. The MOU acknowledges the current opportunities that exist for schools and EPL community branches to work together in support of literacy. District schools can reach out to one of the 20 community branches across the city to access library cards for students, after school programming, field trips or presentations. The MOU also lays the foundation for the District to work with EPL to explore new, exciting and efficient ways to come together around our shared value of literacy and our commitment to children, youth and families.
- After school programming: Many schools, particularly those serving socially vulnerable populations, recognize the importance of providing a safe place and programming for students at the end of the school day. The school is often the safest and most accessible location for this to occur. Schools typically work with community partners to provide access to after school programming for students. There is a network of agencies and community groups in the Edmonton area committed to providing quality afterschool programming. This programming is offered around various themes and schools often have multiple community groups offering after school programs for their students. At one District elementary school, the after school supports include soccer, art, running and reading, homework club, healthy chefs and strings. The school works with six different community groups to have these programs available to its students.
  - Boys and Girls Big Brothers Big Sisters is a community leader in this work, as they support a model of after school programming in several District schools and host after school programming at their nine Edmonton community clubs. They also act as a mentor or coach to other community groups interesting in providing after school programming for children and youth. The efforts to provide after school programming extend across a diverse group of providers and initiatives.
  - To support the diversity of students' interests and provide participants with a range of opportunities and experiences, after school programming touches across a diverse range of offerings—the arts, soccer, recreation, healthy chefs, homework support, literacy support, community service or student leadership. The following are just some of the examples of after school programming offered in music enrichment alone:
    - Heart of the City Music Program is organized and delivered by University of Alberta student volunteers and supports weekly piano lessons for students across 10 District schools: Abbott, Beacon Heights, Delton, Donnan, Dovercourt, Ekota, John A. McDougall, Norwood, Overlanders and R.J. Scott.

- Yona Sistema is an after school music program provided in partnership with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and based upon the Venezuelan El Sistema project that used music to influence social change. The Edmonton model provides under-served children and youth the opportunity for social, emotional, academic, and musical development. Currently, Delton School works in partnership with Yona Sistema to bring this program to its students.
- Sarah McLachlan School of Music offers high quality music programming in a safe, nurturing environment for children and youth who face barriers in their access to music education. The school is currently working in partnership with both Eastglen and Rundle schools.
- music ENRICHMENT program offers affordable and accessible after school string music lessons for children and youth. They currently partner with 11 District schools to bring their programming to families across the Edmonton area; the schools are Bessie Nichols, Caernarvon, Dr. Donald Massey, D. S. Mackenzie, Edmonton Christian Northeast, Esther Starkman, Forest Heights, George P. Nicholson, Kildare, Victoria and Westglen.
- Many of the agencies committed to providing quality after school programs also engage with students during Spring Break and summer holidays. These initiatives tend to be more intensive and complex than an after school focus and are often delivered through the collective capacity of multiple agencies. An example of this collaborative approach took place at Rundle School this past summer, with staff from the Frontier College, the Edmonton Public Library, the Family Centre, E4C and Boys and Girls Big Brothers Big Sisters working together to host a summer program in the month of July. This collaborative model has also supported summer programs at Edith Rogers, Balwin, Spruce Avenue and J. D. Bracco schools.

## Section Three

### **Priority Strategies Moving Forward**

To support the efforts of District leaders, at both school and central levels, to strategically engage and leverage community supports, work will continue around the development of a partnership framework. This work will build upon the School-Community Relationship document and aim to fill existing gaps in our efforts to work effectively and strategically with community stakeholders. Key next steps in this work are to develop a central point of entry or initial contact to engage and support community stakeholders and to implement a sharing of information protocol to support the appropriate and timely sharing of critical information between the District and community partners. At the completion of the 2016-2017 school year, the District will also have the first data set reflecting schools entering their information into the school community tracking tool. This will provide the District with the opportunity to review this data and look for meaningful connections to inform working with our community stakeholders.

In summary, working collaboratively with external stakeholders is a critical strategy towards the success of all students. To support this work, the District will continue to build a partnership framework that provides District leaders with resources to guide their efforts in exploring, developing, implementing, and maintaining strategic relationships with community stakeholders that result in students thriving and achieving to the best of their ability.