

Board Meeting Agenda

Board of Trustees

Board Chair: Saadiq Sumar

Vice-Chair: Linda Lindsay

Nickela Anderson

Sarah Doll

Melanie Hoffman

Julie Kusiek

Holly Nichol

Sherri O'Keefe

Jan Sawyer

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

2 p.m.

McCauley Chambers, Centre for Education
1 Kingsway NW, Edmonton AB T5H 4G9

A. Land Acknowledgement

B. O Canada

C. Roll Call

D. Approval of the Agenda

E. Communications from the Board Chair

F. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

G. Approval of the Minutes

1. DRAFT – Board Meeting – May 26, 2026

H. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on items on the Meeting Agenda

NOTE: To speak under this item, pre-registration with the Board Office (780-429-8443) is required by NOON on MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2026, to reserve a speaking time.

I. Reports

2. Student Senate Summary of Work Accomplished (Information)
3. 2026-27 Non-Resident and Special Needs Sponsorship Fees and 2027-28 International Student Fees (Recommendation)
4. Approval of Policy Framework Review Project Plan and First Reading of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review (Recommendation)
5. Policy Review Committee 2026-27 Work Plan and 2025-26 Work Plan Summary (Recommendation)
6. Belonging and Safety Division Data (Information)

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 Meeting Minutes

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, May 26, 2026, at 2 p.m.

Present

Trustees	Nickela Anderson, Sarah Doll, Melanie Hoffman, Julie Kusiek, Linda Lindsay, Holly Nichol, Sherri O’Keefe, Jan Sawyer, Saadiq Sumar		
Officials	Angela Anderson, Todd Burnstad, Grace Cooke, Andrea Cooper, Kelsey Duebel, Martin Fechner, Kathy Muhlethaler, Kent Pharis, Nancy Petersen, Cliff Richard, Carrie Rosa, Ron Thompson, Liz Yule		
Board Chair	Saadiq Sumar	Recording Secretary	Catherine Angeles

A. Land Acknowledgement

The Board Chair called the meeting to order and shared the treaty acknowledgement that students from Elder Dr. Whiskeyjack School co-created with Elder Whiskeyjack.

Here on Treaty Six territory.

A meeting place of the many Indigenous people who came before us.

A place where we as students can learn to be proud of ourselves and to be gentle with others.

We are here to honour those who walked before us, the many of us who walk together now and those who will walk after.

As students at Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack, we proudly thank you for walking this journey of truth and reconciliation with us.

B. O Canada

The Old Scona video version of O Canada was played.

C. Roll Call

2:08 p.m. – The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

D. Approval of Agenda

Board Chair Sumar requested that the 'Recognition - Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence' agenda item be moved to immediately follow the approval of the agenda.

MOVED BY Vice-Chair Lindsay:

That the agenda for the May 26, 2026, Board meeting be approved as amended.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

H. Recognition

2. Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence (Information)

The Board Chair announced the following students as recipients of the Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence:

- Gold Medal – Elizabeth Wolde, Eastglen School
- Silver Medal – Chloe Ge, Dr. Anne Anderson School
- Bronze Medal – Alyx Goddard, Victoria School

There was a short break in the meeting at 2:24 p.m., and it resumed at 2:31 p.m.

E. Communications from the Board Chair

The Board Chair shared that with less than a month away from the end of the school year, schools are busy with a flurry of activities, including provincial achievement tests and year-end celebrations. For high school students, this means graduation, which officially kicked off last week. Chair Sumar congratulated all students crossing the stage this spring, whether they achieved high honours and awards as part of their high school journey or are just managing to scrape by. He shared, as one high school principal put so eloquently last week, “Public education is unique in that students with different interests, backgrounds, and skills sat together shoulder to shoulder in the auditorium and celebrated together and celebrated one another. Congratulations to all graduates, whatever their path may have been to getting to graduation. And for those who may be continuing their studies at Center High or at Argyll, we applaud your commitment to continuing your education.”

The Board Chair shared that a couple of weeks ago, approximately 150 students came to the Center for Education to attend Diversity Day, One Vision, Many Voices. The theme of the event was Students-Unmuted. Chair Sumar thanked Councillor Aaron Paquette for opening the event in a good way with a Land Welcome and to the hoop dancer, Dallas Arcand, for an incredible performance. He also thanked Lieutenant Governor Salma Lakhani for her powerful address, where she talked about her own experience as a stateless person and stressed diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a choice, and that is something that we should all strive for. Chair Sumar had the privilege of moderating a student panel, where they discussed themes of fitting in versus belonging and how we can create safe spaces for everyone. He expressed thanks to the Division staff who organized the event and to the Phoenix Society for their partnership.

The Board Chair advised that earlier this year, the Board of Trustees nominated the Alliance of Black Employee Experience and Leadership or ABEEL Foundation (ABEEL) for the Alberta School Boards Association Friends of Education Award, which recognizes individuals or organizations that have shown an outstanding commitment to improving education, student success, and community engagement. ABEEL is an organization dedicated to combatting Anti-Black Racism through youth engagement and voice for a more beautiful future. This award was included in the Edwin Parr Awards banquet, where Cokee Schmidt from L.Y. Cairns officially received her Edwin Parr Award as the Division's representative. Unfortunately, ABEEL did not receive the Friends of Education Award. They did, however, host their regional gala last week and highlighted the incredible work of students and staff champions. Chair Sumar thanked the ABEEL Foundation and Samuel Ajobo for empowering students and staff to share their spark with the community.

The Board Chair advised that on May 13, 2026, the Provincial Government announced a \$200 million grant, targeted to reducing K-9 class sizes across the Province. He expressed gratitude, on behalf of the Board, for the province's recognition that additional staff will help to maintain and enhance high-quality learning environments for students.

The Board Chair shared that alongside Division staff, he attended the Palix Foundation's Edmonton Symposium to explore brain story science and the resilience scale framework, all aimed to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. He thanked the Palix Foundation for hosting this informative event and for working to better serve the community.

F. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent thanked everyone in attendance and those tuning in online. He also welcomed principals from the Superintendent's Community of Practice in Education (SCOPE), who also joined today's Board meeting: Sheelagh Brown from Wihkwêntôwin and Kirstin Johns Bell from Minchau schools.

The Superintendent reported that the province recently announced \$200 million that's being allocated to school divisions as a class size reduction grant. The provincial funding will help hire 1,400 teachers into the education system across the province. This announcement builds on the complexity team funding that was announced earlier this year. The funding is to be used to reduce class sizes in Kindergarten to Grade 9 classrooms. As part of this announcement, the Division will receive almost \$40 million to hire close to 300 teachers. The Division is working through the details, in consultation with schools and will have more to share in the fall.

The Superintendent provided the Board with additional details about the Division's Educational Assistant (EA) Internship program for the 2025-2026 school year. This program allows EAs to earn and learn at the same time, combining module-based learning with hands-on experience in the classroom under the mentorship of an EA. He was honoured to bring greetings and congratulations to the spring cohort last week, which was just completing their program. He shared that in the fall cohort, 59 graduates completed the program; last week, 65 grads completed the spring cohort, and the Division is on track to have 144 graduates in June. That's 268 new EAs added to the system to support students. He said, "We're so happy to have them as part of our team!"

The Superintendent said that May brings on commencement season. May and June is also exam season across schools. He wished everyone good luck on their upcoming final exams, Provincial Achievement Tests, and Diploma Exams.

The Superintendent shared that the Division's Communications team received an award for their communications work to support the reintroduction of the School Resource Officer program. The award was presented by the Canadian Public Relations Society, which is the national organization for public relations and communications across Canada. The award demonstrates the Division's commitment to best practices in communications. Superintendent Thompson extended his congratulations to the entire Communications team on the award.

The Superintendent said that it's a short week in the Division. He wished Division staff an excellent professional learning day on Wednesday, a restful teachers' day in lieu on Thursday and a non-instructional day on Friday.

G. Approval of the Minutes

1. Board Meeting - May 12, 2026

MOVED BY Trustee Sawyer:

That the minutes of the Board meeting held May 12, 2026, be approved as presented.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives on items on the Meeting Agenda

There were no registered speakers for this item.

J. Reports

3. 2026-30 Division Strategic Plan
(Recommendation)

Trustee Nichol left the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

The Board Chair advised that, in accordance with the Board Policy: Framework for Policy Development and Review, a unanimous agreement by the Board is required for more than two readings to occur in one meeting. Seeking Board agreement is procedural in nature, considered an incidental motion, and not subject to debate.

MOVED BY Board Chair Sumar:

That the Board of Trustees authorize all three readings of the Board Policy AD.BP Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities take place during the May 26, 2026, Board meeting.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

Trustee Nichol was absent for the vote.

MOVED BY Trustee O’Keefe:

That Board Policy AD.BP Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities be read for the first, second, and third time and be approved.

Trustee Nichol returned to the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

Trustee Hoffman requested clarity on the process to potentially move, that Attachment II be amended to include only the first two slides.

There was a short break in the meeting at 2:49 p.m., and it resumed at 2:51 p.m.

Board Chair Sumar explained Trustee Hoffman’s motion would be out of order, as it does not pertain to the question being debated.

The Board Chair called the question on the motion.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

4. Four-Year Education Plan
(Recommendation)

MOVED BY Trustee Kusiek:

That the Edmonton Public Schools’ 2026-30 Four-Year Education Plan: Year One be approved.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

There was a short break in the meeting at 3:58 p.m., and it resumed at 4:11 p.m.

5. 2026-27 School Year Budget
(Recommendation)

MOVED BY Trustee Nichol:

That the 2026–2027 Edmonton Public Schools budget, as outlined in Attachment IX, be approved.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

6. Waivers to Support the Policy Framework Review Project
(Recommendation)

MOVED BY Trustee Anderson:

That, for the 2026–2027 school year only, the Board of Trustees waive the requirement in Section 6.1 of the Trustees Handbook for the Policy Review Committee to present annual work plans to Caucus Committee and for public board approval by December 31; and that the Policy Review

Committee bring its 2026–2027 work plan directly to the Board of Trustees at the June 9, 2026 public board meeting.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

MOVED BY Trustee Anderson:

That, for the current review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review, the Board of Trustees waive the requirement to make the policy available on the Division website for a minimum of four weeks for public input.

(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)

7. Response to RFI to Follow-up on Seclusion Reporting in the 2025 AERR
(Response to Request for Information #002)

Information was provided in response to the Request for Information #002.

8. Caucus Committee Report
(Information)

Information was provided regarding the actions taken at the Caucus Committee meetings.

K. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports

No reports were submitted.

L. Trustees and Board Requests for Information

Trustee Anderson submitted a Request for Information regarding **Ministerial Order 34/2025, Education Act Amendments, and Bills 27/29 Impacts:**

This information request is to better understand the division's implementation, ongoing systems/processes, oversight, and potential impacts on students, families, and staff of Ministerial Order 34/2025, Education Act Amendments, and Bills 27 and 29. The questions below are intended to support transparency, identify emerging trends, clarify processes, and understand how standards, professional learning, and advisory structures are being considered or applied.

Ministerial Order 34/2025 Standards for the Selection, Availability and Access of School Literary Materials:

1. 1. Is guidance provided to principals on how to implement the Government of Alberta's Standards for Selection, Availability and Access of School Literary Materials, in addition to Administrative regulation, including the ongoing review of library collections? Is guidance provided around the use of Artificial Intelligence for the ongoing review?
2. How many review request forms have been submitted? Has this resulted in changes to what library materials are available?

For Alberta Education Act Amendment:

(Instruction dealing primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, and human sexuality)

1. Have community partners, including those who provide resources used by the division, been impacted? If so, how? Have we changed the number or nature of community partnerships that support this instruction?
2. What trend analysis could be conducted comparing participation rates under the new opt-in consent process with the previous opt-out model? Is the division monitoring for impacts on participation rates?

Bill 27 – Gender Identity-Related Chosen Name and/or Pronouns:

1. Regarding changes from previous practice, what are the major procedural/operational changes from previous practice? Is the Parental Notification and Consent Protocol publicly available? How were these changes communicated to schools and families?
2. In terms of consent forms, are parent/guardian consent forms being marked up or returned with comments? If so, what themes are emerging?
3. Concerning harm reduction, what mental health resources are available to support students who indicate concerns about parental notification? How are staff actively supported to minimize harm?

Bill 29 – Fairness in Sports:

1. Have any unique or innovative approaches to intramurals or clubs emerged in response to implementation that support diverse student participation?
2. Regarding parent confirmation form, how many refusals to complete the form have occurred? How many were marked up or returned with comments? What is the general nature of those comments? What does “maintaining forms” mean in practice (storage, retention)?
3. How many challenges have been received to date? What have been the results?
4. Is the Division or are schools tracking impacts on tryouts, team formation, or participation rates? Are there early trends or areas of concern?
5. How are staff actively supported to minimize harm?

For all orders, amendments, and bills noted above please answer these questions:

1. Standards and Best Practices:
 - a. In addition to the administrative regulations, are standards of practice/support or guidance for implementation developed and shared with schools?
 - b. Are staff provided with guiding principles (“green flags” positive ways to frame discussions) or decision-making flow charts?
2. Is intentional PL/PD planned or underway?
3. Is there an advisory board or committee or working group supporting implementation?
4. Does it represent a cross-section of interested and affected parties?

M. Notices of Motion

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

That the response to my request for information regarding Ministerial Order 34/2025, Education Act Amendments, and Bills 27/29 Impacts, be brought forward as an information report and placed on the agenda for discussion at the public board meeting following the completion of the report.

N. Meeting Dates

Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 2 p.m.

O. Adjournment

5:54 p.m. – The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Sadiq Sumar, Board Chair

Kelsey Duebel, Director Board and
Superintendent Relations

Date	June 9, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Ron Thompson, Superintendent of Schools
Subject	Student Senate 2025-2026 Work Plan Summary
Originator	Kelsey Duebel, Director Board and Superintendent Relations
Resource Staff	Sean Jones, Nancy Petersen, Wanas Radwan
Reference	April 4, 2016, Board Report - Engaged and Effective Governance, Strategic Services and Support to Schools October 4, 2016, Board Report—Strategic Plan Update: Student Senate 2016-17 Work Plan

ISSUE

The Student Senate is presenting their 2025-2026 work plan summary to the Board of Trustees.

KEY POINTS

- Student Senators created a [2025-2026 work plan](#). At the March 3, 2026, Board meeting, the Student Trustees shared a [work plan update](#).
- Student Senators formed three project groups.
- The project teams worked collaboratively to creatively address challenges and embrace new learning opportunities.

