



# AGENDA

The Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division  
One Kingsway  
Edmonton, Alberta

CFE McCauley Chambers  
Tuesday, December 10, 2024  
2 p.m.

## Board Meeting

### Land Acknowledgement

- A. O Canada
- B. Roll Call
- C. Approval of the Agenda
- D. Communications from the Board Chair
- E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools
- F. Approval of the Minutes
  - 1. DRAFT – Board Minutes – November 26, 2024
- G. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Items on the Meeting Agenda  
*(NOTE: Pre-registration with the Board Office [780-429-8443] is required by 12 p.m. on Monday, December 9, 2024, to speak under this item.)*
- H. Reports
  - 2. 2025-2026 School Year Calendar (Recommendation)
  - 3. First, Second and Third Reading of Bylaw to Require a Criminal Record Check (Recommendation)
  - 4. Belonging and Safety Draft Framework (Feedback)
  - 5. Policy Review Committee 2024-2025 Work Plan (Recommendation)
- I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Educational Issues – 5 p.m.  
*(NOTE: Pre-registration with the Board Office [780-429-8443] is required by 12 p.m. on Monday, December 9, 2024, to speak under this item.)*
- J. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports
- K. Trustees and Board Requests for Information
- L. Notices of Motion
- M. Meeting Dates
- N. Adjournment

BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES

Julie Kusiek  
Board Chair

Jan Sawyer  
Board Vice-Chair

Trisha Estabrooks  
Dawn Hancock  
Marcia Hole  
Marsha Nelson  
Sherri O’Keefe  
Saadiq Sumar

**MINUTE BOOK****Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of Alberta held in the Centre for Education McCauley Chambers on Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 2 p.m.

**Present:****Trustees**

Trisha Estabrooks  
Dawn Hancock  
Marcia Hole

Julie Kusiek  
Marsha Nelson

Sherri O'Keefe  
Jan Sawyer  
Saadiq Sumar

**Officials**

Angela Anderson  
Todd Burnstad  
Grace Cooke  
Andrea Cooper

Karen Mills  
Kent Pharis  
Nancy Petersen  
Cliff Richard

Darrel Robertson  
Carrie Rosa  
Ron Thompson  
Liz Yule

**Board Chair:** Julie Kusiek**Recording Secretary:** Catherine Angeles

The Board Chair called the meeting to order with recognition that we are in the beautiful, crisp and snowy season of winter on Treaty 6 Territory, a traditional meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene and Nakota Sioux. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.

The Board Chair took a moment to reflect on her relationship with the land. She is reminded of the joy of the first really big snowfall - going with her daughter to their neighbourhood park to sled down the hill, then building community in this outdoor space as more and more neighbours arrived to also enjoy the day. On the walk to the park, seeing piles upon piles of really high fluffy white snow on the mountain ash berries. Her husband and daughter shovelling the biggest snow pile they could in the backyard, so that they can build a fort once the snow settles and packs down a bit more. This connection to the outdoors is powerful and it inspired her to look up the Cree word for snow, which she understands to be kona and the act of snowing to be mispon. The Board Chair's snowy experiences make her grateful for the land and those who have nurtured it.

**A. O Canada**

**MINUTE BOOK****B. Roll Call: 2:04 p.m.**

The Superintendent advised that Board Chair Kusiek was participating remotely and all other Trustees were present.

**C. Approval of the Agenda**

**MOVED BY Trustee Estabrooks:**

**“That the agenda for the November 26, 2024, Board meeting be approved as printed.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**D. Communications from the Board Chair**

The Board Chair shared updates from the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Fall General Meeting and Conference. Member boards across Alberta approved the Edmonton Public School Board’s (EPSB) position statement that: *Sexual health education remains an “opt out” option for parents in Alberta and that school board autonomy be respected with regards to their own sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression policies.* Board Chair Kusiek said this is a strong stand, with ASBA representing membership from over 60 public, Catholic and Francophone boards in the province. She hopes that the government acts on this feedback and revises Bill 27, which is currently in third reading in the Legislature.

The Board Chair also shared that ASBA members approved the other position statement brought forward by the Board: *The Government of Alberta annually increases grant funding rates proportional to inflation, to maintain the impact and value the grant funding is intended to have on supporting students for success.* The Board Chair said given the Minister of Education has signaled there will be changes to Education funding with Budget 2025, this position statement is especially important to protect the purchasing power of school divisions with rising inflation over time. Chair Kusiek said that Trustee Hancock, ASBA Director for EPSB, will provide a further update on other position statements passed by ASBA members at the ASBA Fall General Meeting and Conference.

The Board Chair advised that following the ASBA business meeting, trustees from the metro boards in both Calgary and Edmonton met. She noted that this was a great opportunity to build relationships among trustees, discuss the work being done across their divisions and explore ways to leverage their collective metro voice.

The Board Chair mentioned that the Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta (PSBAA) also held meetings for several days this month. She expressed appreciation to the PSBAA Provincial Executive Director for EPSB, Vice-Chair Sawyer, and Public School Boards’ Council representative for EPSB, Trustee O’Keefe, for their many days of hard work and looks forward to their updates later in the meeting.

The Board Chair shared that Trustees, schools and central units are currently busy with results review, which is an important part of the accountability process and an integral part of the Annual Education

## **MINUTE BOOK**

Results Review report. She expressed thanks to Division staff for their unwavering dedication to supporting students and their unique pathways to success.

The Board Chair thanked Mayor Amarjeet Sohi for organizing a meeting with Joint Use Agreement (JUA) partners earlier this month. They discussed opportunities within the JUA for further collaboration and the urgency to ensure new school sites are ready so that we can all benefit from the School Construction Accelerator Program. By working together, we can maximize opportunities to get schools built, benefitting current and future generations of Edmonton students and their families who are an integral part of creating a thriving local economy and vibrant city.

### **E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent thanked everyone attending the meeting in person today, including SCOPE principals Heather Duncan and Damian Wilkinson, and those watching online.

The Superintendent stated that Trustee Results Reviews began last week and will continue later this week. These reviews provide excellent opportunities to highlight the truly great things happening within the Division and to share this information with staff, parents, and the community. Superintendent Robertson thanked principals and central DU administrators for all of the work they've done to prepare for these great conversations. He also thanked the Board of Trustees and acknowledged that, while the upcoming schedule would add to Trustees' busy calendars, it provides a valuable opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the past school year and gain insights into the plans for the future.

The Superintendent extended congratulations to Jasper Place School for being honoured with the National Philanthropist of the Year Award for their Make-A-Wish bike-a-thon. Since 2016, the event has raised over \$1 million, granting countless wishes to children who are battling life-threatening diseases. This award is a testament to the unwavering dedication and compassion of Jasper Place students, staff and community. Superintendent Robertson congratulated Principal Kim Backs and her team at Jasper Place for providing a supportive environment for this great fundraiser to take place every year.

### **F. Approval of the Minutes**

1. Board Meeting – November 5, 2024

**MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:**

**“That the minutes of the Board meeting held November 5, 2024, be approved as printed.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

### **G. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Items on the Meeting Agenda**

The Board of Trustees heard from one registered speaker for this item.

**MINUTE BOOK****H. Reports**

2. Caucus Committee Report (From the meeting held November 5, 2024)

Information was provided regarding actions taken at the November 5, 2024, Caucus Committee meeting.

3. 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements

**MOVED BY Trustee Hancock:**

**“That the 2023-2024 audited financial statements, notes to the financial statements and unaudited schedule be approved.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

There was a short break in the meeting.

4. Modular Classroom Update

An update was provided on modular classrooms. Of the 42 new modulars and eight total relocations approved by the Province, 19 units have been installed and are now operational. Eight additional units are on their intended sites and installation will be complete by the end of November. The remainder are anticipated to be received/moved and installed over the course of the 2024–2025 school year.

5. Revised Capital Reserve Plan for 2024-2025

**MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:**

**“That the revised Capital Reserve Plan as outlined in Attachment I be approved.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

There was a short break in the meeting.

6. Annual Education Results Report (2023-2024)

Ms. Petersen presented a slide presentation on the Annual Education Results Report.

