DATE:	December 13, 2011
TO:	Board of Trustees
FROM:	Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT:	Status Update on Anti-Bullying Committee Recommendations (Trustee Request #133)
ORIGINATOR:	Tanni Parker, Assistant Superintendent
RESOURCE STAFF:	Jim Davies, Debbie Jackson, Sherry Melney, Kristopher Wells, Corrie Ziegler
REFERENCE:	October 25, 2011 Board Meeting (Trustee Hoffman)

ISSUE

The following information was requested: Provide a status update regarding the recommendations brought forward by the Anti-Bullying Advisory Committee last year. This update should include what has been done to date as well as the next steps to prevent bullying in the District with their anticipated time lines.

BACKGROUND

On February 22, 2011, the Board of Trustees approved a recommendation to create an anti-bullying advisory committee. After review and consultation the committee developed a definition of bullying and recommended a multi-year approach to the implementation of strategies to ensure that all students in Edmonton Public Schools are safe and protected. An anti-bullying advisory committee update report was provided to the Board of Trustees on June 14, 2011 (Attachment I). The definition of bullying was sent to Administration for review.

CURRENT SITUATION

Prior to moving forward with the committee's recommendations the Administration requested a review of the proposed definition of bullying brought forward by the advisory committee. Various resource staff, including legal counsel, were consulted. Based on the input received, the definition brought forward by the advisory committee was revised (Attachment II). With an agreed upon definition related to student bullying as the foundation for the development and implementation of the District's framework for bullying prevention, the steps outlined below are now in progress.

Next Steps
- Develop a bullying prevention framework (conduct expectations, reporting, roles and responsibilities, process for complaints/investigation, and outcomes) and include this framework as part of the administrative regulations for the Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments Policy, IF.BP (January to June 2012).
- Design and implement an environmental scan to determine what bullying prevention programs and practices are currently in place within district schools. Data will be analyzed and recommendations presented to the administration (January to June 2012).

- Conduct a policy audit to ensure all relevant Board policies and regulations (e.g., Student Behaviour and Conduct, IG.BP, IG.AR) are in alignment with and offer support to the District's bullying prevention framework (January to June 2012).
- Develop and host a bullying prevention web page on the District website to serve as an information clearinghouse for staff, students and larger community. This web page would contain relevant district policies, definitions and links to best practices and community supports (completed by June 2012).
- Develop a communications plan to examine ways to communicate and disseminate the District's bullying prevention framework, conduct expectations, and prevention/intervention resources to all stakeholders (September to December 2012).
- Develop questions related to bullying prevention framework for inclusion on the District Satisfaction Survey (February to March 2012).

KEY POINTS
- A uniform definition of bullying is foundational to the creation of a district-wide bullying prevention framework.
- Development of a bullying prevention framework (including definition, conduct expectations, reporting, roles and responsibilities, process for complaints/investigation, and outcomes) will be included as part of regulations for the Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments policy.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES
ATTACHMENT I – June 14, 2011 Board Report - Anti-Bullying Advisory Committee Update
ATTACHMENT II - Definition of Bullying

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June 14, 2011

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee S. Hoffman, Chair, Anti-Bullying Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Anti-Bullying Advisory Committee Update

ORIGINATOR: T. Taylor, Director, Executive and Board Relations

RESOURCE
STAFF: Tanni Parker

INFORMATION

Background
On February 22, 2011 the Board of Trustees approved the following motion:
> *That the Board establish an Anti-Bullying Advisory Committee that will develop a list of recommendations for the Administration to consider implementing in an effort to identify the scope and reduce the extent of bullying in Edmonton Public Schools. The Advisory Committee would consist of one Trustee, a member of Central Administration who specializes in this area, one active staff member of school, one high school student, one junior high school student, one elementary school parent and one person from the Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities. The Committee would provide recommendations to the Administration by May 31, 2011.*

The advisory committee members were:
Trustee Sarah Hoffman
Donna Blundell, Society for Safe and Caring Schools
Curtis Malin, Teacher Donnan School
Sherry Melney, Consultant
Tanni Parker, Assistant Superintendent
Matthew Schmidt, Student, John D. Bracco
Vincent Brulotte, Student, Jasper Place
Sara Hiebert, Parent

The committee began meeting on April 11, 2011. In order to achieve the desired outcomes for the committee and the District the committee felt that it was important to first draft a definition of bullying that could be used throughout the District. A draft definition was posted on the district website for feedback from students, parents, staff and community members. There were more than 600 responses. After reviewing the feedback the committee is recommending the following definition to the Administration:

Bullying

A direct or indirect, physical or non-physical form of violence that includes three important factors:

1. The relationship has an imbalance of power.
2. Action is deliberate and unwanted, actual or threatened.
3. Action is repetitive.

