

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 22, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee D. Fleming, 2008-2009 Board Evaluation Committee  
Trustee K. Gibson, 2008-2009 Board Evaluation Committee  
Trustee S. Huff, 2008-2009 Board Evaluation Committee Chair

SUBJECT: Board Evaluation 2008-2009 Summary Report

RESOURCE

STAFF: Bruce Coggles, Anne Sherwood

### INFORMATION

The Board conducts an annual self-evaluation for the following reasons:

- to enable the Board to model its policy of system-wide evaluation as a means of continuous improvement.
- to provide an opportunity for Trustees to reflect on Board governance and how they can work effectively as a Board and as individuals in support of the Board's mandate.

The Board charges the Board Evaluation Committee with the task of assisting the Board in conducting its annual self-evaluation. Attached as APPENDIX I are the Terms of Reference for the Board Evaluation Committee.

### Evaluation Process

The areas for evaluation are based on the Board's Role and Responsibilities statement (Appendix II) and reflect the District Mission, District Priorities and the Board's Strategic Plan.

A Board evaluation questionnaire is administered annually to gather individual Trustee assessment on the success of the Board in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities. The questionnaire is divided into seven sections: decision making, advocacy, leadership and direction, resources, monitoring/evaluating/accountability, reporting/communication, and staff relations. For each question, Trustees are asked to give an overall assessment of the Board's effectiveness on a four-point scale of very effective to very ineffective and to comment on why they rated the Board as they did, identify what the Board is doing well, and what the Board needs to improve. Each Trustee is then asked to identify an area of overall priority for improvement. The results of the individual Trustee responses are compiled and provided to the Board for a facilitated discussion at a Trustee Retreat.

## Summary of the Results of the 2008-2009 Board Evaluation Questionnaire

A majority of Trustees gave the Board a rating of very effective or effective in its key roles and responsibilities. The overall level of Trustee satisfaction remained stable compared to the evaluation results from the previous year except for a decline in the area of teamwork. The range of Trustee responses provided an excellent opportunity for discussion and deeper understanding of issues among Trustees. Themes discussed by Trustees included: communication, governance, measuring outcomes and making decisions accordingly, building trust internally and externally, focusing on Board work, public engagement, the need to improve results, reporting on the strategic plan, innovation, concern for staff morale, and accountability.

As an overarching theme, the Board remains focused on providing students with the best educational opportunities possible. In-line with its Strategic Plan, the Board has undertaken a number of significant initiatives over the past year intended to improve the educational outcomes for all students. These include:

- focus on increasing the rate of high school completion
- renewal of policies related to human resources to establish the district as an employer of choice
- support for groups delivering quality child care and early learning
- advocacy for early childhood education as a foundation for school readiness and long-term educational success
- support of English Language Learner initiatives for refugee students
- conducting a task force review of the diversity of the student population
- development of a multicultural policy
- conducting a review of and research on community attitudes toward school sustainability reviews and school closures to better understand the values of the wider community toward the management of school space
- support for an overall strategy to adopt an all-sector planning approach to ensure an even distribution of quality schools and programs throughout the district
- a school naming process for the six new Alberta Schools Alternative Procurement schools to identify honourees that have made a lasting impact on public education and our community

While the Board celebrates these accomplishments, it recognizes there is still much work to be done and remain committed to continuous improvement. Board members believe they will be able to address the challenges of the year ahead by committing to work as a team and by maintaining a focus on improving student outcomes. To this end, the Board has developed a work plan for the year.

### Recommendations for the Board Evaluation Process

The 2008-2009 Board Evaluation Committee has identified the following recommendations for follow-up by the 2009-2010 Board Evaluation Committee:

- That the Board Evaluation Committee be provided with a copy of the Board Evaluation Results prior to the Fall retreat, in order to formulate a summary for the Board's consideration.
- That a greater emphasis be placed on Trustees identifying an overall priority area for improvement.
- That the Terms of Reference for the Board Evaluation Committee be amended so that the Committee is charged with responsibility for identifying areas of significant concern arising from a Board Evaluation and recommending an action plan to address the concerns.

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APPENDIX I - Board Evaluation Committee Terms of Reference

APPENDIX II - Board Role and Responsibility Statement

## **BOARD EVALUATION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Board Evaluation Committee consists of three Trustees who are responsible for assisting the Board of Trustees to conduct an annual Board self-evaluation for continued Board development and improved Board performance with respect to the Board's role and responsibilities.

The committee will:

- recommend a plan to Conference Committee for the annual evaluation of the Board of Trustees in keeping with the terms of reference for the Board self-evaluation.
- develop and recommend to Conference Committee a proposed Board result statement based on an analysis of the Board's self-evaluation.
- present the Board evaluation result statement on behalf of the Conference Committee to public Board for approval.

The Board shall undertake an annual Board evaluation for the purpose of Board development and to model its policy of system-wide evaluation as a means of continuous improvement.

The Board Evaluation process should:

- assist the Board in identifying Board strengths and areas for improvement, and common beliefs and values amongst Trustees,
- provide an opportunity for Trustees to reflect on how they work collectively and as individuals with respect to the Board's mandate and role and responsibilities,
- provide an opportunity for Trustees to discuss the Board Evaluation results in the context of Board development, and
- provide an opportunity to recognize the Board's accomplishments.

The Board Evaluation Instrument should:

- be brief; it should not take more than one hour for completion by each Trustee.
- be specific to the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Public Schools.
- measure Board performance with respect to the mission statement, the roles and responsibilities of the Board, the principles of operation of the Board, and the district priorities.
- measure Board performance in both quantitative and qualitative terms.
- lend itself to ease of aggregating results.
- provide a basis of comparison of Board performance from year to year over the Board's three-year term.

## Board Role and Responsibilities

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In accordance with law, Alberta Education directives, community expectations, and in support of the District's mission statement, the Board's mandate includes:

- representing the interests of the community and reflecting the values of the community in its decision making;
- serving as an advocate of public education;
- setting priorities and policies to provide leadership and overall direction for the district;
- allocating resources to the district to fulfill its responsibilities;
- monitoring the implementation of policies;
- evaluating the results achieved in the district;
- reporting the results achieved to its public;
- serving as a communication bridge between the community and the district; and
- hiring and evaluating the Superintendent of Schools.

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Revised: September 11, 2007

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