

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 8, 2011

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee C. Spencer

SUBJECT: Motion re Policy for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/Transgendered and Queer (LGBTQ) Students and Employees

RECOMMENDATION

That the Policy Review Committee develop a policy that affirms the District's commitment to providing a welcoming environment, free of discrimination and harassment, for all students and employees who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual/transgendered and queer (LGBTQ). The Committee shall look at LGBTQ policies of the Greater Victoria School District and Vancouver School Board as examples, and seek input from students, staff and members of the public.

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Notice of the above motion was served at the February 22, 2011 board meeting.

Copies of the Greater Victoria School District Regulation 4303 – Discrimination (Attachment #1), the Vancouver School Board Policy ACB: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-spirit, Questioning (Attachment #2) and the Edmonton Public School Board Policy IF.BP – Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments are provided as information.

CS:mmf

- Attachment #1 - Greater Victoria School District Regulation 4303 – Discrimination
- Attachment #2 - Vancouver School Board Policy ACB: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-spirit, Questioning
- Attachment #3 - Edmonton Public School Board Policy IF.BP – Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments



The Greater Victoria School District is committed to each student's success in learning within a responsive and safe environment.

REGULATION 4303

DISCRIMINATION

A. School and District Culture

In order to create a school and district culture which supports diversity, all members of the school community must be expected to model respectful conduct and to refuse to tolerate any form of discrimination.

- a. Schools shall encourage and support activities promoting respect for human rights and the celebration of diversity.
- b. Schools shall expect students to be “respectful and fair” and to “increasingly be willing to speak up or take action to support diversity and defend human rights” (BC Performance Standards for Social Responsibility).
- c. School rules and codes of conduct outlining expectations for student behaviour shall include anti-discrimination language.
- d. Upon hearing discriminatory language or witnessing discriminatory behaviour, school staff shall take appropriate action.
- e. Students and parents shall be informed that discriminatory acts should be reported to staff and those reports will be treated respectfully and seriously.
- f. Schools shall document reports of discriminatory acts.
- g. Where it is determined that a student has committed a discriminatory act, the principal shall be informed and undertake disciplinary action which may include the suspension of that student. This action will include an educational component focused on the impact of discrimination.
- h. Where it is determined that a student or staff member has been the victim of discrimination, the principal and parents (where appropriate) shall be informed and support will be offered.

- i. The Board and District Administration shall ensure that all members of the school and district community are aware of the discrimination policy and regulations.
- j. The Board and District Administration shall take a leadership role in promoting an awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination.
- k. The Board expects all staff to model respectful, tolerant conduct regardless of perceived differences.
- l. The Board expects its employees to take appropriate steps to discourage discriminatory acts and to follow the Greater Victoria School District Complaint Policy 1155 (Complaint Process for a Resolution of Concerns) when addressing such acts.
- m. Where it is determined that a Board employee has committed a discriminatory act, the employee's immediate supervisor shall take disciplinary action in accordance with the employee's collective agreement. Additionally, an educational component will be included with a focus on understanding the impact of discrimination.
- n. The Board recognizes that systemic barriers may interfere with the attainment of an environment free from discrimination. Such barriers shall be identified and removed, at the district and school level, in order to create a culture which promotes respect for human rights and supports diversity (i.e. in policy statements, district forms, and communications with the public).

B. Learning and Curriculum Resources

- a. The learning and curriculum resources shall emphasize universal human themes that acknowledge human diversity as an essential and enriching element of our society.
- b. The learning and curriculum resources shall, when appropriate, provide the student with opportunities to become familiar with diversity.
- c. An awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination and the expectation that students will treat each other respectfully despite differences shall, whenever appropriate, be integrated into the curriculum.
- d. Teaching personnel shall review materials prior to use to identify areas of bias. This review may involve consultation with representative groups.
- e. The Board and District Administration shall promote opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights, supporting diversity, and addressing discrimination in schools.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL BOARD

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2002 the Greater Victoria Board of School Trustees passed the following motion:

"That the Board directs administration to strike a committee to explore and make recommendations to deal with safety issues for sexual minorities".

In accordance with this motion a committee which included a trustee, school administrators, teaching, counselling and CUPE staff, parents, and students, looked at all aspects of the safety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, intersex, queer, or questioning (LGBTTIQQ) youth in schools. Information was gathered from policies and regulations in school districts throughout Canada and the United States, survey results such as those from the 1999 McCreary Centre Society "Being Out-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Youth in BC: an Adolescent Health Survey", various Human Rights documents, and discussions with same-sex parents as well as students in our school district.

