

**DATE:** March 21, 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, Third and Final Reading of Policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments

**ORIGINATOR:** Karen Mills, Director Board and Superintendent Relations

**RESOURCE**

**STAFF:** Marnie Beaudoin, Nancy Petersen

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

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## ISSUE

The Policy Review Committee has developed a new policy, AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments, to be given second, third and final reading by the Board of Trustees at the March 21, 2017 public Board meeting.

## BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2016, the Policy Review Committee initiated work to develop a new policy, AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments. The development of this policy was initiated to ensure alignment of board policies with the *School Act*. The Board gave first consideration to AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments at the January 31, 2017 public Board meeting. An online survey was posted to the District website to obtain stakeholder feedback on AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments. The survey remained open until February 24, 2017.

## RELATED FACTS

- Policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments serves as a parent policy to a set of policies related to learning and working environments; it does not replace any of the policies. This set of policies align to the requirements of the *School Act*, reflect the diversity our student and staff populations and are intended to foster a sense of belonging, safety and wellness for all students and staff. The work to complete Policy AE.BP and initiate the required revisions to all related policies is scheduled in the Annual Policy Review Work Plan 2016—2017. This policy is intended to be implemented through the policies and administrative regulations that relate to and support it.
- Stakeholder feedback to the first draft of AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments resulted in minor edits, specifically to the Accountability section of the policy.
- Policies included in the Annual Policy Review Work Plan 2016—2017 that relate to the new parent policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments include:

- AA.BP Stakeholder Relations
- ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag
- AD.BP District Vision, Mission, Values, and Priorities
- AEBB.BP Wellness of Students and Staff
- AGA.BP Recognition of Students, Staff, Parents, and the Community
- FA.BP Human Resources Framework
- FGB.BP Evaluation of Superintendent of Schools
- GGAB.BP Multicultural Education
- HA.BP Inclusive Education
- HAA.BP Aboriginal Education
- HFA.BP Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct
- HGD.BP Student Suspension and Expulsion
- Eight of the policies relating to policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments will require minor revisions to ensure alignment to the *School Act*, consistency with language in the draft parent policy, and alignment to the current Board policy template. These minor revisions will not alter the intention or direction of these policies. To ensure public assurance and transparency, the eight policies requiring minor revisions will be presented for approval at a public board meeting within one information report. These policies are listed in Attachment II.
- The six remaining policies relating to policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments will be revised or reviewed using standard District process to approve board policies, including seeking stakeholder input and feedback. These six policies are listed in Attachment II.
- There are several definitions within the set of policies related to policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments. For congruence and clarity, these definitions have been aggregated into a Glossary of Terms. The Glossary of Terms will be posted separately from board policies, and therefore can be updated as terminology evolves, rather than be restricted to board policy revision dates. The Glossary of Terms is found in Attachment III.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. **That Board policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments be considered for the second time.**
2. **That Board policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments be considered for the third time and approved.**
3. **That the eight identified policies relating to AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments requiring minor revisions be revised to ensure alignment with the School Act and consistency with the language of AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments.**

## OPTIONS

1. Approve draft Board policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments as written.
2. Request the Policy Review Committee consider changes to the draft AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments and bring it back to Board for approval.

## CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

- All feedback received through the online survey was considered by the Policy Review Committee.

There were 74 stakeholder responses to the survey on draft Board policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environment. A total of 56 respondents completed the survey. These responses were comprised of the following self-identified groups: 61 Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) staff members, 10 EPSB parents, two community members, and one community organization. Respondents were invited to offer feedback on all sections of the draft policy. A minority of respondents offered written feedback pertaining to the following areas:

- Seven per cent of respondents provided feedback on the Purpose section of the draft policy. The feedback focused on the implementation of the policy.
- Fourteen per cent of respondents provided feedback on the Definitions section of the draft policy. The majority of feedback was positive. There were comments indicating a need to coordinate definitions across policies, and to provide as much clarity as possible in definitions.
- 23 per cent of respondents provided feedback to the Policy section of the draft policy. Two themes that emerged from these comments include the challenge of implementing a policy of this nature and the importance of continuing to provide professional support to staff to ensure welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environments.
- 24 per cent of respondents provided feedback to the Accountability section of the draft policy. Comments on this section included questions about the metrics to be used to measure successful implementation of the policy, and recommendations to provide more detail in this section.
- Additional feedback included questions about the complexities related to the implementation and measurement of the policy.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

1. Once approved, policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments will be implemented through the existing policies and administrative regulations related to this policy.
2. A review process for the set of policies related to AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments will commence.

