

DATE: November 1, 2022

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Student Senate 2022-2023 Work Plan

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director Board and Superintendent Relations

RESOURCE STAFF: Sabin Ammanethu, Sean Jones, Nancy Petersen, Wanas Radwan

REFERENCE: [October 4, 2016, Board Report – Strategic Plan Update: Student Senate 2016-17 Work Plan](#)

ISSUE

The Student Senate is presenting their work plan for the 2022-2023 school year to the Board of Trustees.

BACKGROUND

The Student Senate serves as a youth engagement model to promote active student participation in youth governance within education and to provide the Board of Trustees with a meaningful way to access student voice. To help focus the direction and energy of the Student Senate, they establish a yearly work plan that focuses on real-life application projects that are informed by the voice of their peers. The Student Senate reports on their efforts to meet their work plan goals at three public Board meetings throughout the year.

In the spring of 2022, Edmonton Public high schools selected up to two students per high school to provide representation on a 2022-2023 Student Senate. The 2022-2023 Student Senate met on September 21 and 28, and October 12 to complete the following tasks:

- elect three Student Trustees: Akhalya Arulmozhi (Dr. Anne Anderson), Abinash Saravanan (W.P. Wagner), Tia Dobbernack (Millwoods Christian)
- elect four Student Senate Executives: Chair Ryan Fang (Old Scona), Vice Chair Anwi Patel (McNally), and Secretaries Ashlyn Lu (Harry Ainlay) and Joy Yang (Harry Ainlay)
- co-create a survey question that would engage students across the Division to reflect on their school experiences
- identify the theme and channels for their project work this year

CURRENT SITUATION

To help ensure their work would meet the needs of their peers, the Student Senate conducted a survey. They did an outstanding job of engaging their peers, collecting 2,156 responses in only five days (October 3 to 7). This survey was available to all high school students in the Division.

The survey asked students to answer the following question: Considering your school experiences, what supports or opportunities would enhance pathways for your success?

Survey responses identified an overarching theme of support for mental health and wellness, which aligns the Student Senate's work on the Division's Strategic Plan's third priority: Promote a comprehensive approach to student and staff well-being and mental health.

This theme was further broken down to three sub-themes: Transitions from High School, Supporting Students with School Work and Mental Health Supports for Students. Students noted that these themes are all interwoven and that the overall mental health aspect is what unites it all. Students also noted that success can look different for students across the division and their work will be most meaningful if they are able to engage a variety of perspectives about mental health through different avenues of presentation.

Given the common theme and overlapping subject areas, rather than create project groups based on theme, students were asked to indicate their preference for the medium they wished to use to communicate with students. Responses led to the formation of three project groupings: Presentation (panel, individual, live or recorded), Media (brochure, poster, etc.), and Networking (group, forum, event, etc.). Students also considered work that might not be thematically focused, and decided to form a group to work on Student Senate promotion.

In the 2022-2023 school year, the Student Senate will also be providing youth perspective to Board and Division initiatives. Throughout the year, the Board and Division administration will be able to access youth voice through the Student Senate about a broad range of topics relevant to high school students.

KEY POINTS

- Student Senators elected three Student Trustees and four executive members.
- The Student Senators chose student mental health and wellness as their overarching theme, based on student input on the question, "Considering your school experiences, what supports or opportunities would enhance pathways for your success?"
- Three working groups have been established to deliver resources and supports around student mental health through presentations, media and networking. A fourth group will work on promoting the Student Senate.
- The Student Senate will provide youth perspective to the Board of Trustees and Division administration about a range of topics throughout the year.
- Student Trustees will report their progress towards their work plan goals at the March 7, 2023, public Board meeting.

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