RATIONALE FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board of School Trustees recognizes and values the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the district's culture. The Board also recognizes that students and other school community members identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, intersex, queer, or questioning (LGBTTIQQ) face a unique set of challenges within our schools and communities. Individuals who are dealing with or are perceived to be dealing with issues of gender identity, gender expression, intersexuality or sexual orientation, as well as their families, are frequently the targets of homophobic, transphobic, or heterosexist behaviors. This often results in a struggle with a variety of profound social consequences including discrimination, harassment, physical and sexual violence, social and emotional isolation, substance abuse, homelessness, school truancy and drop-out, self-harm and suicide.

It is with this reality in mind and with an understanding that each member of the school and district community must share the responsibility for changing this

reality, that in accordance with the Greater Victoria School District Policy and Regulations 4303, these recommendations are made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

That the Board strike a Committee of School District stakeholders and representatives from the Victoria LGBTTIQQ Community to act in an advisory capacity in the implementation and further development of the following recommendations:

1. EDUCATION

- a) That the Board and District Administration promote opportunities for staff to increase their awareness of the scope and impact of discrimination against LGBTTIQQ people.
- b) That the Board and District Administration promote opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and skills in developing respect for, as well as eliminating discrimination against, LGBTTIQQ people.
- c) That schools be encouraged to support age-appropriate activities which promote an understanding of the impact of discrimination on members of their LGBTTIQQ community.
- d) That schools be encouraged to support age-appropriate activities which promote respect for and reduce discrimination against members of their LGBTTIQQ community.
- e) That the Board and School Administration work to increase parental awareness of the needs of LGBTTIQQ students and families through school PAC's and VCPAC.

2. SAFETY

- a) That middle and secondary schools be encouraged to develop student Codes of Conduct which clearly state that discrimination on the basis of gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation is prohibited.
- b) That school staff take steps to eliminate language and conduct which discriminates against people in the LGBTTIQQ community.
- c) That schools document incidents of discrimination against students in the LGBTTIQQ community in their school.

3. SUPPORT

- a) That schools create support systems for the LGBTTIQQ youth in their school communities.
- b) That the Board issue a public statement promoting and supporting school clubs such as Social Justice or Gay/Straight Alliance Clubs for their LGBTTIQQ youth and their allies.
- c) That middle and secondary schools be encouraged to promote and support school clubs such as Social Justice or Gay/Straight Alliance Clubs, for their LGBTTIQQ youth and their allies.
- d) That community resource lists and displays in schools be inclusive of community supports for LGBTTIQQ youth and families.

4. LEARNING AND CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- a) That current and promising practices which promote safe and inclusive school environments for LGBTTIQQ youth be identified and shared with school staffs.
- b) That resources be identified which schools can access to assist their school communities in becoming safe and inclusive school environments for LGBTTIQQ youth.

5. SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

- a) That the Board ensures that the wording of all District documents reflects equal treatment and inclusion for LGBTTIQQ youth and families.

Respectfully submitted by:

Charley Beresford, Trustee
Dick Brown, Elementary Counsellor
Chelsea Clark, Student
Gail Dunlop, Parent
Lyle Fink, CUPE 382
Bryan Hartshorn, Student
Karen Leahy-Trill, CUPE 947
Ruth MacIntosh, VCPAC
Andre Serzisko, Parent
Brenda Simmonds, Principal
Joan Thain, Vice Principal
Lynn Thomson, GVTA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

School District 61 Board of School Trustees has undergone a process of connecting with members of the school community to discuss how needs relating to gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation are being met by the school system. Insight and direction was gained in a series of public meetings and focus groups with stakeholder individuals and organizations. These meetings generated a number of recommendations that lay the foundation of the discrimination policy and, in particular, the preceding rationale and recommendations.

