

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 14, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Linkages Committee Draft Terms of Reference
ORIGINATOR: T. Parker, Assistant Superintendent
RESOURCE
STAFF: Karen Bardy

RECOMMENDATION

That the Linkages Committee Draft Terms of Reference (Appendix I) be approved in principle.

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Linkages Committee members agreed they would discuss the Draft Terms of Reference document with their boards prior to the winter break.

Trustee MacKenzie, Linkages Committee member, has requested the Draft Terms of Reference be brought to public board for “approval in principle”.

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APPENDIX I Linkages Committee Draft Terms of Reference

**Linkages Committee
Terms of Reference:
May 2010**

Background:

The Capital Region Services to Children Linkages Committee (Linkages) was instituted to provide a regional forum for governing bodies involved with services to children, youth and families to meet as equal partners to share information, adopt strategic directions, and facilitate improved collaboration. The intent of Linkages is to promote the regional delivery of family-centred, child/youth-focused, coordinated care when needs of individuals and families extend beyond what one organization or sector can provide and to reduce fiscal, attitudinal and organizational barriers to coordinated service delivery.

The Joint Action for Children Committee (JACC) was also instituted to improve outcomes for children through coordinated, collective action. The JACC goal *"to improve the health and educational potential for all children by building on the capacity of children and their families to make healthy choices within supportive environments"* has remained as the focus for this administrative committee that is aligned with the work of Linkages.

Linkages provides a forum that creates opportunities to gain a better understanding of the needs of children, youth and families from multiple perspectives including member organization's roles, mandates and current programming. In the Edmonton Region, representatives are invited from administration within the 13 school districts, Alberta Health Services (Edmonton Zone) including mental health and addictions, Region 6 Child and Family Services, the Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security, City of Edmonton Community Services, municipalities and FCSS to identify and collectively action strategies to improve coordination of services.

The shared commitment of these two committees (Linkages and JACC) to achieving better outcomes for children, youth and families in the Capital Region is premised on creating and fostering strong partnerships at all organizational levels, from governance bodies through front line staff. This collective commitment and action is essential to effective implementation of collaborative action toward achieving agreed upon strategic priorities.

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Vision

Children, youth and families within Region 6/the Edmonton zone will have access to coordinated services that optimize their health, education and achievement within the home, school and community.

Mission

Children and youth will have access to the right services and supports when needed, incorporating family voice and choice, while utilizing effectively planned, coordinated and evaluated cross-sector services when their needs extend beyond the capacity of a single system to provide.

Purpose:

Endorsement of the vision and mission indicates the commitment of the signatory governing organizations to build on the work of the Linkages Committee to further empower their organizations in promoting the well being of the children, youth and families of Alberta's Capital Region.

Successful collaboration will:

- (1) enhance the capacity and performance of each organization in achieving their individual and collective mandates, e.g., early childhood development and
- (2) enable partnerships of shared expertise and resources to be established that support the community in anticipating and responding to emergent and future challenges to the success and well being of our children and youth.

Beliefs:

Signatory organizations believe that:

- The development of children and youth is the shared responsibility of individuals, their family, caregivers and the community.
- Providing coordinated services and support for vulnerable children, youth and families will assist them in achieving their full potential as healthy, functioning individuals, family members, and citizens of our communities.
- Preventative supports early in each stage of development can reduce more challenging and costly interventions later.
- Supporting the development of stronger families enables them to provide for the safety, health, and success in learning of their children
- Collaboration between organizations within the region builds capacity and improves outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families.
- The way we raise and care for our children and youth today, shapes our communities' future.

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Guiding Principles:

The Terms of Reference of the Linkages Committee provide the foundation for the relationship between governing bodies. The Terms of Reference of the Joint Action Committee For Children in the Capital Region Council provide the foundation for relationships that harness and direct the resources of the signatory organizations. Acceptance of the Linkages Terms of Reference indicates that the participating organizations are willing to identify shared priorities and collaborative actions towards achieving established priorities, including performance evaluation of these collaborative actions.

The autonomy of each organization and their right and responsibility to execute their respective mandates is recognized and respected.

Opportunities for collaboration are voluntary and non-exclusive. Information sharing is encouraged to build capacity and community support.

Evidence-based decision-making and sound performance measurement will assist in the wise use of resources and development of best practices.

Voluntary sharing of resources and expertise is expected to be flexible, efficient, effective, and financially responsible.

Pilot projects encourage innovation and provide opportunities for learning to enhance outcomes.

Commitments:

Each signatory organization will:

- designate a representative and/or alternate to the Linkages Committee
- ensure an update on the Linkages Committee is a regular agenda item for the appropriate meeting(s) of its own organization.
- participate in the development or reaffirmation of a shared set of priorities for collective action. This contribution may include the organization committing to analysis of social, demographic, economic and other reports produced about the residents, children, and youth of the Capital Region, business plans or statements of priorities of other signatory organizations, or other materials identified by the Linkages Committee or JACC.
- participate in the development and delivery of communication strategies to raise community and provincial government awareness and decision-maker support for the collective capacity of Linkages to address regional challenges affecting children, youth and families
- advise annually at the Linkages Committee, and through members own annual reports, about its involvement in the identified priorities, actions taken, resources

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expended, performance and results achieved. The Linkages Committee also will submit to appropriate Ministers an annual summary of the identified priorities and subsequent actions.

For joint initiatives in which member organizations chose to participate, collective resources expended and results achieved will be reported at Linkages and in the annual report to various ministries.

Outcomes:

- Improved knowledge and appreciation for member organization contributions to vulnerable children, youth and families in Region 6
- Improved coordination, access and effectiveness of cross-sector supports to vulnerable children and youth.
- Reductions to gaps and duplication of services and improved ability to respond to emergent needs.
- Improved knowledge and practice by staff within member organizations.
- Strengthened relationships and ability to navigate within and between systems or organizations.
- Improved satisfaction of children, youth and families accessing cross-sector services.

Signatories:

Signing this document indicates that the signatory organizations support the purpose, beliefs, guiding principles, commitments and outcomes outlined in this document. However, participation in any specific collective action is voluntary and decided upon action by action.