The Board Chair temporarily moved to a later agenda item prior to the vote on the AERR recommendation to accommodate public speakers scheduled for 5 p.m.

**I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on Educational Issues – 5 p.m.**

The Board of Trustees heard from two registered speakers for this item.

**MINUTE BOOK**6. Annual Education Results Report (2023-2024) (continued)**MOVED BY Vice-Chair Sawyer:**

**“That the Board meeting be extended beyond 6 p.m.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

Trustee Estabrooks left the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

**MOVED BY Trustee O'Keefe:**

**“That the Edmonton Public Schools’ 2023-2024 Annual Education Results Report be approved.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

Trustee Estabrooks was not present for the vote.

There was a short break in the meeting.

Board Chair Kusiek left the meeting at 6:31 p.m. Vice-Chair Sawyer chaired the remainder of the meeting.

7. Funds for the Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated (2025-2025 and 2026-2027)**MOVED BY Trustee Hole:**

**“1. That an allocation of \$1,300,000 from the 2025-2026 operating budget be committed for the Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff for the purpose of granting professional improvement leaves and tuition support to teachers for the 2025-2026 school year.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**“2. That a commitment of support for Year 2 (2026-2027) applications not exceeding 50 per cent of the 2025-2026 allocation amount be approved by the Board of Trustees. A formal request for an allocation of funds from the 2026-27 budget year be brought to Board of Trustees in the fall of 2025.”**

**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

Board Chair Kusiek and Trustee Estabrooks were not present for the votes.

8. Funds for the 2025-2026 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program**MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:**

**“That an allocation of \$140,000 from the 2025-2026 operating budget be approved for the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program for the purpose of granting professional improvement leaves and tuition support to exempt staff for the 2025-2026 school year.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

Board Chair Kusiek and Trustee Estabrooks were not present for the vote.

**MINUTE BOOK**9. **Bereavement**

Vice-Chair Sawyer reported on the passing of Ms. Julie-Ann Dzeryk.

J. **Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports - None**K. **Trustees and Board Requests for Information - None**L. **Notices of Motion**

Trustee Hole gave notice that she would be making the following motion:

Given the significant population growth the province of Alberta and the City of Edmonton have experienced in recent years, and the associated challenges that has been posing for Edmonton Public School Board's rapidly increasing enrolment, and

Given that the enrolment of students requiring specialized learning supports is outpacing overall enrolment in the division,

THAT the Board of Trustees advocate to the province for an increase to the education budget that adequately addresses the growing number and complexity of diverse learners requiring specialized supports.

M. **Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 2 p.m.**N. **Adjournment: 7:02 p.m.**

**The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.**

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Julie Kusiek, Board Chair

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Karen Mills, Director Board and  
Superintendent Relations

**DATE:** December 10, 2024

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** 2025–2026 School Year Calendar

**ORIGINATOR:** Cliff Richard, Chief Infrastructure and Technology Officer

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Vicki de Haan, Terry Korte, Clair Sprake

**REFERENCE** [Education Act](#)  
[GCA.BP](#) – Approval of the School Year Calendar  
[GCA.AR](#) – The School Year Calendar

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## ISSUE

Section 60 of the *Education Act* states that “A board shall determine and make publicly available for each school year the days, dates and number of days of school operation.” Additionally, *GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar* states, “Each year, by no later than December 15, the Board will approve a school year calendar for the following school year. The approved calendar will be shared with parents, students, staff and community.”

## BACKGROUND

The school year calendar is designed with a number of requirements and considerations including provincial and federal employment legislation, Alberta Education requirements, our Division’s board policies and administrative regulations, and collective agreements with staff groups. These requirements need to be incorporated when designing a school year calendar that best supports the educational programming of the Division.

Provincial and federal legislation lists a variety of holidays that must be included in the calendar. They are also required to be provided to some staff groups through collective agreements. These required holidays include New Year’s Day, Alberta Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, August Civic Holiday, Labour Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Furthermore, provincial legislation identifies teachers’ convention and assigns the responsibility for these days to the Alberta Teachers’ Association. Alberta Education articulates the number of hours of instruction that students receive in a year and sets the diploma exam and provincial achievement testing schedules. The Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate testing schedules are set by their respective organizations.

Division Administrative Regulation *GCA.AR The School Year Calendar* requires a two-week winter recess inclusive of December 24 and January 2. Under the direction of the administrative regulation, the spring recess is to be five consecutive days beginning on the last Monday of March.



The Division has been approached by members of the community advocating for the inclusion of a number of specific holy days or days of significance as non-instructional days in the Division's calendar. The Board of Trustees is committed to exploring the incorporation of these days where feasible, with the goal of creating a more inclusive school year calendar.

Feedback from the 2022 Division Feedback Survey indicated strong support for a calendar that would allow students and families to participate in religious and cultural days that are special to them. It should be noted that a majority of respondents did not support a calendar with days off in the middle of the week. This suggests that caution should be employed when setting midweek non-instructional days. The concept of clustering versus distributing breaks was also confirmed in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey with over 75 per cent of respondents who had a preference indicating support for school breaks that happen less often but with more days grouped together.

In January 2024, the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Board of Trustees ratified a new collective agreement that includes provisions that impact the school year calendar, including committing to a four weekday fall break, and where possible, extending to a five weekday fall break. Two drafts of the calendar have been created with either a four or five weekday fall break with varying start dates, for the Board's consideration.

## RELATED FACTS

Key points related to the draft 2025–26 School Year Calendars include:

- The calendar is built around 178 instructional days.
- The start date for students is:
  - Draft A: Thursday, August 28, 2025; this allows for a fall break consisting of five weekdays. The Board has the discretion to start classes before September 1 to allow for the five weekday fall break.
  - Draft B: Tuesday, September 2, 2025; this aligns with the preference for school to start in the first week of September, as indicated in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey and the Collective Agreement.
- The end date for students is Tuesday, June 23, 2026, aligning with the draft Alberta Education Diploma Exam schedule.
- Instructional days are balanced for first and second semesters.
- A breakdown of instructional days is as follows:
  - Draft A: 33 Mondays, 37 Tuesdays, 36 Wednesdays, 37 Thursdays, 35 Fridays
  - Draft B: 34 Mondays, 37 Tuesdays, 36 Wednesdays, 36 Thursdays, 35 Fridays
- A fall break that consists of:
  - Draft A: five weekdays that consist of: Remembrance Day, one day-in-lieu for parent-teacher interviews, and three Board declared non-instructional days
  - Draft B: four weekdays that consist of: Remembrance Day, one day-in-lieu for parent-teacher interviews, and two Board declared non-instructional days
- A May break of three days consists of: one Professional Development day, one day-in-lieu for parent-teacher interviews, and one Board declared non-instructional day.
- Professional Development days are as follows:
  - Draft A: seven Professional Development days
  - Draft B: six Professional Development days

- It should also be noted that the Professional Development day on October 20, 2025 is the municipal election and Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.
- As of December 4, 2024, Alberta Education has not yet finalized diploma examinations for the 2025–26 school year. Tentative dates supplied by the Province have been used in the development of this report; Administration will table an amendment for the Board’s consideration in the event these dates change.

A summary of the key differences between the draft calendars is provided in the table below.

	<b>Draft A</b>	<b>Draft B</b>
Student start date	Thursday, August 28, 2025	Tuesday, September 2, 2025
Fall break	5 weekdays	4 weekdays
Professional Development (PD) Days	7	6
Breakdown of Instructional Days	33 Mondays 37 Tuesdays 36 Wednesdays 37 Thursdays 35 Fridays	34 Mondays 37 Tuesdays 36 Wednesdays 36 Thursdays 35 Fridays
Considerations	Allows for a five weekday fall break by starting before September 1	Aligns with preference for school to start in the first week of September

## RECOMMENDATION

**That Draft A of the proposed 2025–26 School Year Calendar be approved.**

## OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. That Draft A of the proposed 2025–26 School Year Calendar be approved.
2. That Draft B of the proposed 2025–26 School Year Calendar be approved.
3. That Draft A or B of the proposed 2025–26 School Year Calendar be approved, with modifications.

## CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The attached draft calendars were developed in alignment with the various requirements outlined in the background section of this report and the Letter of Understanding #9 in the Collective Agreement with the Alberta Teachers’ Association.

