

DATE: June 10, 2014

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Michelle Draper, Chair Policy Review Committee
Trustee Sarah Hoffman, Policy Review Committee
Trustee Nathan Ip, Policy Review Committee

SUBJECT: Board Policy AEBB.BP – Wellness of Students and Staff

RESOURCE STAFF: David Fraser, Debbie Jackson, Lynn Norris, Kent Pharis, Anne Sherwood, Sandra Stoddard

REFERENCE: [Draft Board Policy AEBB.BP – Wellness of Students and Staff \(March 4, 2014 Board Report\)](#)

ISSUE

Revisions to the Board’s policy direction for the health and wellness of students and staff are needed to reflect the context of the District’s work related to the health and wellness of students and staff, current research and provincial curriculum direction.

RECOMMENDATION

That draft new Board Policy AEBB.BP - Wellness of Students and Staff (Attachment I) be considered for the second time.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees (the Board) gave first consideration to a draft new Board Policy AEBB.BP - Wellness of Students and Staff on March 4, 2014 (see link provided in the above Reference) which was subsequently posted for stakeholder feedback from March 7, 2014 to April 6, 2014. The Policy Review Committee reviewed the results of the survey and other submissions provided by stakeholders in making revisions to the recommended Board Policy AEBB.BP – Wellness of Students and Staff.

RELATED FACTS

- The comprehensive review of all board policy is organized around board responsibilities outlined in the anticipated new *Education Act*. Three major policy themes (respectful environment, health and wellness, and safety and security) were identified for section 33(1)(d) of the *Education Act* -- “each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.” Draft new Board Policy AEBB.BP – Wellness of Students and Staff is addressing the policy theme for “health and wellness”. The policy also addresses the Board’s responsibility under Section 33(1)(h) of the *Education Act* “to establish and maintain governance and organizational structures that promote student and staff well-being and success, and monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.”

- Current board policies that address the Board expectations for district health and wellness supports for both students and staff (Attachment II a-e) were reviewed and consolidated into the new draft policy as shown in Attachment II.
- The holistic concept of “wellness” used in the draft policy is taken from the *Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education* developed by Alberta Education based on current research and broad stakeholder input. This document identifies the fundamental concepts and inherent values of K-12 wellness education for future development of the programs of study in Alberta which is anticipated to be completed in 2016.

OPTIONS

The following options are selected for consideration as they are deemed the most admissible:

1. The Board considers draft Board Policy AEBB.BP - Wellness of Students and Staff for the second time. The policy and report will be scheduled for the June 17, 2014 public board meeting for third consideration and approval.
2. The Board considers draft Board Policy AEBB.BP - Wellness of Students and Staff for the second time and provides direction to the Policy Review Committee to consider further revisions before bringing back to the Board for third consideration and approval.

CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS

There were 227 respondents to the stakeholder survey on draft Board Policy AEBB.BP - Wellness of Students and Staff of which 75 percent to 85 percent, depending on the section of the policy being reviewed, supported the proposed policy as written. While the majority of respondents were supportive of the policy, 15 percent to 25 percent, depending on the section of the policy being reviewed, provided comments with concerns, suggestions or commendations.

The Policy Review Committee reviewed the comments and input provided by stakeholders. Attachment III provides an overview of the themes and key points identified and the considerations and rationale for changes to the draft policy. Attachment IV shows the deletions and additions made to the March 4, 2014 version of the draft policy by strikeout and shading. The following provides a brief summary of key considerations and changes:

Spiritual Wellness

- To address a concern that the term “spiritual wellness” implies a religious affiliation that may not be inclusive of diverse values and beliefs, the Purpose was revised to emphasize that our learning and working environments will “address and respect the diversity within our student and staff population.”
- To further convey that spiritual wellness is a personal matter involving an understanding of one’s own values and beliefs, the last sentence of the preface to the wellness definition now reads: “Personal wellness occurs with commitment to a lifestyle based on healthy attitudes and actions *that honour self and others.*”
- All board policies provide direction and guidance to the Administration and are not meant to be read in isolation. Other board policies and administrative regulations that address the Board of Trustees’ expectations for inclusion and respect for differences of culture, religion and sexual orientation were added to the References section of the policy.

Comprehensive School Health

- A definition was added for the Comprehensive School Health approach to addressing student and staff wellness, which formed part of the research and basis for Alberta

Education's *Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education*. The Comprehensive School Health approach has been promoted within the District for the last several years and is now explicitly endorsed within this policy.

