

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 12, 2007

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee D. Colburn, Planning and Policy Committee  
Trustee D. Fleming, Planning and Policy Committee, Chair  
Trustee S. Hansen, Planning and Policy Committee  
Trustee W. Keiver, Planning and Policy Committee

SUBJECT: Review – Proposed Board Policy GBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jan Anderson, Gloria Chalmers, Margaretha Ebbers, Stuart Wachowicz

RECOMMENDATION

1. That proposed Board Policy GBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students (Appendix I) be introduced.
2. That proposed Board Policy GBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students (Appendix I) be considered for the first time.
3. That proposed Board Policy GBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students (Appendix I) be considered for the second time.

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**Background:** In response to a November 2006 board report requesting the elimination of junk food in all district schools and the ensuing discussion, the administration undertook consultation and a review of research. The administration consulted with schools through two principal advisory committees and through work conducted by curriculum. Curriculum developed a nutrition unit and compiled resources with support from Capital Health (HEAL) and the David Thompson Health Region. As well, it reviewed policies in other jurisdictions across the country and reviewed research on health and wellness from various sources.

Based on district experience with eliminating smoking in our schools, we learned that we need to educate, provide support and works with parents, community organizations, especially health and businesses, in order to have a long term impact. Our experience, coupled with the comprehensive school health research we examined, supported the decision to take a holistic approach and develop a health and wellness policy that covers students and employees.

**Proposed Policy:** The proposed policy links nutrition and physical and emotional well-being to our core business of teaching and learning. While it acknowledges the Board's commitment to healthy eating and active living, it does recognize that this is a shared responsibility with parents, government and community members and agencies. It also supports the work, albeit within the boundaries of healthy choices, being conducted at the school level in context of the conditions specific to our various school communities.

Consultation through the Curriculum and Programs principal advisory committees confirmed that many district schools have addressed or are addressing nutrition and fitness. They did emphasize the need to effectively engage students in the decisions affecting them, particularly secondary students, if they are to make healthy choices in and out of school. They identified the need, in some situations, to provide healthy snacks or lunches where economic factors rendered this difficult for families.

The feedback from the web survey (Appendix II) highlighted the need for reference to safety, for improved hygienic practices and for more specifics. Health and safety of staff is addressed in GBEA.BP – Occupational Health and Safety. It also is referenced in a number of other policies and administrative regulations related to student behaviour and conduct, off-campus education, school dances and field trips. The comments related to hygienic practices have been forwarded to Employee Health Services in Personnel. Because Board policy is designed to provide direction to the administration while administrative regulations identify key directives for action, specifics will be provided in an administrative regulation under development.

The administration is developing a regulation that will address nutrition, physical fitness and emotional well being. The plan is to seek preliminary feedback from the Curriculum and Programs principal advisory committees before the end of June. Based on this feedback, the regulation will be revised and forwarded to Superintendent's Council early in the fall of 2007 for broader input. The intent is to have regulations in place by December 2007.

GC:ee

Appendix I Board Policy GBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students  
Appendix II Web Survey Feedback

# Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

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CODE: GBE.BP

TOPIC: ~~Health and Safety of Staff and Students~~

**Health and Wellness of Staff and Students**

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11-01-2005

ISSUE DATE: 13-01-2005

REVIEW DATE: 01-2010

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~~Edmonton Public Schools values its employees and is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and learning environment for staff, students and other individuals present at district sites. Edmonton Public Schools believes that work related incidents are preventable and their elimination is integral in achieving *Superb Results From All Students*. A safe and healthy work environment is a shared responsibility between the board, superintendent, staff, staff group representatives, as well as government, parents, students, volunteers, visitors, contractors and subcontractors.~~

The Board believes that employees and students who are emotionally healthy, well nourished and physically active are better able to achieve the goals of education.

The Board is committed to working with parents, community members, organizations and government to foster lifelong habits that improve the health and well-being of employees and students.

