

**DATE:** June 22, 2021

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Governance and Evaluation Committee: Trustees Draper, Dunn, and Gibson (chair)

**SUBJECT:** Next Steps for the Evaluation Framework

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

**REFERENCE:** [Trustees' Handbook](#) Section 5.4 – Caucus Committee  
[Trustees' Handbook](#) Section 6.1.1 A – Governance and Evaluation Committee, Board Self-Evaluation

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## ISSUE

The Governance and Evaluation Committee is recommending next steps for the Strategic Evaluation Framework they have designed.

## BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees establishes the Division Strategic Plan in collaboration with stakeholders. The strategic plan sets the direction for the Division, guiding its efforts and investments for the Board's four-year term. The Board is also responsible for establishing Board policies.

A robust system of evaluation and performance monitoring provides a solid base for policy review and is a key part of the development cycle. As part of their 2021 work plan, the Governance and Evaluation Committee led the creation of a draft Strategic Policy Evaluation Framework (Framework) to guide the evaluation of the Division's Strategic Plan and guiding policies.

## RELATED FACTS

- An evaluation framework is a written document that describes the overall approach and strategy that will be used to guide evaluation. It identifies scope (in this case the focus is on the Strategic Plan and in-scope Board-level policies), approach, resources required, timelines, responsibilities, etc.
- Systematically evaluating the strategic plan and associated policies will contribute to organizational learning and supports evidence-based decision-making, helping the Board of Trustees and Administration better understand impacts on student learning, and ultimately contributing to the vision, "Success, one student at a time."
- A full Framework, along with the Summary presented with this report, were developed over the course of the past year by the Governance and Evaluation Committee.
- There were several opportunities for engagement and to obtain feedback on the Framework.
  - Governance and Evaluation Committee: February 2021
  - Policy Committee: March 26, 2021
  - Board and Superintendent: Generative Discussion, May 4, 2021
  - Student Senate: May 12, 2021

There is a lot of synergy between the questions asked in policy evaluation and what is important to consider in strategic plan development. Reviewing the Framework could help inform the incoming Board's approach to developing their new strategic plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Administration present the Strategic Evaluation Framework to the incoming Board for their consideration before December 15, 2021.**

## **CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS**

- Given that it is near the end of this Board's term, Trustees felt it would best serve the incoming Board to create the Framework's structure, but leave the finalization and implementation decisions for the newly elected Board. If the incoming Board sees this Framework as a valuable resource, they will need to decide how and when they would like to use it, what resources to allocate toward the implementation and who will be assigned oversight of it.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Following approval of this recommendation, Administration will arrange time to discuss the Framework, its potential uses and outstanding decisions with the newly elected Board before December 15, 2021.

## **ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I      Summary from the Governance and Evaluation Committee on the Creation of a Strategic Policy Evaluation Framework

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## **SUMMARY FROM THE GOVERNANCE and EVALUATION COMMITTEE ON THE CREATION OF A STRATEGIC POLICY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

**Last updated: June 8, 2021**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The Board of Trustees establishes the Division Strategic Plan in collaboration with stakeholders. The strategic plan sets the direction for the Division, guiding its efforts and investments for the Board's four-year term. The Board is also responsible for establishing Board policies. The Board of Trustees' policies reflect the values they bring to a specific issue as representatives of the community.

A robust system of evaluation and performance monitoring provides a solid base for policy review and is a key part of the development cycle. The *Alberta Education Act* Board Procedures Regulation states the Board must (a) establish policies and procedures governing the conduct of meetings of the board and the administration and business of the board, and (b) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the established policies and procedures on a regular basis (Section 4 AR 82/2019 BOARD PROCEDURES REGULATION). The Superintendent Quality Standards indicates the Superintendent is responsible for implementing Board policies and supporting the regular review and evaluation of their impact.

As part of their 2021 work plan, the Governance and Evaluation Committee led the creation of a draft Strategic Policy Evaluation Framework (Framework) to guide the evaluation of the Division's Strategic Plan and guiding policies. The Board of Trustees recognizes the act of systematically evaluating our strategic plan and associated policies contributes to organizational learning and supports evidence-based decision-making, helping the Board of Trustees and Administration better understand impacts on student learning, and ultimately contributing to our vision, "Success, one student at a time." When creating and evaluating the strategic plan, it is important to consider how the Division's Strategic Plan and policies align with Alberta Education's business plan and how our Three-Year Education Plan ties the work of the Division to Alberta Education's priorities.

### **SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK**

The Framework focuses on the Division's strategic plan and associated policies. However, it may not always be possible to separate the various components of the system. In some instances, it may be necessary, as part of the evaluation, to review the Administrative Regulation, programs or initiatives associated with the policy for greater clarity and understanding of how it has been implemented.