Both proposed calendars maintain the 178 instructional days present in prior school year calendars. Both calendars have semesters that are balanced at 89 days per semester with a Professional Development day in the middle on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. In Draft A, students start before September 1 and there are seven Professional Development days in order to meet the terms and conditions of the Letter of Understanding #9 and to allow for the five weekday fall break. In Draft B, there is a four weekday fall break and six Professional Development days. This meets the terms and conditions of the Letter of Understanding #9 and allows students to start school on September 2, 2026. This aligns with a

preference for school to start in the first week of September as indicated in the 2022 Division Feedback Survey.

Revisions were made to GCA.BP *Approval of the School Year Calendar* in May 2024 to articulate that the Board prioritizes alignment with diverse days of significance as the Division's primary consideration in the scheduling of the school year calendar's breaks for students, before the consideration of additional preferences for the placement of breaks. It also reinforced the importance of grouping days off for students, rather than scheduling individual days off mid-week.

Professional Development days have been planned with consideration of days of significance and operational requirements. In both calendars, four of the Professional Development days fall on days of significance: Diwali, Bandi Chhor Divas, Lunar New Year, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are grouped together with weekends, holidays, or other non-instructional days.

Consideration was given to the placement of the teachers' day in lieu and the board-approved non-instructional day in May, immediately following Victoria Day. Recognizing that Eid al-Adha occurs mid-week on Wednesday, May 27, it is recommended these days are scheduled on May 28 and 29 to maintain continuity in instruction. This also aligns with the majority of responses from the 2022 Division Feedback Survey that did not support a calendar with days off in the middle of the week.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Following the approval of the School Year Calendar, it will be published on the Division website.

#### **ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I [Draft A 2025–26 School Year Calendar](#)

ATTACHMENT II [Draft B 2025–26 School Year Calendar](#)

VdH:al

# 2025–26 School Year Calendar

**DRAFT – A**  
December 4, 2024



## AUGUST • 2025

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## SEPTEMBER • 2025

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## OCTOBER • 2025

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## NOVEMBER • 2025

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## DECEMBER • 2025

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## JANUARY • 2026

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## FEBRUARY • 2026

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## MARCH • 2026

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## APRIL • 2026

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## MAY • 2026

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## JUNE • 2026

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### LEGEND

- Public Holiday
- PD Day (no students)
- First/Last Day of Classes
- Operational Day (no students)
- Teachers' Convention
- Teachers' Day in Lieu (no teachers or students)
- Board Approved Non-instructional Day (no teachers or students)
- Winter/Spring Break

### Important dates

<b>First Operational Day</b> (no students)	<b>August 27</b>
<b>First Day of Classes</b>	<b>August 28</b>
<b>Winter Break</b>	<b>Dec. 22–Jan. 2</b>
<b>Teachers' Convention</b>	<b>February 26–27</b>
<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>Mar. 30–Apr. 2</b>
<b>Last Day of Classes</b>	<b>June 23</b>
<b>Last Operational Day</b>	<b>June 24</b>

### Approved holidays

<b>Labour Day</b>	<b>September 1</b>
<b>The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation</b>	<b>September 30</b>
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>October 13</b>
<b>Remembrance Day</b>	<b>November 11</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>December 25</b>
<b>Boxing Day</b>	<b>December 26</b>
<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>January 1</b>
<b>Family Day</b>	<b>February 16</b>
<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>April 3</b>
<b>Easter Monday</b>	<b>April 6</b>
<b>Victoria Day</b>	<b>May 18</b>

### Dates of significance (no students)

<b>Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas</b>	<b>October 20</b>
<b>Lunar New Year</b>	<b>February 17</b>
<b>Eid al-Fitr</b>	<b>March 20</b>
<b>Eid al-Adha</b>	<b>May 27</b>

Pink highlight indicates diploma exam days for reference only and will not be on final published calendar.

# 2025–26 School Year Calendar

**DRAFT - B**  
December 4, 2024



## AUGUST • 2025

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## SEPTEMBER • 2025

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## OCTOBER • 2025

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## NOVEMBER • 2025

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## DECEMBER • 2025

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## JANUARY • 2026

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## FEBRUARY • 2026

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## MARCH • 2026

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## APRIL • 2026

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## MAY • 2026

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## JUNE • 2026

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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

### LEGEND

- Public Holiday
- PD Day (no students)
- First/Last Day of Classes
- Operational Day (no students)
- Teachers' Convention
- Teachers' Day in Lieu (no teachers or students)
- Board Approved Non-instructional Day (no teachers or students)
- Winter/Spring Break

### Important dates

<b>First Operational Day</b> (no students)	<b>August 29</b>
<b>First Day of Classes</b>	<b>September 2</b>
<b>Winter Break</b>	<b>Dec. 22–Jan. 2</b>
<b>Teachers' Convention</b>	<b>February 26–27</b>
<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>Mar. 30–Apr. 2</b>
<b>Last Day of Classes</b>	<b>June 23</b>
<b>Last Operational Day</b>	<b>June 24</b>

### Approved holidays

<b>Labour Day</b>	<b>September 1</b>
<b>The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation</b>	<b>September 30</b>
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>October 13</b>
<b>Remembrance Day</b>	<b>November 11</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>December 25</b>
<b>Boxing Day</b>	<b>December 26</b>
<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>January 1</b>
<b>Family Day</b>	<b>February 16</b>
<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>April 3</b>
<b>Easter Monday</b>	<b>April 6</b>
<b>Victoria Day</b>	<b>May 18</b>

### Dates of significance (no students)

<b>Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas</b>	<b>October 20</b>
<b>Lunar New Year</b>	<b>February 17</b>
<b>Eid al-Fitr</b>	<b>March 20</b>
<b>Eid al-Adha</b>	<b>May 27</b>

Pink highlight indicates diploma exam days for reference only and will not be on final published calendar.

**DATE:** December 10, 2024

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** First, Second and Third Reading of Bylaw to Require Criminal Record Check

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

**REFERENCE:** [Local Authorities Election Act](#)

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## ISSUE

Section 21.1 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) authorizes elected authorities to require prospective candidates to provide a criminal record check with their nomination package. To be enacted for the 2025 municipal and school board election, a bylaw must be approved prior to December 31, 2024.

## BACKGROUND

Prior to the passing of Bill 20, jurisdictions did not have the authority to require prospective candidates to provide a criminal record check with their nomination package.

## RELATED FACTS

- Bill 20, the *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act*, which made changes to the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) and the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) was proclaimed on October 18, 2024. One of the changes is the authorization for elected authorities to require prospective candidates to provide a criminal record check with their nomination package.
- There are different types and sources of criminal record checks.
  - Criminal record checks conducted by the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for employment purposes contain information about convictions for which the applicant has not received a record suspension or pardon under the federal *Criminal Code*, as well as upcoming court appearances and relevant provincial statute convictions. These checks have fees of \$76 to \$78 and can take up to 10 days to process.
  - There are criminal record checks that may be obtained from a private third-party provider. However, the EPS advises that these checks only indicate the existence of a criminal record. They do not contain information relating to any upcoming court appearances or relevant provincial statute convictions. These checks have fees that range from \$45 to \$65 and often offer same day turnaround.
- When required, the results of the criminal record check do not otherwise affect a candidate's nomination (i.e., with few exceptions, a criminal record does not prohibit an individual from running), but they must be disclosed with the nomination package when it is made available for public examination.
- Edmonton Elections officials have informed Division administration that if criminal record checks are required, they would not be posted online with individual nomination packages. Instead,

interested individuals would be required to visit the elections office to view the record check document(s).

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That Bylaw No. 2024-1 be read for the first time.
2. That Bylaw No. 2024-1 be read for the second time.
3. That the Board of Trustees proceed with the third reading of Bylaw No. 2024-1 at this meeting.
4. That Bylaw No. 2024-1 be read for the third and final time.

## OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. That Bylaw No. 2024-1 be approved as presented.
2. That Bylaw No. 2024-1 be amended and approved.
3. That Bylaw No. 2024-1 not be approved.

## CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

At their October 22, 2024 meeting, Edmonton City Council decided not to require mayoral and councillor candidates to submit criminal record checks. In the City administration's report, they cited that 77 per cent of respondents surveyed from the Edmonton Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Edmonton Youth Council and the Women's Advisory Voice of Edmonton Committee felt that requiring a criminal record check would be a barrier to individuals seeking office.

Given the December 31, 2024 deadline to have a bylaw in place should the Board desire one and the current schedule that has only one Board meeting in December, all three readings of the bylaw are being presented in the same meeting.

## NEXT STEPS

If approved, Edmonton Elections will be notified and candidate information will be updated to reflect the new requirement.

If not approved, no changes to current election materials will be made.

## ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Draft Bylaw No. 2024-1

KM:km

## Bylaw 2024-1

### A Bylaw to Require Criminal Record Checks for Trustee Candidates

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division wishes to maintain a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy working and learning environment;

AND WHEREAS Edmonton School Division Trustees are required by their Code of Conduct to observe the highest standard of ethical conduct and perform their duties in office and arrange their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence and will bear close public scrutiny;

AND WHEREAS Section 21.1 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* grants school divisions the authority to, through a bylaw, require a person seeking to be nominated as a Trustee candidate to provide a criminal record check;

THEREFORE, the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division enacts as follows:

1. That each person seeking to be nominated as a candidate for the Board of Trustees be required to file with their nominations papers a criminal record check in accordance with s. 21.1 of the *Local Authorities Election Act*;
2. That the criminal record check be conducted by the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and contain information about convictions for which the applicant has not received a record suspension or pardon under the federal *Criminal Code*, as well as upcoming court appearances and relevant provincial statute convictions;
3. That the criminal record check be conducted not more than 45 days prior to the submission of the candidate's nomination package; and
4. All costs related to the criminal record check are the responsibility of the candidate.



Read a first time on December 10, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Secretary

Read a second time on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Secretary

Read a third time and approved on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Secretary

DRAFT

**DATE:** December 10, 2024

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Belonging and Safety Draft Framework

**ORIGINATOR:** Kathy Muhlathaler, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional and Strategic Division Supports

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Zainab Azhar, Kelsey Duebel, Erin Faight, Lee Hodgkinson, Nancy Petersen, Carrie Rosa, Christine Simmons, Kim Smith, Soleil Surette, Lisa Wright, Jon Yin

**REFERENCE:** [Education Act, Sec 33\(1\)\(d\)](#)

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## ISSUE

A culture of belonging and school safety are foundational to student success and core features of welcoming, respectful and inclusive school communities. Supporting students to feel that they have a sense of belonging and feel safe in their schools is a collective responsibility reflecting the commitment of the Division, schools, staff, students, families and members of the community. This responsibility is formalized for the Division through the *Education Act*, which requires the Division to create a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and supports a sense of belonging, and direction set out in board policies and administrative regulations

## BACKGROUND

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of community, belonging and safety has become increasingly prominent, particularly for children and youth. The pandemic safety measures were necessary but unfortunately contributed to the erosion of social ties and community life, and disrupted the daily routines of many students through which they connected with each other and supportive adults at school. The result has been negative impacts on student wellness and exacerbation of feelings of loneliness and isolation, leading to difficulty engaging with learning. In their series about Lessons for Education from COVID-19, the OECD highlighted that:

*“...the crisis has drawn increased attention to the notion that learning is relational and social, and not transactional. It reminds us that effective learning is more about relationships and mind-sets than it is about physical spaces or instruments.”* OECD, 2021

- Within our local context, schools have also identified the factors of social media and the complexity of the world around us as having an impact on students. Combined, these influences have only reinforced the importance of the responsibility schools have to support students in experiencing a sense of belonging and feelings of safety within the school community.
- The Division looks at perceptions of belonging and safety through a variety of means including Division Feedback Survey data, Youth Resilience Survey results and Alberta Education Assurance measures. Additionally extensive work has been done to engage with students to hear from them

directly how they experience school and to better understand their feelings of belonging and safety within their school community. Through this work, the Division knows there is an opportunity to build upon current efforts in support of belonging and safety to enable more students to feel a sense of connection and well-being while at school.

- To further support schools in this work, the Division is building out a framework that addresses belonging and safety in schools, *Building a Culture of Belonging and Safety: A Shared Responsibility*. The framework will serve as a living document and has been informed by research, student voice and feedback from school leaders. The draft of this framework is being shared with Trustees to provide an opportunity for feedback to inform further development.
- Individually and collectively, we are responsible for creating welcoming and safe learning environments, where every student feels like they belong. The framework will help demonstrate our commitment to this work and support schools in taking their next steps towards every student experiencing a positive sense of belonging and safety within their school community.

#### **RELATED FACTS**

The following actions have been taken to support the development of the draft framework:

- A review of literature and research related to school belonging and safety was conducted
- The Superintendent's Community of Practice in Education provided feedback around actions schools take to support belonging and safety and also did work to theme these actions
- Principals were engaged at multiple times to help inform the development of the framework
- An initial draft concept of the framework was taken to a principal committee for feedback to help inform further development
- A working group of school leaders, central staff from the Diversity Team, Communications and Strategic Division Supports and school staff who work in support of youth and families were engaged to provide feedback that informed this most recent draft of the framework.

#### **ACTION REQUESTED**

**That the Board of Trustees provide Administration with feedback for consideration to inform the final development of the framework.**

#### **CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS**

The framework is intended to be a living document; there will be additional supporting resources that complement the framework available to schools and, over time, the framework will be built out to include school stories and additional exemplars.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Feedback from the Board of Trustees will help to inform the version of the framework that is released to schools.
- The framework, as a living document, will be shared with Division leaders to support them in their work. At the same time, Trustees will receive a copy of the framework.

#### **ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I      Draft Building a Culture of Belonging and Safety: A Shared Responsibility

DR:np

# **Building a Culture of Belonging and Safety:** *A Shared Responsibility*

# Introduction

Students should feel a sense of belonging and safety within their school community. Having this connection to school helps build positive behaviours, improves academic outcomes and supports health and well-being.

To help articulate the work occurring in schools that supports belonging and safety, the Division has developed a framework, *Building a Culture of Belonging and Safety: A Shared Responsibility*. This framework emphasizes the relationship of belonging and safety and how the two are foundational to student success in school.

## How schools contribute to belonging and safety

To inform the development of the framework, we looked at research and literature related to belonging and safety in schools and gathered feedback from Division principals. This work highlighted five factors that together contribute to a positive sense of belonging and safety within a school community.

- **School culture:** School culture is a collaborative effort. School culture is the shared values, everyday behaviours, practices and traditions that shape how the members of a school community interact with each other.
- **Learning environment:** The learning environment is a space where students are encouraged to take risks, explore new ideas and grow both academically and personally. Students thrive in this environment when they experience a sense of belonging and safety.
- **Engagement:** Engagement is the intentional active process of seeking feedback and listening to the voices of students, staff and families across the school community. Creating strong pathways of engagement in schools reflects the importance and value of voice in school decision-making.
- **Family and community:** Family and community is about the strong relationships among school staff, families and community members where everyone works together in support of student success. Family involvement and community partnerships are essential in creating environments where students thrive.
- **School operations:** School operations are the processes, activities and efforts that support the effective daily operations of the school community. These predictable structures and routines help to support belonging and safety across the school community.



This ongoing work is a collective responsibility across the school community. Staff, students and families work together to create spaces for all students to thrive.

# **Building a Culture of Belonging and Safety: A Shared Responsibility**

A culture of belonging and safety are vital to student success and are key features of healthy, vibrant school communities. As a Division, we strive for continuous improvement to ensure that every student feels connected and safe within their school. We are listening to the voices of students, families, staff and community to learn more about belonging and safety within the context of school to help inform our actions.

To further support schools in this work the Division looked at research and gathered voices related to belonging and safety. This, along with principal feedback, helped to inform the development of a framework that articulates key factors within a school community that influence belonging and safety.

The framework is intended to support school leaders as they are responsive to the unique needs of their school communities and the students they serve. The framework includes inquiry questions to help schools take next steps or go deeper in this work, exemplars of current practices and questions that can help schools monitor for progress. Intended to be a living document, there will be additional supporting resources that complement the framework available to schools and, over time, the framework will be built out to include school stories and additional exemplars.

