

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 12, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee D. Colburn, Multi-cultural Task Force Chair
Trustee B. Esslinger, Multi-cultural Task Force
Trustee K. Shipka, Multi-cultural Task Force

SUBJECT: Proposed Terms of Reference and Suggested Process for Trustee Multi-cultural Task Force

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE
STAFF: Karen Bardy, Gloria Chalmers

RECOMMENDATION

That the terms of reference for the Trustee Multi-cultural Task Force (Appendix I) be approved.

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Background: On May 13, 2008, the Board approved “a multi-cultural task force to examine and make recommendations on how to enhance the education of the growing segment of our student population from other cultures.” The approved recommendation also required that the terms of reference (Appendix I) for the task force be approved by the Board. This report provides draft terms of reference for the task force for Board consideration. It also provides information on suggestions for proceeding. The task force recognizes that adjustments to the process will be required based on community input. It will keep the Board informed of its process

Suggested Process: Based on initial discussions, the following process is suggested:

- Review and discuss background information including the District’s current policy, number of English Language Learners, policies from other jurisdictions and literature.
- Meet jointly with representatives of the Multicultural Health Brokers, Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Catholic Social Services, Settlement Services and Edmonton Immigration Services Association. This group of people can provide a broad overview of the community, its needs and aspirations, as they are either part of the community or have worked with the community extensively, but also understand the Canadian context.
- Meet with immigrant and refugee junior and senior high youth.
- Host a symposium for community members from the broad range of cultures and invite all Trustees to participate.
- Meet with a representative group of non-multi-cultural organizations serving culturally diverse populations (e.g., Northern Alberta Association on Race Relations, Cultural Diversity Specialist Council of the Alberta Teachers’ Association, Diversity Institute at

the University of Alberta, Region 6 Child and Family Services, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Family Centre, Community Services City of Edmonton, Head Start).

- Meet with district staff involved in serving the multi-cultural community.
- Provide a forum to enable members of the public to provide input to the task force.

It also is suggested that questions similar to those used by the Trustee Aboriginal Task Force (e.g., What is working well? What are current barriers? What are your hopes and aspirations?) would guide the discussion. Feedback would be provided to all participants and they would be provided with opportunities to comment on a draft policy.

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APPENDIX I – Draft Terms of Reference

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS' MULTI-CULTURAL TRUSTEE TASK FORCE
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Composition

The Multi-cultural Trustee Task Force consists of three trustees approved at the Organizational Board meeting, September 2008, to serve until the next Organizational Board.

The Superintendent of Schools has assigned appropriate staff to support the work of the Trustee Multi-cultural 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 external partners in improving the achievement of immigrant and refugee students.

Purpose

To support the Board's strategic plan in the provision of direction regarding diversity which includes English language learning, transition programming and supports for refugee students.

To identify ways to strengthen and encourage relationships between the Board of Trustees and the multi-cultural community it serves.

To increase Board awareness and understanding of multi-cultural education needs, opportunities and priorities in order to guide the Board's education policy leadership and political advocacy efforts in support of improved achievement of immigrant and refugee youth.

Process

- The Task Force will review literature, district data and policies from other school jurisdictions (October 2008).
- The Task Force will meet with broadly representative multi-cultural groups of people (November 2008 to February 2009).
- The Task Force will meet with broadly representative groups of people serving the immigrant and refugee population (November 2008 to February 2009).
- The Task Force will meet with district immigrant and refugee students and district staff that serve this population (November 2008 to February 2009).
- The Task Force will develop interim and final recommendations to the Board of Trustees (January to May 2009).

Amendment to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference may be amended upon recommendation of the Trustee Multi-cultural Task Force and approval of the Board of Trustees.

Financial Resources

A maximum of \$12,000 will be provided to support the work of the task force.

October 23, 2008