Human Sexual Education

- Human sexual education, the selection of instructional resources and the need for students to be fully informed was raised as a point of concern by several stakeholders.
- All wellness related curricula are intended to be taught from the perspective of the holistic definition of wellness that addresses the interplay of the five elements of wellness: the emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual dimensions of a topic. To make this clearer an explanation of this concept has been added under the definition of wellness which reads: "These dimensions do not exist in isolation; ... All wellness curricula, including topics considered controversial or sensitive, such as those related to family interactions; personal, family and community values; personal relationships; and issues of sexual and mental health are approached through the lens of this holistic definition of wellness."
- Expectation 4 in the draft policy has been revised to make it clearer that "curricular instruction" will be provided to students "in accordance with the *School Act*, regulations and the *Guide to Education*." The *Guide to Education* governs the programs of study offered to students. Human sexuality education is offered in Grade 4 to Grade 9 as a mandatory part of the program of studies with specific outcomes identified. Additionally, at the high school level, the Career and Life Management (CALM) course is offered and contains specific outcomes relative to human sexuality.
- There are references to Board Policy GAA.BP – Student Programs of Study, which articulates the Board's expectation that all student programs will use "a wide range of teaching and learning resources that reflect and value the diversity in the District so that all students see themselves and their lives positively reflected within the curriculum."
- There is a reference to the administrative regulation that addresses the selection of instructional resources "appropriate for the program of studies, the program's instructional philosophy and for the age, social and emotional development, and learning style of the students for whom the materials are selected" (Administrative Regulation GI.AR - Teaching and Learning Resources). As explained in Attachment III, with respect to instructional resources for sexual education, the District encourages teachers to refer to *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education* and the lesson plans, programs and comprehensive evidence-based information developed by Alberta educators and health professionals housed online at teachingsexualhealth.ca.
- The *Guide to Education* indicates that studying controversial topics that give rise to alternative points of view, such as human sexuality, assists in preparing students to participate responsibly in society, as well as providing opportunities to develop the ability to think clearly, to reason logically, to open-mindedly and respectfully examine different points of view and to make sound judgments. Controversial topics should be used by teachers to promote critical inquiry and thinking skills. Teachers must provide a broad view and balanced approach to perspectives on controversial subjects.
- As well, the *Guide to Education* contains a Human Sexuality Education Policy which provides for notice to parents under section 11.1 of the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the parental right to exempt their student, where courses of study, educational programs or instructional material, instruction or exercises include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion, human sexuality or sexual orientation.

- Should the new draft Board Policy AE_{BB}.BP – Wellness of Students and Staff be approved, administrative regulations and processes will be reviewed, revised and/or developed and communicated to teachers with respect to the selection of instructional resources for controversial subjects and appropriate notice to parents when a controversial subject will be taught.

Staff Wellness

- Staff wellness was identified as an area of concern requiring more preventative and proactive strategies that promote personal well-being and a healthy and respectful work environment.
- This policy specifically speaks to “a proactive approach to creating positive and supportive environments that contribute to the well-being of self and others.” As well, there is both a board policy and administrative regulation addressing respectful working environments which has been added as a reference to this policy.

NEXT STEPS

1. The new draft policy will be brought to the June 17, 2014 public board meeting for third consideration and approval and after having been approved, the following board policies will be recommended for rescission:
 - a. FBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students (Attachment II a.)
 - b. FBEA.BP – Occupational Health and Safety (Attachment II b.)
 - c. FIC.BP – Employee Assistance (Attachment II c.)
 - d. GIAA.BP – Health Instruction Materials (Attachment II d.)
 - e. GJ.BP – Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services (Attachment II e.)
2. Implementation of the new policy will require review, revision and, or development of administrative regulations related to supports for wellness of students and supports for wellness of staff which will take place over the 2014-2015 school year.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I	Draft New Board Policy AE _{BB} .BP – Wellness of Students and Staff
ATTACHMENT II	Revised Draft Board Policy AE _{BB} .BP – Wellness of Students and Staff showing consolidation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) FBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students b) FBEA.BP – Occupational Health and Safety c) FIC.BP – Employee Assistance d) GIAA.BP – Health Instruction Materials e) GJ.BP – Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services
ATTACHMENT III	Summary of Themes and Key Points from Stakeholder Feedback and Committee Considerations
ATTACHMENT IV	Deletions and Additions from the March 4, 2014 Version of Board Policy AE _{BB} .BP – Wellness of Students and Staff

DJ/AS:lb

CODE: AEBB.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (dd-mm-yyyy)**TOPIC:** Wellness of Students and Staff**ISSUE DATE:** (dd-mm-yyyy)**REVIEW YEAR:** (yyyy)

PURPOSE

To assist students and staff in reaching their full potential by providing policy direction to create learning and working environments that supports a district culture of wellness.