The Division will continue to engage students, families, staff and community in conversations as we collectively work towards every student feeling a sense of belonging and safety in their school community.

## ***Why belonging and safety matter***

Schools understand the importance of experiencing a sense of belonging and feeling safe. When students feel connected, they are more likely to positively contribute to the overall culture of the school community. When they feel safe, they can develop strong and trusting relationships with their peers and school community. This importance is underscored by our responsibility as set out in Alberta's *Education Act*, Sec 33(1)(d), which requires that each student enrolled in a school operated by the Board and each staff member employed by the Board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respect diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The importance of this work is further reinforced through research, where positive feelings of belonging and safety have been linked to school success.

## How belonging and safety are connected

The sense of belonging and safety are built on the foundation of a positive school culture, effective operations, meaningful family and community relationships, active engagement and a supportive learning environment. These pieces fit together to create a space where every student feels valued, supported and ready to learn.

### Belonging

Schools support a sense of belonging through the development of a welcoming school culture. The everyday actions of members of the school community establish an environment where students feel cared for and have the opportunity to succeed.

According to Allen et al. (2021), belonging incorporates a dynamic set of emotions and experiences including individual competencies, motivations and perceptions, along with the opportunities or barriers that encourage or hinder connection with others. Belonging in educational settings arises from being accepted, valued and supported within the school community, a sentiment that is created through close relationships with peers and teachers (Allen et al., 2018). These relationships contribute to students' feelings of security and acceptance. The everyday interactions and intentional facilitation of spaces that celebrate students and build connections all provide opportunities to build a school culture that centres on belonging.

School leaders walk alongside students, staff, families and other professionals to promote school connectedness and explore possibilities of support or intervention for students. Students' experiences become unified when they know what to expect and how others will support their success.

### Safety

Sense of belonging in educational settings intertwines with students' sense of safety—where students feel safe to express themselves within their learning space, knowing their contributions are welcomed—and physical safety, where students feel protected from physical harm within the school environment. Every day, teachers and school staff work together to make students feel protected and valued.

The Division's commitment goes beyond physical security, to include psychological, academic and emotional safety as staff understand the deep connection between belonging and safety. When students feel secure, they are able to develop strong relationships with their peers and trust in their school community. When they see themselves as valued members of a school community, they are more likely to act in a way that contributes positively to the overall culture. Research supports a connection between students' sense of belonging with prosocial behaviour and the prevention of behavioural problems (Stojanović et al., 2022).

The broader school environment encompasses the physical setting, policies and culture that together create a safe and inclusive space conducive to learning. Schools have direct control over these elements and can design environments that support both physical and psychological safety, promoting better mental health and engagement (Ungar et al., 2019). Physical safety in schools involves creating



environments free from violence and threats, with robust security measures and comprehensive safety protocols directly within the control of school divisions (Richard et al., 2012). Psychological safety refers to students feeling secure enough to express their identities and opinions without fear of judgment or retaliation, created by a supportive school culture that promotes open communication and mental health awareness. The broader school environment also impacts student mental health. This includes physical settings and the cultural climate of the school, which should be welcoming and inclusive (Ungar et al., 2019). A safe and engaging physical environment can decrease stress and alienation among students, promoting better mental health outcomes. School divisions can manage these aspects by designing spaces conducive to learning and psychological well-being.

## A supportive framework

The responsibilities of educators are guided by legislation, board policy, administrative regulations and the unique context of their school community. Every day schools are taking actions that design, create, maintain and enhance the environment of the school community in support of feelings of belonging and safety. The strategies being used are incorporated into school culture and complement instructional practice, recognizing that learning and well-being are mutually reinforcing.

### How the framework is intended to help support schools:

- **Encourages reflection on current practices:** Identify what they're already doing well and areas to improve.
- **Provides examples of evidence-based strategies:** Learn about and explore additional ways to enhance belonging and safety.
- **Supports a layered approach:** Provide support for all students across a continuum of proactive to responsive strategies.
- **Supports engagement with school communities:** Seek feedback and listen to the voices of students, staff and families across the school community.

While using a range of approaches, school leaders consider contributing factors related to belonging and safety as unique and comprised of a continuum of actions that includes proactive strategies as well as responsive approaches and interventions. However, the strength of the framework lies in the interconnectedness of these factors as they work together to support a school community where every student is able to experience a sense of belonging and safety.





## How the framework is designed

The framework is designed around the five identified factors that inform belonging and safety within a school community, with one page for each factor. Each page provides schools with the following:

- A brief descriptor of each of the factors: [school culture](#); [learning environment](#); [engagement](#); [family and community](#); and [school operations](#).
- Exemplars of practices that have been mapped out across a pyramid of action reflecting universal, targeted and specialized strategies schools use that enhance/promote belonging and safety.
- Questions of inquiry to support reflection, dialogue and next steps within a school community.
- Questions to support schools in monitoring the impact and effectiveness of their actions.

The framework is intended as one tool to support schools in this ongoing work and will be built out with additional supporting materials over the coming months, such as sample focus group questions, school stories and materials to support engaging with staff and families around this work.

## Our path forward

*Building a Culture of Belonging and Safety: A Shared Responsibility* is responsive to the diversity across Division schools. As school leaders reflect on their own schools' context, the voices of their school community and data related to belonging and safety, this framework can deepen understanding of the relationship between belonging and safety and inform next steps. The framework also supports the implementation of evidence-based practices that promote schools as places where students experience belonging and feel safe.

Individually and collectively, we are responsible for creating welcoming and safe learning environments, where every student feels like they belong. The framework will help demonstrate our commitment to this work and support schools in taking their next steps towards every student experiencing a positive sense of belonging and safety within their school community.

## Factor: School Culture – Pyramid of Action

School culture is a collaborative effort. School culture is the shared values, everyday behaviours, practices and traditions that shape how the members of a school community interact with each other. Viewing schools as relational and multidimensional spaces, schools consider their unique contexts and use a whole-school approach as a means to creating schools that build on a culture of belonging in support of safety. The everyday actions of members of the school community establish an environment where students feel cared for and have the opportunity to succeed.

The following inquiry questions could be used to identify next steps in your community:	Evidence of impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are our school community's strengths in supporting a sense of belonging and safety for students and staff?</li> <li>• How are school teams intentionally identifying and eliminating barriers for staff and students to support belonging and safety?</li> <li>• What whole school approaches to belonging and safety that address harmful behaviours including bullying, violence, threat, discrimination, intimidation and harassment do we have in place?</li> <li>• How are staff being supported in their capacity to create safe, engaging and inclusive learning environments?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Strategy selection will depend on the school context and current evidence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we know that what we are doing is having an impact? What evidence do we have? What evidence might we need?</li> <li>• What information or perspective may be missing?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who else might we need to engage with? How might we engage them?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What do we notice in our evidence? Where are we seeing strengths, concerns or areas for further exploration?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What areas for growth are indicated?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How can our evidence inform possible adjustments to our school structures, processes and practices?</li> <li>• What questions or perspectives does this evidence raise to explore further?</li> </ul>

### Level 3: Examples of Specialized strategies: *For a select number of students*

- Restorative [Community Conferencing](#) held with the support of Division Support Services (DSS).
- Requesting support from the Critical Incident Support Services (CISS) team or the Anti-racism Critical Support (ARCS) team in support of an emergent issue that disrupts the sense of belonging and/or safety for the school community.

### Level 2: Examples of Targeted strategies: *For some students (some of these strategies will be in support of all students)*

- Building staff capacity to support culturally responsive practices that contribute to welcoming students and families (e.g., Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Intercultural supports, Diversity team support).
- Accessing resources and/or agencies to support families and/or students related to specific concerns (e.g., Alberta Health Services, Child and Family Services, Bent Arrow, Food Bank).
- Leveraging multi-disciplinary collaborative opportunities:
  - Care team consisting of school staff and partners (e.g., All in for Youth, The Family Centre) that meets regularly to plan how best to support students.
  - Helping families connect with community resources that address barriers (e.g., food security, emotional, physical health, transportation).
  - Support from the Anti-racism Critical Support (ARCS) team responsive to emergent issues related to discrimination and equity.

