

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 25, 2011

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee L. Cleary, Special Needs Task Force
Trustee C. Johner, Special Needs Task Force Chair
Trustee C. Spencer, Special Needs Task Force

SUBJECT: Proposed Terms of Reference for Special Needs Task Force

ORIGINATOR: T. Parker, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE
STAFF: John Edey

RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed terms of reference for the Special Needs Task Force (Appendix I) be approved.

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Background Information

On November 26, 2010, the recommendation “That the Board establish a task force to review and make recommendations on special needs education in order to enhance the education and outcomes for all special needs students” was approved by the Board. The recommendation further outlined that “the terms of reference would be developed by the task force and approved by the Board.” This report provides the proposed terms of reference for the task force for Board consideration.

The terms of reference outline a proposed process which may need to be adjusted as the work proceeds. Members of the Task Force have also prepared an ideal timeline whereby the process would be completed and recommendations returned to Board by May 24, 2011. There is recognition that this timeline may be overly optimistic, and if that proves to be the case, the final report would be returned to Board during the month of November, 2011.

TP: jle

APPENDIX I – Proposed Terms of Reference

**EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPECIAL NEEDS TASK FORCE**

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE

Composition

The Special Needs Task Force consists of three Trustees approved at the January 11, 2011 Board Meeting.

The Superintendent of Schools has assigned appropriate staff to support the work of the Special Needs Task Force.

Parameters

All recommendations from the Task Force will be presented to the Conference Committee for recommendation to the Board of Trustees at a public board meeting.

The Task Force will support but not duplicate the administration's work with partners in improving the achievement of students with special education needs.

The Task Force will not duplicate work already completed through *Setting The Direction*; rather, it will build on that work to help the vision become a reality.

Definition

Inclusive education system is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance of, and belonging for, all students. Inclusive education in Alberta means a value-based approach to accepting responsibility for all students. It also means that all students will have equitable opportunity to be included in the typical learning environment or program of choice. (*Setting The Direction Framework*, Government of Alberta, June, 2009, page 9)

Purpose

To support the implementation of an inclusive education system, as envisioned in the *Setting The Direction Framework*, in Edmonton Public Schools.

Deliverables

The task force will recommend five to seven high-leverage actions to the Board that will move the District significantly forward toward the vision of an inclusive education system.

Process

1. Review the work that has already occurred.
2. Establish an advisory committee consisting of district staff and parent/community partners.
3. Attend Professional Learning Day called “*INCLUSION: Every Child is Successful*” with Dave Edyburn.
4. Gather information related to deliverables outlined above through two focus group conversations for parents/community members and two focus groups for staff members.
5. Synthesize information and prioritize through an electronic survey with participants from focus groups.
6. Adjust process as required.
7. Review information and determine recommendations.

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference may be amended upon recommendation of the Special Needs Task Force and approval of the Board of Trustees.

Financial Resources

A maximum of \$25,000 will be provided to support the work of the Task Force.

January 18, 2011