

DATE: April 11, 2017

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Update: Priority 2 Goal Three: Building Capacity Through a Culture of Collaboration and Distributed Leadership

ORIGINATOR: Angela Anderson, Managing Director Human Resources

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REFERENCE: N/A

ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on the District’s Strategic Plan for Priority 2 Goal Three: Building Capacity Through a Culture of Collaboration and Distributed Leadership (Attachment I). This report focuses on areas of success and areas for growth, and is part of Administration’s commitment to providing the Board of Trustees with ongoing updates on progress relative to the District Strategic Plan. This analysis is also helping to inform the District’s direction for the 2016–2017 operational year.

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 ten 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 in its 2014–2018 Strategic Plan, rather than reporting on Alberta Education’s Business Plan. This is foundational to creating clarity and congruence across the District relative to our local priorities.

CURRENT SITUATION

Each year, Alberta Education requires school jurisdictions to submit an Annual Education Results Report (AERR) and a Three-Year Education Plan (3YEP) by November 30. The AERR/3YEP reports the results from all 10 of the goals and outcomes in the District’s Strategic Plan 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 a new Assurance and Public Board Reporting Cycle in support of completing the AERR/3YEP. This cycle was developed to achieve the following outcomes:

- To establish a planning and reporting cycle that considers when local and provincial data is available for analysis and to inform timely decisions.
- To use evidence to inform programming decisions that promotes success for all students.
- To support a cycle of continuous improvement and reinforce how results and data drive District planning and reporting.
- To interpret and report on results in a manner that demonstrates assurance and transparency.

With these outcomes in mind, for the 2016–2017 school year, a high level overview and analysis of results for a District Strategic Plan goal and outcome will be presented at selected Board meetings. Not only will this reporting cycle support the completion of the AERR/3YEP, it will enable meaningful dialogue on results and strategies moving forward.

KEY POINTS

Attachment I provides an analysis of data highlighting areas of success and growth relevant to Priority 2, Goal 3 of the District Strategic Plan.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Strategic Plan Update: Priority 2 Goal 3—Building Capacity Through a Culture of Collaboration

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Strategic Plan Update: Building Capacity Through a Culture of Collaboration

INTRODUCTION

A collaborative approach to building capacity provides a foundation that supports achievement of the District Strategic Plan. Classrooms are becoming increasingly complex—building the literacy and numeracy skills required for the success of our students, supporting the range of needs in today’s classrooms, and developing solutions to the challenges and opportunities we face as an organization require the District to continue to build our capacity.

Access to professional development opportunities exposes District employees to new skills, knowledge, and competencies required to support professional growth and career development. By creating opportunities to share and apply learning and experience through collaborative work, the District is able to leverage the impact of professional development in our classrooms and on the success of students.

This goal also highlights a specific focus on building leadership capacity at all levels of the organization. It is through a distributed model of highly skilled leaders that the District will be able to develop and implement strategies that support all our students for success through early learning, high school completion and beyond.

Additionally, a focus on professional development and a culture of collaborative practice helps to position the District as an employer of choice, supporting our work to recruit and retain talent. Research has clearly shown access to professional development, perception of career opportunities and positive relationships and culture positively impacts employee recruitment, retention, and engagement.

This report provides an overview of the data and initiatives that support Priority 2 Goal 3, Building Capacity Through a Culture of Collaboration. The report begins by listing the Key Performance Indicators from the Annual Education Results Report (AERR), followed by highlighting key plans and initiatives that support analysis of the results, and concludes with priority strategies moving forward.

Priority 2:
Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.
Goal Three: Building Capacity Through a Culture of Collaboration and Distributed Leadership
Outcome: Throughout their careers, all staff are provided opportunities to enhance their professional capacity and leadership with a culture of collaboration.