Direct   Physical or non-physical including harassment or intimidation where there is direct interaction between bully and victim.

Indirect   Physical or non-physical where there is no direct interaction between the bully and the victim (technology, messages, etc.)

Physical   Any hurtful or unwanted physical contact.

Non-physical Verbal, cyber, rumours, exclusion, discrimination (racial, homo-negativity, classist, inappropriate sexual language, cultural, religious, diversity, gender or ability).

The goal of the committee was to develop a language focused around bullying-prevention and ensuring that all students in Edmonton Public Schools are safe and protected.

The committee believed it would be of benefit to have one uniform definition of bullying for use throughout the District. The Committee also recommended using the term "bullying prevention" rather than "anti-bullying". This places the emphasis on reducing the occurrences of bullying in first place, rather than focusing on punitive measures.

The Committee recommended a multi-year approach to ensure that the change in language, understanding and behaviour are done in a way that ensures that all members of the school and broader community are prepared to assist in this important work.

Year One - 2011-2012
- Ensure strategies and resources are identified and easily accessible through a central resource hub.
- Develop an understanding of the definition and share examples at the school level.
- Revisit student conduct regulations to ensure alignment.
- Share the definition of bullying and goals of bullying prevention with all staff.
- Include a question (or questions) on the district satisfaction survey to develop a baseline (i.e., identify the scope).

Year Two - 2012-2013
- Pursue relationships with external partners to support the implementation of the bullying prevention program. Recommended stakeholders include experts researching in this area, particularly at the University of Alberta, Government (Education and Children and Youth Services), and other school jurisdictions doing work with a similar focus.
- Implement strong communications plans at all schools.

- Develop and share resources that are already developed. This should include, but not be limited to, a poster for each classroom, handbooks and web resources (e.g., Kids Help Phone, It Gets Better Project).

Overall Outcomes
This will support a safe and caring learning environment and ensure that the District is being a leader in bullying prevention.

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Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a form of aggressive and unwanted behaviour, which causes (or should be known to cause) fear, distress, and/or harm to another person. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance and serves to maintain dominant social order by targeting difference on the basis of actual or perceived sex, age, ability, race, culture, religion, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic disadvantage, ethnicity, or other forms of difference.

Bullying can take a variety of forms, including:

Direct - Physical or non-physical behaviours including harassment or intimidation where there is direct interaction between the bully and target. Examples include name-calling, teasing, threats, shoving, hitting, hazing, stealing, damaging property, stalking, public humiliation, or sexual harassment.

Indirect - Physical or non-physical behaviours where there is no direct interaction between the bully and the target. Examples include participating as a bystander, scapegoating, spreading rumours, excluding others from a group, derogatory graffiti, and using technology to intimidate, put-down, spread rumours or make fun of someone or a group of people.

Physical - Any hurtful or unwanted physical contact. Examples include punching, kicking, poking, pinching, chasing, shoving, coercing, destroying or stealing belongings, or unwanted sexual touching.

Non-physical - Any hurtful, exclusionary, or unwanted non-physical contact. Examples include making sexist, racist, homophobic and transphobic comments, obscene gestures, cyber harassment (email, cell/smart phones, sexting, voyeurism, Internet web/share sites, social media, etc.), spreading rumours, perpetuating stereotypes, deliberately sharing misinformation, willful exclusion, prejudice, or discrimination.

Board policies connected to or impacted by this definition include:
AD.BP: District Priorities
AE.BP: District Vision and Mission
AE.AR: Basic Beliefs, Commitments and Expectations
GBE.BP: Health and Wellness of Staff and Students
GBE.AR: Health and Wellness of Staff and Students
HJ.BP: Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services
IF.BP: Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments
IG.BP: Student Behaviour and Conduct
IG.AR: Student Behaviour and Conduct
IFA.BP: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
KC.AR: Appropriate Use of District Technology