BACKGROUND

At the December 9, 2025, Board meeting, the Student Trustees presented the Student Senate 2025-2026 work plan. They also shared the three project groups that had been developed, including: A live event group, an information kit group, and a podcast group.

CURRENT SITUATION

At the March 3, 2026, Board meeting, the Student Trustees presented an update on the Student Senate 2025-2026 work plan. Since March 3, 2026, the Student Senate has held three meetings, with a focus on project work. On June 1, the Senators held their last meeting of this year to celebrate this year’s work and to provide input on the structure of Senate meetings and activities in the 2026-2027 school year.

During the 2025-2026 school year, each project group set objectives, timelines, action plans, budgets and evaluation strategies using a project planning guide to assist them. As they worked, unanticipated challenges

emerged that caused some project groups to modify their project plans and find creative solutions.

Responding to these challenges also provided senators with opportunity to practice:

- Navigating sensitive conversations.
- Assessing the potential benefits and risks of different options, and listening to diverse perspectives when making a decision about the best path forward.
- Embracing learning opportunities and sharing these insights with others.

Today, the Student Senate is excited to share the following projects:

- An Information Kit brochure that provides helpful resources for life after high school. Physical copies of this brochure were shared with Division high schools, and a digital copy is publicly available on the Student Senate website (StudentSenate.epsb.ca).
- Four podcast episodes with discussions that focus on the theme of student life, within and outside of school. These podcast episodes are publicly available on the [Division's YouTube channel](#), and the Student Senate website (StudentSenate.epsb.ca).

KD:wr

Date	June 9, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Ron Thompson, Superintendent of Schools
Subject	2026-2027 Non-resident and Special Needs Sponsorship Fees and 2027-2028 International Student Fees
Originator	Todd Burnstad, Chief Financial Officer
Resource Staff	Christopher Jette, Drew Horn, Jennifer Price, Madonna Proulx, Elizabeth Shen
Reference	Education Act Administrative Regulation HC.AR Student Admission and Enrolment Funding Manual for School Authorities 2026-2027

ISSUE

Administration prepares an annual recommendation report for the Board of Trustees regarding non-resident and special needs sponsorship fees. These fees are established each year to support cost recovery for educating non-resident students when Edmonton Public Schools does not receive provincial funding, or when another school division requests the Division to deliver programming for its resident students.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the proposed 2026–2027 Non-Alberta Resident Fees and Special Needs Sponsorship Fees, as detailed in Attachment I, be approved.
2. That the proposed 2027–2028 International Student Tuition Fee of \$13,500 and International Student Application Fee of \$250, as outlined in Attachment I, be approved.

BACKGROUND

Non-Alberta Resident Fees

The Division applies fees for students who are Canadian residents but whose parent(s) or court-appointed legal guardian(s) reside outside Alberta. As these students are not eligible for provincial per-student funding, fees are necessary to offset the cost of delivering educational programming.

Consistent with the prior year, in the 2025–2026 school year, Edmonton Public Schools enrolled two non-Alberta resident students from Nunavut.

The fee structure also includes a Distance Education Credit Enrolment Unit (CEU) fee for non-Alberta resident students. This fee aligns with the provincial funding rate for part-time distance education students, as outlined in the 2026–2027 Funding Manual.

For the 2026–2027 school year, administration proposes increasing the Non-Alberta Resident Fee to \$11,420 (an increase of 10 per cent). This fee is specifically calculated to reflect the per-student operational funding the Division would typically receive from the province for a resident student. By aligning the fee with the operational Funding per Adjusted Enrolment Method (AEM), we ensure that the cost of educating a non-Alberta resident student is fully covered and does not draw from resources intended for local Alberta students.

Non-Alberta and Alberta Resident Special Needs Sponsorship Fees

The Division enters into education service agreements (sponsorships) with other school divisions to provide programming for students with special needs. Programming costs vary depending on individual student needs and may include supports such as additional educational assistant time and transportation.

When eligible students from other Alberta school divisions are included in the Division’s enrolment count and provincial funding is received, the Alberta resident special needs sponsorship fee is reduced by the amount of the Non-Alberta Resident Fee (Attachment I).

In the current school year, Edmonton Public Schools is providing programming for:

- 14 sponsored special needs students
 - 12 from other Alberta school divisions
 - 2 from outside Alberta

Most of these students attend the Alberta School for the Deaf.

International Program Student Fees

The Division has over 30 years of experience delivering academic programming to international students:

- In the current school year, 31 schools hosted 234 students from 23 countries, including:
 - 207 full-year students
 - 27 partial-year students
- By grade level, enrolment includes:
 - Kindergarten - Grade 9: 55 students
 - Grades 10 - 12: 179 students

For the 2026 - 2027 school year, the expected intake is 245 to 270 students. To date, approximately 125 applications have been received, with 59 students accepted. Admissions decisions are based on program requirements, available space, and Edmonton address location.

International tuition fees are determined based on:

- English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming costs
- Required support services
- Division operating costs (e.g., staffing)
- Market conditions across Alberta and Canada

For the 2027–2028 school year, administration recommends no change to international student fees.

RELATED FACTS

- Sponsorship agreements enable the transfer of funds from the resident school division to Edmonton Public Schools to support high-needs programming, in addition to provincial funding.

- Sponsored special needs students from outside Alberta, as well as other non-resident students, are excluded from AEM enrolment calculations for provincial funding.
- Non-Alberta Resident and Special Needs Sponsorship fees are reviewed annually based on programming costs and funding rate changes.
- International student tuition fees are set two years in advance to support planning and communication with families.
- International Program tuition fees are allocated in a way that maximizes revenue for schools while also ensuring there are adequate financial resources to effectively administer the International Student Program.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The proposed fee structure is in alignment with Board Policy [HEC.BP Non-Resident Student Admission and Enrolment](#), and Administrative Regulation [HC.AR Student Admission and Enrolment](#).

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval, updated fee information will be communicated to Division staff through Connect, and International Student Program materials will be updated accordingly.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I 2026-2027 Proposed Non-Alberta Resident and Special Needs Sponsorship Fees
 2027-2028 Proposed International Student Tuition and Application Fees

TB: ja

Edmonton Public Schools
2026-2027 Proposed Non-Alberta Resident and Special Needs Sponsorship Fees
2027-2028 Proposed International Students Tuition and Application Fees

<u>FEE DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>2026-2027 Proposed Fees</u>	<u>2025-2026 Fee</u>	<u>Variance \$</u>	<u>Variance %</u>	<u>Notes</u>
NON-ALBERTA RESIDENT FEE					
Non-Alberta Resident Fee	\$ 11,420	\$ 10,400	1,020	10%	1
Distance Education/High School per credit enrolment unit (CEU)	212	\$ 206	6	3%	2
NON-ALBERTA RESIDENT SPECIAL NEEDS SPONSORSHIP FEE*					
<u>LEVEL OF SPECIALIZED LEARNING SUPPORTS (Grades Kindergarten - 12)</u>					
Moderate - frequently requires adult support (targeted)	\$ 12,253	\$ 11,896	357	3%	3
Severe - extensively dependent on adult support (specialized)	27,510	\$ 26,709	801	3%	3
Profound - constantly dependent on adult support (specialized)	38,662	\$ 37,536	1,126	3%	3
* Additional fees may be added to cover costs such as additional educational assistant time and transportation costs, this is determined on an individual student basis					
ALBERTA RESIDENT SPECIAL NEEDS SPONSORSHIP FEE*					
<u>LEVEL OF SPECIALIZED LEARNING SUPPORTS (Grades Kindergarten - 12)</u>					
Moderate - frequently requires adult support (targeted)	\$ 833	\$ 1,496	(663)	-44%	4
Severe - extensively dependent on adult support (specialized)	16,090	\$ 16,309	(219)	-1%	4
Profound - constantly dependent on adult support (specialized)	27,242	\$ 27,136	106	0%	4
* Additional fees may be added to cover costs such as additional educational assistant time and transportation costs, this is determined on an individual student basis					
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TUITION AND APPLICATION FEES					
<u>FEE DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>2027-2028 Proposed Fees</u>	<u>2026-2027 Fee</u>	<u>Variance \$</u>	<u>Variance %</u>	
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TUITION FEE	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	-	-	
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT APPLICATION FEE	250	\$ 250	-	-	

Notes

- 1 The proposed fee increase aligns program fees with changes to the government funding amount provided per student. Adjustments to provincial funding, along with rising costs for teachers, specialized staffing, and other essential supports, have increased overall program delivery costs. The proposed fee has been calculated to align with the projected 2026–2027 per-student operational funding amount.
- 2 The Distance Education/High School per credit enrolment unit (CEU) fee is equal to the funding rate as outlined in the 2026-2027 Funding Manual. The change from the previous year is due to a 3% increase in base rates, which was approved for the 2026 budget.
- 3 Non-Alberta Resident special needs sponsorship fees are calculated using the provincial base instruction funding rate of \$6,760, as outlined in Section I – Payment to School Authorities of the 2026–2027 Funding Manual. This amount is then multiplied by the same ratios the Division uses to determine internal Weighted Enrolment allocations for Division schools.
- 4 Special needs sponsorship fees for Alberta Residents is equal to the Non-Alberta Resident special needs sponsorship fee (note 2 above) less the Non-Alberta resident fee.

Date	June 9, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Trustee Nickela Anderson, Policy Review Committee, Chair Trustee Sarah Doll, Policy Review Committee Trustee Holly Nichol, Policy Review Committee Trustee Julie Kusiek, Policy Review Committee
Subject	Approval of the Policy Framework Review Project Plan and First Reading of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review
Resource Staff	Kelsey Duebel, Wanas Radwan
Reference	Policy Review Committee 2025-2026 Work Plan Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review

ISSUE

The Policy Review Committee (PRC) is presenting the Policy Framework Review Project plan to the Board of Trustees (the Board) for approval. The review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review (CH.BP) is the first stage of the multi-year Policy Framework Review Project. As such, this policy is also being presented for first reading.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Policy Framework Review Project Plan be approved as presented in Attachment I.**
- 2. That Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review be read for the first time.**

BACKGROUND

As part of their 2025-2026 Work Plan, the PRC is undertaking a multi-year Policy Framework Review Project (the Project). The PRC has developed a draft Project Plan (see Attachment I), which includes tentative timelines. These timelines will remain responsive to the scope of work that emerges as each policy is reviewed, and are therefore likely to change. Broadly, the draft Project Plan outlines three key phases:

- Phase 1 focuses on completing the review of CH.BP. The review of this policy is anticipated to be completed by November 2026.
- Phase 2 focuses on using the updated criteria in CH.BP to review all board policies, and identify potential revisions required. This full review of board policies is anticipated to be completed by October 2027.
- Phase 3 focuses on revising board policies. As the scope of work in Phase 3 is contingent on the outcome of Phase 2, the anticipated completion date is unknown. While revisions will be anticipated in the current Board's term, the work to complete the necessary revisions for all policies is expected to extend beyond the Board's four-year term.

To initiate this project, the PRC began a review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review (CH.BP). This policy outlines the criteria and format that must be used in the development of new policy or the review of existing policies.

- At the February 24, 2026, PRC meeting, Committee members identified potential opportunities for revising the criteria set out in CH.BP. The decision to move forward with a comprehensive review of CH.BP, prior to initiating the review of all board policies, was made at the March 18, 2026, PRC meeting.
- The PRC reviewed and refined revisions to the draft CH.BP policy at the April 7 and May 5, 2026, PRC meetings (see Attachments II and III). Broadly, these proposed changes focus on:
 - Updating the Purpose section to clearly articulate the intent of the policy and to identify the legislation and provincial direction that guides the Board’s mandated responsibility to establish and implement policy.
 - Supporting accountability by removing the Policy section and modifying broad belief statements into either purpose statements or actionable expectations that can be implemented by the Superintendent and reported on to the Board.
 - Revising the Expectations section to:
 - Remove repetition between Clause 1, which outlines why a policy may be created or revised, and Clause 2, which outlines the criteria for the content of all new and revised policies.
 - Streamline the criteria to support clarity and alignment with current practice. .
 - Update the format requirements to support consistency and clarity across all policies, specifically by:
 - Providing more detail on the intent of the Purpose section
 - Simplifying the Definitions and Expectations section descriptions
 - Removing the Policy section to shift board policy away from belief or philosophical statements toward clear purpose statements and actionable direction
 - Revising the Accountability section to support reporting expectations at the policy governance level (i.e., focused on the achievement of outcomes instead of implementation)
 - Narrowing the description of the References section to include only those references that directly impact how the policy is understood and implemented
 - Remove the requirement for seven year review cycle and replace with the intent to review all policies over the Board’s term, in alignment with the Policy Review Committee’s Terms of Reference
 - Clearly delineate the roles of the Board, the Policy Review Committee, and the Superintendent of Schools, while also articulating the interplay among these roles.
 - Clarify the purpose of each reading of a policy at public board and the requirements for when readings occur at public board.
 - Enable engagement practices to remain responsive to the unique nature of each policy.
 - Updating the Accountability section to clearly outline when CH.BP will be reviewed and how its implementation will be evaluated.
- As these potential changes to the policy are based on internal governance practices, engagement will focus on informing the public about the changes (see Attachment IV).

RELATED FACTS

- The Policy Framework Review Project Plan outlines three key phases of the project, including a review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review; a review of all board policies based on the Framework's criteria; and the initiation of revisions based on the findings of the review.
 - While the first two phases of the project are anticipated to be completed over the Board's term, the final phase (i.e., revisions to all policies) is expected to extend beyond the four year term.
- As a first phase of the proposed Policy Framework Review Project Plan, the PRC is completing a comprehensive review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review.
- As Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review supports internal Board governance practices, engagement will focus on informing the public about the changes.

OPTIONS

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

1. Approve the Policy Framework Review Project Plan and first reading of the policy.
2. Approve the Policy Framework Review Project Plan and provide the PRC with feedback to inform revision of the policy.
3. Provide the PRC with feedback to inform revision of the document(s) to support approval of the Policy Framework Review Project Plan and approval of first reading of the policy and at an upcoming Board meeting.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The timelines outlined in the Policy Framework Review Project Plan are dependent on the approval of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review. The criteria outlined in CH.BP will direct the second phase of the Project (i.e., the review of all board policies to identify potential revisions that will bring policies into alignment with CH.BP).