Section One: Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Results (in percentages)					Evaluation
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Improvement
Percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies including fine arts, career, technology, and health and physical education. (Source: Accountability Pillar)	81.9	83.1	82.4	83.0	83.0	Maintained
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH						
Number of registrations in professional growth opportunities through the Leadership Development Framework. (Source: District Dashboard)		226	239	245	497	+
The percentage of teachers reporting that in the past 3-5 years the professional development and in-servicing received from the school authority has been focused, systematic, and contributed significantly to their ongoing professional growth. (Source: Accountability Pillar)	80.0	79.9	79.1	83.5	84.1	+
Thinking back over the past three years, to what extent do you agree or disagree that professional development opportunities made available through the jurisdiction have significantly contributed to your ongoing professional development (Source: Accountability Pillar)	77.0	76.0	76.0	80.0	80.0	=
Thinking back over the past three years, to what extent do you agree or disagree that professional development opportunities made available through the jurisdiction have been focused on the priorities of the jurisdiction (Source: Accountability Pillar)	86.0	87.0	85.0	90.0	92.0	+
Thinking back over the past three years, to what extent do you agree or disagree that professional development opportunities made available through the jurisdiction have effectively addressed your professional development needs (Source: Accountability Pillar)	77.0	77.0	76.0	80.0	80.0	=
Percentage of staff that report Edmonton Public schools supports employee professional development and growth. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 17a)				91.8		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report they are aware of career opportunities available to them within the District. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 17b)				92.9		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report they have opportunities to move to different roles in the District. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 17d)				76.1		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report school-based professional learning opportunities are effective in enhancing their professional growth. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 18a)				88.5		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report catchment level professional learning opportunities are effective in enhancing their professional growth. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 18b)				81.6		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report other District-wide professional learning opportunities are effective in enhancing their professional growth. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 18c)				87.2		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report out of District professional learning opportunities are effective in enhancing their professional growth. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 18d)				66.8		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report formalized coaching and mentoring that supports my professional growth are effective in enhancing their professional growth. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 18e)				71.3		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report they have the knowledge, skills, and resources to program and support students in need of specialized supports and services. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 25g)				78.5		Baseline

Percentage of staff that report they have the knowledge, skills, and resources to program for and support students who are English Language Learners (ELL). (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 26a)				67.3		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report they have the knowledge, skills, and resources to program for and support students who self-identify as Status Indian/First Nations, Non-Status Indian/First Nations, Métis or Inuit. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 26b)				68.0		Baseline
<u>DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP</u>						
Percentage of staff that report they have opportunities in their work to develop and demonstrate their leadership skills. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 17e)				87.6		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report the decisions made at their school/decision unit reflect collaboration. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 13b)				90.3		Baseline
<u>COLLABORATION</u>						
Percentage of staff that report staff in their school/decision unit work as a team. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 15b)				89.4		Baseline
Percentage of staff that report staff in their school/decision unit collaborates with other school/decision units. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 15c)				86.4		Baseline
Percentage of parents that report the decisions made at their child's school reflect collaboration. (Source: District Feedback Survey Q 12b)				77.7		Baseline

Notes:

1. Survey results for the province and some school authorities were impacted by changes in the number of students responding to the survey through the introduction of the Tell THEM From ME survey tool in 2014.
2. Data values have been suppressed where the number of respondents/students is fewer than 6. Suppression is marked with an asterisk (*).

Section Two: Analysis of Results and Supporting Initiatives

High quality teaching and learning environments are at the heart of student success. By preparing staff with quality professional development opportunities, leadership development, opportunities for collaboration and effective supports and services, the District strives to provide the high quality teaching and learning environments necessary for student success. The District continues to focus on providing professional development, collaboration and leadership development opportunities to all staff. An overview of each of these areas of focus is provided below.

Professional Development

The District recognizes that professional development for staff is a critical aspect in supporting successful outcomes for students, as well as for succession planning. Board Policy GE.BP - Organization for Instruction states that “effective teachers who have strong knowledge of pedagogy and subject content knowledge, make a significant difference to student learning and achievement”.

Best practice suggests that “one size does not fit all” with respect to professional development and integration of learning into our practice. Our leadership development framework introduces a learning model that recognizes the importance of formal learning, mentoring and coaching, peer-to-peer learning, and experiential learning as part of the development of new knowledge, skills and competencies. Our approach to learning in all areas of our work highlights the critical role of each of these learning methods. The District also has adopted a distributed approach to learning that relies on centrally supported, school, catchment and self-directed professional development as all having a role to play in building capacity.

According to the 2015 District Feedback Survey, 91.8 per cent of staff reported that the District supports employee professional development and growth. Furthermore, according to Alberta Education’s Accountability Pillar, 80 per cent of staff believe the professional development opportunities provided to them contributed to their professional growth. The District provides professional learning topics to staff across the District that align with both District priorities and staff professional needs. In fact, 92 percent

of staff felt that professional development opportunities available through the District are focused on the priorities of the District, an increase from 86 per cent in 2011–2012.

To gain further insight into the professional learning needs of staff, the District has conducted surveys with several of our staff groups. The results of these surveys have been used to inform the development of District professional learning activities. Professional development activities are delivered through District-wide professional development, catchment and school-based professional development, and communities of practice. Furthermore, in 2016, the District launched a range of summer institute learning opportunities.

