

DATE: May 9, 2017

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Update: Priority 2 Goal One—A Focus on Well-being and Student Citizenship

ORIGINATOR: Nancy Petersen, Acting Executive Director Governance, Strategic Services and Supports for Schools

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ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update of the District’s Strategic Plan for Priority 2 Goal One—A Focus on Well-being and Student Citizenship. The 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 will also help to inform the District’s direction.

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 supporting goals and outcomes. The plan serves to provide common direction and alignment between the work of the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent of Schools, 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 on the 2014–2018 Strategic Plan, which reflects provincial educational priorities while being responsive to 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 on results 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 an Assurance and Public Board Reporting Cycle in support of completing the AERR/3YEP. This cycle was developed to achieve the following outcomes:

- establish a planning and reporting cycle that considers when local and provincial data is available for analysis and to inform timely decisions
- use evidence to inform programming decisions that promote success for all students

- to support a cycle of continuous improvement and reinforce how results and data drive District planning and reporting
- interpret and report on results in a manner that demonstrates assurance and transparency

With these outcomes in mind, for the 2016–2017 school year, at each public Board meeting, a high level overview and an analysis of results for a District Strategic Plan goal and outcome will be presented. 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 and an update of the District’s Strategic Plan for Priority 2, Goal One—A Focus on Well-being and Student Citizenship

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Priority 2, Goal One—A Focus on Well-being and Student Citizenship

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Strategic Plan Update—A Focus on Well-Being and Student Citizenship

Introduction

A positive learning environment is foundational for all students to experience success. A welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environment that respects diversity, fosters a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self creates conditions where students and staff can thrive. With Board Policy AE.BP—Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments as the foundation, the District aims to provide classroom and school environments that give students a sense of safety and acceptance where they can be successful in their educational journey. Through their journey, students are also preparing for their futures in post-secondary studies or the world of work, and are becoming active members of society with a strong sense of citizenship and social responsibility.

Edmonton Public Schools has identified “A focus on well-being and student citizenship” as a goal in the District Strategic Plan. The targeted outcome for the goal is “Our learning and working environments are welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy.”

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on the progress the District is making in creating welcoming, inclusive, safe, and healthy learning environments for all students we serve. The first section of this report highlights the results of the Key Performance Indicator data. The second section provides an analysis of the results of the Key Performance Indicators. The third section identifies strategies implemented in the 2015–2016 school year that may account for growth. Additionally, section four highlights priority strategies that are in place moving forward to address potential areas for improvement.

The report includes data from both the 2015 District Feedback Survey and Alberta Education’s Accountability Pillar. As part of the Accountability Pillar, every year between January and March, Alberta Education surveys all teachers, students in Grades 4, 7 and 10, and their parents, to capture perceptions about quality of education that students are receiving. One key measure category in the Accountability Pillar Survey is whether school environments are perceived as safe and caring. The survey included five questions to measure the percentage of teachers, parents and students who agree that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school. More specifically, teachers, parents and students were asked whether: students feel safe at school; students feel safe on the way to and from school; students treat each other well at school; teachers care about their students; and whether students are treated fairly by adults at school.

Priority 2:

Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.

Goal One: A Focus on Well-being and Student Citizenship

Outcome: Our learning and working environments are welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy

Section One: Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators¹

Key Performance Indicator	Results (in percentages)					Evaluation
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Improvement
WELL BEING						
Percentage of teacher, parent and student agreement that: students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school. (Source: Accountability Pillar) n=27,937	88.5	89.3	88.7	90.0	89.5	Maintained**
CITIZENSHIP/ LEADERSHIP						
Percentage of teachers, parents and students that are satisfied that students model active citizenship. (Source: Accountability Pillar) n=27,962	83.2	84.4	83.6	85.3	84.9	Improved**
Your child is encouraged at school to be involved in activities that help the community (Source: Accountability Pillar, Parent Survey) n=3,744	76.0	77.0	78.0	79.0	79.0	=
Students are encouraged at your school to be involved in activities that help the community (Source: Accountability Pillar, Teacher Survey) n=3,936	89.0	89.0	90.0	91.0	92.0	+
Percentage of staff, students, and parents that report that Edmonton Public Schools provides learning environments that promote student citizenship and leadership. (Source: District Feedback Survey roll up Q 7f, 21e, 21h, 25d, 9d) n=55,609				88.7		Baseline
WELCOMING						
Percentage of students, parents, and community and partners that report that Edmonton Public Schools provides learning and working environments that are welcoming. (Source: District Feedback Survey roll up Q 3e, 11c, 4, 8c, 26d) n=51,395				85.4		Baseline
Students at your child's school respect each other (Source: Accountability Pillar, Parent Survey) n=3,737	76.0	80.0	81.0	81.0	81.0	=
Students at your school respect each other (Source: Accountability Pillar, Teacher Survey) n=3,966	93.0	93.0	93.0	94.0	94.0	=

** Alberta Education determines improvement evaluation by comparing the current year result with the previous three-year average.

Key Performance Indicator	Results (in percentages)					Evaluation
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Improvement
INCLUSIVE						
Percentage of staff, students, parents, and community that report that Edmonton Public Schools provides learning and working environments that are inclusive. (Source: District Feedback Survey roll up Q 3c, 3d, 13e, 13f, 7c, 7d, 9a, 13a, 15d, 8e, 26e) n=57,013				86.9		Baseline
Students at your child's school help each other when they can (Source: Accountability Pillar, Parent Survey) n=3,757	76.0	79.0	78.0	79.0	79.0	=
Students at your school help each other when they can (Source: Accountability Pillar, Teacher Survey) n=3,962	95.0	96.0	96.0	96.0	97.0	+
SAFE						
Percentage of teacher, parent and student agreement that: students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school (Source: Accountability Pillar) n=27,937	88.5	89.3	88.7	90.0	89.5	-
Percentage of staff, students, parents, and community and partners that report that Edmonton Public Schools provides learning and working environments that are safe. (Source: District Feedback Survey roll up Q 13a, 13b, 13c, 13d, 15, 12a, 12b, 12c, 12d, 15, 25e, 9e, 26b) n=57,013				89.1		Baseline
HEALTHY						
Percentage of staff and students that report that Edmonton Public Schools provides learning and working environments that are healthy. (Source: District Feedback Survey roll up Q 7c, 7d, 9e, 11b, 11c, 20b, 21c, 21d, 16c) n=53,665				84.7		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

The District wants every student to grow, thrive and experience success throughout their learning journey. Consequently, the District supports student growth and development academically, socially and emotionally by fostering the conditions that will enable all students to experience learning in a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy school environment. This environment allows students to focus on their learning, prepares them for their future in post-secondary studies and/or the world of work and helps them gain a strong sense of citizenship and social responsibility.

District students represent a diverse range of beliefs, backgrounds, cultures and circumstances. As a result, the District endeavours to have classroom and school environments that foster a sense of belonging, acceptance and safety, all of which help children learn. One key measures

category in the Accountability Pillar Survey is whether school environments are perceived as safe and caring. Overall, 89.5 per cent of teachers, parents and students who completed the Accountability Pillar Survey indicated they agreed students are safe at school; learning the importance of caring for others; learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school. The District results are consistent with provincial results. While there was some variance between stakeholder groups, all responses reflected high levels of agreement among teachers (95.1 per cent), parents (89.3 per cent) and students (84.2 per cent).

Section Three: 2015-2016 Targeted Supports

The District pursued several initiatives in 2015–2016 to promote welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environments. These initiatives included activities that built upon existing District protocols and processes, enhanced staff capacity, and supported students in their own growth and awareness of personal well-being. This work was accomplished through the efforts of central supports, school-based initiatives, and in collaboration with various community partners whose mandate is focused on health and well-being.

The District recognizes that, through the school community, students have many opportunities to demonstrate citizenship and pursue activities that promote social responsibility. The percentage of parents, teachers and students who are “satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship” continues to remain stable, with a slight dip in 2016, but showing an overall increase over the past five years at both the District and the province.

