

DATE: June 23, 2015

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Aboriginal Elders Advisory Council
(Response to Request for Information #109)

ORIGINATOR: Mary Michailides, Assistant Superintendent, Support for Schools

**RESOURCE
STAFF:** Eileen Marthiensen, Melissa Purcell

REFERENCE: June 9, 2015 Board Meeting (Trustee Johner)
[HAA.BP Aboriginal Education](#)
[HAA.AR Aboriginal Education](#)

ISSUE

The following information was requested: provide information around the creation of an Aboriginal Elders Advisory Council reporting directly to the Board of Trustees (this is currently being modelled by the Edmonton Catholic School Board).

BACKGROUND

Edmonton Public Schools (EPSB) is committed to fostering ongoing relationships and working collaboratively with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members. In addition, the District recognizes the significance of the traditional and fundamental importance of Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members within the First Nations, Métis and Inuit community. This is demonstrated by:

- Collaborating with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members in the development of the foundational, comprehensive Guiding Document and Family Guide in support of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit student achievement and high school completion.
- Collaborating with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members in the Kindergarten to Grade 3 Curriculum Development Prototyping project to support the Standards for Curriculum Development and the inclusion of diverse perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.
- Supporting District staff to engage with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members within school communities in support of Monthly Family Nights, National Aboriginal Day Celebrations, Annual Honouring Celebration, sharing of traditional teachings and providing support in cultural protocol and ceremony.

CURRENT SITUATION

Edmonton Public Schools has not established an Aboriginal Elders Advisory Council. There are a variety of ways that the Board of Trustees is informed of First Nations, Métis and Inuit supports in the District, including the work with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members. The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education department collaborates with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members to foster an inclusive and culturally

responsive environment that honours First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture and education. This is achieved by:

- Continuing to support the District in the cultivating and strengthening of relationships with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members at school events and celebrations.
- Developing a Protocol Document to support and guide District staff in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community protocols. This culturally responsive resource will assist District staff with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community protocols when requesting cultural assistance and/or participating in cultural activities.
- Continuing to strengthen relationships by annually attending the Alberta Native Friendship Centre's Elders' Wisdom Circle.
- Furthering collaboration with Elders/Knowledge Keepers, including those from the Canadian Native Friendship Centre, and the Edmonton Catholic School Board's Elders' Council to support teaching and learning.
- Supporting District staff to engage with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members within school communities, including culturally responsive practices and protocols.

KEY POINTS

- Edmonton Public Schools is committed to fostering ongoing relationships and working collaboratively with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members to build a culturally responsive environment that honours First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education and culture.
- The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education department engages with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members by fostering relationships through the Canadian Native Friendship Centre, Alberta Native Friendship Centre and Edmonton Catholic School Board.
- Collaboration with Elders/Knowledge Keepers and community members to support the development of culturally responsive resources and practices to support capacity building.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

N/A

MP:co