Positive and supportive social and physical learning and working environments address and respect the diversity within our student and staff population and are a key contributor to health for individuals. A wellness policy supports the Board of Trustees (the Board) in meeting its responsibility to establish and maintain governance and organizational structures that promote student and staff well-being and success, and monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

DEFINITIONS

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an internationally recognized, evidence-based approach for building healthy school communities based on collaboration between home, school and community partners. A CSH approach to effective school health initiatives uses strategies from all four pillars of CSH as defined by the Joint Consortium for School Health:

- **Social and Physical Environments** includes the quality of the relationships between school community stakeholders, the emotional well-being of students and the buildings, grounds, play spaces and equipment in and around the school.
- **Teaching and Learning** includes resources, activities and curriculum where students gain skills and knowledge related to health and wellness.
- **Healthy School Policy** includes management practices, decision-making processes, policies and procedures that promote and support health and wellness.
- **Partnerships and Services** include connections between schools, families, community organizations, the health sector and other sectors that support student health.

Wellness is a balanced state of emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual well-being that enables individuals to reach their full potential. Personal wellness occurs with commitment to a lifestyle based on healthy attitudes and actions that honour self and others.

The Alberta Education's *Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education, 2009*, defines the five dimensions of wellness as:

- **Emotional wellness** is acknowledging, understanding, managing and expressing thoughts and feelings in a constructive manner.
- **Intellectual wellness** is the development and the critical and creative use of the mind to its fullest potential.
- **Physical wellness** is the ability, motivation and confidence to move effectively and efficiently in a variety of situations, and the healthy growth, development, nutrition and care of the body.

- **Social wellness** is relating positively to others and is influenced by many factors including how individuals communicate, establish and maintain relationships, are treated by others and interpret that treatment.
- **Spiritual wellness** is an understanding of one's own values and beliefs leading to a sense of meaning or purpose and a relationship to the community.

These dimensions do not exist in isolation; it is the balance and interplay of these elements that constitute wellness. All wellness curricula, including topics considered controversial or sensitive, such as those related to family interactions; personal, family and community values; personal relationships; and issues of sexual and mental health are approached through the lens of this holistic definition of wellness.

POLICY

The Board recognizes that wellness is both an individual and collective responsibility. The Board believes that a state of personal wellness enables students and staff to reach their full potential and to contribute in an increasingly interdependent world. The Board acknowledges that only by working in partnership with students, staff, parents, community members, organizations and government can we promote and foster lifelong habits that support wellness.

The Board recognizes that it is subject to different legislative requirements when supporting student and staff wellness. As such, the Board embraces a Comprehensive School Health approach and is committed to ensuring that students and staff are provided with the supports they need to learn about, create and maintain a district culture of wellness. The Board is further committed to providing safe, healthy learning and working environments through prevention of personal and occupational injuries and illnesses, and a proactive approach to creating positive and supportive environments that contribute to the well-being of self and others.

EXPECTATIONS

1. Each school and central decision unit shall work towards creating and maintaining learning and working environments that support a district culture of wellness using a Comprehensive School Health approach.
2. The District shall:
 - a. consider student and staff health and safety in the planning, implementation and evaluation of district services;
 - b. base supports for student and staff wellness on research, informed best practice and a balanced approach to delivery; and
 - c. meet or exceed all legislated occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements through a district OHS program.
3. School staff shall work collaboratively with district services, parents, government agencies, and community partners to provide awareness of and access to available professional guidance and counselling services for students.

4. Curricular instruction and the development, implementation and monitoring of strategies to create and maintain a culture of wellness for students shall be in accordance with the *School Act*, regulations and the *Guide to Education*.
5. Staff, and their dependents, shall be provided access to professional employee and family assistance services which offer assessment, referral, consultation, and counselling services. These services shall be confidential except where limited by law.
6. Assessment tools shall be identified to measure and monitor the effectiveness of the wellness strategies implemented by schools and central decision units for the purpose of local and district-wide planning and delivery of supports.
7. The Superintendent of Schools shall implement this policy through the establishment of administrative regulations and the assignment of responsibilities as needed.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Administration reports on progress in relation to the supports provided to create a culture of wellness for students and staff through the Annual Report –Wellness of Students and Staff.

REFERENCES

[FBCA.BP - Respectful Working Environments](#)
[FBCA.AR – Respectful Working Environments](#)
[EA.BP - Infrastructure Planning Principles](#)
[GA.BP - Student Programs of Study](#)
[GAA.BP - Delivery of Student Programs of Study](#)
[GGAB.BP – Multicultural Education](#)
[GI.AR – Teaching and Learning Resources](#)
[HA.BP – Inclusive Education](#)
[HAA.BP – Aboriginal Education](#)
[HF.BP - Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments](#)
[HF.AR – Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments](#)
[HFA.BP – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)
[HFA.AR – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)
[Comprehensive School Health Approach – Alberta Health Services](#)
[Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education](#)
[Guide to Education](#)
[Joint Consortium for School Health](#)
[School Act](#)

CODE: AEBC.BP	EFFECTIVE DATE: (dd-mm-yyyy)
TOPIC: Wellness of Students and Staff	ISSUE DATE: (dd-mm-yyyy)
	REVIEW YEAR: (yyyy)

PURPOSE

To assist students and staff in reaching their full potential by providing policy direction to create learning and working environments that supports a district culture of wellness.