### Level 1: Examples of Universal strategies: *For all students*

- Communication strategies implemented with students and families to share celebrations, opportunities, welcome information for new families and newcomers and how to connect with school staff.
- Multiple pathways for students to access support (e.g., QR codes, self-referral form, staff photo wall).
- Implementing common language, consistent expectations across the school community
- Using the multi-faith Division calendar to support planning.
- Leadership experiences provided to allow students to meaningfully connect with their school community (e.g., winter mitten drive, recycling program, shoveling snow angels to help seniors in the community).
- Mentoring to support building a sense of community (e.g., buddy classrooms, peer mentoring, volunteer mentoring).
- Student or staff led groups that support student connectedness (e.g., student associations, buddy classes, peer tutoring).
- Extracurricular activities that encourage students' sense of belonging, and increase motivation to connect and contribute within the school community (e.g., clubs, celebrations, teams).
- School-wide use of restorative practices, co-regulation strategies and social-emotional learning (e.g., Mindfulness, Zones of Regulation, Growth Mindset, morning circles, Hats on for Mental Health).
- School community events that engage students in awareness of societal initiatives (e.g., National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Pink Shirt Day, Hats on for Mental Health).
- Using a comprehensive school health approach to create a school culture that focuses on improving healthy eating, active living and positive mental health.
- Student and family engagement opportunities that provide pathways to share voice (e.g., student associations, school/parent council, advisory groups, focus groups, school surveys).
- Professional learning for staff that supports key areas (e.g., trauma-informed practices, differentiation, co-regulation, resilience).

## Factor: Learning Environment – Pyramid of Action

The learning environment is a space where students are encouraged to take risks, explore new ideas and grow both academically and personally. Students thrive in this environment when they experience a sense of belonging and safety.

The following inquiry questions could be used to identify next steps in your community:	Evidence of impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies are in place to help our staff understand how diverse groups of students and families may experience the education system?</li> <li>• How do school staff get to know students as learners?</li> <li>• What structures and practices do we have in place to plan for the success of all students and for monitoring progress?</li> <li>• What practices and/or strategies are in place that promote positive social and emotional behaviours for all students and staff?</li> <li>• How are diverse identities represented in the learning community and/or classroom?</li> <li>• How do school staff build relationships across the school community?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Strategy selection will depend on the school context and current evidence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we know that what we are doing is having an impact? What evidence do we have? What evidence might we need?</li> <li>• What information or perspective may be missing?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who else might we need to engage with? How might we engage them?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What do we notice in our evidence? Where are we seeing strengths, concerns or areas for further exploration?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What areas for growth are indicated?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How can our evidence inform possible adjustments to our school structures, processes and practices?</li> <li>• What questions or perspectives does this evidence raise to explore further?</li> </ul>

### Level 3: Examples of Specialized strategies: *For a select number of students*

- [Restorative Community Conferencing](#) held with the support of Division Support Services (DSS).
- CASA Mental Health Classroom and the Division's CARE Classrooms.
- Continuum of responses set out in the school's Student Rights and Responsibilities documents.
- Implementation of identified Individual Behaviour Support Plan strategies to crisis response.
- Support from the Critical Incident Support Services (CISS) team and the Anti-racism Critical Support (ARCS) team that builds the sense of belonging and/or safety for the school community.

### Level 2: Examples of Targeted strategies:

*For some students (some of these strategies will be in support of all students)*

- Inviting Elders and Knowledge Keepers into the school, organizing presentations and experiences that support students making connections (e.g., Smudging, ceremony, teachings).
- Access to a sensory room, use of quiet corners and other sensory supports (e.g., rocking chair, wiggle cushion).
- Differentiated support for English as additional language learners.
- Division Centres and Alternative Programs (e.g., Opportunity, Connections, Interactions, Logos, language programs).
- Leveraging multi-disciplinary collaborative opportunities:
  - Connecting with Mental Health Wellness Coaches for classroom workshops and/or staff presentations.
  - Working with Specialized Learning Supports (SLS) to support student programming (e.g., reading specialists, occupational therapists, psychologists, educational and behavioural programming).
  - Development and ongoing review of an Individual Program Plan, Individual Behaviour Support Plan or specific learning plan in collaboration with families.

### Level 1: Examples of Universal strategies: *For all students*

- Communication tools for families that inform them of school-wide practices and individual student progress (e.g., School Assessment Plan, Students Rights and Responsibilities document, learning conferences, interim progress reports).
- Selecting school and classroom resources that reflect the diversity of the students across the school community ([Administrative Regulation GLAR Teaching and Learning Resources](#)).
- Personal contact established with new families to welcome them and support ongoing communication pathways.
- Staff professional learning to enhance capacity to be responsive to all students (e.g., co-regulation strategies, culturally responsive practices, meeting requirements set out in the Teacher Quality Standard *Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit*).
- Use of differentiated furniture responsive to a range of learning styles (e.g., student collaborative groupings, high-tables, bean bags).
- Weaving foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, histories and culture into learning for all students.
- Direct teaching of positive peer relational skills (e.g., social-emotional learning, collaborative learning).
- Use of the multi-faith calendar to support school planning, including assessment timelines.
- Connecting learning to life after high school through Career Pathways (e.g., myBlueprint, Campus EPSB, student portfolios).
- Engaging students in land-based learning opportunities.
- Taking intentional action to help students understand who they are as learners, resulting in a greater sense of self-efficacy, confidence and willingness to take risks in their learning.

## Factor: Engagement – Pyramid of Action

Engagement is the intentional active process of seeking feedback and listening to the voices of students, staff and families across the school community. Creating strong pathways of engagement in schools reflects the importance and value of voice in school decision-making.

The following inquiry questions could be used to identify next steps in your community:	Evidence of impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do school staff build positive home-school-community connections?</li> <li>• How do staff develop partnerships that draw on community and multi-disciplinary resources to support a sense of belonging for students and families in our school?</li> <li>• What processes and procedures are in place to support students, staff and families with transitions (grade-to-grade, elementary to junior high, junior high to high school, high school to postsecondary/world of work)?</li> <li>• How are staff creating and nurturing a sense of belonging and safety for all students, families and staff? (as a leader, as a leadership team, as a staff).</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Strategy selection will depend on the school context and current evidence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we know that what we are doing is having an impact? What evidence do we have? What evidence might we need?</li> <li>• What information or perspective may be missing?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who else might we need to engage with? How might we engage them?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What do we notice in our evidence? Where are we seeing strengths, concerns or areas for further exploration?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What areas for growth are indicated?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How can our evidence inform possible adjustments to our school structures, processes and practices?</li> <li>• What questions or perspectives does this evidence raise to explore further?</li> </ul>

### Level 3: Examples of Specialized strategies: *For a select number of students*

- [Restorative Community Conferencing](#) held with the support of Division Support Services (DSS).
- [Office of Student Attendance and Re-engagement](#) (OSAR) contacted for support.
- Requesting support from the Critical Incident Support Services (CISS) team or the Anti-racism Critical Support (ARCS) team in support of an emergent issue that disrupts the sense of belonging and/or safety for the school community.

### Level 2: Examples of Targeted strategies:

*For some students (some of these strategies will be in support of all students)*

- Facilitating Student Action Summits to support student collaboration around school culture and belonging.
- Establishing advisory groups (student, staff and/or family) to hear voice and perspective around a topic important to the school community (e.g., a new playground, developing a school level policy to support open campus noon hour).
- Inviting guest speakers and/or hosting information sessions for families and students around specific topics of interest (e.g., post-secondary night, test taking, anxiety).
- Accessing resources and/or agencies to support families and/or students related to specific concerns (e.g., Alberta Health Services, Child and Family Services, Bent Arrow, Food Bank).

