

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 27, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee G. Rice, Conference Committee Chair

SUBJECT: Report #6 of the Conference Committee (From the Meeting Held January 20, 2009)

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Report #6 of the Conference Committee from the meeting held January 20, 2009 be received and considered.

2008-2009 Board Evaluation

2. That, as follow-up to the 2007-2008 Board Evaluation, the following be approved:
 - a) Community Relations Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Board in improving its understanding of who, when and how to engage or promote opportunities and processes for community engagement;
 - b) Planning and Policy Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Board in examining the structure and function of all board meetings and how they interrelate;
 - c) Community Relations Committee and the Government Relations Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Board in gaining an understanding of and identifying means of communicating to the wider community the resources required to meet the varied needs of students;
 - d) The District Priorities, Planning and Policy, and Superintendent Evaluation Committees shall be responsible for assisting the Board in monitoring the alignment of their respective areas of responsibility with the Strategic Plan;

3. A post-meeting debriefing as per APPENDIX I, following every Public Board meeting and Trustee Retreat be approved.

Structure and Function of Board Meetings

4. That the following delegation of authority to the Committee of the Whole - Conference be approved:
 1. In accordance with Section 61 of the *School Act*, the Board delegates to the Conference Committee the following powers:
 - a) Discussing and, or developing recommendations to Board on matters pertaining to:
 - the personal or proprietary information of an identifiable individual or group, including staff, students and parents
 - labour relations and employee negotiations
 - a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of property
 - law enforcement matters, litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals affecting the District
 - the security of the property of the District
 - the terms and conditions of a contract with the Superintendent of Schools in accordance with Section 113 of the *School Act*
 - b) Studying a matter in depth to build Trustee understanding of an issue that may be coming before the Board;
 - c) Engaging in strategic planning activities;

- d) Reviewing the functioning of the Board and Board development activities, and
 - e) Providing advice to the Superintendent.
2. The first order of business for a Conference Committee meeting shall be approval of the agenda and confirmation of the items as appropriate for discussion in-camera.
 3. All matters requiring Board decision arising from discussions in Conference Committee shall be reported to a public board meeting for Board approval. Recommendation reports to Board shall contain sufficient background information to explain the recommendation and implications of the decision to be made with due consideration to protection of personal or proprietary information.
 5. That, the following process for trustee requests for information for inclusion in the Board's Rules of Order (Trustees' Manual) be approved:

When a Trustee brings forward a request for information, the Board Chair or Conference Chair will determine whether there is a majority of the Trustees in favour of the information request going forward to the Administration for response. If there is not a majority, the request may be brought forward as a notice of motion.

Community Engagement Initiative

6. That the Board undertake an activity to gather feedback from stakeholders who do not have students in our schools with regard to what they think is important in public education and their desired level of involvement in the operation of the school system.
7. Information gathered through this activity will be provided to Trustees attending the ASBA Summit on Public Involvement in Public Schools (March 13-14, 2009)

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Background - Recommendations 2 and 3

The Conference Committee, in accordance with its Terms of Reference and the Board's direction, undertook to facilitate follow-up on the approved recommendations and areas identified for improvement arising from the 2007-2008 Board Evaluation by:

- Identifying those areas for improvement which are within the mandates of the various Board committees and recommending the assignment be confirmed by Conference Committee as outlined in Recommendation 2 above.
- Incorporating evaluation of the alignment of Board activities with its Strategic Plan into the regular debriefing after every board meeting (APPENDIX I) and recommending to Conference Committee that the debriefing be formalized for Board and extended to include debriefings following every Trustee Retreat as outlined in Recommendation 3 above. Since each Board committee will be responsible for regular reporting to a Committee of the Whole, as per the Strategic Plan, the post-meeting debriefings will capture Trustee assessment of progress against the areas identified for improvement when the committee reports are made. Debriefing meeting ratings will be compiled, tabulated and reported back to the Board prior to each Trustee Retreat and for information prior to completing the annual Board Evaluation.

Background – Recommendation 4

The Board's policy with respect to Conference Committee has been revised to clarify the matters that the Board delegates to the Conference Committee for in-camera discussion and developing recommendations to Board. Meetings between the Superintendent and Trustees (MST), Trustee Retreats and Trustee Information Meetings are meetings of the Conference Committee.

A statement on the process for approval of the Conference Committee agenda at the beginning of every meeting has also been added.

Furthermore, the Planning and Policy Committee recommended that written Conference Committee reports to Board include appropriate background information and rationale for the recommendation being made for the Board's records.

Background - Recommendation 5

Trustees agreed to adopt a new process for Trustee requests for information whereby: Prior to asking the Administration for information, Trustees will identify how the request relates to the District Priorities, furthers the work of the Board's Strategic Plan, and adds value to the Board's decision-making. The Board Chair will ask if the request is supported by Trustees. Support by a majority of Trustees is required for the request to go forward.

Background – Recommendations 6 and 7

The Community Relations Committee believes that participation in the March ASBA *Summit on Public Education – Satisfaction of Our Public with Current Levels of Engagement* will be valuable in reviewing our successes in this area and will contribute to the development of a Board policy on public engagement and to the establishment of an effective communication plan.

In order to participate in the Summit, trustees need an awareness of the understanding and attitudes of Edmonton Public's stakeholders.

If the recommendations are approved, the Committee will facilitate the gathering of stakeholder input.

APPENDIX I - Board/Retreat Checklist – Expectation of Trustees for Meetings of the Board

AS:mmf

BOARD/RETREAT CHECKLIST**Expectation of Trustees for Meetings of the Board**

Rank = **H** (Highly Successful)
M (Moderately Successful)
L (Low Success)
N/A (Non Applicable)

Board Members engaged in healthy and constructive debate on an issue and were open and respectful of diverse views.	H	M	L	N/A
Board Members stayed focused on the issue being debated and came to the meeting with their "homework" and research done.	H	M	L	N/A
Board Members avoided dysfunctional conformation and conflict while striving to find the best decision.	H	M	L	N/A
The Board's work in this meeting moved our strategic plan forward. COMMENTS:	H	M	L	N/A
Board members conducted themselves in a way that treated everyone with respect, dignity and value. (board, staff, guests)	H	M	L	N/A
Issues were adequately addressed.	H	M	L	N/A
COMMENTS:				

Date of Meeting: _____