A 1999 survey entitled “*Being Out – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Youth in BC: An Adolescent Health Survey*”, published by The McCreary Centre Society, highlights the issues many lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in British Columbia’s schools are presently facing:

- 37% of gay and lesbian youth feel like outsiders at school.
- Two-thirds often hear homophobic remarks made by other students.
- Nearly 1 in 5 lesbian and gay youth have been physically assaulted and the majority of youth have been verbally harassed at school in the past year.
- 46% of the lesbian and gay youth surveyed attempted suicide at least once before in their lifetime and in the past year, almost 25% attempted suicide.
- The average age of first suicide attempt was 13 years.
- Almost 40% of lesbian and gay youth have dramatically low self-esteem.
- 61% of surveyed youth have been physically abused in their lifetime.
- None of the surveyed youth gave high ratings to the quality of their family relationships.

One of the primary findings of the survey was that schools are not safe or supportive places for most gay and lesbian youth. When asked by surveyors if they liked school, 37% gay and lesbian youth responded that they don’t like or hate school compared to 21% of all youth in schools.

An issue highlighted in the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Education in 1999 states that 20%

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of gay, lesbian and bisexual students skipped school in the past month because they felt unsafe en route to or at school.

Studies of transgender youth have documented elevated high school dropout rates, parental abuse and increased likelihood of becoming street involved, with high rates of sexual exploitation of homeless transgender youth. While some transgendered people are well supported, many struggle with daily discrimination, physical and sexual violence, poverty and extreme social isolation with resulting depression, alcohol and drug use and high rates of self-harm and suicide attempts. HIV rates are disproportionately high among transgendered people.

According to the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA), “a person with an intersex condition is born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia or an internal reproductive system that is not considered ‘standard’ for either male or female.” It is estimated that 1% of the population is intersex. The medical profession is currently split between those who believe that intersexuality should not be treated unless it poses health risks and those who believe that evidence of intersexuality should be concealed through surgery, hormones and non-disclosure to intersex children. The trauma from repeated invasive surgeries can have profound long-term consequences on the physical, mental and sexual health of intersex people. Additionally, intersex youth speak of becoming depressed and suicidal as a result of the shame and stigma they feel about their bodies as a result of constant medical scrutiny.

In discussion with focus groups of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning youth in the Victoria area, a number of recommendations for schools and the school environment were put forward as follows:

- Include discussions of same sex relationships and sexual activity when covering curriculum areas of sexuality and sexual health.
- All staff and students need education on the issues of homophobia transphobia, intersexuality and heterosexism.
- All staff need to treat issues of discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation (specifically verbal harassment such as name calling – “fag” “queer”) as seriously as other forms of discrimination, such as racism.
- Gay/Straight Alliances need to be set up in all middle and secondary schools. These organizations need to be set up and supported by staff, not only sexual minority youth.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning youth need to know who they can safely approach about these issues in the school environment and where the safe spaces in the school are in the event that they need to access support immediately.

Information was also gathered from same-sex parents with children and youth in School District 61. Much of the concern expressed by parents was also expressed by the youth groups, e.g. unacceptability of homophobic remarks and schools being unsafe for lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex and transgender youth. There are some important distinctions, however, which are described below:

- The School District needs to encourage the integration of same-sex family messages into curriculum during elementary grades and into school district policies.
- School forms need to be updated to provide for the possibility that students do not live in a heterosexual family, e.g. changing “mother/father” to “parent1/parent2” or leaving a space where parents can identify themselves.
- Sexual minority issues need to be visible to students via information in libraries, images in the school and guest speakers from the community.
- The School District must be proactive in supporting its staff by identifying anti-harassment policies and by ensuring that the District will support staff if they choose to acknowledge their sexual orientation in the workplace.
- Parent Advisory Councils should be encouraged to educate themselves on the issues of sexual orientation in schools and every effort should be made to encourage diversity on parent councils.

The extensive consultation with impacted school community members did not highlight specific issues that the working committee feels necessary to address with this policy. In particular, intersex, transgender, gender identity and gender expression issues were not strongly stated due to the lack of representation of this group of individuals. The committee believes that failure to acknowledge this population in the writing of this policy would contribute to the continued silencing of the voice of these groups thereby not reflecting the needs of this population.

DEFINITIONS

Bisexual - an individual (male or female) who is attracted to, and may form sexual and affectionate relationships with both males and females. A bisexual may not be equally attracted to both genders and the degree of attraction may vary over time.

Gay - a person who forms sexual and affectionate relationships with those of the same gender; often used to refer to men only.

Gender Expression - the appearance, mannerisms and/or behaviour used to signify to others the gender that the individual wishes to be perceived as.