The Professional Development Registration (PDR) system, which was implemented in the 2016-2017 school year, allows staff to search for and register in courses and sessions covering a range of topics that are offered by a number of central decision units. The District is able to more easily report on courses and sessions offered to District staff through central decision units. PDR also assists the District in meeting legislated and District defined requirements for certification, including Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and WHMIS. These certifications play an important part in contributing to the safety of staff and students and supporting the needs of complex students.

Central decision units offered a number of courses focused on a range of topics aligned with District Priorities and areas of need. Over the 2016–17 school year, 446 courses were offered on a variety of topics including student assessment, mental health, FMNI, District software, instructional strategies, literacy, and numeracy. Courses may include multiple sessions, resulting in the delivery of over 600 sessions.

District teachers have many opportunities to access professional learning within their schools and catchment areas. The courses and summer institutes offered by central decision units provide additional learning opportunities that complement school and catchment professional development. Many teachers also participate in a range of professional learning activities outside the District.

- In 2015–2016, 77 teachers were granted tuition and/or leave support through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program to pursue post-secondary coursework. In 2016–2017, 90 teachers were granted tuition and/or leave support and 99 teachers have been granted support for 2017–2018.
- Over the past few years, requests for support through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program have been primarily for masters programs related to counselling, leadership, literacy and special needs. The number of requests for support for counselling programs doubled from 8 to 16 from 2016–2017 to 2017–2018. As well, the number of requests for support for leadership programs increased from 16 to 39 between 2015–2016 and 2017–2018.
- In 2015–2016, 25 teachers were provided tuition support to participate in 39 courses through the Teacher Development Program. The courses were related to core subject areas, second languages, and District priorities (ELL, special needs, FNMI, CTS, literacy and numeracy).
- Since 2014, \$500,000 has been allocated annually to the ATA to support the Pilot Project on Staff Development Fund. Through this fund, District teachers have had the opportunity to access support for a broad range of professional learning activities. In 2014–2015, over 300 individual teachers and over 25 groups of teachers received support through this fund. In 2015–2016, over 510 individual teachers and over 100 groups of teachers received support. To date in 2016–2017, 387 individual teacher applications and 106 applications from groups of teachers have been approved for support.
- The common professional development days introduced in the Pilot Project on the Revised School Calendar have supported a more coordinated approach to professional development of teachers.

The 2015 District Feedback Survey results indicated that staff felt they required increased knowledge, skills and resources to support ELL, FNMI students and students in need of specialized supports. The District is also continuing to focus on literacy and numeracy as key contributors to student success. The summer institute learning opportunities and the variety of courses offered through the year build teacher capacity in these key areas to meet the instructional learning needs of all our students. Summer institutes, which were launched in the summer of 2016, provide focused opportunities for teachers to continue to build on ongoing professional learning in catchments and across schools. Areas of focus have been selected based on staff feedback on specific professional development topics that would help address the complex and diverse needs of our students. These sessions will be offered again in 2017 at no cost to teachers.

Furthermore, in 2015–2016, the District established the Teacher Collaboration Committee (TCC) to hear teacher voice on a variety of educational issues and initiatives. The information gathered from the TCC discussions is being used to identify and implement strategies that impact teaching and learning at a school and catchment level.

The District offers a Teacher Induction Program to teachers on probationary contracts. This program is a collaborative process that welcomes new teachers to the profession and/or Edmonton Public Schools. This mentorship program is a non-evaluative collaborative approach on developing identified areas for professional growth. Benefits of the program include working alongside an experienced teacher, building new skills and accelerated professional learning to provide optimal student learning opportunities, and an increased confidence and awareness through self reflection. Currently, 383 teachers are participating in this program.

The Exempt staff group consists of a variety of diverse roles, resulting in a range of professional development needs.

- In 2015–2016, six exempt staff members were granted tuition and/or leave support. Five were granted support in 2016–2017 and six have been granted support for 2017–2018. The support granted allowed Exempt staff to pursue post-secondary coursework in the areas of social work, leadership, occupational therapy and business administration.
- Exempt staff also participate in District professional development activities based on their role, as well as a variety of department organized and supported professional development.
- A number of exempt staff group members are active participants in the Leadership Development Framework.

District custodial staff are provided many opportunities for professional growth over the course of their career. New supply custodial staff attend a comprehensive two-day orientation followed by ten days of on-the-job experience in both a small and large school. Staff Development, Human Resources Consulting is currently working collaboratively with CUPE Local 474 to develop a training program specifically for head custodians. This program will support ongoing District need for trained head custodians and is scheduled for implementation in the 2017–18 school year.