The Policy Framework Review Project Plan is a living document which, when required by legislation or Division needs, will evolve and remain responsive to emergent policy work.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of the recommendation report:

- The Policy Framework Review Project Plan will inform the planning of PRC meetings and workflow in the 2026-2027 year.
- In early fall 2026, Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review will be shared on various platforms to inform the public of proposed changes.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I	Policy Framework Review Project plan
ATTACHMENT II	CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review (Tracked)
ATTACHMENT III	CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review (Clean)
ATTACHMENT IV	Engagement Plan

NA: wr

Policy Framework Review Project

Project Title	2025-2029 Policy Framework Review Project
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1 | Overview

Background or Rationale

Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review provides direction around the development of new policies and updates to existing policies. The policy provides a criteria to ensure consistent policy development and review and outlines expectations for the format and scope of direction to be articulated in policy.

Currently, there is inconsistency in the format, scope, and adherence to criteria among existing board policies. As such, the PRC will undergo a multi-year Policy Framework Review Project, with the intent to:

- Streamline board policies and eliminate outdated, unnecessary or redundant policies.
- Improve efficiency for the policy review cycle of future Policy Review Committees.
- Enhance the effectiveness, clarity, and accountability of board policy.

Project Goals

Goal 1: Update Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review

- To initiate this project, the Policy Review Committee (PRC) will first undertake a comprehensive review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review (the Framework), to ensure it articulates clear and feasible criteria and expectations for policy development and review.

Goal 2: Review all policies and identify opportunities for revision

- Using the revised Framework, the PRC will then review all board policies to identify potential revisions to bring the policies into alignment with the updated criteria.

Goal 3: Complete revisions and necessary engagement to finalize updates

- Finally, the PRC will prioritize required revisions and begin updating board policies. During this last phase of the project, engagement opportunities will be made available to the public to support policy revisions.

Throughout this work, board policies requiring additional revisions beyond the scope of this project will be flagged for further revisions, and included in work plans for further review and public engagement.

Key Engagement Partners

Engagement plans will be developed with consideration to the required revisions identified for each policy. Engagement for multiple related policies may occur together to support efficiency and minimize engagement fatigue. Broadly, it is expected that the following education partners will be consulted throughout this project:

- Central staff subject matter experts across Division units.
- Division staff and students.
- Parents and families.
- Communities and community groups.

In alignment with the *Trustees' Handbook*, the PRC will keep the Board of Trustees (the Board) apprised of all work

initiated through the Policy Framework Review Project, and will recommend proposed policy revisions to the Board for approval. Consistent communication with, and regular feedback and input from, the Board will remain an essential part of this project.

2 | Project Phases

This is a living document, intended to provide a guide to support transparency and accountability. The phases and key objectives identified below will remain responsive to emerging contexts and Division needs.

PHASE 1: FEBRUARY 2026—November 2026 *[Tentative]*

Update Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review

At the end of this phase, the following goals should be reached:

- Identify potential revisions to the Framework. These revisions will be shared with the Board of Trustees for review and feedback, and will focus on the following outcomes:
 - Clarify the process for initiating and approving policy development and review.
 - Support responsive and appropriate opportunities for the public to provide feedback during the policy review process.
 - Update the criteria to support efficient, effective and transparent policy work.
- Begin to develop an engagement strategy for the review of this policy that outlines the scope and intent of required feedback.

Upon approval of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development Review, Phase 1 will be complete.

PHASE 2: NOVEMBER 2026—October 2027 *[Tentative]*

PHASE 2: Review all policies and identify opportunities for revision

At the end of this phase, the following goals should be reached:

- Complete a review of all board policies to determine alignment with the criteria set out in the Framework.
- Recommend policies for rescindment, merging, or revisions, as outlined below:

Rescindment

Rescindment is recommended when there is no clear necessity for the policy (i.e., it does not articulate board responsibility and/or is not aligned with the *Education Act*, associated regulations, or other relevant legislation). When rescindment is recommended, internal engagement is necessary to ensure that the rescindment of the policy does not create a gap in direction. As such, this recommendation is considered mid complexity.

Merging

When the direction in the policy is required (e.g., due to a legislated requirement), but streamlining would improve clarity, merging is recommended. Merging supports clarity by consolidating two or more policies into a single policy. In these cases, the policies whose content has been merged will be rescinded. As direction will be added and/or removed, external stakeholder engagement will likely be necessary. As such, this recommendation is considered high complexity.

Major revisions.

Major revisions are recommended when direction needs to be added to a policy (e.g., an Accountability statement

or an Expectations section) or when changes to existing direction are required. In these cases, external stakeholder engagement will likely be necessary. As such, this recommendation is considered high complexity.

PHASE 3: OCTOBER 2027—End date contingent on outcome of Phase 2 *[Tentative]*

The number of policies identified for revisions and the scope of the recommended revisions will influence the timelines for the policy project. As such, this is a living document with changes expected as more is learned through the review of each policy. Broadly, the following goals frame Phase 3 of the project:

- Streamline board policies and eliminate outdated, unnecessary or redundant policies.
- Improve efficiency for the policy review cycle for future Policy Review Committees.
- Enhance the effectiveness, clarity, and accountability of board policy.

Engage educational partners in the finalization of revisions to policies:

- Engagement will be tailored for each policy to support meaningful and authentic opportunities for education partners to share their input.

While this phase will be initiated in the current Board’s term, the work to revise existing policy is expected to extend beyond the Board’s four-year term.

CODE: CH.BP**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (28-01-2020)**TOPIC:** Framework for Policy Development and Review**ISSUE DATE:** (29-01-2020)**REVIEW YEAR:** (2019)*Black text indicates original content**Red text indicates new/revised content since the March 18, 2026, meeting*

PURPOSE

To provide clarity around the Board's **of Trustees' (the Board)** governance role through **this** policy and to create coherence and consistency across all board policy by establishing the Board's expectations for process, content ~~development, structure and format~~ to guide the development and review of policies.

To establish a transparent approach to policy development and regular review, with the meaningful involvement of partners in the education system.

To support effective and accountable governance, in alignment with the Board's Strategic Plan, the Four Year Education Plan, the *Education Act* and other relevant legislation.

~~The *Education Act* legislates that a board must establish policies respecting the provision of educational programs and services affecting student learning. The Board governs the Division through the adoption of carefully developed policies which have the force of local law applied to Edmonton Public Schools. Policies provide parameters on and guidance for the action of the Board, Trustees, the Superintendent of Schools, staff, students, electors and others with respect to Edmonton Public Schools.~~

DEFINITIONS

Administrative Regulations are the directions, procedures and assignment of responsibilities established by the Superintendent of Schools that direct the implementation of and achievement of desired outcomes of board policy and the operation of the Division.

~~Stakeholders~~ **Education Partners** are individuals and groups who are affected by a policy and have a vested interest in its implementation. ~~Stakeholders~~ Education partners may include, but are not limited to students, parents, staff, school councils, associations, unions, community members and organizations.

Policy is **the Board's** intent, **direction**, ~~belief~~, governing principles and expectations regarding specific areas of Board responsibility, formally adopted by a majority vote of the Board and intended to guide future actions.

~~Board Governance Policy~~ **Trustees' Handbook** is a policy that applies to the Board's own internal operations and expectations of its members which may also include specific directives and regulations for the Board and Trustees.

POLICY

The Board believes that a coherent, consistent and transparent approach to policy development and regular review will improve alignment with the Board's vision, mission and priorities, increase accountability and help translate the intention of the Board into actions for its students.

The Board is committed to making student learning its primary focus when meeting its responsibility to develop policy in keeping with the requirements of legislation and the values of the community. The Board believes that the development and review of policy is enhanced when the process allows for the meaningful involvement of staff, parents, students and other interested groups and persons:

When developing policy, the Board strives to achieve a balance between the responsibility of the Board to govern by the adoption of policy to guide the Division and the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools and school administrators to exercise professional expertise and judgment in the management of the Division by implementing policy.

EXPECTATIONS

The *Education Act* legislates that a board must establish policies respecting the provision of educational programs and services affecting student learning. The Board governs the Division through the adoption of carefully developed policies which have the force of local law applied to Edmonton Public Schools. Policies **set parameters and direction** ~~provide parameters on and guidance~~ for the action of the Board, Trustees, the Superintendent of Schools, staff, **and** students. ~~electors and others with respect to Edmonton Public Schools.~~

1. The Board may adopt new or revise existing policy to:
 - ~~a.~~ comply with legislative requirements and fulfill the Board's mandate.
 - ~~b.~~ give substance to the Board's vision, mission and priorities;
 - ~~c.~~ provide the Superintendent of Schools with parameters for the effective operation of the Division and to inform and guide actions of staff;
 - ~~d.~~ provide the Board of Trustees with parameters for effective Board governance; and
 - ~~e.~~ articulate the Division's culture and communicate the Board's values and philosophy to students, parents and the public.
 - a. A new policy will be proposed for development only in cases when direction cannot be articulated through the amendment of an existing policy.**
2. All ~~statements of board policy shall~~**will** meet the following criteria:
 - ~~a.~~ conform to the *Education Act* and regulations, policies and orders issued under the authority of the *Education Act*, and other relevant provincial and federal legislation;
 - ~~b.~~ support **the Board's Strategic Plan, the Board's Vision, Mission, and Priorities**
 - ~~c.~~ be consistent with other board policies;
 - ~~d.~~ create a framework within which the Superintendent of Schools can exercise professional judgment in discharging responsibility for the administration of the Division;
 - ~~e.~~ be broadly stated to provide guidance and the flexibility to address diverse situations while ensuring consistency across the system;
 - ~~c.~~ be capable of implementation, review and evaluation; ~~and~~
 - ~~d.~~ be developed and reviewed with appropriate ~~stakeholder~~ engagement, **in accordance with the International Association of Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation and Board policies relevant to engagement.** ~~in accordance with the Board's policy on stakeholder engagement, with due consideration for the contentiousness of the policy topic, its impact on student learning and wellness, and whether the policy is new~~

~~or expected to be significantly revised.~~

3. All board policies shall **will** have a consistent format and the following sections as appropriate:
 - a. Purpose
 - i. **Articulates the intent and rationale for the policy's development, including how its direction supports the Board in fulfilling its mandate, as outlined in the *Education Act*.** ~~include a purpose statement indicating the intent and rationale for the policy;~~
 - b. Definitions
 - i. **Defines terminology used in the policy to support accessibility and clarity.** ~~may include definitions of terminology used specific to the understanding of the policy statement;~~
 - c. Policy: ~~include statements of belief, values and philosophy or approach;~~
 - d. **Expectations**
 - i. ~~Expectations: may include statements of~~ **Provides direction for** specific expectations, outcomes or results to be achieved by the Board or by the Superintendent of Schools. ~~and the Administration;~~
 - e. Accountability
 - i. ~~include a statement of~~ **Outlines requirements for the reporting of progress toward the policy's intended outcomes. These requirements may include information on implementation and indicators as well as expectations for frequency of reporting to the Board.** ~~how the effectiveness of the policy implementation will be measured and reported to the Board; and~~
 - f. References
 - i. ~~include a listing of~~ **Lists relevant** references, including related legislation, policies and administrative regulations, that directly impact how the policy direction is understood and implemented. ~~pertinent to the understanding of the policy such as related legislation, policies and administrative regulations.~~
4. The Board shall ~~formally review each existing policy a minimum of every~~ **will strive to complete a formal review of all board policies over the Board's term.** ~~seven (7) years*, with the exception of:~~
 - a. ~~the Division Priorities, which the Board shall review at the beginning of its term;~~
 - i. ~~The Board's Division Priorities Committee shall assist the Board in this process by facilitating an open stakeholder consultation process and enveloping recommendations for the Board's consideration.~~
 - b. ~~board governance policies, also known as the Trustees' Handbook, which the Board shall review the year prior to a Board election in preparation for the newly elected Board of Trustees.~~

~~The Board shall be responsible for the development, review and approval of its board governance policies in the manner and frequency it deems necessary.~~

5. The decision to initiate a ~~policy change, that is, the development of a~~ new policy or the review of an existing board policy resides with the Board. ~~of Trustees.~~
 - a. A Trustee, a Board Committee, the Administration, or **a member of the public** ~~an individual or community delegation~~ may make suggestions for policy development or review of a board policy to the Board. The request for policy change must include a rationale for the request.
6. The Board's Policy Review Committee (PRC) shall ~~will~~ be responsible for assisting the Board in its policy role by:
 - a. **Bringing a work plan, including a preliminary budget, to a public board meeting for approval prior to December 31 of each year. Prior to this work plan being shared for approval, the PRC will:**
 - i. ~~g~~**Giving** advance notice of board policy review discussions and ~~providing~~ **giving** the Board the opportunity to give preliminary input. ~~prior to policy development or review.~~ **by p**
 - b. ~~o~~**Overseeing the development of new policy or the review of existing policies outlined in the work plan, review of proposed board policy changes** in accordance with this policy, ~~Framework for Policy Development and Review;~~

- c. Providing regular reports to Board on the status of policies coming up for and currently under review, including ; and any exploratory work initiated by the PRC to determine whether policy work not included in the annual work plan is recommended.
 - i. If the Policy Review Committee deems ~~that~~ the development of a new policy or the review of an existing policy not included in the annual work plan necessary, this work shall will must be initiated by a Board approved motion.
 - d. ~~Providing t~~The Board with shall be provided the opportunity to give preliminary guidance to the Policy Review Committee as to the desired intent of the policy change.
 - e. ~~r~~Recommending policies meeting the Board's expectations for policy to the Board for approval.
7. The Superintendent of Schools shall will be responsible for assisting the Board and the Policy Review Committee in their roles by assigning resources for drafting new and revised board policy for consideration in accordance with this policy ~~the Framework for Policy Development and Review~~. The draft should be accompanied by a Recommendation Report that provides:
- a. An overview of how the new or revised policy aligns with the criteria set out in this policy, and how it supports the Board's Strategic Plan and fiduciary duty.
 - b. ~~i~~Information on the process used and ~~stakeholders~~—engagement involved in the policy's development or review.
 - c. ~~a~~An analysis of intended and unintended consequences of the policy and.
 - d. ~~r~~Relevant supporting data that may be helpful to the understanding of the ~~Policy Review Committee~~ Board.
 - e. A summary of recommended reporting to meet accountability expectations outlined in the policy.
9. With the exception of ~~the Trustees' Handbook~~ board governance policies, every new policy or substantive change to the intent of an existing policy will receive three separate readings considerations by the Board. Board approval of the third reading is considered final approval of the policy. before the policy is finally approved. Not more than two considerations may be given at any one meeting unless the Trustees present at the meeting unanimously agree.
- a. Not more than two readings may be given at any one meeting unless the Trustees present at the meeting unanimously agree.
 - i. First reading Consideration: The proposed policy change is recommended by the Policy Review Committee to provide the Board the opportunity to seek clarification, request additional information and make suggestions for change.
 - ~~ii. After first consideration of a proposed policy change, the Policy Review Committee will oversee the updating of the draft policy as needed and request the Superintendent of Schools to circulate the draft policy for broad stakeholder review. At minimum, each policy shall be made available on the Division website for four weeks for stakeholder input.~~
 - iii. Second reading Consideration: The proposed policy, with changes as needed, is recommended by the Policy Review Committee to the Board for second reading consideration. At this stage, further suggestions for change or public engagement may be made by the Board. Amendments may be made.
 - iv. Third reading Consideration (Approval): The proposed policy, with changes as needed, is recommended by the Policy Review Committee to the Board for approval. The attached Recommendation Report will include information on the rationale for any recommended changes, or absence of changes.
 - b. The requirement for three separate readings is waived only in the following circumstances:
 - i. For policy revisions that are not deemed substantive by the Board (i.e., the intent of the existing policy has not changed).
 - ii. For omnibus updates to policies that support alignment with legislative requirements.
 - iii. For proposed rescindments.
 - c. The public will be engaged to provide input and/or feedback on the development of new policies; on substantive changes to the intent of an existing policy; or on proposed rescindments that result in substantive changes to Division direction or practice. The engagement will occur either before first reading or, where applicable, any time between readings prior to third reading.