Every school in our District and every Central Services Department play a role in the critical work of providing and promoting welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and working environments.

There are virtually thousands of stories in Edmonton Public Schools worth sharing, about how, through school-based initiatives and activities, our students, staff and parents strive daily to meet this outcome.

To support school and District leaders in their work to focus on well-being and student citizenship, the District promotes the Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach in schools. CSH is an internationally recognized approach to supporting improvements in students’ educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way. It is a whole-school model that builds capacity to integrate well-being as an essential aspect of student achievement. Its four interrelated components serve as foundational supports for action. They are:

- Social and physical environments
- Teaching and learning
- Healthy school policy
- Partnerships and services

We know that healthy students learn better and achieve more, and that schools play a key role in directly influencing students’ health and behaviours. A CSH model provides an opportunity to be intentional about encouraging healthy lifestyle choices, promoting students’ health and well-being, and integrating health into all aspects of school and learning. Partnerships between

health and education systems are strengthened, as well as the participation and support of families and the community (e.g., Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health [JCSH]).

Targeted central supports were implemented in 2015–2016 to support the focus on well-being and student citizenship, with the support of many departments. Through the leadership of District Support Services, Human Resources, and Governance and Strategic Support Services, capacity across the District was improved, in both preventative and reactive strategies for student and staff safety. The training of District leaders in Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) and in the Commit to Kids Program are two examples of this work.

The VTRA model provides a common language and protocol for assessing and responding to school threats or threatening behaviour. Since 2015, approximately 275 District staff members have completed Level 1 VTRA training, more than 120 staff have been certified in Level 2 VTRA and three District Support Services staff members are now certified trainers for Level 1 which will increase the availability of the training for District staff across divisions. Our District is also an active partner organization with the Edmonton multi-jurisdictional threat response team called Community Threat Risk Intervention Support Protocol (C-TRISP).

Commit to Kids is a national non-for-profit that works with organizations in service to children to help them in their efforts to foster safe environments for children and youth. District Human Resources has a working relationship with Commit to Kids, and in the 2015–2016 school year all District schools were invited to have one staff member participate in the Commit to Kids core training program.

School linked Inclusive Learning teams supported schools through tireless efforts to collaborate across multiple disciplines, in support of students in need of specialized supports and services. Through our partnership within Edmonton Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (ERCSD), schools had direct access to professional staff, including Speech Language Pathologists, Mental Health Therapists, Vision Consultants, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consultants, Emotional-Behavioural Specialists, among others. An additional temporary Mental Health Team was added in response to the enrolment mid-year of more than 500 Syrian students. The team was comprised of a Mental Health Therapist and a Social Worker who worked alongside the English as a Second Language consultants and Intercultural Consultants in providing services to welcome and support newcomer families who experienced trauma.

Numerous targeted central supports were also provided by the Diversity Education and CSH Units, of Inclusive Learning. These central initiatives to support schools included:

- Mental Health First Aid Certification training, to build staff capacity to identify students in need of intervention and understand the importance of fostering healthy relationships.
- The ‘Go-to Educator’ mental health literacy training, initiated in the spring of 2016, based on the [research](#) of Dr. Stan Kutcher from Dalhousie University. The goal of this training is to build common strategies, language, and social norms in the promotion of positive mental health by increasing the level of mental health literacy amongst District employees.
- A CSH Professional Learning Day for CSH lead teachers, planned by a jurisdictional wellness team, to build capacity within catchment groups for championing healthy school cultures and creating sustainable professional development for staff.