- District custodial staff had opportunities to participate in 18 professional learning sessions in 2015–2016 and 20 to date in 2016–2017.
- In 2015–2016, 23 new custodians and relief custodians completed the Edmonton Public Schools' Building Operator Certificate course.
- In 2015–2016, 16 custodial staff members completed the Power Engineering Certificate course.
- Eighteen custodial staff completed the 5th Class Power Engineering Certificate Prep course in 2015–2016.
- Five custodial staff received financial support from the District to participate in 4th Class Power Engineering training at NAIT in 2015–2016 and five received support in 2016–2017.

- The District has two custodial mentor positions whose primary role is to provide mentorship and coaching support to head custodians who are new to their role and responsibilities.

District support staff are provided with a comprehensive orientation at the beginning of their career with Edmonton Public Schools. Supply support staff with office duties attend a one-day orientation, followed by opportunities to take District software training. Supply educational assistants participate in a five-day orientation which includes Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training.

- Depending on their professional learning needs and career path, support staff with office duties have opportunities to access up to twelve sessions of training on District software. In 2015–2016, 225 support staff participated in these sessions.
- Through the Administrative Assistant Training Program, both permanent and newly hired support staff have the opportunity to prepare for the role of lead administrative assistant in a school office. Program participants attend in-class training on District software and learn hands-on through a practicum placement in a school office under the guidance of an experienced administrative assistant. In 2015–2016, 16 support staff completed the Administrative Assistant Training Program. To date in 2016–2017, 22 support staff have participated in the program.
- The Administrative Assistant E Preparation Program is currently being piloted in 2016–2017 to assist support staff in preparing for intermediate positions in school offices. To date, six participants have participated in this program.
- Educational assistants are provided the opportunity to complete Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training and can access a number of sessions provided through central decision units. The District is currently exploring opportunities for an Educational Assistant Training Program to support ongoing needs for these roles.
- The District has two Administrative Assistant Mentors. These mentors support new and existing Administrative Assistants. In the 2015-16 school year, Administrative Assistant Mentors attended 479 job-embedded mentoring sessions and facilitated 20 one-day orientation sessions.
- The District also has two Educational Assistant Mentors. These individuals deliver NVCI training and provide job-embedded support to education assistants.

Maintenance staff encompass a diverse range of roles with Edmonton Public Schools. In addition to comprehensive health and safety training, maintenance staff participate in professional development and trade-specific training that is customized to their particular needs.

In summary, the District provided many opportunities through which staff were able to enhance their professional capacity, and will continue to expand upon its professional learning opportunities for all staff.

Collaboration

The District recognizes that a collaborative approach to our work is the way we create an environment that enhances student and staff success. Research clearly recognizes that a top down approach is not the way to create change. It also suggests that if we want to positively impact student achievement results, we need to adopt ways to engage all team members throughout the organization in understanding data, exploring solutions, and implementing change. Data that supports identification of gaps and opportunities, in conjunction with targeted collaboration, is the way we are working toward continuous improvement as a District.

The Teacher Collaboration Committee is one of the ways in which we gather data and information about topics important to teachers that will impact teaching and learning. Catchments have formed committees for collaborative work on issues important to improving teaching and learning in the catchment. This has resulted in a much more focused and evidence-based approach to continuous improvement.

The Equity Fund has provided funding for a variety of projects where a need was identified and catchments worked purposefully to identify ways to improve the issue. In the 2016–2017 school year, over 90 Equity Fund projects have been approved. These projects cover a range of topics, including literacy, numeracy, developing leaders, and supporting diversity in learning. Many of these projects have supported release time for teachers to collaborate.

We also have developed a number of committees with our staff groups to explore opportunities, discuss common interests and develop collaborative solutions. Joint Training and Advisory Committees provide input related to the professional learning needs of staff and work together in developing and refining programs. As an example, the Joint Custodial Training Advisory Committee is currently providing input into the design and structure of the Head Custodian Preparation Program referenced earlier in the report. Other committees with staff groups focus on working collaboratively on specific projects and initiatives. The Teacher Collaboration Committee explores opportunities to improve teaching and learning based on topics selected by teachers.

In addition, many other District committees have been developed to collaborate on key projects and initiatives. We also have implemented standing Principal committees that help to provide a school perspective to many Central projects.

Leadership Development

The District provides opportunities for staff to grow and thrive as leaders. The District has implemented a four quadrant leadership development framework as a way of developing leadership capacity. We have also developed seven leadership competencies and use the Principal Quality Practice Standard (PQPS) for Principals to define leadership expectations in the District. Leadership development opportunities are available across all staff groups.