Positive and supportive social and physical learning and working environments address and respect the diversity within our student and staff population and are a key contributor to health for individuals. A wellness policy supports the Board of Trustees (Board) in meeting its responsibility to establish and maintain governance and organizational structures that promote student and staff well-being and success, and monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

DEFINITIONS

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an internationally recognized, evidence-based approach for building healthy school communities based on collaboration between home, school and community partners. A CSH approach to effective school health initiatives uses strategies from all four pillars of CSH as defined by the Joint Consortium for School Health:

- **Social and Physical Environments** includes the quality of the relationships between school community stakeholders, the emotional well-being of students and the buildings, grounds, play spaces and equipment in and around the school.
- **Teaching and Learning** includes resources, activities and curriculum where students gain skills and knowledge related to health and wellness.
- **Healthy School Policy** includes management practices, decision-making processes, policies and procedures that promote and support health and wellness.
- **Partnerships and Services** include connections between schools, families, community organizations, the health sector and other sectors that support student health.

Wellness is a balanced state of emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual well-being that enables individuals to reach their full potential. Personal wellness occurs with commitment to a lifestyle based on healthy attitudes and actions that honour self and others.

The Alberta Education *Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education, 2009*, defines the five dimensions of wellness as:

- **Emotional wellness** is acknowledging, understanding, managing and expressing thoughts and feelings in a constructive manner.
- **Intellectual wellness** is the development and the critical and creative use of the mind to its fullest potential.
- **Physical wellness** is the ability, motivation and confidence to move effectively and efficiently in a variety of situations, and the healthy growth, development, nutrition and care of the body.

- **Social wellness** is relating positively to others and is influenced by many factors including how individuals communicate, establish and maintain relationships, are treated by others and interpret that treatment.
- **Spiritual wellness** is an understanding of one's own values and beliefs leading to a sense of meaning or purpose and a relationship to the community.

These dimensions do not exist in isolation; it is the balance and interplay of these elements that constitute wellness. All wellness curricula, including topics considered controversial or sensitive, such as those related to family interactions; personal, family and community values; personal relationships; and issues of sexual and mental health are approached through the lens of this holistic definition of wellness.

POLICY

The Board recognizes that wellness is both an individual and collective responsibility. The Board believes that a state of personal wellness enables students and staff to reach their full potential and to contribute in an increasingly interdependent world. The Board acknowledges that only by working in partnership with students, staff, parents, community members, organizations and government can we promote and foster lifelong habits that support wellness. **(FBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students)**

The Board recognizes that it is subject to different legislative requirements when supporting student and staff wellness. As such, the Board embraces a Comprehensive School Health approach and is committed to ensuring that students and staff are provided with the supports they need to learn about, create and maintain a district culture of wellness. The Board is further committed to providing safe, healthy learning and working environments through prevention of personal and occupational injuries and illnesses, and a proactive approach to creating positive and supportive environments that contribute to the well-being of self and others. **(replaces FBEA.BP – Occupational Health and Safety)**

EXPECTATIONS

1. Each school and central decision unit shall work towards creating and maintaining learning and working environments that support a district culture of wellness using a Comprehensive School Health approach. **(FBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students)**
2. The District shall:
 - a. consider student and staff health and safety in the planning, implementation and evaluation of district services;
 - b. base supports for student and staff wellness on research, informed best practice and a balanced approach to delivery; and
 - c. meet or exceed all legislated occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements through a district OHS program. **(replaces FBEA.BP – Occupational Health and Safety)**
3. School staff shall work collaboratively with district services, parents, government agencies, and community partners to provide awareness of and access to available professional guidance and counselling services for students. **(replaces GJ.BP – Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services)**

4. Curricular instruction and the development, implementation and monitoring of strategies to create and maintain a culture of wellness for students shall be in accordance with the *School Act*, regulations and the *Guide to Education*. **(replaces GIAA.BP – Health Instructional Materials)**
5. Staff, and their dependents, shall be provided access to professional employee and family assistance services which offer assessment, referral, consultation, and counselling services. These services shall be confidential except where limited by law. **(FIC.BP – Employee Assistance)**
6. Assessment tools shall be identified to measure and monitor the effectiveness of the wellness strategies implemented by schools and central decision units for the purpose of local and district-wide planning and delivery of supports.
7. The Superintendent of Schools shall implement this policy through the establishment of administrative regulations and the assignment of responsibilities as needed.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Administration reports on progress in relation to the supports provided to create a culture of wellness for students and staff through the Annual Report –Wellness of Students and Staff.