Part of determining scope is to ascertain if some policies are more conducive to being assessed and reported on through other functions. When drafting the Framework, policies associated with each priority of the strategic plan were assessed for their evaluability. It is interesting to note that some policies were determined to not be evaluable, mainly due to the legislative requirements or simply better suited to a review or monitoring process.

### **APPROACH**

The approach to policy evaluation within the Division aligns with our core values of accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity. Evaluations will occur through engagement and collecting evidence to inform decision making. Monitoring data should be collected on an ongoing basis. A list of data that could be accessed for evaluation purposes is listed in the Framework. The evaluation and monitoring processes can contribute to strengthening relationships with stakeholders. Evaluation practices must be respectful and encompass and acknowledge different ways of knowing, respecting the rich diversity of

cultures, worldviews, histories, and current realities that inform policy development and are lived realities for those who will be impacted by policies.

Policies are reviewed on a planned schedule of every seven years. Some policies, in their accountability section, have more frequent reporting or review requirements than others due to legislative requirements or the significance of the topic. The Division may wish to establish an evaluation planning cycle that aligns with the Board's four-year term and length of the strategic plan, with annual updates. The planning cycle should also include a review of the evaluation framework and processes to revise as new learning occurs. Evaluation findings can be used to support the extent to which the priorities of the strategic plan are being met and strengthen policies. As the strategic plan is revised every term and policies will be reviewed, indicators will also need to be reviewed and adapted as required. The intention is that this Framework is robust enough to adapt to changes to the strategic plan and policy revisions throughout the years with updates made as required.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA and POTENTIAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

The following criteria, adapted from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee on Development Evaluation (2019) was identified by Governance and Evaluation and reviewed with the full Board of Trustees to guide evaluations and serve as a measure to which to assess the strategic plan priorities and policies. Each one is described in the Framework.

- relevance
- coherence
- efficiency
- effectiveness
- impact
- sustainability
- equity

In addition to being assessed against the criteria, the following questions are a few examples of what could be asked through the evaluative process:

- To what extent does the policy align with the current strategic plan, mission, vision and values of the Division?
- To what extent has the policy been implemented as intended?
- To what extent is the policy achieving its intended outcomes?
- Have various populations been differentially impacted? If yes, to what extent have known disparities between populations been effectively diminished? What are the unanticipated favourable and unfavourable effects on non-dominant populations?
- What changes are needed to achieve more equitable results for different populations?

The Framework includes an evaluation matrix and list of sources of data accessible for helping to answer evaluation questions. Further discussion on possible benchmarks on which to assess against is needed.

### **REQUIRED RESOURCES**

To be successfully implemented, this Framework requires the support of the Board of Trustees and Senior Administration, the existence of a culture of inquiry, learning and evidence-based decision making and allocation of financial and human resources to support the process.

To continue the development and support the implementation and capacity building surrounding the Framework, the incoming Board may wish to access the Board Initiative Fund. Future resources may consist of Administration appointing a dedicated staff to support the evaluative function, to oversee the policy evaluation process and implement the Framework. Additional funds could be in the creation of a yearly set budget allocation to provide access to external evaluators. It will also be important to determine where the Framework “lives” in terms of oversight. This may be through the Governance and Evaluation Committee, the Policy Review Committee or integration with the Audit Committee (which consists of the full Board).

## ENGAGEMENT

The current Board of Trustees have been engaged in the creation of the Framework through discussions at the Governance and Evaluation and Policy Committee and through a Generative Discussion. A representative from the Committee met with the Student Senate to ask about measuring student success and input into how the Board should measure its progress on our Strategic Plan. Our students shared the importance of looking at student success in a holistic way, how career pathways are strengthened through learning, and the need to amplify the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour individuals and people from different communities. Ultimately, there exists the desire to continue to collaborate with stakeholders to inform this Framework and future evaluations.

The work is not complete. There is opportunity for continued outreach to stakeholders (e.g., Equity Advisory Committee, SCOPE), as well as integrating the collection of input into the Framework as part of the incoming Board’s strategic plan engagement.

## PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

- The incoming Board of Trustees is requested to take ownership of the draft Framework for further development. As part of the transition, the Board is asked to review the proposed criteria and determine overarching questions they would like to use to guide the evaluative process and continue to engage stakeholders to gather input to inform the development of the Framework.
- Additional work weaving equity throughout the Framework remains to be done, recognizing the role of Truth and Reconciliation, expanding to anti-racism and equity analysis, moving beyond Gender Based Analysis +.
- Allocation of resources, clarity on roles and a schedule to implement the Framework needs to be determined.
- Finally, where the framework “lives”, how the Board retains oversight of the document to ensure it is kept up to date and implemented as planned remains to be identified.