

DATE: April 25, 2017

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Bridget Stirling

SUBJECT: Motion re: Sexual Health Education in Provincial Curriculum

REFERENCE: [Trustees' Handbook – Section 5.2.2 – Notices of Motion](#)

ISSUE

Notice of motion was served at the April 11, 2017, Board meeting.

BACKGROUND

Alberta Education is currently undergoing a curriculum review, including Grades 4-9 health and CALM 20 curricula. Under this area of curriculum, the existing sexual health curriculum offers minimal guidance for teachers on aspects of sexual health, including issues such as consent and sexual health for sexual and gender minority students. Additionally, while educators are expected to vet classroom presenters in any subject, many schools across the province have faced difficulty in assessing appropriate presenters in the classroom.

To offer further clarity and guidance, Edmonton Public Schools decided that existing guidance for teachers needed to be addressed. The District developed *A Guide for Teaching Sexual Health Education Grades 4-12* and additionally adopted the *Guide for Choosing School Health Resources* to better support teachers in teaching sexual health. On February 21, 2017, the District also held a Teaching Sexual Health Day in partnership with the University of Alberta to offer professional development to current and pre-service teachers.

The Board of Trustees also voiced its support of consent education in February 2015, recognizing that sexual health education should include teaching all students about consent.

Board policy AEBB.BP, *Wellness of Students and Staff*, supports a comprehensive school health approach and reflects an approach to wellness that is grounded in research, informed best practice and a balanced approach to delivery. The policy also requires that curricular instruction reflect the *School Act*, including supporting welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environments that respect diversity and are inclusive of a range of sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

In order to best support instruction that is reflective of recent changes to the *School Act* and best practices in sexual health education, such as those outlined in Alberta Health Services' teachingsexualhealth.ca resources for educators, provincial sexual health curriculum should be updated to include current research and best practices in sexual health education. Updated curriculum should support the emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual wellness of Alberta students.

Additionally, educators and school districts should be supported in making choices of classroom presenters who can appropriately support evidence-based, age-appropriate, medically accurate, comprehensive, consent-based, and inclusive sexual health education.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Trustees write to the Minister of Education in support of ensuring evidence-based, age-appropriate, medically accurate, comprehensive, consent-based, and inclusive sexual health education in the provincial curriculum.

NEXT STEPS

That a letter to the Minister of Education be prepared in support of ensuring evidence-based, age-appropriate, medically accurate, comprehensive, consent-based, and inclusive sexual health education in the provincial curriculum.

Additionally, that, in this letter the Board advocate for a clear set of guidelines for vetting third-party presenters to ensure that classroom presentations are in compliance with the provincial sexual health curriculum and the requirements of the *School Act* around welcoming, caring, respectful and safe schools for all students, similar to the standards currently used by Edmonton Public Schools.

BS:sj