REFERENCES

[FBCA.BP - Respectful Working Environments](#)
[FBCA.AR – Respectful Working Environments](#)
[EA.BP - Infrastructure Planning Principles](#)
[GA.BP - Student Programs of Study](#)
[GAA.BP - Delivery of Student Programs of Study](#)
[GGAB.BP – Multicultural Education](#)
[GI.AR – Teaching and Learning Resources](#)
[HA.BP – Inclusive Education](#)
[HAA.BP – Aboriginal Education](#)
[HF.BP - Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments](#)
[HF.AR – Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments](#)
[HFA.BP – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)
[HFA.AR – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)
[Joint Consortium for School Health](#)
[Guide to Education](#)
[Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education](#)
[Comprehensive School Health Approach – Alberta Health Services](#)
[School Act](#)

CODE: FBE.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (12-06-2007)**TOPIC:** Health and Wellness of Staff and Students**ISSUE DATE:** (14-06-2007)**REVIEW YEAR:** (2014)**POLICY**

The Board of Trustees believes that employees and students who are emotionally healthy, well-nourished and physically active are better able to achieve the goals of education.

The Board of Trustees is committed to working with parents, community members, organizations and government to foster lifelong habits that improve the health and well-being of employees and students.

The Board of Trustees encourages each school and central decision unit to maintain a supportive environment that develops the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enable individuals to make choices that foster emotional health, healthy eating and active living.

REFERENCES

FBE.AR - Health and Wellness of Staff and Students

CODE: FBEA.BP

EFFECTIVE DATE: (12-06-2007)

TOPIC: Occupational Health and Safety

ISSUE DATE: (14-06-2007)

REVIEW YEAR: (2014)

POLICY

Edmonton Public Schools values its employees and is committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy working and learning environment, and
- preventing occupational injuries and illnesses.

The District will:

- meet or exceed all occupational health and safety legislated requirements;
- give priority to occupational health and safety in the planning, implementation and evaluation of district services; and
- work to continuously improve its occupational health and safety management system.

A safe and healthy work environment is a shared responsibility among the Board of Trustees, Superintendent of Schools, staff, staff group representatives, as well as government, parents, students, volunteers, visitors, tenants, contractors and subcontractors.

REFERENCES

FAA.BP - Human Resources Framework

FBEA.AR - Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities

HHCA.AR - Hygienic Practices

HHCC.AR - Communicable Disease

HHCF.AR - Student or Staff Suicide

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation

Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act

Environmental Protection and Enhancement (Miscellaneous) Regulation (AR 118/93)

Public Health Act

CODE: FIC.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (13-06-2006)**TOPIC:** Employee Assistance**ISSUE DATE:** (23-06-2006)**REVIEW YEAR:** (2013)

POLICY

The Board shall provide employee and family assistance which offers assessment and referral, consultation, and counselling services through which staff and their family members living in their household can have direct access to professional assistance. These services shall be confidential except where limited by law.

CODE: GIAA.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (13-06-2006)**TOPIC:** Health Instruction Materials**ISSUE DATE:** (23-06-2006)**REVIEW YEAR:** (2013)**POLICY****HEALTH INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES**

Teaching and Learning resources for health, where applicable, shall:

- promote respect for one's physical, mental, spiritual, social and emotional well-being and that of others;
- recognize the role of the family regarding the health and welfare of society;
- strive to ensure parent and community satisfaction with health programs;
- promote healthy attitudes towards human sexuality, and the view that abstinence from sexual relationships is the most effective method of preventing sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies;
- promote a balanced view of the issues;
- view health issues sensitively, avoiding unduly violent or frightening depictions of the issues; and
- promote healthy decision making that will reduce the likelihood of substance abuse.

REFERENCES

GIAA.BP – Student Programs of Study

CODE: GJ.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (27-09-2011)**TOPIC:** Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling
Programs and Services**ISSUE DATE:** (29-09-2011)**REVIEW YEAR:** (2018)**POLICY**

The Board believes that guidance and counselling is an integral part of school programming delivered to meet the needs of all students in the areas of career planning and development, personal/social issues and educational planning.

The Board supports the development of a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program. Schools are responsible to ensure that equitable, proactive, professional and collaborative guidance and counselling services are available to all students.

REFERENCES

Alberta Education's Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12 - page 69

Alberta Education's Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services:
Guidelines for Practice

Board Policy AE~~BB~~.BP – Wellness of Students and Staff

Summary of Themes and Key Points from Stakeholder Feedback and Committee Considerations

There were 227 respondents of which 75% to 85%, depending on the question, did not have any concerns with the proposed policy. While the majority of respondents were positive, 15% to 25% provided comments with concerns, suggestions or commendations. The following document highlights themes **(t)** that emerged (mentioned 3 to 8 times), as well as key points **(kp)** (mentioned only once or twice) that were identified for consideration in revising the draft wellness policy.

