

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 9, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee D. Colburn, Multicultural Task Force Chair  
Trustee B. Esslinger, Multicultural Task Force  
Trustee K. Shipka, Multicultural Task Force

SUBJECT: Multicultural Task Force: Recommendation Report

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Karen Bardy, Donna Barrett, Gloria Chalmers

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That proposed Board Policy ACBA.BP – Multicultural Education (Appendix I) be considered for the first time.
- 1.2 That proposed Board Policy ACBA.BP – Multicultural Education (Appendix I) be considered for the second time.
- 1.3 That in accordance with the provisions of section 69 of the School Act, proposed Board Policy ACBA.BP – Multicultural Education (Appendix I) be considered for the third time at this meeting.
- 1.4 That proposed Board Policy ACBA.BP – Multicultural Education (Appendix I) having been considered three times at this meeting, be approved.
2. That the administration provide information to Board with regard to the implementation of ACBA.BP – Multicultural Education Board Policy and anticipated Multicultural Education Administrative Regulation prior to December 2009 to enable the Board to consider staffing and other implications for the 2010-2011 budget.
3. That the administration provide an annual Multicultural Education report to Board regarding progress as it relates to ACBA.BP – Multicultural Education Board Policy and the anticipated Multicultural Education Administrative Regulation.
4. That the Board approve the development of a Kindergarten to Grade 12 year-round transition centre that:

- serves refugee and immigrant children and youth with limited English, minimum understanding of Canada and the Canadian education system, and little or no formal education experience.
  - acts as a hub of services and supports for immigrant students and families.
5. That the Board approve the development of an advocacy plan by the administration, including nature of advocacy, by whom and to whom, with regard to areas such as extended time for school completion, transportation, immigrant airfare costs, school space, pre-service training, curriculum, and intergovernmental coordination in support of immigrant and refugee families.
  6. That the Board approve an annual Board celebration of Canadian Multiculturalism Day.

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**Background:** On November 12, 2008, the Board of Trustees approved the creation of a Multicultural Task Force with the following 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 multicultural community it serves.
- To increase Board awareness and understanding of multicultural 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.

An interim report was brought to Board on March 24, 2009. This report provided Trustees with information on the Terms of Reference for the Task Force and information collected from the consultation process. A policy was drafted based on the consultation and a review of policies in other school jurisdictions. The draft policy was posted on the District website for feedback purposes for a month. All participants in the consultation process were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft policy. All principals were advised of the opportunity for input and asked to advise their staff as well.

The District website received 107 responses regarding the draft policy. Comments focused on responding to racial issues; multicultural sensitivity training; culturally sensitive assessment; need for advocacy; use of resources that reflect diversity; working collaboratively with community partners; considering multicultural in terms of social identity; committing to equity, access and accountability; embracing Canadian culture; recognizing minorities; role of the school district; and support for learning English. Feedback also indicated that the references to declarations and legislation in the beginning of the draft policy were confusing. A summary of the stakeholder input from the website survey is provided in Appendix III.

Based on the input, the following modifications were made to the policy that was posted on the District website:

- In the first paragraph, the references to the “United Nations Declaration of Human Rights”, the “United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child”, and the “Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms” were removed.
- In the second paragraph, the following changes were made:
  - A statement was added regarding appreciation for Canadian values and culture.
  - Information from another section was combined with this paragraph.
- In the third paragraph, modifications were made to include both the belief statement about “racism” and a statement describing the action of the Board.
- In the fifth paragraph, the reference to “strengthening program delivery and support for students” was modified to indicate “the importance of continuing to strengthen program delivery and supports to realize success for all of our students.”
- In the list of bullets in the fifth paragraph, the first bullet was modified to refer to a sense of belonging as the other concepts of “feeling welcomed, respected, and understood” are already referred to in the policy.
- The following new bullet was added: “Ensuring students learn about the values and culture of Canada.”
- The term, “culturally sensitive” in the bullet regarding assessment was changed to “culturally appropriate.”
- The term “cultural” was added to the bullet regarding racial issues.
- The bullet regarding student conduct was modified to: “Using a proactive approach to student conduct.”
- The references in two of the bullets to “intercultural understanding” were modified to “intercultural appreciation and understanding.”
- The term, “wrap around services”, in the last bullet was changed to “the development of services to extend learning opportunities and supports.”

The Task Force spent \$9,644 out of the allocated budget of \$12,000. The expenditures covered honorariums for youth facilitators, snacks and light meals at parent, student, staff, and community group meetings, and the cost of a resource person to invite communities and to organize a community symposium.

