

**DATE:** October 24, 2017

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Trustee Bridget Stirling

**SUBJECT:** Motion re: Affirming Commitment to Protecting the Privacy and Confidentiality of Sexual and Gender Minority Students

**REFERENCE:** [Trustees' Handbook – Section 5.2.2 – Notices of Motion](#)  
[HF.BP - Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments](#)  
[HF.AR - Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments](#)  
[HFA.BP - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)  
[HFA.AR - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)

---

#### **ISSUE**

Notice of motion was served at the September 12, 2017, Board meeting.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Students participating in Gay Straight Alliances(GSAs)/Queer Straight Alliances(QSAs) may be uncertain of Edmonton Public Schools' policies on confidentiality of students participating in these groups, particularly given public discourse around whether schools should inform parents/guardians about students' participation.

Additionally, the lack of clarity in the *School Act* around student confidentiality and GSAs/QSAs has led to questions of the legality of protecting student confidentiality; while the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* protects student confidentiality, changes to the *School Act* would clarify this requirement.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board of Trustees affirms our commitment to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of sexual and gender minority students as stated in HFA.BP and HFA.AR, including students' participation in gay-straight alliances (GSAs) and queer-straight alliances (QSAs), and will not disclose information about students' participation in these groups to any person without the student's consent. District staff will not refer students to programs or services that attempt to change or repair a student's sexual orientation or gender identity, such as reparative or conversion therapy and that the Board of Trustees will write a welcome letter to all Edmonton Public Schools GSAs and QSAs including this affirmation of our support. Further, the Board will submit a letter to the Minister of Education in support of protecting student privacy and confidentiality in GSAs in upcoming amendments to the *School Act*.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Should the Board of Trustees approve the recommendation, the Board will send welcome letters to all Edmonton Public School GSAs and QSAs with an affirmation of support. The Board will also submit a letter to the Minister of Education supporting legislation that would clarify privacy protections for sexual and gender minority students.

BS:km