

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 12, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee K. Gibson, Conference Committee Chair

SUBJECT: Report #2 of the Conference Committee (From the Meeting Held December 5, 2006)

RECOMMENDATION

1. That report #2 of the Conference Committee from the meeting held December 5, 2006 be received and considered.

Principles of Board Operation

2. That the proposed revision to the board's Principles of Board Operation statement (Appendix I) be approved.

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AS:mmf

APPENDIX I – Principles of Board Operation

# Edmonton Public Schools

## Board Policies and Regulations

### Principles of Board Operation

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Further to and in keeping with the Alberta School Boards' Trustee Code of Ethics, the board also acknowledges the following precepts and principles for board operation.

Legally, the authority of the Board is derived from the Province which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the school district and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the board and the people of this community for the exercise of local autonomy. The board of trustees must operate within its mandate under the School Act.

A trustee, as defined within the School Act, is "a member of the board of trustees".

A trustee sub-committee or trustee who is given corporate authority to act on behalf of the board may carry out duties individually but only as an agent of the board and within the parameters set by the board.

All district communications – that is communications by, on behalf of or though the district -- to stakeholders should be in keeping with board philosophy, policies and or positions. A trustee may seek the advice and assistance of the Superintendent of Schools or designated Executive Director in ensuring trustee communications are in keeping with board philosophy and positions.

A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen.

**Channels of communication should be kept as free and open as possible between members of the board and the administration.**

Accountability is best when delegation is traceable through a single channel. The board speaks as one voice to the administration through the superintendent of schools and the superintendent of schools is accountable to the board for the administration.

The board as the corporate body may request whatever information it deems necessary for its deliberations. Only the board may request personal information, restricted by law, about an individual student or staff member.

Decisions affecting the school system may only be made at public board meetings by the board.

The board is responsible for its own attendance, discipline, and governance methods.

The board delegates specific responsibility for board process to the board chair, but this in no way mitigates other board members' responsibility to contribute to the integrity of the process.

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Each member of the board has an obligation to:

- make decisions on issues before the board in the best interests of the corporation with an open mind based on all available facts and in consideration of the interests of all students and public school supporters.
- work with fellow trustees in a spirit of co-operation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debate on issues brought before the board.
- respect the corporate decisions of the board.
- respect the confidentiality of information.
- work on behalf of the board to communicate to the community the facts about the school system in order that the community can support public education.
- remember at all times that individual trustees have no legal authority outside the meeting of the Board to bind the board, act on behalf of the board or to direct the administration. Therefore, relationships with the school staff, the community and all media of communication should be conducted accordingly.
- never intentionally give the appearance of speaking on behalf of the board on issues that the board has not taken a position.
- resist every temptation and outside pressure to use his or her position as a school board member for personal benefit or the benefit of any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school district.
- respect the authority of the superintendent to direct the work of the administration.
- foster positive relationships between the board and its stakeholders.
- encourage active participation by stakeholders with respect to establishing policy on current school operations and proposed future developments.
- Seek and receive communication from stakeholders to inform decision making on matters before the board.
- observe the board's rules of order for the conduct of board meetings.
- respect the office of the board chair and the authority delegated to the board chair by the board.

The Board Chair shall have authority, on behalf of the board, to:

- preside at all board meetings, call the meetings to order at the hour appointed, maintain order in the meetings and facilitate full debate and proceed with the business of the board.

- sign all documents required by law or as authorized by the action of the board.
- represent the corporate board as required.
- delegate board representation at a function. The board chair may request a trustee to represent the board at any function which relates to that trustee's ward.
- delegate any of the board chair's other duties, when necessary, to the vice-chair.

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Affirmed: September 14, 2004 Revised Draft October 2006

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