

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 15, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee K. Shipka, Chair, Planning and Policy Committee
Trustee S. Huff, Planning and Policy Committee
Trustee C. Ripley, Planning and Policy Committee

SUBJECT: Board Policy Review - AA.BP Stakeholder Engagement

ORIGINATOR: B. Coggles, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE
STAFF: Jenise Bidulock

RECOMMENDATION

1. That new Board Policy AA.BP – Stakeholder Engagement (Appendix I) be considered for the first time.

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Background

At the November 10, 2009 board meeting the following motion was carried:

That the Board develop a Board policy on public engagement specifically, but not limited to, describing when and under what circumstances public engagement should occur and the type of public engagement; e.g. in accordance with IAP2 principles.

Historically, the District has demonstrated a long standing commitment to engaging stakeholders in appropriate and respectful ways. A variety of practices and approaches have been taken to public engagement. Examples of the most recent public engagement process include the Aboriginal and Multi-Cultural Task Forces, sector reviews and input into “Setting the Direction”.

Effective stakeholder engagement is about building and sustaining trusting relationships. By intentionally creating the space to speak and hear a range of stakeholder perspectives based on their different experiences and knowledge, the District is able to make better, sustainable decisions that impact the education of children.

Rationale

The purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Policy is for the board to provide further direction regarding the development of clear processes and consistent approaches that are inclusive, transparent, adaptive and accountable. The District has demonstrated a commitment to engagement, and is committed to consistent approaches.

Through consistent processes and approaches:

- people know what to expect, how to participate, and how their involvement and input will contribute to the decision;

- everyone's time and input, and the available resources, are respected and factored into the plan;
- people gain confidence and trust, knowing that genuine involvement aligned with the core commitments is practiced; and
- credible data results.

The decisions and recommendations reflect a full range of stakeholder perspectives, moving beyond vested interest, and balancing the dominant voices with those who might have difficulty being heard.

The proposed policy was based on a review of engagement policies across public sector organizations in large urban areas, specifically, the Calgary Board of Education, the City of Calgary, and the City of Edmonton. All of these public bodies have policies, regulations, guidelines and practices that are based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) core values and spectrum of public participation.

The proposed policy was available for feedback from the public on the District Web Survey for four weeks from May 5 to June 4, 2010. There were 51 responses received with 14 being district staff, seven Principal/DU Administrators, 25 parents, and five community members. Of these, 26 of the respondents (52 per cent) felt that there were no aspects of the policy that required clarification. There were 25 respondents (50 per cent) that indicated no additional elements should be considered in the policy. Finally, 19 of the respondents (38 per cent) indicated that there were no elements of the policy that they had concerns with. Comments were made by 32 respondents.

Comments regarding clarification of the policy focused on:

1. How stakeholders will be engaged including:
 - timeframes,
 - kind of information given and received,
 - clarification of engagement – level, how much, when, expense,
 - define how stakeholders input will be used and how input impacted the decision, and
 - how input will be weighted or balanced re: special interest groups.
2. Need to reference IAP2 standards.
3. Clarify how the Board will be held accountable to the policy.

The comments received regarding additional elements to be included in the policy focused on:

1. How stakeholders will be engaged including:
 - involve and provide information to all stakeholders, not just public school electorate,
 - methods adaptable to needs of stakeholders, and
 - all aspects of IAP2 incorporated.
2. Clear information about nature of the decision:
 - define how stakeholders input will be used and how input impacted the decision, and
 - clarification of difference between input and making decisions.
3. Cost of engagement.

The third area addressed elements of the policy about which there were concerns. Comments related to:

1. Policy reads as a belief statement, not action oriented.
2. How the Board will be held accountable to the policy.
3. Clarification of engagement:
 - how and when stakeholders will be engaged,
 - any one stakeholder group should not be given preference,
 - all input should be available to everyone,
 - staff should be able to provide input,
 - analysis of feedback should show how the plan or decision is consistent with feedback.
4. Concerns about the extent/cost of the engagement:
 - costs take dollars from classroom, and
 - not enough resources used in current process.

