

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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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