The approach of using a task force to engage in dialogue with parents, students, staff, and community is a very positive one. The consultation meetings provide the Trustees with many opportunities to engage in thoughtful dialogue and to listen to the many and varied perspectives expressed. This approach provides a solid foundation for the development of a board policy and administrative regulation.

**Rationale for Recommendations:** The proposed policy reflects the input received, and recognizes the District’s role in welcoming a diverse range of students and enabling them to be successful academically and in adjusting to Canadian society. The policy focuses on articulating District values and beliefs supported by Trustees.

The recommendation regarding the Kindergarten to Grade 12 transition centre is responsive to input received from virtually all categories of stakeholders – students, parents, staff and community – that a centre is needed for those immigrant and refugee students who have significant gaps in their English language skills, require health and social supports, and who

need to build a basic understanding of Canadian society and the education system. The students who will benefit from being in this centre are particularly vulnerable because they have both extensive learning needs and needs beyond schooling.

It is intended that the transition centre be created in collaboration with community partners, that it have year-round intake, and that it serve as a hub of educational, health, and social supports for students and families. This centre would provide intense, short-term support, up to a maximum of one and a half years, to assist students in making the transition to a school program. Work will begin on this concept in the 2009-2010 school year and officially a school site will be launched in September 2010. The District is exploring other sources of funding for the centre; for example, the administration is currently preparing an application for funding from Canadian Heritage to fund health and social supports for students and families.

The development of an advocacy plan is aligned to the Board of Trustees' strategic plan which includes a focus on diversity. In addition, as with the Board's recognition of National Aboriginal Day, the Task Force believes recognition of Canadian Multiculturalism Day would be appropriate.

Once the policy is approved, the superintendent will review the draft administrative regulation.

**Next Steps:** The recommendation report, if approved, will be distributed broadly; it will be provided to all participants in the Multicultural Task Force consultation groups and, as well, to school principals who will be asked to share the report with their staff and school councils. The report will also be shared with the Minister of Education; Edmonton MLAs and MPs; Edmonton City Council; and the Alberta School Boards' Association. Additional mechanisms for sharing the report include through the media, the District website, the Parents as Partners Newsletter, and camera ready pieces for school newsletters.

Based on an approved policy and regulation, an implementation plan will be developed by the administration and information about the progress achieved in relation to this plan will be provided to the Board on an annual basis.

GC:ee

- Appendix I Proposed Board Policy ACBA.BP – Multicultural Education
- Appendix II Draft Administrative Regulation – Multicultural Education
- Appendix III Summary of Stakeholder Input on Draft Policy via District Web Survey

# Edmonton Public Schools

## Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: ACBA.BP  
 TOPIC: Multicultural Education

EFFECTIVE DATE:  
 ISSUE DATE:  
 REVIEW DATE:

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### PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION STATEMENT

Edmonton Public School Board believes that Canadian traditions and values are enriched by the presence and involvement of a diverse, multicultural community of students, staff, parents, community members and groups. The Board wants all members of our diverse community to be welcomed, respected, to feel a strong sense of belonging and to participate fully in the District.

The Board believes that public education plays an important role in ensuring that all students develop an understanding of Canadian values and culture including an appreciation of the contributions of a diverse community to an evolving global society. The Board also believes that an environment in which there is equity of opportunity, and equity of access to programs, services and resources is critical to supporting all students and staff in realizing their full potential. The Board expects these values to be reflected in District programs, operations and practices.

The Board believes that racism is intolerable and has the potential to negatively impact educational, social and career outcomes for students and staff. Further, it damages relationships with families and community partners. As racism exists in society and therefore in our schools, the Board is committed to acknowledging, addressing, and eradicating racial incidents.

As community leaders, the Board believes that it has a role to play in working collaboratively with other agencies and levels of government to advocate for changes to support the development of a community in which all citizens have the opportunity to benefit from and participate fully in the cultural pluralism that is characteristic of Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Board believes that student learning is the core work of the District and recognizes the importance of continuing to strengthen program delivery and supports to realize success for all of our students. The Board believes that student success is enhanced by:

- Creating learning environments that support all students and their families to develop a sense of belonging.
- Ensuring students learn about the values and culture of Canada.
- Having high expectations for achievement and providing a range of supports to promote continuous growth in student learning.

- Providing responsive programming that includes the use of resources to reflect diverse cultural perspectives.
- Creating opportunities for students to share and celebrate their cultural heritage.
- Using culturally appropriate assessments to inform programming.
- Ensuring that racial and cultural issues are appropriately addressed.
- Using a proactive approach to student conduct.
- Enabling parents and families to be involved in and make informed decisions concerning their child's schooling.
- Attracting and retaining qualified staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Working collaboratively with community members and groups to increase intercultural appreciation and understanding.
- Working collaboratively with other educational institutions to promote successful transitions for students and improved pre-service training for staff.
- Providing professional development to increase intercultural appreciation and understanding of staff.
- Working collaboratively with community partners and other levels of government to advocate for the development of services to extend learning opportunities and supports.