The Board encourages each school and central decision unit to maintain a supportive environment that develops the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enable individuals to make choices that foster emotional health, healthy eating and active living.

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Reference(s):

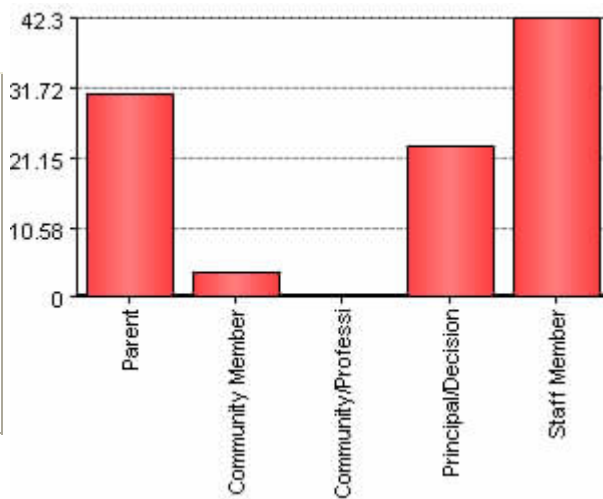
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**GBE.BP - Health and Wellness of Staff and Students**

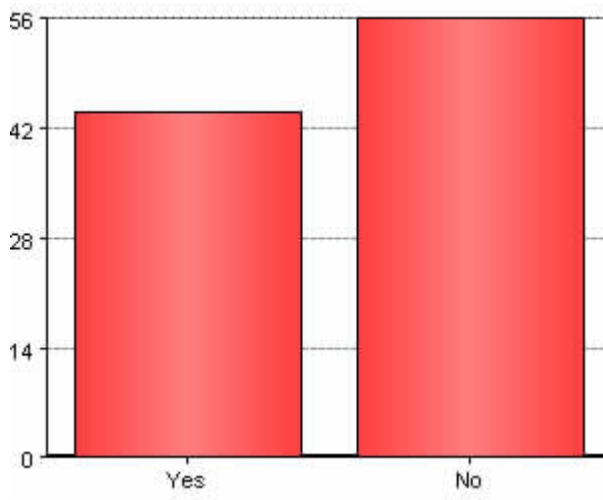
**Question 1:** Please select the one identifier that best describes the perspective from which you are providing feedback: (N=26)

Choices	Count	Percent
Parent	8	30.8
Community Member	1	3.8
Community/Professional Organization	0	0.0
Principal/Decision Unit Administrator	6	23.1
Staff Member	11	42.3



**Question 2:** Are there any aspects of the policy which require clarification? (N=25)

Choices	Count	Percent
Yes	11	44.0
No	14	56.0

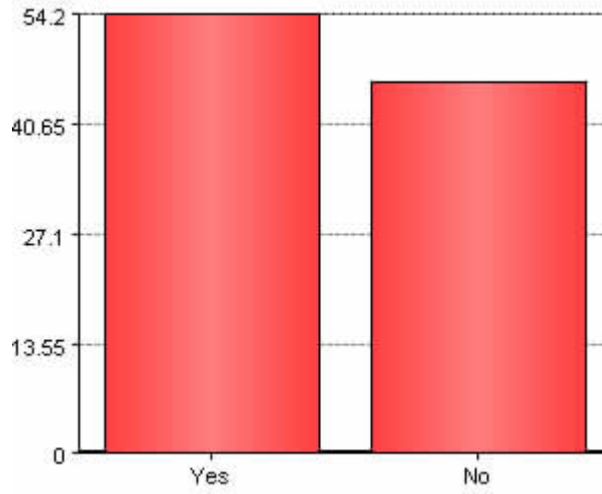


[Show "If yes, please list below."](#)