Themes (t) and/or Key Points (kp)	Considerations and Response
<p>Milieu: The term milieu was not clear to some and it was felt that a more common word should be used. (kp)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One shouldn't have to look up a word to understand an important sentence in the policy. 	<p>The Purpose was simplified by removing the word milieu and keeping the more common term environment.</p>
<p>Spiritual Wellness: There is a concern that the term spiritual wellness has a religious connotation and that this has/or may have negative implications. (t)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this inclusive of diverse values and beliefs? • Religion has no place in a public school system. 	<p>Spiritual wellness is one of five dimensions referred to in the wellness definition in the Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education document, 2009. These elements do not exist in isolation; it is the balance and interplay of these elements that constitute wellness.</p> <p>Although one's religion may inform one's values, spiritual wellness is not dependent on a religion.</p> <p>Spiritual Wellness is a personal matter involving values and beliefs that provide a purpose in our lives. While different individuals may have different views of what spiritualism is, it is generally considered to be the search for meaning and purpose in human existence, leading one to strive for a state of harmony with oneself and others while working to balance inner needs with the rest of the world. The <i>National Wellness Institute</i> says spiritual wellness follows the following tenets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is better to ponder the meaning of life for ourselves and to be tolerant of the beliefs of others than to close our minds and become intolerant. • It is better to live each day in a way that is consistent with our values and beliefs than to do otherwise and feel untrue to ourselves

	<p>The Ministerial Order 001/2013 also states that “an Ethical Citizen ...; cares for themselves physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually;...”</p> <p>The Purpose has been revised to include the idea that our learning and working environments will “address and respect the diversity within our student and staff population...”</p> <p>The italicized words have been added to the preface to the wellness Definition: “ Personal wellness occurs with commitment to a lifestyle based on healthy attitudes and actions <i>that honour self and others</i>”</p> <p>References have been added for other related policies and administrative regulations such as Aboriginal education, multicultural education, and sexual orientation and gender identity.</p>
<p>Comprehensive School Health (CSH) : Why doesn’t the term CSH appear in the policy? It should be embedded in the policy as this approach is accepted by health and education across the country as the most effective means to create and sustain healthy school communities. The District has been using CSH for a number of years. (kp)</p>	<p>The Comprehensive School Health approach to addressing student and staff wellness is used and supported within the District. The term CSH is an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students’ educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way. CSH is an effective approach for building healthy school communities, and can be used to address a variety of health issues and improve health, education, and social outcomes for children and youth.</p> <p>CSH was added in the Definitions for the policy.</p> <p>The second paragraph under Policy now reads...” As such, the board embraces a Comprehensive School Health approach and is committed to ...”</p> <p>Expectation 1 now reads “Each school and central decision unit</p>

	<p>shall work towards creating and maintaining learning and working environments that support a district culture of wellness using a Comprehensive School Health approach.” Reference: http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/csh.asp</p>
<p>Sexual Wellness/Sexual Education: The policy needs to be more explicit in regards to sexual wellness and sex education. (t)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need to be fully informed with evidence-based, medically sound and inclusive sex education provided by knowledgeable people. • Parents need to be notified about which presenters will be invited into the schools as resources. 	<p>The policy is intended to support the teaching of wellness related curriculum such as the topic of human sexuality from the perspective of a holistic definition of wellness that integrates the emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual (being true to one’s own sense of values) aspects of the topic. An explanatory statement to this effect has been added under wellness in the Definitions.</p> <p>Expectation 4 in the policy has been revised to make it explicit that <i>curricular instruction</i> will be provided to students in accordance with the <i>School Act</i>, regulations and the <i>Guide to Education</i>.</p> <p>Human sexuality education is offered in Grade 4 to Grade 9 as a mandatory component of the program of studies. Additionally, at the high school level, the Career and Life Management (CALM) course is offered and contains specific outcomes relative to human sexuality.</p> <p>Board policy GA.BP – Student Programs of Study articulates the Board’s expectation that all student programs will use “a wide range of teaching and learning resources that reflect and value the diversity in the District so that all students see themselves and their lives positively reflected within the curriculum”. Administrative regulation GLAR – Teaching and Learning Resources addresses the selection of instructional resources appropriate for the curriculum, and the instructional philosophy of the school. It requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that teaching and learning resources shall be appropriate for

the program of studies, the program’s instructional philosophy and for the age, social and emotional development, and learning style of the students for whom the materials are selected; and

- that schools not be limited to the use of provincially authorized resources, but shall use resources that meet the requirements of the respective program of studies.

The District refers teachers to [*Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education*](#). “Effective Sexual Health Education should be provided in an age-appropriate, culturally sensitive manner that is respectful of individual sexual diversity, abilities and choices.”

Key elements of comprehensive sexual health education in schools, includes access to information, which is:

- science-based and medically accurate;
- non-judgmental;
- culturally-sensitive;
- inclusive of persons with disabilities and sexual and gender minorities;
- age-appropriate;
- focused on healthy decision making;
- supports effective communication skill development, which includes teaching the meaning of “consent”; and reflects the *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education*.