- i. The Policy Review Committee will recommend a public engagement plan for Board approval. The engagement plan will at minimum outline what decisions will be informed by public input, appropriate methods for engagement, and at what point in the policy development and review process engagement is most appropriate.
 - ii. The Superintendent of Schools ~~or designate~~ will review and summarize the ~~feedback gathered stakeholder input received from education partners~~ and recommend any changes to the Policy Review Committee, as deemed necessary. The Policy Review Committee ~~shall~~ will review ~~the raw data and the summary of feedback, input received,~~ and consider any recommended changes.
10. ~~Only those statements meeting the Board's criteria for policy and approved by the Board as policy shall be recorded as board policy.~~
 11. The Superintendent of Schools ~~shall~~ will ensure that approved board policies and administrative regulations are available and accessible to staff, students, parents and the public on the Division's website.
 12. The Board ~~shall~~ will be responsible for implementing ~~the Trustees' Handbook~~ Board governance policies which governs the Board's own operations.
 13. The Superintendent of Schools ~~shall~~ will be responsible for implementing board policy through the establishment of administrative regulations. ~~and processes and assignment of responsibilities as needed.~~
 14. The Superintendent of Schools ~~shall~~ will report to the Board on the implementation of board policy on a regular basis. ~~Accordingly, the Board shall be inform~~ the Board of new administrative regulations and substantive changes to existing administrative regulations prior to these regulations being made public.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board will:

- Review this policy at least once during its term.
- Evaluate the implementation and efficacy of this policy annually, as part of the review cycle for all other policies.

The Board shall evaluate implementation of this policy on an annual basis as part of the Board's self-evaluation process.

~~*ADDENDUM The minimum seven year review cycle for existing policy shall be suspended for the duration of the Full Review of Board Policy Project, approximately three (3), years September 2015.~~

The Board approved the following motion January 31, 2012:

That the Board undertake a full review of all its policies and update them using a standard framework for process, content development, structure and format. That the review process and standard framework be developed by the Policy Review Committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

REFERENCES

AA.BP - Stakeholder Relations
 CH.AR - Policy Development and Review
 CHA.BP - Board Delegation of Authority
 IA.BP - Parent and Community Involvement
 Trustees' Handbook –~~Policy Review Committee Terms of Reference~~
 Education Act ~~Sections 53, 222~~

CODE: CH.BP

EFFECTIVE DATE: (28-01-2020)

TOPIC: Framework for Policy Development and Review

ISSUE DATE: (29-01-2020)

REVIEW YEAR: (2019)

PURPOSE

To provide clarity around the Board of Trustees' (the Board) governance role through this policy and to create coherence and consistency across all board policy by establishing the Board's expectations for process, content and format to guide the development and review of policies.

To establish a transparent approach to policy development and regular review, with the meaningful involvement of partners in the education system.

To support effective and accountable governance, in alignment with the Board's Strategic Plan, the Four Year Education Plan, the *Education Act* and other relevant legislation.

DEFINITIONS

Administrative Regulations are the directions, procedures and assignment of responsibilities established by the Superintendent of Schools that direct the implementation of and achievement of desired outcomes of board policy and the operation of the Division.

Education Partners are individuals and groups who are affected by a policy and have a vested interest in its implementation. Education partners may include, but are not limited to students, parents, staff, school councils, associations, unions, community members and organizations.

Policy is the Board's intent, direction, governing principles and expectations regarding specific areas of Board responsibility, formally adopted by a majority vote of the Board and intended to guide future actions.

Trustees' Handbook applies to the Board's own internal operations and expectations of its members which may also include specific directives and regulations for the Board and Trustees.

EXPECTATIONS

The *Education Act* legislates that a board must establish policies respecting the provision of educational programs and services affecting student learning. The Board governs the Division through the adoption of carefully developed policies which have the force of local law applied to Edmonton Public Schools. Policies set parameters and direction for the action of the Board, Trustees, the Superintendent of Schools, staff, and students.

1. The Board may adopt new or revise existing policy to comply with legislative requirements and fulfill the Board's mandate.
 - a. A new policy will be proposed for development only in cases when direction cannot be articulated through the amendment of an existing policy.
2. All board policy will meet the following criteria:
 - a. Conform to the *Education Act* and regulations, policies and orders issued under the authority of the *Education Act*, and other relevant provincial and federal legislation.
 - b. Support the Board's Strategic Plan.
 - c. Create a framework within which the Superintendent of Schools can exercise professional judgment in discharging responsibility for the administration of the Division.
 - c. Be capable of implementation, review and evaluation.
 - d. Be developed and reviewed with appropriate engagement, in accordance with the International Association of Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation and Board policies relevant to engagement.
3. All board policies will have a consistent format and the following sections:
 - a. Purpose
 - i. Articulates the intent and rationale for the policy's development, including how its direction supports the Board in fulfilling its mandate, as outlined in the *Education Act*.
 - b. Definitions
 - i. Defines terminology used in the policy to support accessibility and clarity.
 - c. Expectations
 - i. Provides direction for specific outcomes or results to be achieved by the Board or by the Superintendent of Schools.
 - d. Accountability
 - i. Outlines requirements for the reporting of progress toward the policy's intended outcomes. These requirements may include information on implementation and indicators as well as expectations for frequency of reporting to the Board.
 - e. References
 - i. Lists relevant references, including related legislation, policies and administrative regulations, that directly impact how the policy direction is understood and implemented.
5. The Board will strive to complete a formal review of all board policies over the Board's term.
6. The decision to initiate new policy or the review of an existing board policy resides with the Board.
7. The Board's Policy Review Committee (PRC) will be responsible for assisting the Board in its policy role by:
 - a. Bringing a work plan, including a preliminary budget, to a public board meeting for approval prior to December 31 of each year. Prior to this work plan being shared for approval, the PRC will:
 - i. Give advance notice of board policy review discussions and provide the Board the opportunity to give preliminary input.
 - b. Overseeing the development of new policy or the review of existing policies outlined in the work plan, in accordance with this policy.
 - c. Providing regular reports to Board on the status of policies coming up for and currently under review, including any exploratory work initiated by the PRC to determine whether policy work not included in the annual work plan is recommended.
 - i. If the Policy Review Committee deems the development of a new policy or the review of an existing policy not included in the annual work plan necessary, this work must be initiated by a Board approved motion.
 - d. Providing the Board with the opportunity to give guidance as to the desired intent of the policy change.

- e. Recommending policies meeting the Board's expectations for policy to the Board for approval.
7. The Superintendent of Schools will be responsible for assisting the Board and the Policy Review Committee in their roles by assigning resources for drafting new and revised board policy for consideration in accordance with this policy. The draft should be accompanied by a Recommendation Report that provides:
- a. An overview of how the new or revised policy aligns with the criteria set out in this policy, and how it supports the Board's Strategic Plan and fiduciary duty.
 - b. Information on the process used and engagement involved in the policy's development or review.
 - c. An analysis of intended and unintended consequences of the policy.
 - d. Relevant supporting data that may be helpful to the understanding of the Board.
 - e. A summary of recommended reporting to meet accountability expectations outlined in the policy.
8. With the exception of the *Trustees' Handbook*, every new policy or substantive change to the intent of an existing policy will receive three separate readings by the Board. Board approval of the third reading is considered final approval of the policy.
- a. Not more than two readings may be given at any one meeting unless the Trustees present at the meeting unanimously agree.
 - i. First reading: The proposed policy change is recommended by the Policy Review Committee to provide the Board the opportunity to seek clarification, request additional information and make suggestions for change.
 - ii. Second reading: The proposed policy, with changes as needed, is recommended by the Policy Review Committee to the Board for second reading. At this stage, further suggestions for change or public engagement may be made by the Board.
 - iii. Third reading (Approval): The proposed policy is recommended by the Policy Review Committee to the Board for approval. The attached Recommendation Report will include information on the rationale for any recommended changes, or absence of changes.
 - b. The requirement for three separate readings is waived only in the following circumstances:
 - i. For policy revisions that are not deemed substantive by the Board (i.e., the intent of the existing policy has not changed).
 - ii. For omnibus updates to policies that support alignment with legislative requirements.
 - iii. For proposed rescindments.
 - c. The public will be engaged to provide input and/or feedback on the development of new policies; on substantive changes to the intent of an existing policy; or on proposed rescindments that result in substantive changes to Division direction or practice. The engagement will occur either before first reading or, where applicable, any time between readings prior to third reading.
 - i. The Policy Review Committee will recommend a public engagement plan for Board approval. The engagement plan will at minimum outline what decisions will be informed by public input, appropriate methods for engagement, and at what point in the policy development and review process engagement is most appropriate.
 - ii. The Superintendent of Schools or designate will review and summarize the feedback gathered from education partners and recommend any changes to the Policy Review Committee, as deemed necessary. The Policy Review Committee will review the raw data and the summary of feedback, and consider any recommended changes.
9. The Superintendent of Schools will ensure that approved board policies and administrative regulations are available and accessible to staff, students, parents and the public on the Division's website.
10. The Board will be responsible for implementing the *Trustees' Handbook* which governs the Board's own operations.

11. The Superintendent of Schools will be responsible for implementing board policy through the establishment of administrative regulations.
12. The Superintendent of Schools will inform the Board of new administrative regulations and substantive changes to existing administrative regulations prior to these regulations being made public.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board will:

- Review this policy at least once during its term.
- Evaluate the implementation and efficacy of this policy annually, as part of the review cycle for all other policies.

REFERENCES

AA.BP - Stakeholder Relations

CH.AR - Policy Development and Review

CHA.BP - Board Delegation of Authority

IA.BP - Parent and Community Involvement

Trustees' Handbook

Education Act

Engagement Plan

Policy Review Committee (PRC)

Policy and Stage of Review

First reading of revised draft Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review.

Overview

- [Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review](#) (the Framework policy) provides direction around the Board of Trustees' (the Board) governance role to develop and implement policy.
- As part of the PRC's 2025-2026 Work Plan, the Committee completed a comprehensive review of this policy, and has recommended substantive changes to support clarity, accountability and engagement opportunities.
 - The recommendation report outlines the changes that have been made to the existing policy, as well as the proposed revised draft.

Purpose of Engagement

1. Who will be affected by the changes being proposed to the policy? How will they be affected?

The direction outlined in the Framework policy guides the Board and administration staff who support the Board's policy committee, in developing policies. It also provides expectations for the Superintendent of Schools to create and implement corresponding administrative regulations. Students, staff, families, and community are not directly involved in the processes to develop and review board policy, outside of public engagement opportunities, and are therefore not significantly impacted by changes to these processes through a revised CH.BP.

2. What is the risk of not engaging?

As these changes to the policy are considered substantial, there is a risk of lack of transparency and confusion if the EPSB students, staff, families, and community are not informed about the changes.

3. What level of participation should those affected/interested have?

As the direction in this policy directly impacts the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent of Schools, and administration who support the work of policy development and review, engagement that is intended to **inform** the public about the proposed changes, and the implications of these changes, is recommended. Specifically, the following should be shared with the public:

- Currently, the Framework policy limits engagement to the period of time after first reading. Engagement occurs for a minimum of four weeks, and is typically conducted through a survey.
 - The proposed changes to the Framework policy means that engagement may occur prior to first reading, or at any point before third reading, of a policy. Engagement will be tailored to meet the unique nature of each policy; this means that engagement may extend beyond four weeks, or may be reduced to a shorter time period and include the appropriate techniques for engagement for a particular policy.
- Currently, the Framework policy directs that each policy must have a Policy section, which includes "statements of beliefs, values and philosophy or approach."
 - The proposed changes to the Framework policy removes this section. Where appropriate, this content will be revised to articulate clear expectations that can be monitored, evaluated, and reported to the Board.

4. What are the decision points about or within the policy that could be informed by those affected/interested?

The PRC will seek input from the Board of Trustees to inform revisions to this policy. As part of this ongoing engagement, the PRC will collaborate with administration supporting the PRC to explore considerations that could

impact the feasibility of the proposed changes.

5. What does the Board need to know to inform these decisions?

- The level of detail that is required in policy to support the Superintendent of Schools in the development of administrative regulations while still supporting the flexibility necessary for site-based decision making.
- The anticipated resources and time required to create engagement opportunities, and how these considerations could impact the number of policies that are reviewed annually.

Proposed Engagement Plan

Key Education Partners	Engagement Approach	Engagement Method
Students	Inform	SchoolZone
Staff	Inform	Common message (principals) Division staff news (all staff)
Parents	Inform	SchoolZone
Community members	Inform	Social media posts EPSB.ca webpage content

Required Resources and Anticipated Costs

If this engagement plan is approved, administration will work with Communications to support the development of resources that can be shared in the engagement methods outlined above.

Tentative Timelines

- Based on tentative timelines, the first draft of the Framework policy is expected to be shared for first reading at the June 9, 2026, Board meeting. At this meeting, the finalized engagement plan will be shared.