#### **ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I	Policy AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments
ATTACHMENT II	Annual Policy Development and Review Work Plan 2016-2017
ATTACHMENT III	Glossary of Terms

MB:mb

**CODE:** AE.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (dd-mm-yyyy)**TOPIC:** Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments**ISSUE DATE:** (dd-mm-yyyy)**REVIEW YEAR:** (yyyy)**PURPOSE**

To reflect the Board of Trustees' (the Board) mandated responsibility and expectation for providing a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environment throughout the District.

AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments serves as a foundation policy to setting overarching, high level direction to a set of comprehensive policies. The policies supported by AE.BP are listed in the References section.

**DEFINITIONS**

A comprehensive list of terms and definitions for all policies supporting AE.BP can be found in a glossary, accessible in the References section.

**POLICY**

A positive learning environment is foundational for all students to experience success. The Board is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environment that respects diversity, fosters a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self. Each student and staff member in the District has the right to learn and work in an environment that promotes equality of opportunity, dignity, respect and recognition of diversity.

Such an environment creates conditions where students and staff can thrive. The Board is committed to providing an environment that supports the positive mental health of students and staff and reflects emerging research related to trauma sensitivity and strength-based approaches, and applies restorative principles.

The Board is further committed to providing an environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination and violence. It is the collective responsibility of all those involved with the District, including trustees, employees, students, parents, volunteers, contractors and visitors, to create and maintain positive cultures within our schools and other educational settings.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Administration will use relevant data and metrics to inform the Board about the effectiveness of the direction established by AE.BP through reporting and accountability related to the theme of welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environments.

**REFERENCES**

AA.BP – Stakeholder Relations

ACB.BP – National Anthem and Flag

AD.BP – District Vision, Mission, Values, and Priorities

AE.AR - Basic Beliefs, Commitments, and Expectations  
AE.BB.BP – Wellness of Students and Staff  
AGA.BP – Recognition of Students, Staff, Parents, and the Community  
FA.BP – Human Resources Framework  
FGB.BP – Evaluation of Superintendent of Schools  
GGAB.BP – Multicultural Education  
HA.BP – Inclusive Education  
HAA.BP – Aboriginal Education  
HFA.BP – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity  
HG.BP – Student Behaviour and Conduct  
HGD.BP – Student Suspension and Expulsion  
Glossary of Terms  
*School Act* Section 45.1(1)

### Annual Policy Development and Review Work Plan 2016-2017

<b>Overarching Theme: Safe and Caring Learning Environments</b>		
<b>Policies to be reviewed under draft “parent policy” AE.BP</b>	<b>District Priority</b>	<b>Review year</b>
AA.BP Stakeholder Relations	Priority 3	2022
AD.BP District Vision, Mission, Values, and Priorities	Priority 1	2018
AEBB.BP Wellness of Students and Staff	Priority 2	2021
AGA.BP Recognition of Students, Staff, Parents, and the Community	Priority 2	2019
FA.BP Human Resources Framework	Priority 2	2022
FGB.BP Evaluation of Superintendent of Schools	Priority 2	2023
HA.BP Inclusive Education	Priority 1	2019
HFA.BP Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	Priority 1	2018
<b>Policies to be revised using standard District process</b>		
ACB.BP National Anthem and Flag	Priority 2	2017
AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments*	Priority 2	TBD
GGAB.BP Multicultural Education	Priority 1	2016
HAA.BP Aboriginal Education	Priority 1	2014
HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct	Priority 1	2013
HGD.BP Student Suspension and Expulsion	Priority 1	2020

\* overarching new draft policy - currently in development

<b>Overarching Theme: District Operations</b>		
<b>Policies to be reviewed using standard District process</b>	<b>District Priority</b>	<b>Review year</b>
IJA.BP Electioneering and Politically Motivated Communications	Priority 2	2014
FBD.BP Vacations and Holidays	Priority 2	2016

This glossary of terms provides definitions for terms found in board policies related to *AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments*. These definitions will be updated as appropriate.

