

DATE: June 10, 2014
TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Student Representative
ORIGINATOR: Ron McNeil, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
RESOURCE STAFF: Jeremy Fritsche, Janet Hancock, Dave Jones, Ron MacNeil, Darwin Martin, Nancy Petersen, Jean Stiles, Sandra Stoddard
REFERENCE: [Board Motion - September 10, 2013 Board Meeting](#)

ISSUE

The following motion was approved by the Board of Trustees on September 10, 2013: *That the elected position of Student Representative be further outlined with the active engagement and participation of District students, and be piloted by the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) for the 2014-2015 school year. The purpose is threefold: facilitating dialogue between the student body and the Board, increasing student engagement in Board policy and planning functions and educating students about democratic governance.*

The following motion was also approved by the Board of Trustees on October 23, 2012: *That the Administration design a program that offers students the opportunity to participate in a tour of the Centre for Education, watch part of a school board meeting, meet School Trustees and the Superintendent, and possibly participate in other activities modelled after, or in conjunction with, the School at the Legislature Program and City Hall School.*

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the following process to support the election and ongoing participation of a Student Representative to the Edmonton Public School Board, beginning in the 2014-2015 school year be approved.**
- 2. That the identified costs, associated to support this pilot, be funded out of the Board Initiative Fund for the 2014-2015 school year be approved.**

BACKGROUND

The Board values student voice, feedback and participation and has found the Student Advisory Council (established in the 2012-2013 school year) an effective source of meaningful student input. The proposed Student Representative to the Board pilot intends to support the District's Vision, Mission, and Priorities and reflect the District's Cornerstone Values of accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity.

A group of school and central services staff have been working on a model for the election of a Student Representative in fall 2014 and for the subsequent support of the Student Representative over the one-year term.

In developing the model, the following background work has been done:

- Examined current models of Student Representative participation in British Columbia and Ontario.
- Reviewed for alignment and relevance the *School Act*, Board Policies, Administrative Regulations and the Trustees' Handbook.
- Consulted with Claire Edwards of the Student Voice Initiative around models of student representation in Canada.

RELATED FACTS

The model proposed meets the purpose outlined in both the October 2012 and September 2013 Board motions by providing a means for students in all district high schools to learn about and participate in democratic governance, gain a stronger understanding of the role of public education and voice their perspectives about educational issues. It also gives the Board and Administration direct access to student voice to inform decision-making.

The Administration recommends establishing a model that includes the following:

- **Trustee Mentor:** A Trustee mentor will be established to support the Student Representative. The Administration recommends that the Board identify a current Trustee to support and mentor the Student Representative in various aspects of their role throughout the one-year term. The role of Trustee mentor would be established with a Role and Responsibility Statement in the Trustees' Handbook.
- **Role and Responsibility of the Student Representative:** The Student Representative's success rests on a well-thought-out Role and Responsibility Statement that clearly addresses matters such as: attendance and student role in public board meetings, the non-voting status of this position, expectations around media interactions, how the Student Representative will engage with students from across the District and how the student reports items of interest or concerns will be brought forward to the Board. The role of Student Representative would be established with a Role and Responsibility Statement in the Trustees' Handbook.
- **The Student Advisory Council:** High school principals will appoint a group of students in June 2014 to act as the Student Advisory Council for the 2014-2015 school year. The Council will raise awareness about the election of a Student Representative, encourage student participation and democratically elect the Student Representative. The Council will meet with the Board twice per school year to offer student perspective. The Council will also help the Student Representative stay connected to the student population of district high schools.
- **Centre of Education Tour and Orientation:** Through the structure of the Student Advisory Council, the new high school District leadership course and the yearly process of electing a student Trustee, there will be a mechanism to provide District students with the opportunity for a tour and orientation of the Centre for Education. This model will be informed by the recent June 5th Student Advisory Council meeting process that saw participants toured through the Centre and participate in small group discussions with Trustees.
- **A District Leadership Course:** A group of high school principals are developing a course around school board governance and youth leadership that will be available to all district high school students starting in January 2015. The course cohort will be comprised of students from across the District, including the Student Representative and they will participate in a variety of learning and leadership experiences. The issues and reports that

will be brought to public board will serve as one source of course content. It is anticipated that this will assist the Student Representative in being prepared to participate at public board when these reports are being discussed.