Date	June 9, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Trustee Nickela Anderson, Chair, Policy Review Committee Trustee Sarah Doll, Policy Review Committee Trustee Julie Kusiek, Policy Review Committee Trustee Holly Nichol, Policy Review Committee
Subject	Policy Review Committee 2026-27 Work Plan and 2025-26 Work Plan Summary
Resource Staff	Kelsey Duebel, Wanas Radwan
Reference	2025-2026 Policy Review Committee Work Plan Trustees' Handbook , Section 6.1.3 - Board Committees, Policy Review Committee

ISSUE

The Policy Review Committee (PRC) is presenting its 2026-27 work plan to the Board of Trustees (the Board) for approval, along with a summary of the work completed by the PRC in the 2025-26 school year.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Policy Review Committee's 2026-27 work plan be approved.

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 Board approved the membership of the PRC at the October 31, 2026, organizational board meeting to assist the Board in the review, revision and development of Board policy. The PRC ensures that Board policies submitted for Board approval are in accordance with Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review. The PRC is responsible for developing and presenting to the Board an annual work plan. The PRC [2025-26 work plan](#) was approved at the February 10, 2026, Board meeting.

At the [May 26, 2026, public Board meeting](#), the following motion was approved to support a condensed timeline for the Policy Framework Review Project: "That, for the 2026–2027 school year only, the Board of Trustees waive the requirement in Section 6.1 of the Trustees Handbook for the Policy Review Committee to present annual work plans to Caucus Committee and for public board approval by December 31; and that the Policy Review Committee bring its 2026–2027 work plan directly to the Board of Trustees at the June 9, 2026 public board meeting."

2025-26 Work Plan Summary

Over the course of the 2025-26 school year, the PRC has undertaken the following work to accomplish its goals as set out in its annual work plan:

1. Policy Review and Revision

- **An annual review of Board Policy HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct:** Section 33 of the *Education Act* requires an annual review of the code of conduct for students. The PRC completed their annual review of this policy, with no proposed revisions. The completion of the review was approved at the [March 17, 2026, public Board meeting](#).
- **Alignment of board policies with new provincial privacy legislation:** An omnibus update of eight board policies that currently reference the repealed Alberta *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act* (FOIP) to align the policies with current Alberta privacy legislation was completed. The revisions were administrative in nature and did not change the intent or direction of any of the revised policies. The revisions were approved at the [April 14, 2026, public Board meeting](#).
- **Review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review:** To ensure that all board policies are clear, consistent, and in alignment with board policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review (CH.BP), the PRC initiated the multi-year Policy Framework Review Project. The PRC completed the first draft of the Project Plan for consideration and approval by the Board at the June 9, 2026 board meeting and completed its first draft of proposed revisions of CH.BP, for first reading at the June 9, 2026 board meeting.

RELATED FACTS

The 2026-2027 work plan addresses the following:

1. Policy Review and Revision

- **An annual review of Board Policy HG.BP 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 annual requirement, Board Policy HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct will be reviewed.
- **Alignment of board policies with Bill 25, the *Education Amendment Act, 2026*:** In May 2026, Bill 25 was passed into law and will come into effect in September 2026. To ensure compliance, all board policies will be reviewed and recommended for revision to support compliance, as required.
- **Update Board Policy CO.BP Fiscal Oversight and Accountability:** In May 2026, an opportunity to complete a minor revision to this policy to clarify approval of the appointment of an external auditor for the Division. The PRC will review this opportunity and potential revisions in the 2026-2027 school year.
- **Review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review:** The PRC will finalize the review and update of this policy, which began in the 2025-26 school year, to complete the first phase of the Policy Framework Review Project.
 - The approval of the revised Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review will initiate Phase 2 of the Policy Framework Review Project.

2. Multi-Year Policy Work

- The Policy Framework Review Project aims to accomplish the following goals:
 - Streamline board policies and eliminate outdated, unnecessary or redundant policies.
 - Improve efficiency for the policy review cycle of future Policy Review Committees.
 - Enhance the effectiveness, clarity, and accountability of board policy.
- In the 2026-27 school year, the PRC aims to:
 - Complete Phase 1 of the project plan (i.e., the review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review).
 - Begin Phase 2 of the project plan (i.e., review all board policies to identify revisions recommended to bring board policies into alignment with the revised criteria outlined board policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review).

OPTIONS

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

1. Approve the PRC 2026-27 work plan as written
2. Provide feedback and request changes be made to the PRC 2026-27 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 engagement with education partners and will involve a multi-year commitment.

NEXT STEPS

Policy review activities will proceed in alignment with the approved 2026-2027 work plan.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Policy Review Committee 2026-27 Work Plan

NA: wr

Policy Review Committee 2026-27 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 2026-27, 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 2026-27 school year. The Board of Trustees may direct the PRC to undertake emergent policy work through a motion at Caucus Committee or public Board, as appropriate.

ACTIVITIES

The Policy Review Committee (PRC) 2026-27 Work Plan includes the following:

Policy Review and Revision	
Policy	Summary
HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct	Annual review required under Section 33(3) of the <i>Education Act</i> .
Alignment of board policies with Bill 25, the <i>Education Amendment Act, 2026</i> .	Review all board policies to identify revisions required to align direction with Bill 25, the <i>Education Amendment Act, 2026</i> .
CO.BP Fiscal Oversight and Accountability	Minor revisions to clarify approval of the appointment of an external auditor for the Division.
CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review	Review the direction outlined in this policy and revise as needed to support the review of all board policies as part of the Policy Framework Review Project.

Multi-Year Policy Work	
Policy	Summary
Policy Framework Review Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review 	The PRC will undergo a review of all board policies to support alignment with the policy framework set out in Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review. This will include a scan of all board policies to ensure alignment with:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board’s legislative mandate as per the <i>Education Act</i> • The intended purpose, criteria, and format of board policy as outlined in CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review <p>This project aims to accomplish the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline board policies and eliminate outdated, unnecessary or redundant policies • Improve efficiency for the policy review cycle of future Policy Review Committees • Enhance the effectiveness, clarity, and accountability of board policy <p>The above work will identify opportunities to potentially rescind, consolidate, and revise board policies to support effective governance.</p> <p>The goals for the project in the 2026-27 school year will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the review of Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review. • Beginning the review of all board policies, based on the updated criteria outlined in Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review.
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SUPPORTING ACTIONS/INFORMATION REQUESTED FROM ADMINISTRATION

- Administration will support the Policy Review Committee in the planning and implementation of the activities outlined in this work plan, including policy review, public engagement, and the Policy Framework Review Project implementation. The committee may conduct public engagement in support of the review of many of the policies outlined in this work plan.

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.

Date	June 9, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Ron Thompson, Superintendent of Schools
Subject	Belonging and Safety Division Data
Originator	Nancy Petersen, Managing Director, Strategic Division Supports
Resource Staff	Zainab Azhar, Erin Faight, Zaki Hirabe, Kent Pharis, Andrea Volk, Jon Yin
Reference	Board Motion September 22, 2020: Edmonton Public Schools Model for the Collection of Race-Based Data

ISSUE

This report presents findings related to students' sense of belonging and safety across the Division.

KEY POINTS

- In the fall of 2022, the Division surveyed students around key areas of identity; 55,844 students participated in this survey.
- The information gathered through the survey supported conversations to enhance equity, helped to progress the work in support of anti-racism, reconciliation and equity across the Division and ultimately informed the development of Division resources and materials.
- The concepts of belonging and safety are foundational to school connection, academic success and well-being.
- To support a deeper understanding of how belonging and safety are experienced by students, the data from the extended student demographic was analyzed with Division data from the Youth Resilience Survey.
- This report provides the results of this analysis and articulates the Division's continued commitment to actions that will enhance belonging and safety for all students.

BACKGROUND

As part of the Division's commitment to anti-racism and equity, the Board of Trustees brought forward the following motion in the fall of 2020:

Given that collecting race based data is one necessary step in working to dismantle systemic racism and racial discrimination, the Edmonton Public School Board formally requests that Administration develop a model for the collection of race-based data in our Division, in consultation with communities in Edmonton impacted by racism.

To support the motion, a working group was established to develop an implementation strategy for an extended student demographic survey. This group examined a range of factors critical to this initiative, including such things as privacy legislation, survey design, student experience and a communications plan. In the fall of 2022 the Division reached out to students in Grades 4-12 and invited them to participate in the Extended Student Demographic Survey. The survey invited students to share more about themselves around the following:

- Indigenous identity
- Racial identity
- Ethnicity
- Religion or spiritual affiliation
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation (Grades 7–12 only)

A total of 55,844 participated in the survey, with these results being shared in a report at the June 6, 2023, Board meeting.

To support the ongoing evidence-based impact of the extended student demographic data, the Division took a number of steps that included:

- Examining research related to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Engaging with students, families, staff and members of the community.
- Looking at research that explores the feelings of belonging and safety within the context of school success.
- Exploring the potential analysis of the extended student demographic data with other data within the Division, the efficacy of this potential analysis and the opportunity for the Division to initiate action based on the results of this work.
- Building staff capacity and awareness.
- Taking actions to enhance student success.

CURRENT SITUATION

Belonging and safety are foundational to student success. Research shows that when students experience a strong sense of belonging and safety, they are more likely to experience positive academic outcomes, well-being and belonging.

This report presents findings from the analysis phase of the student demographic data work. In this phase, student demographic data was connected with Youth Resilience Survey (YRS) data to better understand how students experience belonging and safety across the Division.

The results from the analysis provide a clear foundation for action and reinforces the importance of the Division's responsibility to strengthen students' sense of belonging and safety.

Supporting this responsibility, the following areas of focus will help guide the next phase of this work:

- Building awareness and shared understanding across the Division.
- Listening to students to better understand their experiences.

- Supporting school-based reflection.
- Using data to guide decisions and actions at both the Division and school levels.
- Strengthening collaboration across school communities.

These areas of focus promote a coordinated and sustained approach to strengthening belonging and safety across the Division, within school cultures that support connection, inclusion and a sense of belonging for all students.

Creating environments where every student feels safe, valued and connected is a shared responsibility across the Division, supported by students, staff, families and community partners. Guided by student voice, the Division will continue to strengthen the conditions that support belonging and success.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I - Student Demographic Data Report: A closer look at belonging and safety across student identity groups

NP:np

Student Demographic Data Report

A closer look at belonging and safety
across student identity groups

May 2026

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Introduction

Creating learning environments where all students feel safe, valued and supported requires a clear understanding of students' experiences in school.

As part of its ongoing commitment to anti-racism, reconciliation and equity, the Division is working to deepen its understanding of these experiences and how they are shaped by students' diverse identities. This work is grounded in listening to students and learning from their perspectives, recognizing that student voice is essential to supporting their success.

Building on this foundational understanding, the Division examined student experiences through an equity lens to identify priority areas for deeper understanding and action. Belonging and safety emerged as central to this work because of the strong connection between these experiences and student well-being, engagement and success.

This report presents findings related to students' sense of belonging and safety across the Division. It identifies areas where student experiences differ and supports continued engagement, reflection and action.

Context

This work builds on the Division's [Anti-Racism, Reconciliation and Equity Action Plan](#), which identifies student demographic data as a key area of focus to improve understanding of Division students and inform actions that respond to their needs.

The Division's collection of student demographic data reflects a commitment to learning more about the students we serve and to using that information to guide action. This approach supports a data-informed understanding of student experiences, helping to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

This work supports the Division's commitment to anti-racism, reconciliation and equity, and is responsive to the Board of Trustees' [motion to collect race-based data](#).

Student Demographic Survey

The Division conducted the [Student Demographic Survey](#) (SDS) in November 2022. The survey was developed through consultation, research and planning, with careful consideration given to the information collected and how it would be used. Each question was designed to contribute to a clearer understanding of student perspectives and to support informed and responsive action.

The survey collected information about student identity, including Indigenous identity, racial identity, ethnicity, religion or spirituality, gender identity and, for students in Grades 7–12, sexual orientation. The results provide insight into the diversity of students and the identities represented across the Division. This data reflects a Division-wide perspective and is not intended to be used to draw conclusions about individual schools.

Following the release of the [survey results](#), demographic data was connected with other Division data to support a broader understanding of student experience at a system level.

About this report

This report presents findings from the analysis phase of the student demographic data work. In this phase, demographic data was connected with Youth Resilience Survey (YRS) data to better understand student experiences across the Division. The YRS provides insight into how students experience school, including their sense of belonging and safety.

Engagement with staff and Division leadership, along with research on student success, helped identify belonging and safety as key areas linked to student well-being, engagement and overall success.

The analysis focuses on learning more about how students experience belonging and safety across various identity groups.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Capture a Division-wide snapshot of students' experiences of belonging and safety.
- Build a shared understanding of belonging and safety across the Division.
- Enhance awareness of how students experience school.
- Guide responsive, data-informed actions to strengthen belonging and safety across the Division.

Belonging and safety

A foundation for student success

Belonging and safety are foundational to student success—and to creating welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments, as outlined in Section 33(1)(d) of the *Education Act*. Research shows that when students experience a strong sense of belonging and safety, they are more likely to experience positive academic outcomes, well-being and belonging.

When students feel safe and valued, they are more likely to engage in learning, build positive relationships and achieve success. Research consistently links a strong sense of belonging to improved academic achievement, mental health and overall engagement in learning (Allen et al., 2019; St-Amand et al., 2017; Ungar et al., 2019), and shows it can contribute to greater academic growth over time (TNTP, 2024).

These experiences are shaped by relationships, school climate and the broader conditions that influence how students experience connection, support and inclusion. Together, these factors reflect the overall culture of a school community and play a critical role in student success. Supporting belonging and safety is a shared responsibility among staff, students, families and community partners.

Understanding student experiences

Division data indicates that staff, students and families do not always share the same perceptions of belonging and safety. In general, staff and families respond more positively to these questions than

students. This highlights the importance of centering student voice and ensuring that student perspectives continue to inform how schools understand and respond to student needs.

Research and evidence from Canadian school jurisdictions indicate that student experiences are influenced by identity, including gender identity, race and ethnicity (Patte et al., 2021; Rodriguez & Wy, 2024; Graham et al., 2022; Viano & Truong, 2022). These experiences are shaped by a range of factors, including relationships at school, school climate and broader social conditions, and have important implications for student well-being, engagement and achievement (Korpershoek et al., 2020; Lacoë, 2013).

Recognizing how these factors shape student experiences is an important step in strengthening learning environments where all students feel safe, connected and supported.