Edmonton Public Schools supports the lesson plans, programs, and information identified on www.teachingsexualhealth.ca. It is an innovative website developed by Alberta educators and health professionals. Their goal is to enhance excellence in education by providing teachers with evidence-based sexual health education background and delivery methods, current lesson plans and activities, and comprehensive resources. Schools are encouraged to use this site as a reference for ensuring the goals of Alberta curriculum are adhered to in regards to human sexuality education.

	<p>The topic, instruction, and selection of instructional resources for human sexuality education may give rise to alternative points of view and inspire <i>controversy</i>. The Guide to Education indicates that studying controversial topics assists in preparing students to participate responsibly in society as well as providing opportunities to develop the ability to think clearly, to reason logically, to open-mindedly and respectfully examine different points of view and to make sound judgments.</p> <p>Controversial topics should be used by teachers to promote critical inquiry and thinking skills. Teachers must ensure they take the time to adequately prepare for guest speakers and ensure a broad view and a balanced approach to the topic.</p> <p>The <i>Guide to Education</i> contains a Human Sexuality Education Policy which provides for notice to parents under section 11.1 of the <i>Alberta Human Rights Act</i>, where courses of study, educational programs or instructional materials, or instruction or exercises include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion, human sexuality or sexual orientation. Where a parent makes a written request, teachers shall exempt a student, without academic penalty, from such instruction, course of study, educational program or use of instructional material.</p> <p>Expectation 2.b. states that the District shall base supports for student and staff wellness “on research, informed best practice and a balanced approach to delivery.” Revised and, or new administrative regulations and processes will be developed and communicated to teachers with respect to the selection of instructional resources for controversial subjects and appropriate notice to parents when a controversial subject will be taught.</p>
<p>Assessment Tools and Accountability: Concern regarding what assessment tool(s) will be used to</p>	<p>The Administration will provide guidance to schools in relation to appropriate assessments tools for school and district purposes.</p>

<p>measure and monitor the effectiveness of the wellness strategies and supports? Will students and parents provide feedback? (t)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment tool needs to be effective: aligned, easy to administer and used to plan and implement next steps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify how this (annual report) will provide accountability. (kp) 	<p>The Joint Consortium for School Health which supports a Comprehensive School Health approach recommends using the Healthy School Planner (HSP). It is an online tool designed to help individual schools assess the overall state of their environment as well as the choice to target one or more specific wellness topics such as healthy eating or physical activity. An aggregate report for a school board/district can be requested and used to assess district progress and inform planning.</p> <p>Tell Them From Me Survey(TTFM) is another assessment tool which surveys students on some wellness concepts in relation to social, emotional outcomes and physical activity. It is an evaluation system that includes a dynamic web-based student survey and optional teacher and parent surveys. The District currently has 2013-14 information from Grade 4-12 students that could be used as baseline data. Additional questions can be added to the survey to measure specific outcomes.</p> <p>Human Resources is developing a staff engagement survey which could measure some wellness concepts for staff.</p> <p>The Annual Report – Wellness of Students and Staff could use data collected through a tool such as the HSP, TTFM survey and Staff Engagement survey to monitor and report on progress. The Purpose statement was revised to more clearly align the purpose of the policy to the Board’s responsibility for creating the governance and organizational structures that promote wellness and monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.</p>
<p>Staff Wellness: This is an area of concern particularly from a preventative stand point. What is being done to promote a healthy work environment? What supports are in place for me to access before I have a problem? (t)</p>	<p>The policy speaks to proactive approaches to creating supportive environments that contribute to staff wellness which would include supporting positive working relationships.</p> <p>We currently have policy and administrative regulations that address a respectful workplace. The Administration is developing</p>

	<p>a violence in the workplace program with proactive processes that will be rolled out in 2015.</p> <p>Leadership development programs have been developed which address supervision, mentoring and coaching of staff.</p> <p>The Healthy Living Program is being implemented within the District. The program is a collaborative long-term program that provides individuals with a two-part assessment of their current health status and health risks, resources including lifestyle coaching to improve and sustain healthy behaviours and support in the workplace for individual health practices.</p>
<p>Implementation of Policy: Will resources/supports be available/provided to implement this policy and its regulations? (t)</p>	<p>The District must implement all policy direction within the means available to it.</p>

CODE: AEBC.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (dd-mm-yyyy)**TOPIC:** Wellness of Students and Staff**ISSUE DATE:** (dd-mm-yyyy)**REVIEW YEAR:** (yyyy)

PURPOSE

To assist students and staff in reaching their full potential by providing policy direction to create learning and working environments that supports a district culture of wellness.

Positive and supportive social and physical milieu in our learning and working environments address and respect the diversity within our student and staff population and are a key contributor to health for individuals. A wellness policy supports the Board of Trustees (Board) in meeting its responsibility to establish and maintain governance and organizational structures that promote student and staff well-being and success, and monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. for providing each student and staff member with welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments.

