

DATE: June 20, 2017

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Ken Gibson, Policy Review Committee
Trustee Cheryl Johner, Policy Review Committee
Trustee Bridget Stirling, Chair, Policy Review Committee

SUBJECT: Second and Third and Final Reading of Board Policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director Board and Superintendent Relations

RESOURCE

STAFF: Marnie Beaudoin, Nancy Petersen

REFERENCE: [ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag Trustees' Handbook](#) Section 6.1 – Caucus Committee
Board Policy CH.BP – Framework for Policy Development and Review

ISSUE

The Policy Review Committee is presenting ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag for second and third and final reading.

BACKGROUND

The Policy Review Committee reviewed ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag to ensure the policy is current. The draft policy was brought forward to Board for first reading at the April 25, 2017 public Board meeting and then posted for stakeholder feedback. The Policy Review Committee gave consideration to stakeholder feedback to inform the draft policy coming forward for second and third reading.

RELATED FACTS

- Revisions to ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag include:
 - ensuring accuracy of *School Act* references
 - adjusting language use to reflect the Board's vision and intent
 - additions of three sections: Purpose, Definitions and Accountability, to align with the current District board policy template
- District General Counsel has reviewed ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag
- After ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag was read for the first time at the April 25, 2017 public Board meeting, the District invited stakeholders to provide feedback to the policy through an online survey. The survey was open from April 25 to May 26, 2017. The District received 740 responses from the following groups:
 - staff members (298)
 - parents (304)
 - principal/decision unit administrators (59)
 - students (70)
 - community members (6)
 - community organizations (2)
 - professional organizations (1)

- When reviewing specific sections of ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag, the majority of stakeholders surveyed indicated they did not have concerns with the Purpose statement (94.1%), Policy section (94.8%), Expectations (86.9%), or Accountability statement (94.3%).
- Several stakeholders provided written feedback responses to ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag. Themes that emerged from written stakeholder feedback included:
 - significantly high level of support for the singing of the Canadian national anthem and displaying of the National Flag of Canada
 - encouragement for District students to display respect for the national anthem and flag
 - questions and value statements about the singing of the Canadian national anthem in a multicultural nation
 - requests for more clarification regarding the meaning of “regular” singing of the national anthem along with requests for appropriate protocols
 - encouragement to the District to ensure flags that are flown at schools are in good condition
- Based on this feedback, the following revisions have been made to the draft ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag that was approved for first reading:
 - The Purpose statement now references the *School Act*, as the Board has a responsibility under the *School Act* to ensure the Canadian flag is displayed at schools, and may prescribe patriotic exercises (such as the singing of the Canadian national anthem) for students.
 - The Expectations section provides a clarification of the term “regular” through the provision of an explanation of the District’s approach to site-based decision-making.
 - Two specific examples have also been added to the Expectations section to provide further clarity around the term “regular”.
 - CO.BP Fiscal Oversight and Accountability has been added to References, as this policy contains a definition of site-based decision-making.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Board policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag be read for the second time.
2. That Board policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag be read for the third and final time and approved.

OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. Approve the policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag.
2. Decline to approve the policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag and provide feedback and/or request changes.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

- The current policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag requires revisions to align it with the District policy template.
- The scheduled review year for policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag is 2017.

NEXT STEPS

Once approved, Board policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag will be posted on the District website and communicated to schools.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Draft Board Policy ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag

MB:mb

CODE: ACB.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (00-00-0000)**TOPIC:** National Anthem and Flag**ISSUE DATE:** (00-00-0000)**REVIEW YEAR:** (0000)**PURPOSE**

To reflect the Board of Trustees' (the Board) responsibility under the *School Act* to support the use of the Canadian national anthem and Canadian flag in Edmonton Public Schools.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

POLICY

The Board believes that the Canadian flag and Canadian national anthem are powerful symbols of our Canadian identity as a multicultural and democratic nation.

The Board believes that demonstrations of Canadian identity contribute to a climate of mutual respect and trust conducive to student learning, personal development, social living and citizenship within a Canadian context.

EXPECTATIONS

All Edmonton Public Schools will display the Canadian flag and are expected to play or conduct regular singing of the national anthem. Each school will determine the manner most appropriate for their school community to conduct singing of the national anthem, within the parameters provided by site-based decision making (for example: how often to sing the national anthem, and whether or not to sing the anthem bilingually).

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Superintendent will ensure appropriate protocols related to the use of the national anthem and Canadian flag are communicated to District staff.

REFERENCES

CO.BP - Fiscal Oversight and Accountability

FA.BP - Human Resources Framework

FBCA.AR - Respectful Working Environments

GGAB.BP - Multicultural Education

GNDB.AR - Flying and Displaying Flags in Schools

School Act Sections 26 and 50.1(d)