Exploring the data

For the purpose of this analysis, the data source used for linkage to the student demographic data was the YRS. The YRS is a Division-wide initiative created in collaboration with Dr. Michael Ungar and the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University to support data-informed decisions on student mental health and well-being. The survey provides insights into factors that strengthen resilience among Grades 4 to 12 students, helping to inform interventions and strategies at both school and Division levels. Central supports, resources and professional learning opportunities support schools in using this data to strengthen student resilience and mental health. More detailed information is available in the [2023–24 Youth Resilience Survey Summary Report](#).

The YRS includes two questions about belonging and safety that were linked to student demographic variables:

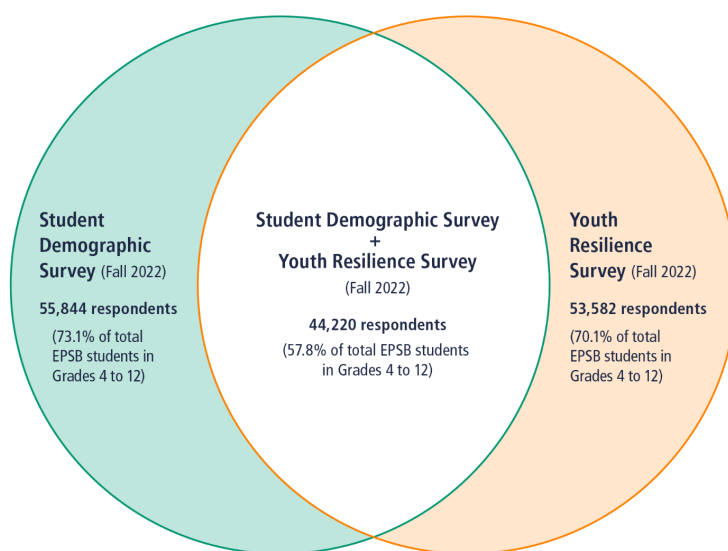
1. I feel like I belong at school.
2. I feel safe at my school.

These questions had possible responses of “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Neutral”, “Disagree”, and “Strongly Disagree”. For ease of interpretation, responses of “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” and those of “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” were collapsed into two categories, “Agree” and “Disagree”, respectively.

The results are presented with students in Grades 4 to 6 and Grades 7 to 12 grouped respectively, as the SDS differed between these two grade groups to accommodate different levels of understanding ([Student Demographic Survey questions](#)). The current analysis is focused on questions about racial identity (including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit identity), religious or spiritual affiliation, gender identity and, for students in Grades 7 to 12 only, sexual orientation.

Of the 55,844 students who completed the SDS (73.0 per cent of students enrolled in Grades 4 to 12), 44,220 (79.2 per cent) also completed the YRS in the fall of 2022.

The analysis in this report is based on the responses from the 44,220 students who responded to both surveys, representing 57.8 per cent of the 76,438 students enrolled in Grades 4 to 12 as of fall 2022.



Results

Opportunities for reflection

This report presents the results of an analysis examining how students' feelings of belonging and safety at school differ across demographic groups. As such, it is important to review the results in this report with the understanding that:

- The onus for change in inequities rests with the Division to take actions that further enhance belonging and safety for all students in school.
- Biases must be examined to ensure that students, families and communities are not further marginalized or stigmatized through reviewing and interpreting data.
- Disparities in student experiences are a reflection of societal and systemic inequities.
- Responses to disparities in student experiences must focus on strategies and initiatives to promote equitable institutional structures and practices.

We encourage readers to review the prompts below and keep them in mind when engaging with the results shared in this report.

Anti-bias prompts

- What might the data suggest about the experiences of students and their families?
- How does the data shift your thinking about systems and structures within the Division?
- How will you shift, maintain or deepen your focus on the Division's work and responsibilities?
- How might your bias influence how you interpret the data?
- What additional information is required to understand perspectives about educational experiences?
- Whose voices may not be represented in the data?
- What expectations did you have before engaging with the data?
- What are the questions that remain unanswered by the data?

We would like to acknowledge that the anti-bias prompt content has been developed based on the work of York Region District School Board through their Anti-Oppressive Framework developed for reporting on the Every Student Counts Survey.

Overall Division results

The following results provide the average agreement level to the two survey questions in focus for students who completed both the YRS and the SDS.



These results represent 44,220 students who completed both the YRS and the SDS. The results indicate that overall, there is the opportunity for the Division to take actions that will increase the number of students who experience a sense of belonging and safety at school. Results show that students’ sense of belonging and safety both decline as grade level increases. This pattern is consistent with existing research (Hughes et al., 2015; Neel & Fuligni, 2013; OECD, 2023).

Overall disparity

To better understand the extent of inequity experienced within racial identity groups, religious or spiritual groups, gender identities and sexual orientations, a “disparity measure” has been created. This measure gives a number that shows how much people in these groups differ in their feelings of belonging and safety at school.

**Disparity Measure (Percentage Point Difference [PPD]) =
group with highest % agreement – group with lowest % agreement**

In this report, disparity is measured by calculating the difference between the highest and lowest percentage of agreement within an identity group. Across all identity groups, disparities in agreement about feeling a sense of belonging at school range from 16.0 per cent to 30.2 per cent, and disparities in feelings of safety at school range from 13.0 per cent to 24.0 per cent. As students progress through school, both their sense of belonging and feelings of safety tend to decline. However, the disparities across groups tend to persist as students age.

Table 1. Disparity measures in feelings of belonging and safety at school within identity groups

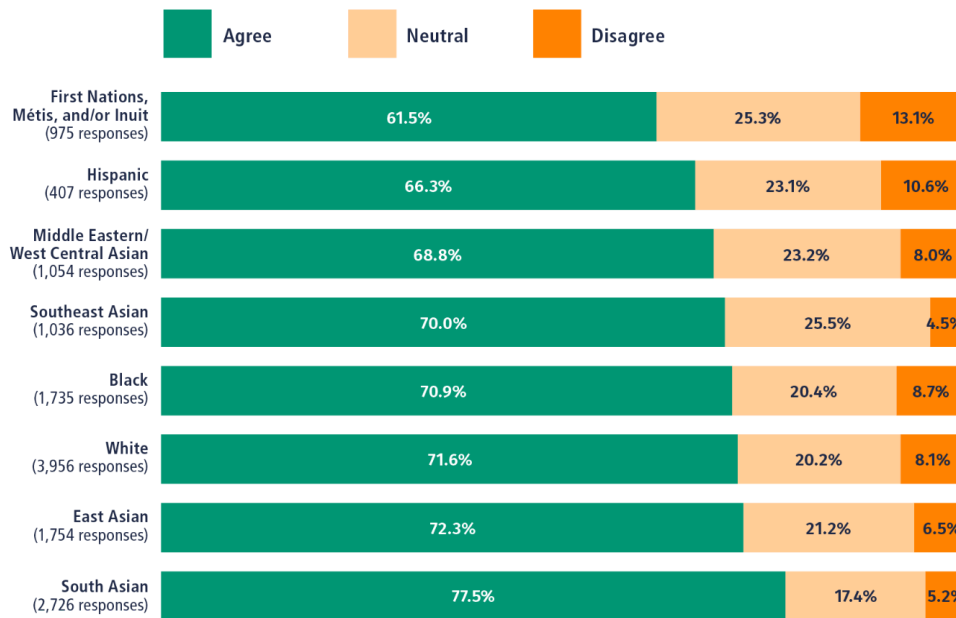
Identity group	“I feel I belong at school.”	“I feel safe at my school.”
Racial identity		
Grades 4 to 6	PPD: 16.0% Range: 61.2% to 77.5%	PPD: 13.0% Range: 70.1% to 83.1%
Grades 7 to 12	PPD: 20.5% Range: 45.2% to 65.7%	PPD: 13.9% Range: 54.6% to 68.5%
Religious or spiritual affiliation		
Grades 4 to 6	PPD: 23.8% Range: 56.2% to 80.0%	PPD: 17.5% Range: 67.2% to 84.7%
Grades 7 to 12	PPD: 24.1% Range: 45.0% to 69.1%	PPD: 18.6% Range: 52.1% to 70.7%
Gender identity		
Grades 4 to 6	PPD: 27.3% Range: 45.9% to 73.2%	PPD: 24.0% Range: 55.3% to 79.3%
Grades 7 to 12	PPD: 30.2% Range: 32.8% to 63.0%	PPD: 21.7% Range: 43.7% to 65.4%
Sexual orientation		
Grades 7 to 12	PPD: 25.8% Range: 35.7% to 61.5%	PPD: 20.3% Range: 44.3% to 64.6%

Results by identity group

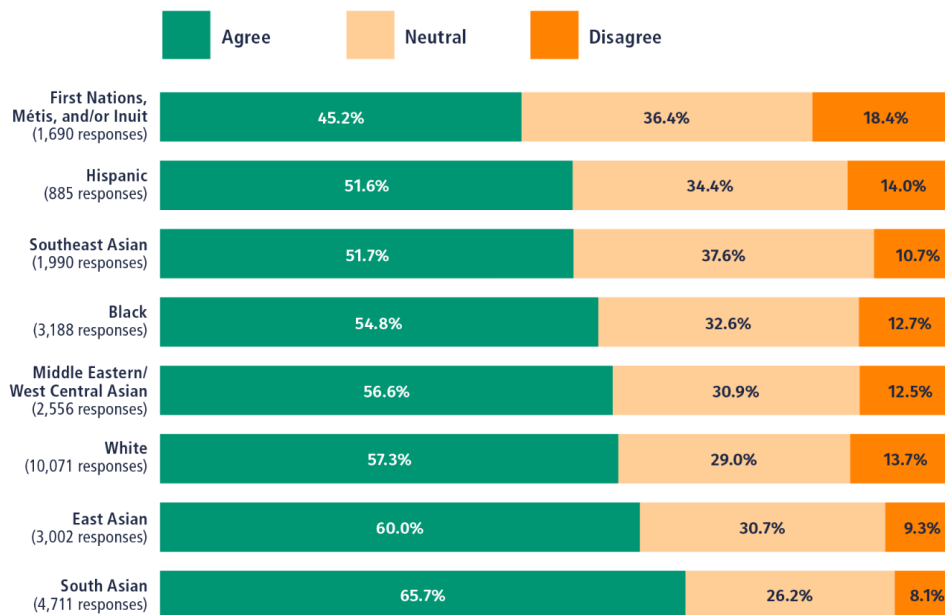
Racial identity

I feel like I belong at school.

I feel like I belong at school. (Grades 4 to 6)



I feel like I belong at school. (Grades 7 to 12)



Anti-bias prompt

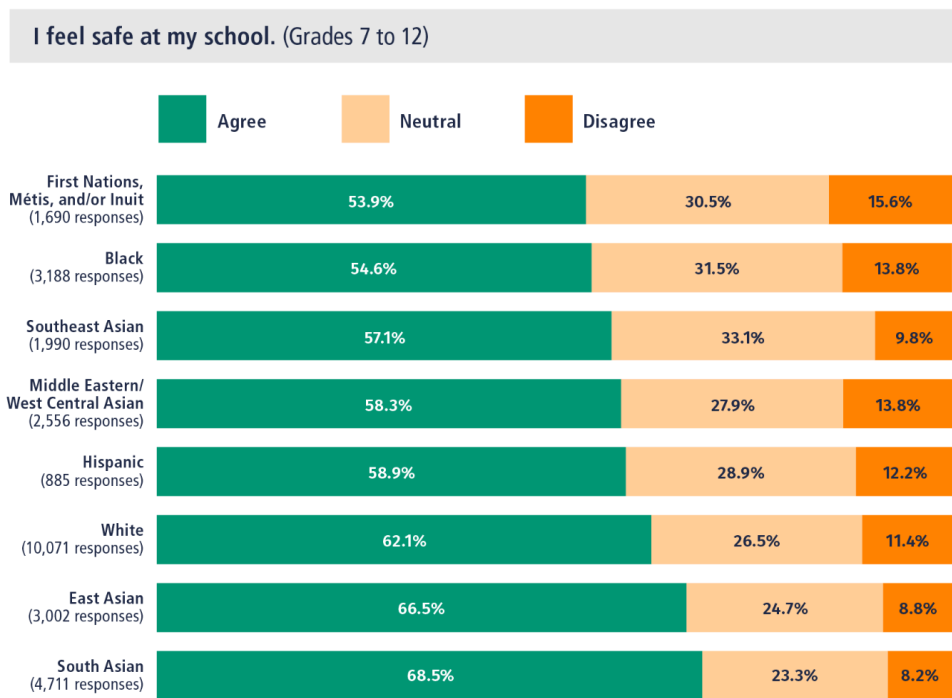
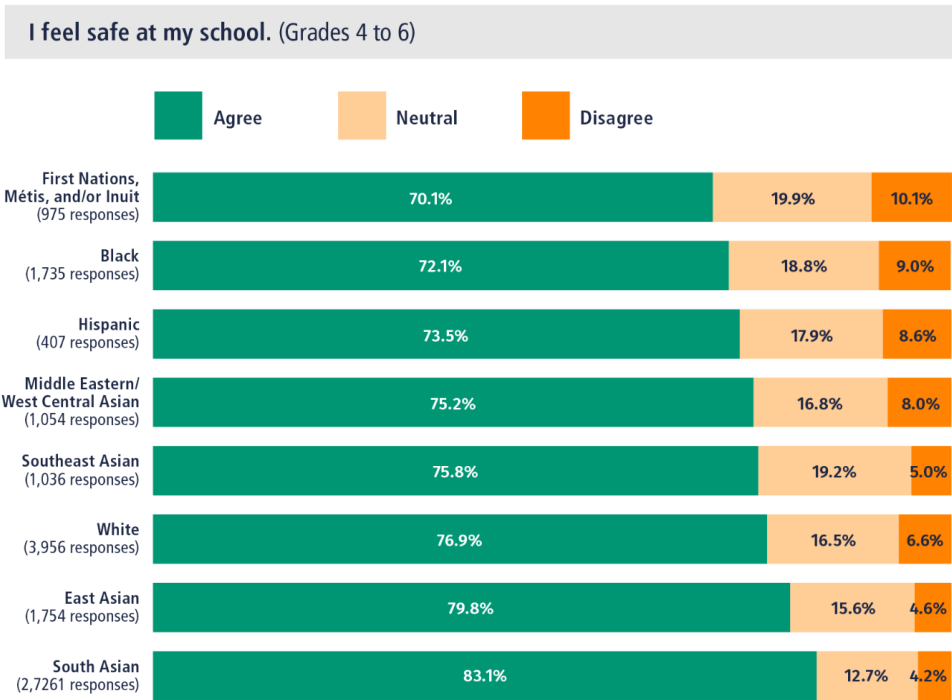
What else might I need to consider when reflecting on these results?