DEFINITIONS	SOURCE
<b>Aboriginal</b> is defined as First Nation, Non-Status, Métis, Inuit, who are descendants of the original inhabitants of Canada.	HAA.BP
<b>Aboriginal community</b> refers to Elders, families, parents/guardians, children and other representatives of the Aboriginal children who attend Edmonton Public Schools.	HAA.BP
<b>Bullying</b> is repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation.	<i>School Act</i>
<p><b>Comprehensive School Health (CSH)</b> 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social and Physical Environments</b> 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.</li> <li>• <b>Teaching and Learning</b> includes resources, activities and curriculum where students gain skills and knowledge related to health and wellness.</li> <li>• <b>Healthy School Policy</b> includes management practices, decision-making processes, policies and procedures that promote and support health and wellness.</li> <li>• <b>Partnerships and Services</b> include connections between schools, families, community organizations, the health sector and other sectors that support student health.</li> </ul>	AE.BB.BP
<b>Conflict of Interest</b> refers to a situation in which private interests or personal considerations can or may appear to affect a staff member's judgment in acting in the best interest of the District. It includes using a staff member's position, confidential information or corporate time, material or facilities for private gain or advancement. A conflict occurs when a situation benefits or appears to benefit any staff member or their family, friends or business associates.	FA.BP
<p><b>Discrimination</b> means refusing to provide an opportunity or benefit with respect to access to any term or condition of employment because of race, religious beliefs, gender, physical disability, sexual orientation, mental disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, or source of income.</p> <p>The behaviour giving rise to a complaint of discrimination need not be intentional in order to be considered discrimination.</p> <p>With reference to employment, the above does not apply to a refusal, limitation, specification or preference based on a bona fide occupation requirement.</p>	FBCA.AR
The <b>District</b> is Edmonton Public Schools, which includes the Board of Trustees, central service departments and all schools.	AA.BP
<b>District Priorities</b> are long-range desired results of the organization established by the Board based on the District Vision, Mission and Values. District Priorities are reviewed in consultation with stakeholders every four years following the election of the Board.	FGB.BP
<p><b>Expulsion</b> is the term used to describe an action by the Board of Trustees or its delegate, in accordance with the <i>School Act</i> s. 25, which for a period of more than 10 days, denies a student access to one or more of the following:</p> <p>a. course(s);</p>	HGD.BP

DEFINITIONS	SOURCE
b. one or more schools; or c. riding in a school bus.	
<p><b>Harassment</b> occurs when an individual is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct because of race, religious beliefs, gender, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, age, ancestry, colour, place of origin, or sexual orientation.</p> <p>Examples of harassment which will not be tolerated in Edmonton Public Schools include: verbal or physical abuse, threats, derogatory remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunts which allude to any of the above categories. Edmonton Public Schools also will not tolerate the display of pornographic, racist or offensive signs or images, practical jokes that result in awkwardness or embarrassment, whether indirect or explicit.</p>	FBCA.AR
<p><b>Human Resource Strategy</b> is designed to build and develop the skills, attitudes, and behaviours among staff that will help the District meet its goals in a manner aligned with its values. It covers the various areas of human resource functions such as recruitment, compensation, performance management, reward and recognition, employee relations, training, and information management.</p>	FA.BP
<p><b>Internal Controls</b> are the checks and balances established by the District to provide reasonable assurance about the achievement of objectives for reliability of human resource reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations, safeguarding of information, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.</p>	FA.BP
<p>A <b>Mission</b> declares the practical commitments and actions that the District believes are needed to achieve its vision.</p>	AD.BP
<p><b>Organizational Capability</b> is the ability and capacity of the District expressed in terms of culture, system, processes, and resources that support our collective efforts to foster student growth and success.</p>	FA.BP
<p><b>Priorities</b> are broad statements that describe long-range desired results based on the District Vision, Mission and Values.</p>	AD.BP
<p><b>Procedural Fairness</b> is a common law doctrine that requires: a person exercising statutory power to give some form of notice of a pending decision to a person (parent/guardian and student); an opportunity for that person to comment and or be represented; and the requirement that the official making the decision be unbiased.</p>	HGD.BP
<p><b>Restorative principles</b> are the foundational beliefs which drive restorative approaches and practices. Restorative principles include a focus on relationships, responsibility, accountability, engagement and voice. When embedded into a school's culture, the result is a more supportive learning environment where both students and staff thrive.</p>	AE.BP
<p><b>Stakeholders</b> are people who contribute to, and have an interest in public education and supporting student achievement and well-being within the District. The <i>Education Act</i> uses the phrase “partner(s) in education” to describe stakeholders. Stakeholders include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students, parents and/or guardians, and staff;</li> <li>• all members of the Edmonton community including citizens, businesses, agencies, not-for-profit organizations and service groups;</li> <li>• other school boards and educational institutions; and</li> <li>• municipal, provincial, federal and international levels of government.</li> </ul>	AA.BP
<p><b>Stakeholder Relations</b> is how the District relates to, and interacts with, our stakeholders. The District’s approach to stakeholder relations focuses on best practices in communications, engagement and collaboration to support meaningful stakeholder participation, as well as strategic and mutually beneficial relationships between the District and its stakeholders. The District relies on recognized standards for public participation practice, such as the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum for Public Participation. It provides a framework for increasing levels of public engagement depending on the purpose of stakeholder participation and degree of impact a decision or initiative may have on stakeholders. The levels of engagement from IAP2 are: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.</p>	AA.BP