**Question 3:** Are there elements which should be added in this policy? (N=24)

Choices	Count	Percent
Yes	13	54.2
No	11	45.8

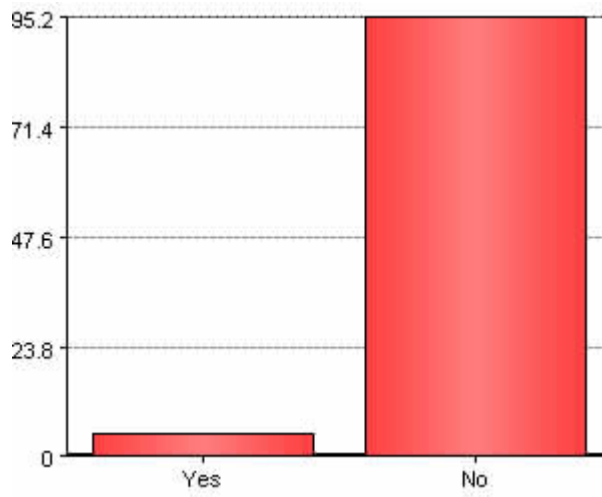
[Show "If yes, please list below."](#)



**Question 4:** Are there elements which should be deleted from this policy? (N=21)

Choices	Count	Percent
Yes	1	4.8
No	20	95.2

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



**Question 5:** Additional Comments:

[Show Text for Question 5](#)

**Question 6:** May we contact you if we require further clarification?

[Show Text for Question 6](#)

**Question #1**

Please select the one identifier that best describes the perspective from which you are providing feedback: (26 responded in total)

- 8 Parents
- 1 Community member
- 6 Principal/decision Unit Administrators
- 11 Staff members

**Question #2**

Are there any aspects of the policy which require clarification?

If yes, please list below

**Parent Comments:**

1. The hygienic practices referred to requires updating. It is 9 years old and there is a lot of new information about infection prevention and control that needs to be included. For example, there is mention of cleaning surfaces with a diluted bleach solution. That doesn't work for porous surfaces like carpet. Somehow that needs to be addressed.
2. Safety of students is not mentioned in either of the 2 policies that are being considered as the replacement to the existing policy. Student safety should be explicitly addressed as a priority of the Board & district.
3. In general the policy is too abstract to be meaningful and is lacking detail essential for its interpretation. For example, the term "emotionally healthy" is popularly used to refer to widely different concepts. e.g. The American Academy of Family Physicians uses the term to indicate that a person is 'in control'; Service Canada uses the term to indicate the ability of a person to 'cope' with difficult life issues such as suicide, depression, stressful situations, self-esteem, &c.; Indeed, the Public Health Agency of Canada has used 'satisfaction with the school experience' itself as a metric of emotional health in youth. The second paragraph uses terminology ('habits', 'health', 'well-being') that are likely inconsistent with the first and third paragraphs and again are not adequately explained.

**Community Member Comments:**

4. The loss of any, and all, references to safe seems curious. or ominous.

**Principal/Decision Unit Administrator Comments:**

5. What do you mean by encourage? This seems to be a very weak statement with limited real support from central to support schools to develop environments that are healthy for all.
6. The wording is nice to have this policy as a dream or a goal or your point of view as a Board or even to say we support healthy living, but an unreasonable expectation put on principals to have to implement into policy and practise. Change should be made to have it as a goal that we are supporting, not a policy to implement.

**Staff Member Comments:**

7. HOW is the board going to work with parents, students, community members, organizations, government and employee? What NEW information is going to be incorporated? Will these groups be surveyed to determine what information they require and will be most helpful to them?
8. What is meant by emotional health?

9. Physical health was not addressed.
10. The policy is very broad? What is the intention of the policy?

<b>Question #3</b>
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**Are there elements which should be added in this policy?**