The Board understands that change occurs over time and believes that the provision of an annual report at a public board meeting on progress related to each of the strategic directions identified in this policy will demonstrate the District's commitment to supporting our diverse community.

# Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: ACBA.AR  
TOPIC: Multicultural Education – **Draft**  
**Administrative Regulation**

EFFECTIVE DATE:  
ISSUE DATE:  
REVIEW DATE:

## A. RESPECT AND WELCOME CULTURAL DIVERSITY

### 1. The District will:

- Provide orientation information about the values and culture of Canada, and the education system for newcomer immigrant and refugee students and parents
- Translate key District and school registration information in other languages, based on the District's demographic information, and place on the District website
- Establish a key contact for those parents who do not have materials translated in their language
- Use culturally appropriate strategies to engage parents and families in district-level parent programs
- Make available supports to schools in English language learning and cultural diversity from the English Language Support Services Centre and Programs' collaborative work with community partners

### 2. Schools will:

- Create learning environments that recognize Canadian values and culture as well as demonstrate respect for all cultures
- Provide support for English Language Learners (ELL)
- Utilize a strength-based approach in working with students and families
- Recognize cultural communities as part of the school community through strategies within the school, such as visual representations of the students' cultures and celebrations of cultural diversity

## B FOCUS ON ACHIEVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

### 1. The District will:

- Track the achievement of ELL students for programming and monitoring purposes
- Report the achievement of ELL students to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis
- Undertake research and work with community partners in identifying culturally appropriate assessment instruments and practices

2. Schools will:
  - Identify and support ELL students' learning needs based on culturally appropriate assessments.

#### C USE CULTURALLY DIVERSE RESOURCES

1. The District will:
  - Identify learning resources that encourage respect for diversity and reflect the experiences of students
  - Identify resources within the community that support the cultural diversity in schools
2. Schools will:
  - Use learning resources that encourage respect for diversity and reflect the experiences of students
  - Encourage involvement of cultural resource people from the community

#### D. PROVIDE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

1. The District will:
  - Offer transition programming for students with limited English, educational backgrounds, and/or knowledge of schools and Canadian culture
  - Provide transition programming that focuses on the educational, health, and social needs of the students through collaboration with community partners
  - Provide English language learning support in the District's transition program based on appropriate placement strategies
  - Research and evaluate effective practices in cultural diversity and provide this information on a website to school and District staff
  - Encourage participation in research studies related to immigrant and refugee students
2. Schools will:
  - Plan programming for immigrant and refugee students that takes into consideration:
    - the importance of interaction with non-immigrant and refugee students
    - the possible trauma experienced by students
    - provision of leadership, extra-curricular, and community services opportunities
    - provision of transition supports between school levels and post-secondary
    - recognition of the financial challenges faced by some immigrant and refugee students and families
    - the role of language and culture in learning



## E. USE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE STRATEGIES REGARDING BEHAVIOUR

1. The District will:
  - Develop a protocol for responding to cultural and racial incidents
2. Schools will:
  - Use the District protocol for responding to cultural and racial incidents

## F. INCREASE DIVERSITY OF STAFF

1. The District will:
  - Encourage cultural communities to invite community members to apply to the District for employment
  - Support the active recruitment of qualified staff with diverse backgrounds in all classifications in order to develop a workforce which is representative of the communities within its jurisdiction
  - Encourage schools to have diverse role models within the learning environment

## G. INCREASE INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

1. The District will:
  - Develop and make available for all staff professional development on intercultural appreciation and understanding that focuses on areas such as:
    - cultural competencies
    - strength-based approaches
    - English Language Learner instruction
    - culturally sensitive assessment
    - understanding the impact of trauma on learning
    - strategies for discipline and behaviour
    - understanding the background and experience of immigrants and refugee students and families
    - anti-racism approaches
    - transitions for students
    - engaging culturally diverse parents
    - collaborating with community partners

## H. ENGAGE PARENTS AND FAMILIES

1. The District will develop culturally appropriate strategies for engaging and providing information to parents and families.
2. Schools will:
  - Use culturally appropriate strategies to engage and to provide information to parents and families, such as:
    - use translated materials or cultural brokers in working with parents with limited English

- collaborate with community partners in providing parent support sessions
- provide information to students and parents about community supports and, when possible, locate community supports within the school environment
- Assist parents in understanding their role in supporting their child’s learning

