

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 10, 2007

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM : B. Holt, Acting Superintendent
SUBJECT: Response to Delegation – Re: Sports Programs in Schools
ORIGINATOR: T. Parker, Executive Director
RESOURCE
STAFF: June Mielnichuk, David Piercey, Scott Sinclair, Don Zabloski

RECOMMENDATION

That the request of the delegation, for the school board to develop a district-wide policy for student participation in interschool athletics that would ensure a fair opportunity for non-sports club athletes to fairly compete on school teams, be denied.

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Background

This report is provided in response to a delegation at the February 27, 2007 board meeting. The presentation was in regard to sports programs in schools, particularly at the senior high level.

Ms. Glynis Dorey, a parent of a student at Strathcona School, who initially initiated communication with the board on November 12, 2006, was given opportunity to meet with district administration to express her observations and concerns on February 6, 2007. Subsequent to this meeting, she then requested to present her views to the board.

Both Ms. Dorey's written and oral submissions of February 21 and February 28, respectively, brought forward the following observations and opinions for the board's attention:

- The district does not have a "properly competitive interschool environment", and that this environment is unbalanced with club players who also compete on other teams outside the schools' league play seasons.
- Accordingly, students who are not also club players are not being provided with a fair opportunity to compete in interschool athletics.
- The inequity between large and small schools in attracting club players results in an "uncompetitive environment" in which larger schools predominate in interschool athletics winning league championships year after year.
- The purpose of interschool athletic programs should be "to foster self-confidence, self discipline, receive exercise, and learning to work in a group."

Response to Delegation

A representative sample of senior high volleyball, basketball and swim teams (Appendix I) shows the percentage of students who do not play on similar club teams during the current school year. An inspection of this data reveals that there is a majority of non-club players on most interschool athletic teams. In other words, club players do not predominate in the majority of interschool athletic sports teams, suggesting that fair opportunities for non-club players to compete are currently being provided at each school.

Whether large schools predominate in interschool athletics is open to interpretation. A smaller school, Edmonton Christian, won the Tier 1 “Premier League” boys volleyball championship in 2005, defeating a much larger school, Harry Ainlay, in the final. Seeding into either the Premier or City Leagues for both volleyball and basketball is determined by round robin play at the start of each season, and is thus based on the skills of the players on any given team. There is no reason to suspect a disparity between teams at larger versus smaller senior high schools, as even smaller senior high schools are seeded into Premier League play, particularly in volleyball. Harry Ainlay, a large school with more club players than other senior high schools, does not appear to predominate much more than any other similar-sized senior high school that has a large talent pool on which to draw.

Alberta Education’s “Learning Outcomes” in the *Guide to Education* instructs school districts to ensure students “know the basic requirements of an active, healthy lifestyle” (p.16). Schools may address this expectation through a variety of instructional and extra-curricular activities. Interschool athletics are extra-curricular programs, and are promoted by current Board Policy HA.BP “as a component of school programming” and “for the enhancement of students’ skills knowledge and attitudes”. Those attitudes to which Ms. Dorey refers are addressed for all students through a wide variety of activities, as only a small percentage of the student population participates in interschool athletics.

In conclusion, it is the administration’s recommendation that no changes are required to Board Policy HA.BP - Participation in Athletic Activities, regarding the selection of students to participate in interschool athletics. It is also the administration’s belief that the full range of athletic activities provided by schools addresses the attitudes for healthy living and sportsmanship that the delegation promotes, and that interschool athletics are only one way in which these attitudes are promoted.

DP/dp

Appendix I Percentage of Students Not Involved in Club Play 2006-2007

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		Percentage of Students NOT Involved in Club Play 2006-2007													
School	Sept. 30 Enrolment	Volleyball						Basketball						Swimming	
		Jr. Girls	Sr. Girls	Jr. Boys	Sr. Boys	Jr. Girls	Sr. Girls	Jr. Boys	Sr. Boys	Jr. Girls	Sr. Girls	Jr. Boys	Sr. Boys		
Edmonton Christian	291	100	92	no team	100	92	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	no team
LY Cairns	293	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Old Scona	324	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Eastglen	1014	92	75	no team	no team	no team	no team	no team	no team	100	100	100	100	100	no team
Queen Elizabeth	1023	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	83	100	100	100
J. Percy Page	1079	83	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Victoria	1103	no team	71	no team	no team	no team	no team	no team	no team	100	100	no team	no team	no team	no team
McNally	1422	92	75	100	100	83	83	100	100	100	100	100	100	92	95
Strathcona	1480	83	25	83	83	83	83	80	100	100	100	80	100	100	88
ME LaZerte	2054	100	100	100	100	100	100	75	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Ross Sheppard	2134	75	100	75	100	100	100	50	100	100	100	100	100	100	81
Harry Ainlay	2234	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	89
Average percent not in Club play		84	78	84	84	86	86	88	88	96	92	92	95	95	95