### Level 1: Examples of Universal strategies: *For all students*

- Using instructional processes that enhance learning experiences for all students (e.g., book clubs, experiential learning, sharing circles).
- Connecting learning to life after high school through Career Pathways (e.g., myBlueprint, Campus EPSB, student portfolios).
- Using a range of strategies with families to support communication and provide multiple pathways for access to information. (e.g., SchoolZone, conferences, newsletters, parent/guardian email).
- Learning conferences as a means to share student progress and set goals.
- Mentoring to support building a sense of community (e.g., reading buddies, Community Helpers, peer mentoring, volunteer mentoring).
- Selecting school and classroom resources that reflect the diversity of the students across the school community ([Administrative Regulation GI.AR Teaching and Learning Resources](#)).
- Using *Talking Circles*, focus groups and/or student symposiums to empower student voice in the classroom and the broader school community.
- Extracurricular activities that encourage students' sense of belonging, and increase motivation to connect and contribute within the school community.
- Bringing an enrichment learning opportunity into the school community to work with students (e.g., Artist in Residence).
- Supporting student governance and agency through student groups and/or associations that enable students to share voice, feedback and perspectives (e.g., GSA's, athletic groups, student associations, student senate, student councils).
- Family engagement opportunities to share feedback that helps to inform decision-making (e.g., parent associations, school/parent council, advisory groups, focus groups, school surveys).
- Facilitating opportunities for parents, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and community members to share knowledge and teachings, volunteer and/or support the school community.

## Factor: Family and Community – Pyramid of Action

It is about the strong relationships among school staff, families and community members where everyone works together in support of student success. Family involvement and community partnerships are essential in creating environments where students thrive. School leaders bring everyone together—staff, students, families and community partners—to build strong, caring and supportive school communities.

The following inquiry questions could be used to identify next steps in your community:	Evidence of impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are school staff co-creating regular opportunities for student voice to inform school and classroom decisions?</li> <li>How do staff co-create regular opportunities for family voice at our school?</li> <li>How do school staff reflect on what students/families share and incorporate their ideas where possible?</li> <li>How are school staff reflecting back on what students/families share so they know they have been heard?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Strategy selection will depend on the school context and current evidence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we know that what we are doing is having an impact? What evidence do we have? What evidence might we need?</li> <li>What information or perspective may be missing?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who else might we need to engage with? How might we engage them?</li> </ul> </li> <li>What do we notice in our evidence? Where are we seeing strengths, concerns, or areas for further exploration?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What areas for growth are indicated?</li> </ul> </li> <li>How can our evidence inform possible adjustments to our school structures, processes and practices?</li> <li>What questions or perspectives does this evidence raise to explore further?</li> </ul>

### Level 3: Examples of Specialized strategies *For a select number of students*

- [Restorative Community Conferencing](#) held with the support of Division Support Services (DSS).
- Calling 911 as an emergency response to a school or community situation.
- Collaborating with community resources to support student specific concerns (e.g., Alberta Health Services, Child and Family Service, CARRT team).

### Level 2: Examples of Targeted strategies

*For some students (some of these strategies will be in support of all students)*

- Work with Specialized Learning Supports (SLS) during student transitions responsive to the needs of individual learners (e.g., occupational therapist, vision consultant, physical therapist).
- Development and ongoing review of an Individual Program Plan, Individual Behaviour Support Plan or specific learning plan in collaboration with families.
- Accessing resources and/or agencies to support families and/or students related to specific concerns (e.g., Alberta Health Services, Child and Family Services, Bent Arrow, Food Bank).
- Leveraging multi-disciplinary collaborative opportunities:
  - Connecting with Mental Health Wellness Coaches for classroom workshops and/or staff presentations.
  - Development and ongoing review of an Individual Program Plan, Individual Behaviour Support Plan or specific learning plan in collaboration with families.

### Level 1: Examples of Universal strategies *For all students*

- Using a range of strategies with families to support communication and provide multiple pathways for access to information. (e.g., SchoolZone, conferences, newsletters, parent/guardian email).
- Intentionally confirming the contact information with a family to support ongoing and timely communication.
- School events, celebrations and information sessions to support families in feeling connected to the school, building relationships with school staff, and gaining relevant information.
- Working in partnership with community agencies or groups for the provision of support responsive to the needs of students (e.g., Free Play, after school clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, The Family Centre, EISA, YMCA, e4c).
- Learning conferences as a means to share student progress and set goals.
- Taking intentional steps to support transitions (e.g., grade-to-grade, elementary to junior high, junior high to high school, high school to postsecondary/world of work).
- Family engagement opportunities to share feedback that helps to inform decision-making (e.g., parent associations, school/parent council, advisory groups, focus groups, school surveys).
- Facilitating opportunities for parents, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and community members to share knowledge and teachings, volunteer and/or support the school community.
- Building staff capacity to support culturally responsive practices that contribute to welcoming students and families.
- Having external partners working alongside school staff within the school community in the delivery of wrap-around supports and services (e.g., Elders, Knowledge Keepers, mental health therapist, Success Coach, School Resource Officer, Roots and Wings worker).



## Factor: School Operations – Pyramid of Action

School operations are the processes, activities and efforts that support the effective daily operations of the school community. These predictable structures and routines help to support belonging and safety across the school community.

The following inquiry questions could be used to identify next steps in your community:	Evidence of impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can school policies, processes and structures support belonging for students from different backgrounds (or groups)?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do we work with students, staff and families to build ongoing understanding and expectations around students' Rights and Responsibilities practices?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● What processes and procedures are in place to support student transitions (e.g. new, between grades, program or departing students)?</li> <li>● What risk management protocols/plans (e.g., emergency plans) are in place and how often are they reviewed, updated and shared?</li> <li>● How are staff creating and nurturing a sense of belonging and safety for all students, families and staff? (as a leader, as a leadership team, as a staff).</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Strategy selection will depend on the school context and current evidence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do we know that what we are doing is having an impact? What evidence do we have? What evidence might we need?</li> <li>● What information or perspective may be missing?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who else might we need to engage with? How might we engage them?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● What do we notice in our evidence? Where are we seeing strengths, concerns, or areas for further exploration?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What areas for growth are indicated?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● How can our evidence inform possible adjustments to our school structures, processes and practices?</li> <li>● What questions or perspectives does this evidence raise to explore further?</li> </ul>

### Level 3: Examples of Specialized strategies: *For a select number of students*

- Implementation of identified Individual Behaviour Support Plan strategies to crisis response.
- The annual review of determining the commissioning or decommissioning of an operational seclusion room within the school community.
- Calling 911 as an emergency response to a school or community situation.
- As a response to behaviour that compromises safety within the school community, utilize responsive action as set out in the school's Student Rights and Responsibilities document.

### Level 2: Examples of Targeted strategies:

*For some students (some of these strategies will be in support of all students)*

- Dedicated space for cultural and religious practices that help to support a sense of belonging (e.g., prayer room, smudging).
- Scheduled, committed time where staff collaborate to examine student learning and monitor for progress.
- Staff trained in Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) protocols.
- Work with Division Security and/or Division Support Services around an incident.
- Leveraging multi-disciplinary collaborative opportunities:
  - Processes to support communication and coordination amongst members of the school community Care team assembled consisting of school staff and partners (e.g., All in for Youth, The Family Centre) to support students.
  - School level processes to identify students for referral to Specialized Learning Supports (SLS).
  - Exploring alternative responses to unacceptable behaviour as part of the school's Student Rights and Responsibilities document and accessing alternative suspension programs (e.g., YMCA).

### Level 1: Examples of Universal strategies: *For all students*

- Developing the Student Rights and Responsibilities document under the direction of [Board Policy HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct](#) to support a safe school community.
- Developing and practicing emergency protocols (e.g., evacuation drills, maintaining security systems).
- Structures and routines are in place to support predictable school operations that help to promote safety (e.g., bell schedules, supervision schedules, bus procedures, parent drop off and pick up procedures).
- Staff trained in First Aid and staff identified to support OHS requirements across the school community.
- Feedback opportunities for students and family to help inform decisions related to school operations (e.g., scheduling, clubs, school events and celebrations, fees).
- Taking intentional steps to support transitions (e.g., grade-to-grade, elementary to junior high, junior high to high school, high school to postsecondary/world of work).
- Extracurricular activities that encourage students' sense of belonging, and increase motivation to connect and contribute within the school community (e.g., clubs, celebrations, teams).
- Supporting staff in creating welcoming school culture through professional learning focused on topics such as resilience, using proactive Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Response strategies, trauma-informed practices, etc.
- Using evidence, research and feedback to inform planning for the school community (e.g., school organization and staffing, setting goals, school budget).
- Having external partners working alongside school staff within the school community in the delivery of wrap-around supports and services (e.g., Elders, Knowledge Keepers, mental health therapist, Success Coach, School Resource Officer, Roots and Wings worker).