DEFINITIONS	SOURCE
<p><b>Stakeholder Relationships</b> are defined by the manner or role in which stakeholders engage with the District. There are different expectations and parameters for interactions with a student, parent, staff member, community connection, donor, funder, partner, sponsor, school council, tenant, vendor or volunteer. However, all stakeholder relationships require varying degrees of support and communication, and a common understanding of each party's role and responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>community connection</b> is an individual, business or organization in the community that has an informal relationship with a school, for example the owner of the local convenience store and the principal connect each August to establish communication and support around students patronizing the store; or the seniors centre that invites the school choir to perform for residents on special occasions.</li> <li>• A <b>donor</b> is an individual, organization or business that voluntarily transfers property, monies, goods, or services to the District for charitable reasons and may be eligible for a district charitable donation receipt under Canada Revenue Agency regulations.</li> <li>• A <b>funder</b> is an individual, organization, business or government that grants money to the District for a specified purpose and in exchange the District accepts accountability to the funder for performance in relation to the purpose being funded.</li> <li>• A <b>parent</b> (or guardian), is an individual who under the <i>Education Act</i> has the right to be involved in their child's education and specific responsibilities to support their child's educational success.</li> <li>• A <b>partner</b> is an individual or organization that is a party to a formal partnership with the District. A partnership is one of the most complex relationships founded upon shared values and co-created objectives and expectations. Roles, responsibilities and commitments of each partner are clearly articulated and formalized with a written memorandum of understanding and binding agreement. Partnership Agreements impose obligations on all parties to the agreement.</li> <li>• A <b>school council</b> is a council, established pursuant to the <i>Education Act</i>, for which the majority of its members are parents of students who are enrolled in the school. The Board recognizes a school council as the official school-community organization representing the collective interests of the parents and students of the school.</li> <li>• A <b>staff member</b> is any individual who is employed by the District.</li> <li>• A <b>student</b> is an individual who is enrolled in a school.</li> <li>• A <b>sponsor</b> is an individual, organization or business that agrees to provide goods, services or money to the District in exchange for a defined level of public recognition or advertisement.</li> <li>• A <b>tenant</b> is an individual or group that enters into an agreement with the District, as landlord, for the use of school space under certain conditions and for a specified period of time.</li> <li>• A <b>vendor</b> is an individual or business that provides a service or product to the District in exchange for a fee thereby entering into a purchasing contract.</li> <li>• A <b>volunteer</b> is a member of the community who, without compensation, commits to assist the District or a school with a designated task under the direction and supervision of a district staff member.</li> </ul>	AA.BP
<p>District Priorities inform the development of the <b>Strategic Plan</b> which includes strategies, goals and measurable outcomes for addressing each priority. The Strategic Plan is implemented in annual planning cycles and serves to guide and inform the respective work of the Board, the Superintendent and staff in their collective efforts to achieving the District Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities.</p>	FGB.BP
<p><b>Strength-based approaches</b> emphasize an individual's existing strengths, capabilities and resources.</p>	AE.BP

DEFINITIONS	SOURCE
The foundation to strength-based approaches is the belief that all individuals have strengths, resources and the ability to recover from adversity.	
<p><b>Suspension</b> is the term used to describe an action by a principal or teacher authorized under the <i>School Act</i> s. 24 which temporarily denies a student access to one or more of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one or more class periods;</li> <li>one or more courses;</li> <li>school; or</li> <li>riding in a school bus.</li> </ol> <p>Note: Although a suspension cannot be appealed, a principal can reinstate a student who has been suspended.</p>	HGD.BP
<b>Trauma sensitivity</b> includes understanding of how trauma affects behaviour and emotions and selecting strategies that show empathy and help to create an environment where individuals can learn positive ways of handling emotions and relating to others.	AE.BP
A <b>Vision</b> is the ideal future state or conditions that the District aspires to change or create.	AD.BP
<b>Values</b> are what anchor the District and are foundational; they are not just a way of doing, but a way of being.	AD.BP
<b>Violence</b> the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes, or is likely to cause, physical injury.	
<b>Wellness</b> 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.	AE.BB.BP FA.BP
<p>The Alberta Education's <i>Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education, 2009</i>, defines the five dimensions of wellness as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emotional wellness</b> is acknowledging, understanding, managing and expressing thoughts and feelings in a constructive manner.</li> <li>• <b>Intellectual wellness</b> is the development and the critical and creative use of the mind to its fullest potential.</li> <li>• <b>Physical wellness</b> 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.</li> <li>• <b>Social wellness</b> 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.</li> <li>• <b>Spiritual wellness</b> is an understanding of one's own values and beliefs leading to a sense of meaning or purpose and a relationship to the community.</li> </ul>	