

DATE: June 20, 2017

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Michelle Draper

SUBJECT: Motion re Lowering the Voting Age in Alberta

REFERENCE: [Trustees' Handbook – Section 5.2.2 – Notices of Motion](#)
[Edmonton Councillors Endorse Lobby Effort to Lower Voting Age to 16](#)
[Research behind Edmonton's Debate on Voting at 16](#)

ISSUE

Notice of motion was served at the June 6, 2017, Board meeting.

BACKGROUND

- Lowering the voting age requires the provincial government to amend the *Local Authorities Election Act*.
- Reducing the voting age would give youth a voice in issues that affect them and foster a greater sense of engagement. Research supports the argument that giving the vote to students while they are still in high school could increase citizen engagement and voter turnout.
- Voting in your first election means you are more likely to vote for the rest of your life. Sixteen-year-olds voted in Scotland for the first time in 2014. The change in Austria came in 2007. Ecuador dropped its voting age a year later and Argentina dropped it to 16 in 2012. Several German states have lowered the voting age, as well as parts of Switzerland, the United States and Norway. Edmonton's City Council endorsed the Youth Council's lobbying efforts to lower the voting age (August 2016)
- The Edmonton Catholic School Board agreed to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs to amend the *Local Authorities Election Act* to allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in municipal elections (January 2017).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Trustees write a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs advocating for a lowering of the municipal voting age from 18 to 16 years of age.

NEXT STEPS

A letter will be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs advocating for a lowering of the municipal voting age from 18 to 16.

MD:md