**DATE:** December 10, 2024

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Trustee Trisha Estabrookes, Policy Review Committee  
Trustee Marcia Hole, Policy Review Committee  
Trustee Sherri O’Keefe, Policy Review Committee  
Trustee Saadiq Sumar, Chair, Policy Review Committee

**SUBJECT:** Policy Review Committee 2024-25 Work Plan

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

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Kesley Duebel, Nancy Petersen, Wanas Radwan

**REFERENCE:** [Trustees Handbook Section 5.4 – Caucus Committee](#)  
[Board Policy CH.BP – Framework for Policy Development and Review](#)

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## ISSUE

The Policy Review Committee (PRC) is presenting its 2024-25 work plan to the Board of Trustees (the Board) for approval.

## BACKGROUND

The PRC is responsible for assisting the Board by ensuring that policies submitted for Board approval are developed and reviewed in accordance with Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review.

The PRC discussed policy development and review for the 2024-25 year on September 19, 2024, October 24, 2024, and November 29, 2024. From these discussions, the committee established an annual plan for policy development and review to be undertaken in 2024-25, while also accommodating the need for any emergent policy work.

## RELATED FACTS

The work plan addresses the following:

1. **New policy development:** There is one area for new policy development work in 2024-25. The work to develop these policies is continued from the 2023-24 Work Plan.
  - **Review of School Names and Naming of Schools:** In accordance with the September 7, 2021, Board motion, two new policies are being developed to provide direction related to the review of school names and the naming of schools. These policies will align with Board Policy HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity and support progress towards the Division’s Anti-racism, Reconciliation and Equity Action Plan.
    - As part of this work, Board Policy EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles, which includes direction on naming schools, is also identified for review to ensure alignment with the new policies.

2. **Policy review and revision:** The Board is responsible for ensuring all board policies are in alignment with provincial legislation, reflect current processes and procedures and support the direction set out in other existing board policies. As such, the following policies or area of policy will be supported for review.
  - **Human Resources Framework:** Board Policy FA.BP Human Resources Framework will be updated in alignment with Board Policy HAA.B.BP Anti-racism and Equity. Where relevant, this policy will also undergo further review to align with current practice and processes.
  - **Student Behaviour and Conduct:** Section 33 of the *Education Act* requires an annual review of the code of conduct for students. To comply with this, Board Policy HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct will be reviewed.
  - **Wellness of Students and Staff:** Board Policy AEBB.BP Wellness of Students and Staff will be updated in alignment with Priority 3 of the Division's strategic plan.
  - **Alignment of Board Policies with New Provincial Direction:** The PRC will review direction set out in *Bill 27 Education Act, 2024* and *Bill 29 proposed Fairness and Safety in Sport Act* to identify and implement revisions to relevant policies.
  
3. **Longer Term Policy Work:** The following policies have been identified by the PRC as policy areas that may require review or revision. Prior to officially initiating these policies for review, the PRC will seek more context related to emerging trends or issues for each policy area. The preliminary work will inform next steps for each of the following policy areas:
  - **Board Policy EO.BP Environment:** Exploratory work may involve environmental scans to explore emerging trends, issues and evidence. Review of this policy may have implications for the review of EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles.
  - **Board Policy EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles:** Considerations for this exploratory work may include opportunities to support environmental stewardship; equity and accessibility in Division buildings; and belonging and wellness through infrastructure. The preliminary work will inform next steps for this policy area.
  - **Board Policy HA.BP Inclusive Education:** The PRC is anticipating the release of the updated *Standards for Special Education* from Alberta Education. Work to revise the policy should reflect alignment with the new provincial standards; the PRC will initiate work to review the policy once the revised provincial standards have been released.
  - **Personal mobile devices in schools:** The PRC will consider whether board policy development or refinement of existing policies is required to support clarity for students, staff and families.
  - **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The PRC will undertake initial exploratory work to understand the current landscape of AI and its implications for the Division, including any potential need for Board direction through a board policy.
  - **Board policy governance and review cycle:** The PRC will consider potential options for refining the governance and systems in place to manage the review cycle for board policies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the PRC 2024-25 work plan be approved.

## OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. Approve the PRC 2024-25 work plan as written.
2. Provide feedback and request changes be made to the PRC 2024-25 work plan.



**CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS**

The work of the PRC reflects the committee's best efforts to fulfill the expectation to complete policy work required for alignment to provincial legislation and the Board's commitment to reviewing and revising existing board policies. The review and revision of these policies will be informed by stakeholder engagement and will involve a multi-year commitment.

**NEXT STEPS**

Policy review activities will proceed, in alignment with the approved work plan.

**ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I Policy Review Committee 2024-25 Work Plan

SS:wr

## Policy Review Committee 2024-25 Work Plan

### PURPOSE

- The Policy Review Committee is responsible for assisting the Board in reviewing Board policy by ensuring that Board policies submitted for Board approval are developed and reviewed in accordance with Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review.
- The main objective of the work plan is to recommend an annual plan for policy development and review to be undertaken in 2024-25, while also accommodating the need for any emergent reviews. This work plan may be adjusted in response to any emergent policy priorities that are identified during the 2024-25 school year.

### ACTIVITIES

The Policy Review Committee (PRC) 2024-25 Work Plan includes the following:

New Policy Development	
Policy	Summary
Review of School Names and Naming of Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles</li> </ul>	In accordance with the September 7, 2021, Board motion and to align with Board Policy HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity; Board Policy EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles is part of this review to reflect alignment with the new draft policies; continuation from 2023-24 work plan

Policy Review and Revision	
Policy	Summary
AEBB.BP Wellness of Students and Staff	Update language in alignment with Priority 3 of the Division's strategic plan.
FA.BP Human Resources Framework	Align with the Division's 2021-22 Anti-racism and Equity Action Plan and to align with Board Policy HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity; continuation from 2023-24 work plan.
HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct	Annual review required under the <i>Education Act</i> . This annual review will include a review of the policy relevant to the Division's current work on safety and belonging.
Alignment of board policies with new provincial direction	The Policy Review Committee will review the direction set out in <i>Bill 27 Education Amendment Act, 2024</i> and <i>Bill 29 proposed Fairness and Safety in Sport Act</i> to identify and implement revisions to relevant policies.

Longer Term and Exploratory Policy Work	
Policy	Summary
EO.BP Environment	The PRC will conduct initial exploratory work to understand opportunities for review and update to EO.BP Environment. This work may involve environmental scans to explore emerging trends, issues and evidence and may have implications for the review of EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles.
EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles	The PRC will also explore the potential to update EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles. Considerations may include opportunities to support environmental stewardship; equity and accessibility in Division buildings; and belonging and wellness through infrastructure. The preliminary work will inform next steps for this policy area.
HA.BP Inclusive Education	The PRC is anticipating the release of the updated <i>Standards for Special Education</i> from Alberta Education. Work to revise the policy should reflect alignment with the new provincial standards; the PRC will initiate work to review the policy once the revised provincial standards have been released.
Personal mobile devices in schools	The PRC will consider whether board policy development or refinement of existing policies is required to support clarity for students, staff and families.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	The PRC will undertake initial exploratory work to understand the current landscape of AI and its implications for the Division, including any potential need for Board direction through a board policy.
Board policy governance and review cycle	The PRC will consider potential options for refining the governance and systems in place to manage the review cycle for board policies.

#### **SUPPORTING ACTIONS/INFORMATION REQUESTED FROM ADMINISTRATION**

- The committee may conduct public engagement in support of many of the policies outlined in this work plan. These engagement activities will require support from Strategic Division Supports, Infrastructure Planning, Human Resources and Division Support Services. However the timing and extent of this engagement for each of these policy areas has yet to be determined.

**REQUESTED RESOURCES**

- More information about potential required funds will become available as the policy work unfolds. The committee will present a project plan and budget for the Board's approval prior to undertaking any work that would require use of Board of Trustee funds.