## I. COLLABORATE WITH COMMUNITY

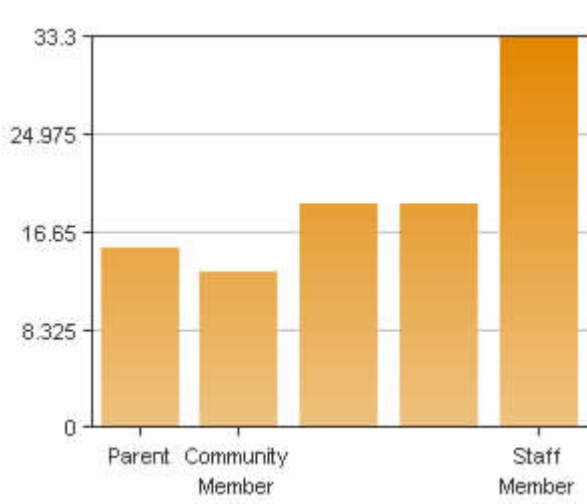
### 1. The District will:

- Maintain an external Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee
- Enhance relationships with immigrant and refugee serving organizations and cultural communities
- Assist schools in connecting and collaborating with community programs and resources, such as:
  - Head Start Programs
  - home visitation programs
  - child care providers to support the transition of students between early learning and District programming
- Collaborate with community partners to increase the availability of supports, such as:
  - cultural youth social workers
  - cultural brokers
  - in-school settlement practitioners
  - homework support
  - mentoring
  - after-school and summer programs
  - parent English language programs
- Work with post-secondary institutions to support effective transitions to post-secondary for immigrant and refugee students
- Work with community and business organizations to support the transition of immigrant and refugee students to the world of work



**Question 1:** Please select the one identifier that best describes the perspective from which you are providing feedback:  
(N=105)

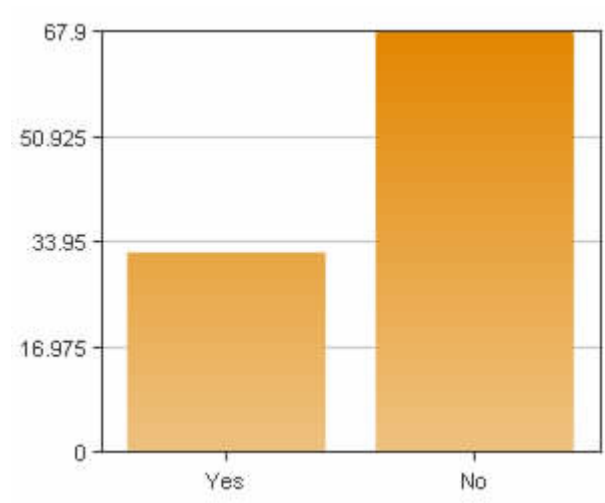
Choices	Count	Percent
Parent	16	15.2
Community Member	14	13.3
Community/Professional Organization	20	19.0
Principal/Decision Unit Administrator	20	19.0
Staff Member	35	33.3



**Question 2:** Are there aspects of this policy that require clarification?  
(N=106)

Choices	Count	Percent
Yes	34	32.1
No	72	67.9

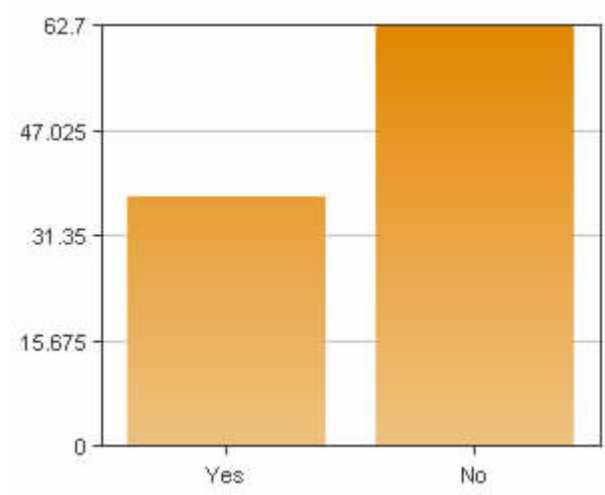
[Show "If yes, please list below."](#)



**Question 3:** Are there additional elements that should be considered in this policy?  
(N=102)

Choices	Count	Percent
Yes	38	37.3
No	64	62.7

[Show "If yes, please specify below."](#)



**Question 4:** Are there elements of this policy about which you have concerns?  
(N=101)

Choices	Count	Percent
Yes	40	39.6
No	61	60.4

[Show "If yes, please specify below."](#)