**If yes, please list below.**

**Parent Comments:**

1. The reference to hygienic practices. There should also be a way to ensure that the students are aware of how to (or not to) help out as students sometimes do if there is a nosebleed or ...something else with blood and body fluids.
2. Student safety.
3. Students should be allowed to participate in physical activities during recess even if there exists a slight chance that they will be hurt. Banning soccer, and baseball and other physical activity is ridiculous.
4. Children's safety from other students while at school.
5. There should be clearly stated measures of the effective application of the policy. Words and phrases like 'encourages', 'maintain a supportive environment' and 'fosters' are extremely dilute, not measurable and are almost assured to not make a positive impact.
6. I am, as a parent, concerned with the levels of physical activity the children have while at school. Despite being a requirement, if monitored, you would find that physical education is pretty much non-existent and for my daughter occurs in 15-20 minutes sessions 1-3 times per week. The type of PHYSED consists mostly of a parent who might come in and teach a cultural dance to the children or simply going to the park next to the school. monitored phys ed by professionals and not general teachers is a much needed requirement in schools as is the strict requirement of daily PhysEd.

**Community Members Comments:**

7. If, as I suspect, safety is merely moved then that should be stated. Wellness is not defined either.

**Principal/Decision Unit Administrator Comments:**

8. See above changes; get rid of the policy concept and make it a goal to support.
9. That the district will support the decision units in the framework and foundational supports for health and wellness of staff.

**Staff Member Comments:**

10. Non-management staff have little or no input into decisions affecting them relating to their work load and expectations are high to work without breaks and during the evening hours. This policy needs to get the attention of some supervisors who currently seem to ignore the stress levels that are being created and the impact on the health and well-being of their staff.
11. For staff, it would be really nice and a great incentive to be able to claim fitness/club membership to our benefit plan. What better way to promote health and wellness instead of just talking about it.
12. Hand washing as part of healthy environments. Preventing the spread of germs - covering mouth with arm or elbow when sneezing Allergens (eg. peanuts, nuts, fragrances)

#### **Question #4**

**Are there elements which should be deleted from this policy?**

**If yes, please list below**

**Parent Comments:**

1. In my opinion the policy should be rewritten to be clear and consistent and be applicable in a concrete, measurable way.

**Principal/Decision Unit Administrator Comments:**

2. How can we as schools focus on teaching and learning and achievement when we are also asked to be nurses and dieticians. The wording is very nice for this policy as a dream or a goal, but an unreasonable expectation put on principals to have to implement into policy and practise. I cannot guarantee "emotional health" when I cannot afford counsellors in schools anymore and my staff are tapped to their limits with everything else. How can I make sure students are "well nourished" when we have no control over what they eat at home for any meals and if parents send poor lunches? How can I "foster habits" when it is the home life and parents that should be doing this, not schools. Get back to focusing on teaching and learning as a goal and not asking staff to change the lives of our students. It is an unreasonable expectation to believe that I can change the lives, parenting and family life of my students; I can only have control over the education they receive.

#### **Question #5 - Additional Comments**

**Parent Comments:**

1. As mentioned above, your policy 1HCA.AR needs updating.
2. This is a great initiative. It's great to see daily phys. ed in the curriculum. What specific opportunities are you providing staff in the schools for access to exercise? A healthy staff with energy always sends the right message to kids.
3. The style and wording of the revised policy is very different from the existing policy. Is there a document that explains the format of EPSB policies and the process that is used to create and revise them?

**Principal Decision Unit Administrator Comments:**

4. A policy is only as valuable as the actions that surround this. It is imperative that senior staff create the environment they wish to see in schools in their support to senior administrators in schools.

**Staff Member Comments:**

5. The link does not allow you to open the policy, so unable to give feedback.
6. Most of the food offered prior to and during meetings held by every level shown on the EPSB organization chart is unnecessary and in most cases unhealthy - cookies, muffins, biscuits, cinnamon buns, hash browns, bacon, squares. Does not set a good example and creates costs better spent on actually promoting the wellness program.
7. This policy is LONG overdue. This should be the top priority in teaching in our schools...and MORE emphasis should be placed on healthy eating and staying physically active. Congratulations on a good start.



8. Wonderful to split these two areas. I am sure this will clarify certain areas into more manageable segments.

<b>Question #6 – May we contact you if we require further clarification?</b>
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**The following groups said YES:**

5 Parents

1 Community member

3 Staff members