- The [Community Helpers Program](#), provided in eight schools to support student leadership with a focus on suicide awareness and prevention. Through this strength-based program, funded by a grant from Alberta Health Services, students were nominated by peers as ‘natural helpers’ and trained in up to 14 modules, including Helping Skills and Resources, Crisis Intervention, Suicide and Depression, Relationships and Social Issues, and Handling Stress. A module supporting LGBTQ issues was written through the Community Helpers Program. The program operated in the following schools in 2015–2016: W.P. Wagner, J. Percy Page, Victoria, Queen Elizabeth, McKernan, John D. Bracco, Londonderry, Dr. Donald Massey.
- The [Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund](#) provided a jurisdictional grant toward initiatives to address student wellness, including healthy eating, active living, positive mental health, and healthy relationships in a school environment. Professional learning opportunities focused on building Social Emotional Learning skills and development of skills to enhance calmness, friendships, conflict resolution strategies, healthy decision making, and citizenship.
- To promote citizenship and leadership, the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund also provided seed funding to student groups to develop activities that increase the welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe culture of their school communities. Schools completed three tools to provide them with feedback about CSH within their schools: the JCSH’s Healthy School Planner, Alberta Education’s Walk Around: Teacher Companion Tool, and Alberta Health Services’ Creating a Healthy School Action Planning Tool. With this support, schools were able to focus on actions toward building healthy relationships, raising awareness about mental health and building trauma-informed practices.
- Implementation support for Board Policy HFA.BP—Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity was provided through three part-time diversity consultants. Consultants provided support on setting up Gay or Queer Straight Alliances (GSAs/QSAs) in schools, attending regional GSA roundtable sessions, providing universal washroom access, and name and gender marker changes on student records, and other relevant topics. Consultants also provided Professional Learning (PL) sessions during catchment and school PL Days, as well as for school council meetings. All schools were required to have a Safe Contact identified as a school support for LGBTQ+ students and staff, and a second level of training was introduced, to support transgender students. New staff received diversity/sensitivity training through Changing the Conversation in-services for new employees. The District also supported student and staff participation in the Gay Rights Festival and Parade, Pink Shirt Day, and the provincial GSA conference. These actions recognize that institutional and cultural change occurs over time. As such, the District is committed to ensuring accountability and demonstrating the District’s commitment to supporting our diverse communities.

Section Four: Priority Strategies Moving Forward

To build upon current successes, the following strategies over the next three years will be implemented.

- Explore, develop and implement additional means to strengthen mental health services by continuing to utilize a Mental Health Transition Team to provide extensive intervention supports as children and youth transition into and out of tertiary services in the community.
- Create a District Mental Health Framework to support District staff in developing common language for mental health awareness, and strategies for pathways in and out of care.
- Develop and implement administrative regulations that are aligned to the *School Act*, to support the implementation of Board Policy AEBB.BP—Wellness of Students and Staff and provide direction to schools with respect to creating learning and working environments that support a District culture of wellness.
- Continue to frame health and well-being within a CSH model, with a CSH lead teacher in each school to support its application to curricular instruction and implementation of strategies to create and maintain a culture of wellness for students in accordance to the *School Act* regulations and the *Guide to Education*.
- Increase capacity building across the District, for understanding physical literacy and the mind-body connection to support student learning and success.
- Continue to work collaboratively with external stakeholders and community partners to coordinate and provide awareness of, and access to, available resources and professional development in the area of mental health, healthy relationships, and creating safe, welcoming and inclusive school environments.
- Review opportunities for further implementation of the [Commit to Kids](#) Program. This program provides a step-by-step plan to assist child-serving organizations to create and maintain safe and healthy environments.
- Continue the District's leadership in guiding schools to maintain welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy learning and teaching environments for gender diverse and sexual minority students, staff, and families. The District understands that change occurs over time and believes that the provision of an annual report at a public Board meeting on progress related to implementation of Administrative Regulation HFA.AR for Board Policy HFA.BP—Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity will ensure accountability and demonstrate the District's commitment to support our diverse community.
- Continue capacity building among school staff who provide supports to students, through Communities of Practice, such as the guidance counsellors' Community of Practice (COP), Physical Literacy teachers COP, subscription list of CSH school leads.
- Continue to build teacher capacity through PL around the teaching of sexual health.

Conclusion

In summary, the District continues to perform well in providing learning and working environments that are welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy, and continues to promote student citizenship. The District recognizes the importance of student well-being, and recognizes this is a topic students are interested in discussing. As such, the District will continue to explore ways to further mental health services in a manner that is responsive to students' needs, and to enhance safe and healthy school and work environments.