Example: What might the data suggest about the experiences of students and their families in the Division?

(See page 8 for more prompts)

Racial identity

I feel safe at my school.

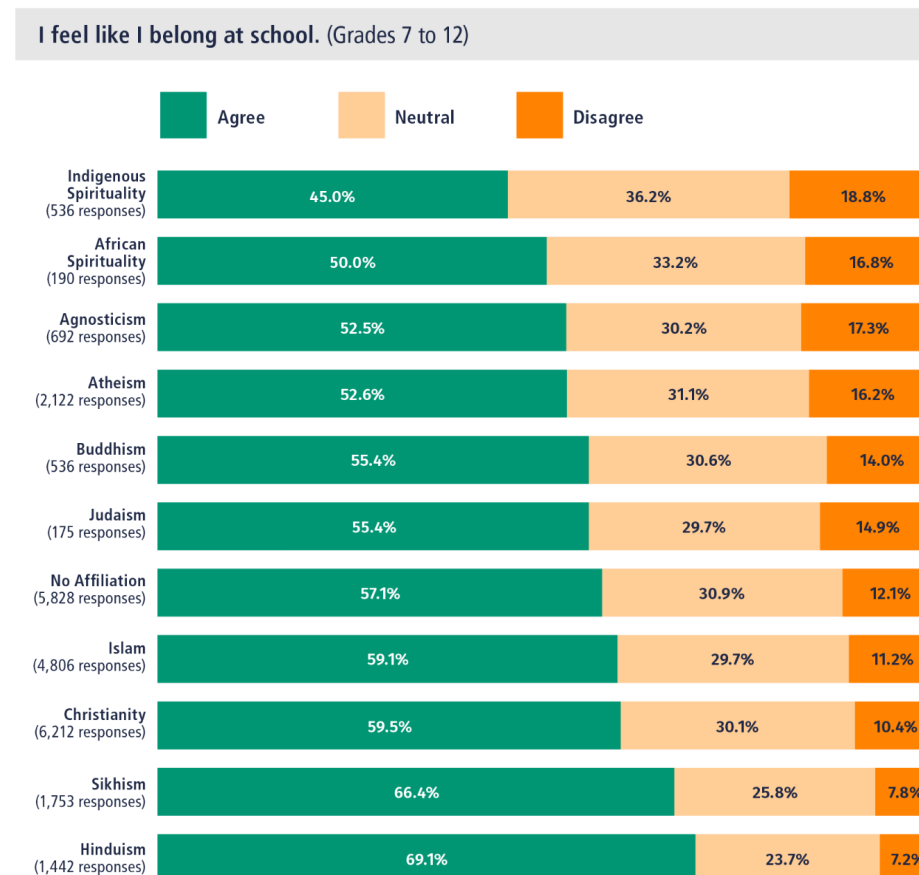
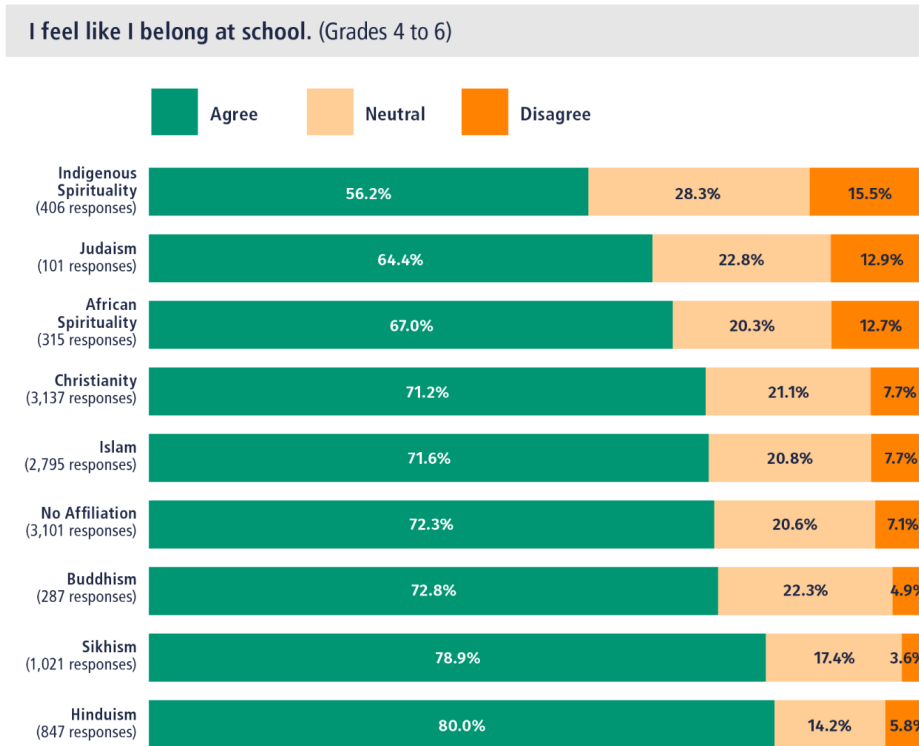


“Students can feel more open, proud and safe being who they are.”

—Student voice on their hopes for the demographic data collection project, June 2022

Religious or spiritual affiliation

I feel like I belong at school.



Anti-bias prompt

What else might I need to consider when reflecting on these results?

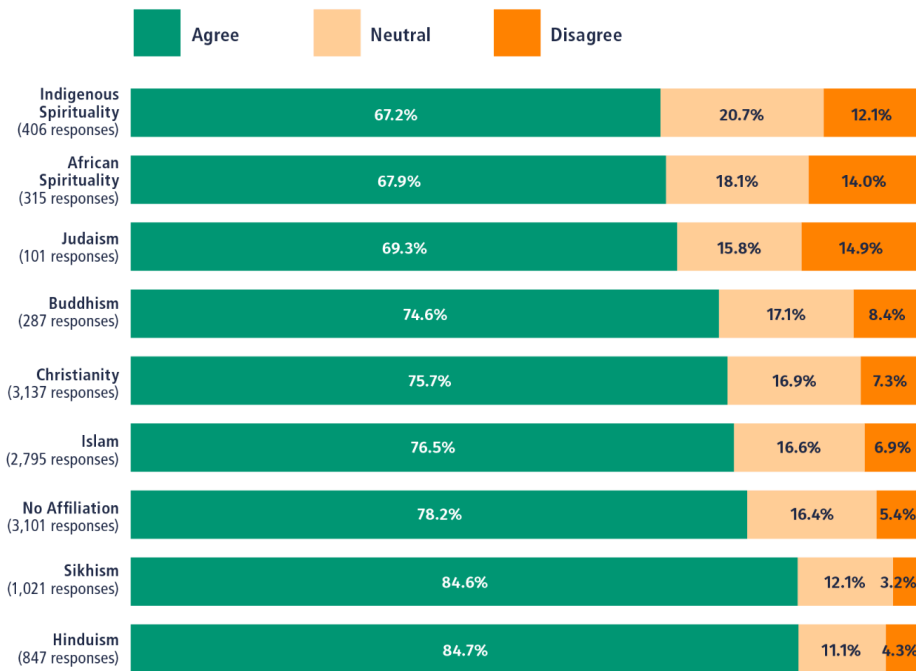
Example: How will you shift, maintain or deepen your focus on the Division's work and responsibilities?

(See page 8 for more prompts)

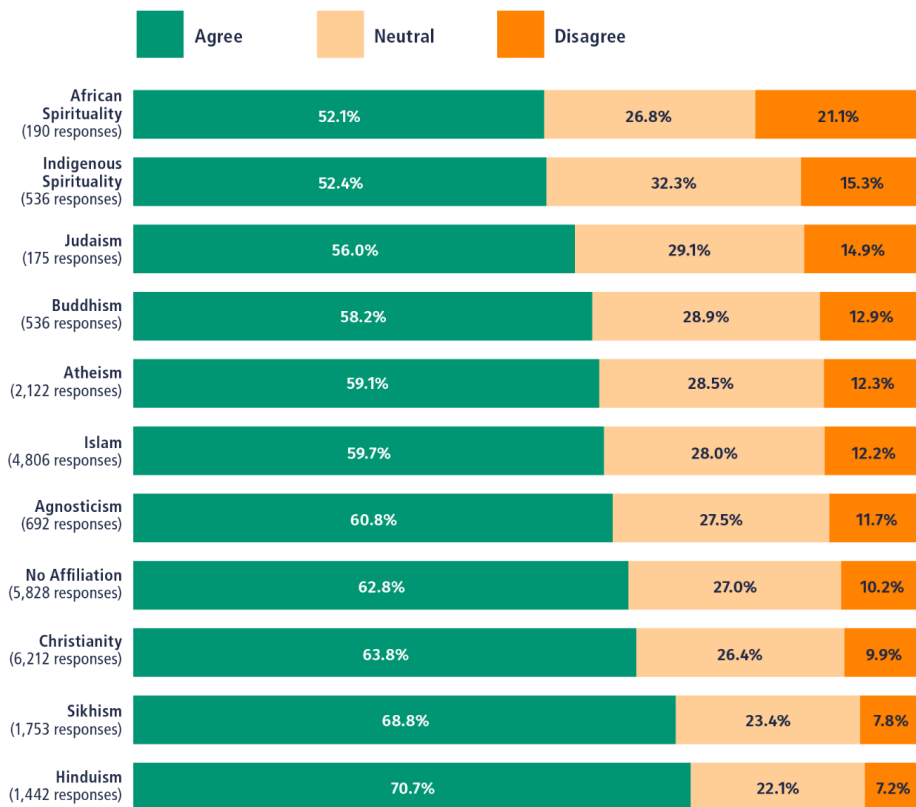
Religious or spiritual affiliation

I feel safe at my school.

I feel safe at my school. (Grades 4 to 6)



I feel safe at my school. (Grades 7 to 12)

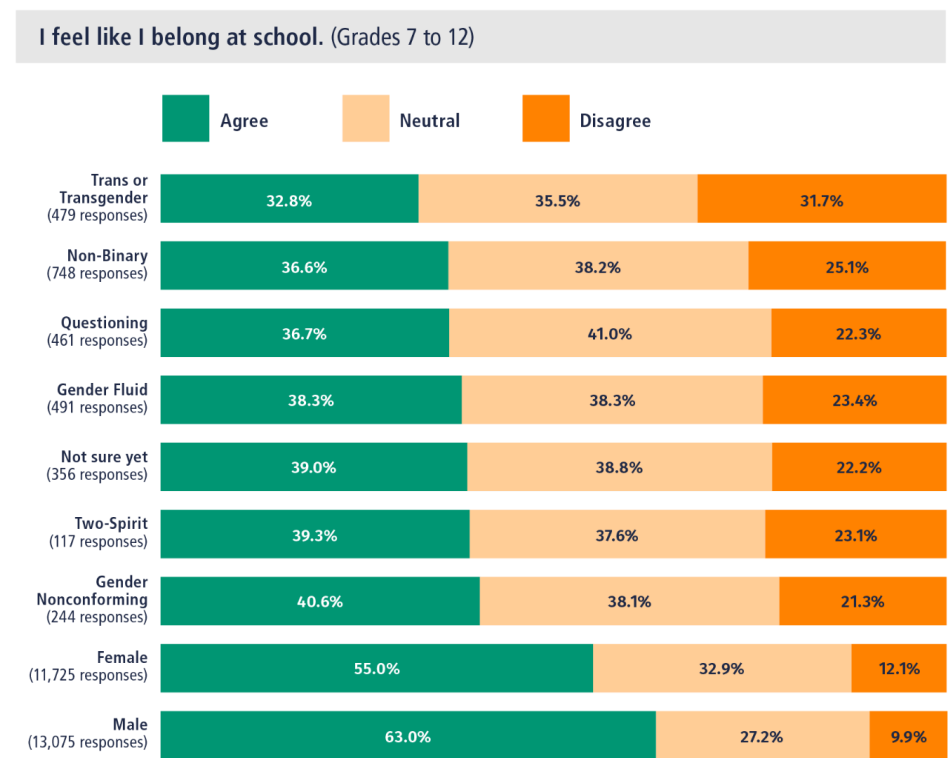
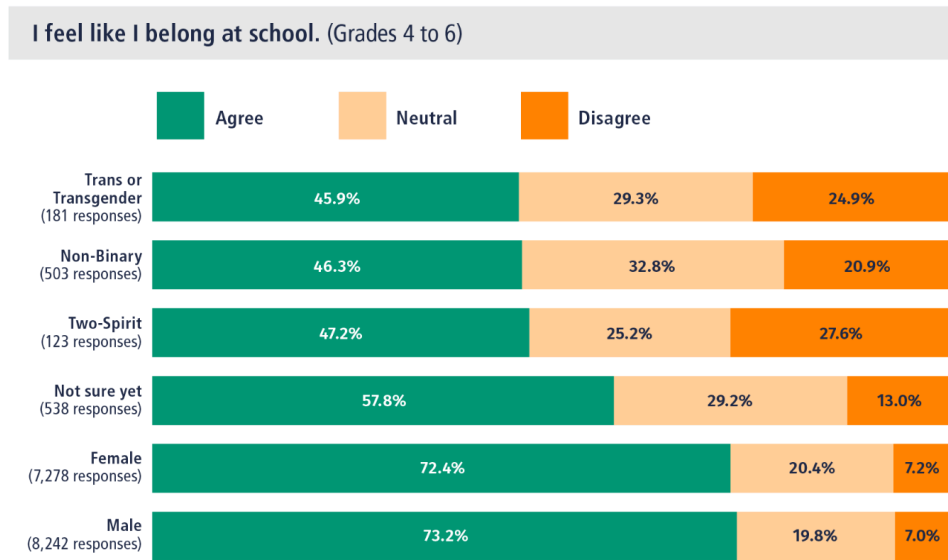


“A deep-seated hope is that students will feel a true sense of inclusion within the school community; they will feel heard and able to trust that those who heard will take action. Students will feel accepted within school buildings and develop a sense of inclusion and belonging.”

—Voice of Equity Advisory Committee about the demographic data collection project, March 2021

Gender identity

I feel like I belong at school.



Anti-bias prompt

What else might I need to consider when reflecting on these results?