- **The Role of District High Schools:** In the fall of 2014, each participating high school will run a nomination process and bring forward one candidate to run for the position of Student Representative. The Student Advisory Council will then elect the Student Representative from this group of candidates.
- **Administration Support:** There will be responsibilities for the Administration throughout the election process and during the Student Representative's one-year term to ensure the role is successful: Board and District orientation, communication skills training, media relations training and ongoing support, technology safety training, and continuous support in fulfilling the role and responsibility of a Student Representative. Ongoing responsibility for the overseeing and coordination of this support would logically rest within Governance and Strategic Support Services in collaboration with the Trustee mentor.
- **Evaluation Component:** The Administration will evaluate the effectiveness and success of the pilot after the first year. The evaluation will examine the election process, the role of the Student Representative and costs associated with this pilot. Trustees, students and staff will be invited to participate in the evaluation process. The results of the evaluation will be presented to the Board.
- **Honourary Scholarship:** Upon successfully fulfilling the duties of Student Representative, as defined by the Student Representative Role and Responsibility Statement, the Administration recommends that the student receive a \$2,000 scholarship from the Board to support a future learning opportunity of their choice. The scholarship would remain in trust until written confirmation of registration and acceptance at a learning opportunity is received from the student or forwarded to the Board's office.

OPTIONS

1. Approve the recommended model and budget to support this pilot as outlined in this report.
2. Approve the model and budget with amendments as noted.
3. Do not proceed with this pilot at this time.

CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS

In considering the approval of this model to support the election of a Student Representative, there are human resource and financial implications that need to be considered. The majority of these implications will be ongoing in nature as the process to elect a Student Representative and provide ongoing support to the Student Representative occur on a yearly cycle. The anticipated financial implications include, but may not be limited to:

- Costs to support the fall election process would impact schools and central services departments (~\$4,000-\$6,000).
- Summer work to support the development of the District Leadership Course (~\$3,500 - \$3,900).
- Supply and set up district computer, i.e., laptop or tablet device (~\$850).
- Transportation to and from district meetings and functions throughout the Student Representative's term (~\$800 - \$1,200).
- Orientation, training and professional development as appropriate (~\$1,500).
- Future learning opportunity scholarship (\$2,000).

The human resource implications include, but may not be limited to:

- The District Priorities and Governance Committee to update the Trustees' Handbook to reflect the role of a Student Representative and the supporting processes to ensure the success of this role.
- Staff from Governance and Strategic Support Services to provide ongoing overarching coordination of the overall pilot, including communicating with the school leadership course teacher to ensure continuity and alignment between the Student Representative's work with the Board and the content and activities of the leadership course.
- Trustee Mentor to provide ongoing mentorship and support to the Student Representative throughout their term.
- Staff from schools and central services to support the yearly election process.
- Staff from Information Technology, Communications, and other central decisions units, as appropriate, to provide ongoing relevant support to ensure the success of the Student Representative role.
- Staff from central services to conduct the pilot evaluation.

In order to implement this pilot in a successful manner there will be pressure points on current staffing levels. Consideration will need to be given to how the lead decision unit, Governance and Strategic Support Services, can properly support this pilot throughout the phases of the election process, the on-boarding and orientation of the Student Representative and the overseeing of ongoing support.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of the model school and central services staff will:

- Finish developing the election process including supporting forms and communication tools.
- Complete the requirements to support the District Leadership Course.
- Work with the District Priorities and Governance Committee to finish writing the Role and Responsibility Statement for the role of Student Representative, the role of the Student Advisory Council, and the role of the Trustee Mentor, revise the Trustees' Handbook to reflect a Student Representative participant, outline the working relationship between the Board and the Student Advisory Council and develop an evaluation strategy for the pilot.
- Formalize the support plan for a Student Representative including orientation, training and ongoing support.
- Administration will bring an update around the progress and status of this initiative to a Caucus meeting in October 2014.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

N/A

NP:ja