DEFINITIONS

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an internationally recognized, evidence-based approach for building healthy school communities based on collaboration between home, school and community partners. A CSH approach to effective school health initiatives uses strategies from all four pillars of CSH as defined by the Joint Consortium for School Health:

- **Social and Physical Environments** includes the quality of the relationships between school community stakeholders, the emotional well-being of students and the buildings, grounds, play spaces and equipment in and around the school.
- **Teaching and Learning** includes resources, activities and curriculum where students gain skills and knowledge related to health and wellness.
- **Healthy School Policy** includes management practices, decision-making processes, policies and procedures that promote and support health and wellness.
- **Partnerships and Services** include connections between schools, families, community organizations, the health sector and other sectors that support student health.

Wellness is a balanced state of emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual well-being that enables individuals to reach their full potential. Personal wellness occurs with commitment to a lifestyle choices based on healthy attitudes and actions that honour self and others.

The Alberta Education *Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education, 2009*, defines the five dimensions of wellness as:

- **Emotional wellness** is acknowledging, understanding, managing and expressing thoughts and feelings in a constructive manner.
- **Intellectual wellness** is the development and the critical and creative use of the mind to its fullest potential.

- **Physical wellness** is the ability, motivation and confidence to move effectively and efficiently in a variety of situations, and the healthy growth, development, nutrition and care of the body.
- **Social wellness** is relating positively to others and is influenced by many factors including how individuals communicate, establish and maintain relationships, are treated by others and interpret that treatment.
- **Spiritual wellness** is an understanding of one's own values and beliefs leading to a sense of meaning or purpose and a relationship to the community.

These dimensions do not exist in isolation; it is the balance and interplay of these elements that constitute wellness. All wellness curricula, including topics considered controversial or sensitive, such as those related to family interactions; personal, family and community values; personal relationships; and issues of sexual and mental health are approached through the lens of this holistic definition of wellness.

POLICY

The Board recognizes that wellness is both an individual and collective responsibility. The Board believes that a state of personal wellness enables students and staff to reach their full potential and to contribute in an increasingly interdependent world. The Board acknowledges that only by working in partnership with students, staff, parents, community members, organizations and government can we promote and foster lifelong habits that support wellness.

The Board recognizes that it is subject to different legislative requirements when supporting student and staff wellness. As such, the Board embraces a Comprehensive School Health approach and is committed to ensuring that students and staff are provided with the supports they need to learn about, create and maintain a district culture of wellness. The Board is further committed to providing safe, healthy learning and working environments through prevention of personal and occupational injuries and illnesses, and a proactive approach to creating positive and supportive environments that contribute to the well-being of self and others.

EXPECTATIONS

1. Each school and central decision unit shall work towards creating and maintaining learning and working environments that support a district culture of wellness using a Comprehensive School Health approach.
2. The District shall:
 - a. ~~give consideration to~~ student and staff health and safety in the planning, implementation and evaluation of district services;
 - b. base supports for student and staff wellness on research, informed best practice and a balanced approach to delivery; and
 - c. meet or exceed all legislated occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements through a district OHS program.

3. School staff shall work collaboratively with district services, parents, and government agencies, and community partners to provide awareness of and access to available professional guidance and counselling services for students.
4. Curricular instruction and the development, implementation and monitoring of strategies to create and maintain a culture of wellness for students shall be guided by in accordance with the *School Act*, regulations and the *Guide to Education*.
5. Staff, and their dependents, shall be provided access to professional employee and family assistance services which offer assessment, referral, consultation, and counselling services. These services shall be confidential except where limited by law.
6. Assessment tools shall be identified to measure and monitor the effectiveness of the wellness strategies implemented by schools and central decision units for the purpose of local and district-wide planning and delivery of supports.
7. The Superintendent of Schools shall implement this policy through the establishment of administrative regulations and the assignment of responsibilities as needed.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Administration reports on progress in relation to the supports provided to create a culture of wellness for students and staff through the Annual Report – ~~Health and~~ Wellness of Students and Staff.

REFERENCES

[FBCA.BP - Respectful Working Environments](#)
[FBCA.AR – Respectful Working Environments](#)
[EA.BP - Infrastructure Planning Principles](#)
[GA.BP - Student Programs of Study](#)
[GAA.BP - Delivery of Student Programs of Study](#)
[GGAB.BP – Multicultural Education](#)
[GI.AR – Teaching and Learning Resources](#)
[HA.BP – Inclusive Education](#)
[HAA.BP – Aboriginal Education](#)
[HF.BP - Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments](#)
[HF.AR – Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments](#)
[HFA.BP – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)
[HFA.AR – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)
[Guide to Education](#)
[Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education](#)
[Comprehensive School Health Approach – Alberta Health Services](#)
[School Act](#)