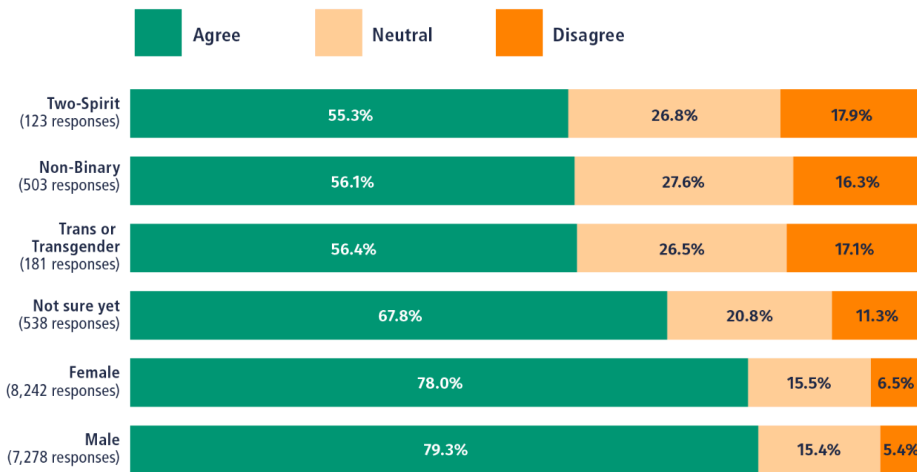
Example: What expectations did you have before engaging with the data?

(See page 8 for more prompts)

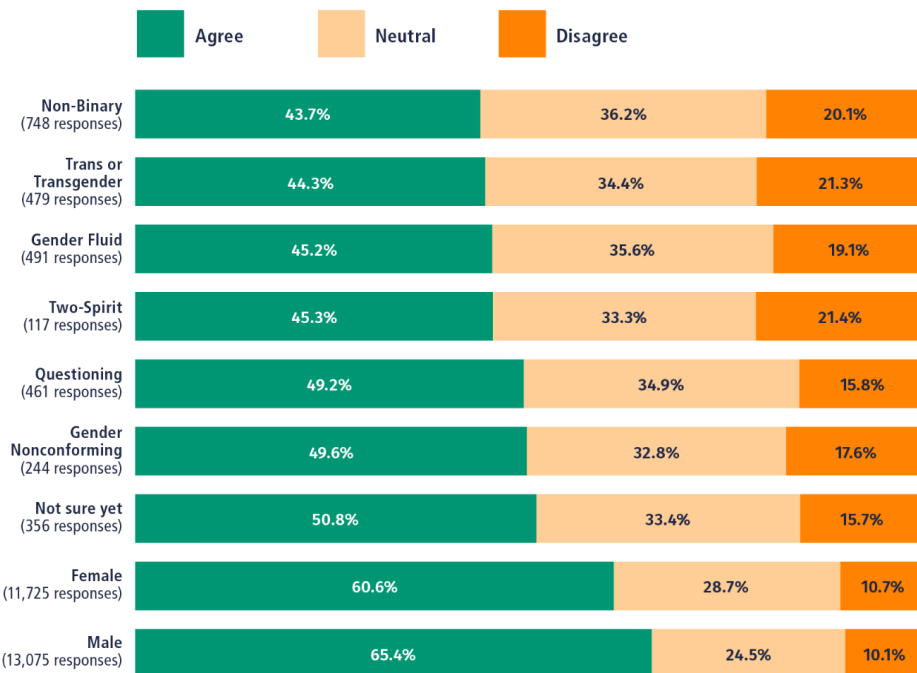
Gender identity

I feel safe at my school.

I feel safe at my school. (Grades 4 to 6)



I feel safe at my school. (Grades 7 to 12)

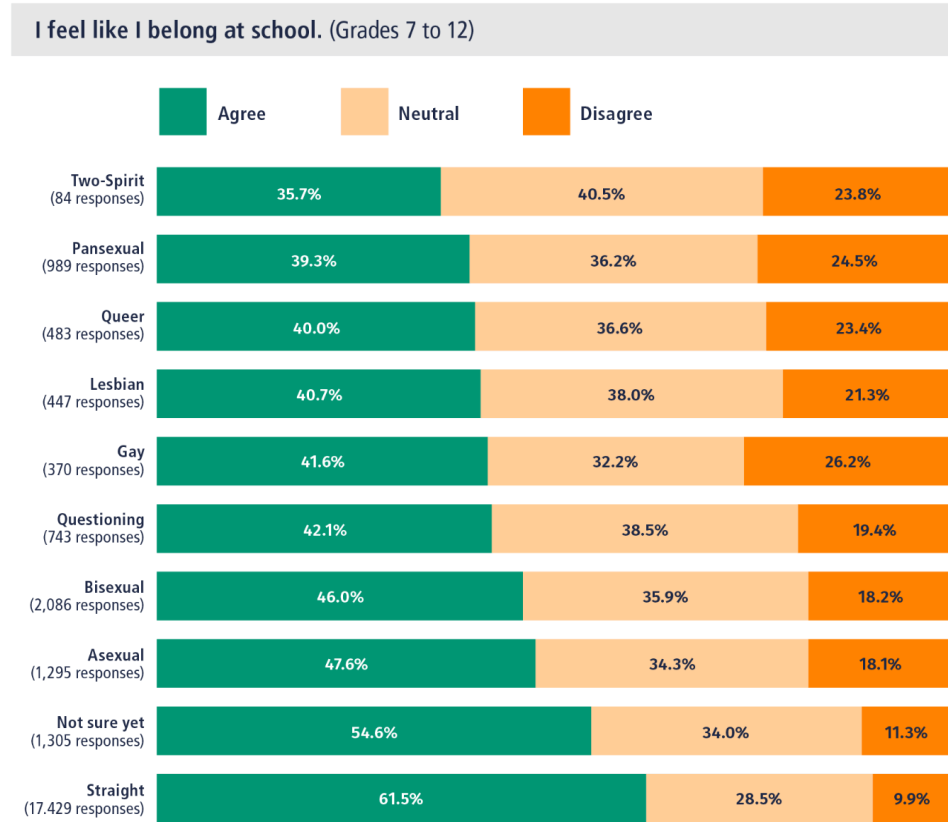


“I hope that everyone feels safe and can truly be themselves.”

—Student voice on their hopes for the demographic data collection project, June 2022

Sexual orientation

I feel like I belong at school. (Grades 7 to 12 only)



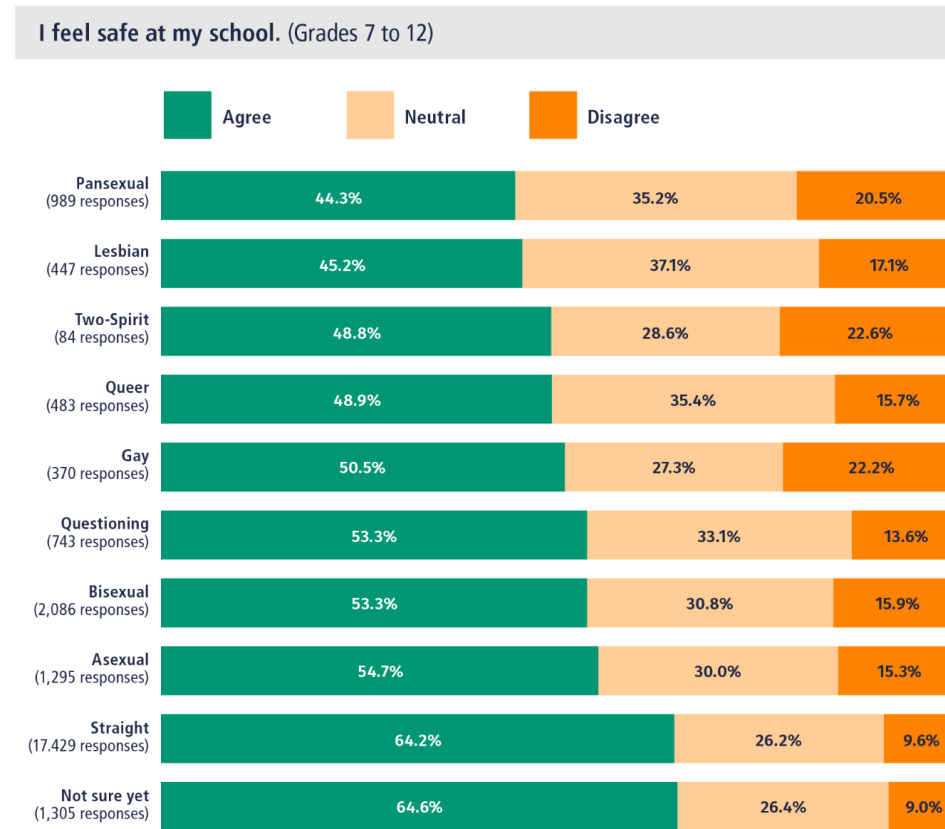
Anti-bias prompt

What else might I need to consider when reflecting on these results?

Example: What additional information is required to understand perspectives about educational experiences? (See page 8 for more prompts)

Sexual orientation

I feel safe at my school. (Grades 7 to 12 only)



“At the heart of all the focus group discussions is the aspiration that this work will lead to actual change. Change brought about with the intention of helping students to feel safe and comfortable with their teachers and school staff. All next steps taken need to be viewed with this lens.”

—Voice of Equity Advisory Committee, January 2021

We acknowledge that the results of this analysis contain difficult truths. If you are struggling as you read this report, please take the time you need to process the feelings that arise as a result of your reflections on the findings.

Moving forward

What we learned

This report represents an important step in understanding student experiences of belonging and safety across the Division. The findings reinforce the importance of understanding the relationships, school climate and broader conditions that shape students' daily experiences and sense of connection at school.

These findings show that students do not experience school in the same way, highlighting both strengths and areas where further action is needed to ensure every student feels connected to their school community.

Key areas of focus

This report provides a clear foundation for action and reinforces the Division's responsibility to strengthen students' sense of belonging and safety.

The next phase of this work focuses on applying these insights and continuing to learn from student experiences in ways that support consistent and responsive approaches across schools, while recognizing the unique context of each school community.

The following areas of focus will guide the next phase of this work:

- Building awareness and shared understanding across the Division.
- Listening to students to better understand their experiences.
- Supporting school-based reflection.
- Using data to guide decisions and actions at both the Division and school levels.
- Strengthening collaboration across school communities.

These areas of focus promote a coordinated and sustained approach to strengthening belonging and safety across the Division, within school cultures that support connection, inclusion and a sense of belonging for all students.

Creating environments where every student feels safe, valued and connected is a shared responsibility across the Division, supported by students, staff, families and community partners. Guided by student voice, the Division will continue to strengthen the conditions that support belonging and success.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the students who participated in this work and the staff who provided safe spaces for them to do so.

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Appendix

Glossary

This glossary is provided to clarify the identity categories featured in the graphs of this report. Note that these terms were used in a glossary of identity categories included in the SDS. Definitions for racial identity were embedded in the survey questions, while definitions for other identities were provided in a supplemental document for students to reference as needed during the survey.

Racial identity

The way in which a person sees oneself, or is perceived by others, as being part of a particular racial group. It is based on a socially constructed system of categorizing people into groups. For the purpose of the SDS, “race” is a social construct that groups people on the basis of perceived common ancestry and characteristics, oftentimes physical (e.g., skin colour, facial features), and affects how some people are perceived and treated.

Black: for example: African origins, Caribbean origins, North American origins

East Asian: for example: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese origins

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit is used to refer to the diversity of Indigenous peoples. This diversity is represented in part through the different languages, communities and groups of the Indigenous peoples in Canada

Hispanic and/or Latino/Latina/Latinx: for example: Central American origins, South American origins, Spanish origins

Middle Eastern/West Central Asian: for example: Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi, Lebanese, Syrian origins

South Asian: for example: Bangladeshi, Indian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan origins

Southeast Asian: for example: Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese origins

White: for example: British Isles origins, European origins, Oceanic origins

Religion or spiritual affiliation

Religion has been defined as being personal convictions or beliefs connected to an individual's spiritual faith. If a person does not follow any religion or spiritual affiliations, the following definitions may be helpful.

Agnostic: An agnostic is someone who doesn't know if any gods exist. It is different from atheism, in that atheism is about what a person 'believes' - that is, not believing in any religion. Agnosticism is about whether one 'knows' that a god exists or not

Atheist: An atheist is someone who does not believe in any god or gods

Gender identity

Gender Identity is each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person's sense of being a female, a male, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their gender assigned at birth. 1 Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of people.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity, sex assigned at birth, and physical body align

Gender fluid: A person whose gender identity shifts between masculine, feminine, non-binary or other labels moment to moment

Gender non-conforming: A person whose gender expression does not follow traditional gender presentation of their sex assigned at birth. Or, an umbrella term for a person who identifies outside of the male/female gender binary

Non-binary: A person whose gender identity does not align with the male/female binary. Non-binary people may redefine gender, identify as non-gendered, multiple genders, or an alternate gender

Questioning: A person who is not cisgender but may feel unsure of their gender identity. This can also describe someone who feels that none of the existing labels truly describe their gender identity

Trans/Transgender: A person whose gender identity or expression differs from their sex assigned at birth and/or physical bodies

Two-spirit: An identity for Indigenous people who also identify as sexual or gender diverse. Some Indigenous people use this term instead of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, etc.

Not sure yet: I have not thought about this much and/or an answer does not come to mind

Sexual orientation (Grades 7 to 12 only)

Feelings of attraction, behavior, intimacy or emotion that influence intimacy or relationships with other people.

Asexual: A person who does not experience desire for sexual or physical interactions, or may experience a lowered spectrum of sexual or physical desire

Bisexual: A person who is attracted to people of the same gender and people of another gender (Bi meaning two)

Gay: An umbrella term to describe people who are attracted to people of the same gender. For example, a male who is physically and emotionally attracted to other males, or a female who is physically and emotionally attracted to other females

Lesbian: A female who is physically and emotionally attracted to other females

Pansexual: A person who is physically and emotionally attracted to people of many different gender identities. This term reaches beyond the male/female binary and is related to attraction to someone's personality regardless of gender

Queer: An umbrella term to describe sexual and gender diverse identities and communities. This term was historically derogatory, but it has been reclaimed by many in the community and is now used in positive ways

Questioning: A person who is not heterosexual but may feel unsure of their sexual orientation. This can also describe someone who feels that none of the existing labels truly describe the way they experience attraction

Straight/Heterosexual: A person whose attraction is understood as opposite within the male/female binary. A male who is attracted to females, or a female who is attracted to males

Two-spirit: An identity for some Indigenous people who also identify as sexual or gender diverse. Some Indigenous people use this term instead of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, etc.

Not sure yet: I have not thought about this much and/or an answer does not come to mind