

**DATE:** June 12, 2012  
**TO:** Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools  
**SUBJECT:** Guidance and Counselling Initiative (Trustee Request #190)  
**ORIGINATOR:** Tanni Parker, Assistant Superintendent  
**RESOURCE STAFF:** Allison Barber, Debbie Jackson, Sherry Melney, Katharine Weinmann, Corrie Ziegler  
**REFERENCE:** [Board Policy HJ.BP – Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services](#)  
April 10, 2012 Board Meeting (Trustee Johner)

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#### **ISSUE**

The following information was requested: Provide background about the Guidance and Counselling initiative and the reasons for its discontinuation. What strategies and activities does the District incorporate now to provide similar supports? Provide a feasibility report on the District re-implementing this initiative.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In the mid 1980s a Guidance Counselling Initiative was designed and implemented by district consultants, which included an inservicing program for elementary, junior high and high school counsellors. This program included monthly meetings for counsellors at each level to provide ongoing, in-depth support around relevant topics and issues such as: program development and needs assessments, addictions, study skills, peer support, depression, suicide prevention, career counseling and collaboration with community agencies. Onsite support was provided by four guidance and counselling consultants and other teams (made up of social workers, psychologists, etc.) from what was then called Consulting Services.

This initiative ended in the early 1990s for the following reasons:

- Limited resources led to reduced time allocated for counselling support at the school level. This led to a decrease in counselling staff.
- Cost recovery was introduced in 1993 and as a result services provided through Consulting Services became a cost to schools. The services previously provided through this initiative (as outlined above) at no cost had to be purchased at an hourly rate. Because schools had limited resources they chose not to, or were unable to pay for the coordination or delivery of service previously provided.

#### **CURRENT SITUATION**

Current trends, events and developments have resulted in different needs within the District, and required a new approach to provide system wide supports and services. In September 2012 Central Services was reorganized with the goal of providing more efficient, effective and equitable services to staff and students across the District. Staff from Support for Staff and Students currently provide various supports in areas related to Guidance and Counselling. These supports are facilitated by staff from two teams: Comprehensive School Health (CSH) and FNMI and Diversity. The CSH team has one full time Guidance and Counselling consultant

who works with consultant colleagues and various community resources to provide ongoing support around many of the same topics offered during the 1980s. Some examples include:

- Planning and facilitating monthly meetings for High School Counselling Department heads. These meetings are driven by the needs of the participants in relation to the District Priorities and the District Plan. Pertinent information is shared and professional learning opportunities are facilitated around current issues and relevant themes such as bullying prevention, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), etc. Participants share effective practices and highlight resources.
- A Comprehensive School Health Share site ([comphealth.epsb.ca](http://comphealth.epsb.ca)) was created for district staff as a clearinghouse for information and recommended resources that support and promote health and wellness.

The two annual reports submitted to the Board of Trustees on April 10, 2012 entitled Health and Wellness of Staff and Students and Aboriginal Education Update provide a comprehensive overview of how health and wellness is supported within the District, of which guidance and counselling work is a part.

In addition, Inclusive Learning Teams from Student Learning Services provide supports through a multidisciplinary team service model.

Given that the needs within the District have changed and the structure for providing service has changed to respond to those needs in an efficient, effective, and equitable way, it is not feasible to re-implement the Guidance and Counselling initiative introduced during the mid-1980s.

#### **KEY POINTS**

- The Guidance and Counselling Initiative facilitated through Consulting Services in the 1980s provided comprehensive service for district guidance counselors.
- The initiative was discontinued due to cost recovery and limited resources.
- Re-implementing this initiative is not feasible as the needs of the District have changed as has the central structure and model for providing support and service.
- Supports that promote and facilitate comprehensive school health within the current context are met through services provided through Student Learning Services.

#### **ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

N/A

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