The components of this model are as follows:

- **Social Competency Development: Mentoring and Coaching:** With ongoing mentoring and coaching, participants reflect on their practice and expand their leadership repertoire creating plans that are tailor-made to meet their unique needs. Often mentors assist participants with identifying where the focus should be placed and how to acquire competencies.
- **Social Contextual Learning: Peer to Peer:** A foundational expectation of the Framework is that participants will become consciously aware of their networks of support. Personal Learning Networks (PLN) are a way of making sense of new information and experiences, as well as sharing expertise and discoveries. They are highly personalized and self-directed.

- **Guided Competency Development: Formal Learning:** Formal learning for building leadership capacity primarily takes the form of modules. Modules are offered in half day, full day, online, and after school formats. Modules are aligned with the seven leadership development competencies. Formal learning may also include classes taken through other institutions or organizations.
- **Guided Contextual Learning: Experiential Learning:** Designed to capitalize on job-embedded and position-specific learning experiences, the Framework encourages participants to mine the rich opportunities for leadership growth that exist within the context of their current roles. Informed by feedback and reflection, participants become adept at leveraging daily duties into opportunities for leadership learning.

Since the fall of 2016, 573 emerging, aspiring and existing leaders have attended 30 modules in support of developing District leadership competencies. Participants in 2016–2017 indicated they were satisfied with the modules (94.0 per cent), and indicated they would recommend the modules to others (98.0 per cent). In support of building leadership capacity and growth through coaching and mentoring, 149 leaders participated in eight modules to enhance their skills and knowledge.

The District also hosts Leadership Saturday, a morning of leadership conversations, with the University of Alberta twice a year, in October and March. Leadership Saturday can accommodate 100 participants and is generally at capacity.

Due to the growth within the District and the demographics of our workforce, a need to build Principal capacity was identified. Three programs to support new-to-role principals were offered in the 2016–2017 year. The programs provide a District perspective that is focused on deepening skills and knowledge required to lead the school community, manage school operations and resources; instructional leadership; and knowledge of District services. Each program builds on the strengths of the individuals in the cohort. Through the cohort-based approach, participants build relationships that will support them through their career with the District.

- For the second consecutive year, the District continued to deliver a monthly program designed to build leadership capacity and operational management capacity for first and second year principals (35 principals participating—8 second year, 27 first year). In the 2016–2017 school year, 15 first and second year principals participated in leadership coaching.
- In the fall, we launched two cohorts in a new Aspiring Principal Development Program for 48 school and central leaders who meet monthly. Each aspiring principal is partnered with an experienced principal for a three day job shadow experience. Participants also are required to lead a project aligned with their school or catchment goals followed by a reflection of their leadership.
- As a result of the assignment of new school principals in February, a new Acting Principal and Acting for Principal Development Program has been put in place until the end of June to provide targeted just-in-time learning and mentoring opportunities with experienced principals.

These programs are in addition to the catchment and school-based leadership development opportunities and the processes to assess readiness for a principal role. Leadership development of school leaders, such as assistant principals and department heads, is also supported through assistant superintendent visits to schools. In these visits, assistant superintendents lead formal and targeted discussions to support building capacity at the school level. The principal also plays a vital role in building capacity within their school through supporting professional development, coaching, mentoring, and providing opportunities for involvement in school projects and initiatives. For high potential principal candidates, acting assignments also provide opportunities for experiential learning.

Work is underway to continue to integrate all these processes that support development of principals.

SECTION THREE: PRIORITY STRATEGIES MOVING FORWARD

The following strategies will be implemented in continued support of Priority 2 Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan.

- Explore ways to increase alignment and integration among school, catchment and central professional development opportunities. Support school and catchment professional learning by collaborating with central decision units around the facilitation and delivery of professional learning topics.
- Continue to support summer institutes, as well as the variety of professional development and collaboration opportunities as ways of building capacity.
- Continue the development and implementation of the Principal Readiness Framework to support building principal capacity.
- Only 66.8 per cent of staff who completed the District survey reported that out-of-District professional learning opportunities are effective in enhancing their professional growth. We need to better understand how to best interpret this data to provide access to relevant and meaningful out-of-District professional learning.
- Continue to build leadership development opportunities for emerging leaders as a way of continuing our focus on distributed leadership.
- Educational Assistants are an area of District need. Work is underway to create an Educational Assistant Training Program that can be introduced in the summer/fall of 2017.

SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSION

This report has highlighted a number of ways we are working toward Priority 2 Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan through collaboration, professional development and building leadership capacity. This is shared work that involves all areas within the District. By embracing the fundamental principles underlying this goal we can achieve continuous improvement and increase student success.