The feedback led to several revisions as follows:

- addition of “in public education” to the first sentence,
- deletion of second sentence in the first paragraph, replaced with “To reflect public interests to the best of its’ ability, the Board is committed to involving the public in decisions that it makes.”,
- deletion of “school electorate” from the third paragraph,
- deletion of the following sentence in the fourth paragraph, “The District is committed to providing accurate, timely information to inform the public.”,
- addition of the following sentence to the fifth paragraph “The Board is committed to providing accurate, timely information to inform the public about decisions to be made, the opportunities to be engaged and how input from stakeholders impacted the decisions made.”,
- addition of the following phrase to the last paragraph, “....aligned with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values and Spectrum of Public Participation.”

Upon approval of the policy by the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent will develop administrative regulations, procedures and principles of practice modelled on the International Association for Public Participation Core Values of Public Participation (Appendix III) and the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (Appendix IV). These regulations, procedures and principles of practice will define how, where, when and under what circumstances public engagement will take place in the District.

In summary, the proposed policy on public engagement reinforces the Board’s commitment to public engagement in general and also ensures continued refinement of District engagement practices in response to input from stakeholders.

JB:pn

APPENDIX I	Proposed Revised Stakeholder Engagement Policy AA.BP
APPENDIX II	Proposed Stakeholder Engagement Policy AA.BP
APPENDIX III	IAP2 Core Values of Public Participation
APPENDIX IV	IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: AA.BP
TOPIC: Stakeholder Engagement

EFFECTIVE DATE:
ISSUE DATE:
REVIEW DATE:

The Board represents the public interests in public education. **To reflect public interests to the best of its' ability, the Board is committed to involving the public in decisions that it makes.** ~~The Board is committed to involving the public in decisions that it makes.~~

The Board recognizes that engaging stakeholders leads to better decisions and stronger support when decisions are implemented. The Board believes that involving stakeholders has a positive impact on students and their learning. The Board is committed to providing the public with the opportunity to be involved in decisions that impact the education of children.

The Board believes that parents, students, staff, district partners and the general public school electorate are all stakeholders. The Board places a high value on engaging those stakeholders who will be most directly affected by a decision.

The Board values broad stakeholder involvement, especially when district decisions have district wide implications. The level, time allotment and extent of stakeholder involvement in such decisions will be aligned with the impact the decision may have on stakeholders and the resources (time, funding, personnel) of the organization. ~~The District is committed to providing accurate, timely information to inform the public.~~

The Board of Trustees is committed to engaging stakeholders in appropriate and respectful ways, through clear processes and consistent approaches. The Board places a high value on processes that are inclusive, transparent, adaptable and accountable. **The Board is committed to providing accurate, timely information to inform the public about decisions to be made, the opportunities to be engaged and how input from stakeholders impacted the decisions made.**

The Board expects the District administration to develop and implement regulations and processes based on sound standards of practice for public engagement **aligned with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values and Spectrum of Public Participation.**

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Reference(s):



International Association
for Public Participation

IAP2 Core Values of Public Participation

As an international leader in public participation, IAP2 has developed the “IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation” for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes. These core values were developed over a two year period with broad international input to identify those aspects of public participation which cross national, cultural, and religious boundaries. The purpose of these core values is to help make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

For more information, visit the IAP2 Web site at www.iap2.org.



International Association
for Public Participation

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Increasing Level of Public Impact

Public participation goal

Inform

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

Consult

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Involve

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Collaborate

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Empower

To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Promise to the public

We will keep you informed.

We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

We will implement what you decide.

Example techniques

- Fact sheets
- Web sites
- Open houses

- Public comment
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Public meetings

- Workshops
- Deliberative polling

- Citizen advisory committees
- Consensus-building
- Participatory decision-making

- Citizen juries
- Ballots
- Delegated decision