Gender Identity - one's internal and psychological sense of oneself as male or female, or both or neither (regardless of sexual orientation); people who question their gender identity may feel unsure of their gender or believe they are not of the same gender as their physical body. **Third gender** is the term sometimes used to describe people who feel other than male or female and **bi-gender** refers to people who feel they are both male and female. Often bi-gender people will spend some time presenting in one gender and some time in the other. Some people choose to present **androgynously** in a conscious attempt to question and expand traditional gender roles, even though they do not question their gender identity.

Heterosexism - the institutionalized assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual and that heterosexuality is inherently superior to and preferable to homosexuality or bisexuality; also refers to the institutional and organizational discrimination against non-heterosexuals or behaviours not stereotypically heterosexual (this discrimination is also sometimes referred to as cultural, institutional or societal homophobia).

Homophobia - the irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behaviour. There are many levels and forms of homophobia, including cultural/institutional homophobia, personal homophobia, interpersonal homophobia and internalized homophobia. Many of the problems faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people stem from homophobia and heterosexism. **Transphobia** is the fear, hatred and intolerance of the transsexuals or transgender people, including anyone judged to not fully fit into their assigned gender.

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Intersex - People who were born with a combination of male and female anatomy. Used to be called "hermaphrodite"; some still use this term, though intersex is the word now preferred.

Lesbian - A woman who forms sexual and affectionate relationships with other women; the term originates from the Greek island of Lesbos which was home to Sappho, a poet, a teacher and a woman who loved other women.

Queer - broad term used both as an individual label and also signifying a larger socio-political movement created from a general dissatisfaction with a gay and lesbian politic that is thought to be too assimilationist in nature; "queer" defines a strategy, an attitude, a reference to other identities and a new self-understanding. It is a term also used as shorthand for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people.

Questioning - an apt term or self-label sometimes used by those exploring personal and political issues of sexual orientation, sexual and gender identity, and choosing not to identify with any other label; "questioning" may create greater potential to create new options as well.

Sexual orientation - refers to a person's deep-seated feelings of sexual attraction. It includes whom we desire sexually, with whom we want to become intimate, and with whom we want to form some of our strongest emotional relationships. The inclination or capacity to develop these intimate sexual and emotional bonds may be with people of the same gender (lesbian, gay), the other gender (heterosexual) or either gender (bisexual). Many people become aware of these feelings during adolescence or even earlier. Some do not realize or acknowledge their attractions (especially same-sex attractions) until much later in life. Orientation is not the same as behaviour since not everyone acts on his or her attractions. It is also important to note that one's gender identity is totally independent of one's sexual orientation; neither facet should be considered predictive of the other.

Transgender - refers to people who do not identify with the gender roles assigned to them by society based on their biological sex.

Transsexual (TS) - an individual who presents himself/herself and lives in the gender "opposite" to his/her genetic/physical gender at birth. A transsexual is someone who feels psychologically like the other sex and has somehow been trapped in the wrong body. Transsexuals may be heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual in their sexual orientation. Some transsexuals may undergo operations and hormone therapy in order to make their body fit what they feel is their true gender. TS's are also known as **female-to-male, FTM, transmen** or **male-to-female, MTF, transwomen**.

Two-Spirit- Two-Spirit is a term used by some indigenous (First Nations) people to describe themselves in a way that is closer to their cultural construct of sex/gender/sexuality than the dominant Western view. Many of the languages of indigenous nations of North America include specific terms for gender and sexual diversity; some indigenous people may use both the general term Two-Spirit and the culturally specific term from their own language to describe themselves.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Advise the Board on the implementation, review and renewal of the recommendations approved by the Board on June 23, 2003 in conjunction with Policy and Regulations 4303.
- Advise the Board on other strategies to address LGBTTIQQ issues of youth, their families and GVSDB staff.
- Suggest appropriate ways to integrate anti-homophobia education within curriculum for all grade levels.
- Work with members of other District groups to raise awareness of LGBTTIQQ issues and develop strategies to effectively support our students and families.
- Encourage youth representation on and input to the committee.

Membership:

Representative from Elementary, Middle and Secondary Principals (1 from each)

Representative from Greater Victoria Teachers Association (GVTA)

Representative from CUPE 947

Representative from CUPE 382

Representative from Allied Specialists Association (ASA)

Representative from District Councillors Association

Parent from Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Council (VCPAC)

Representative from Gay/Straight Alliances and Student Councils

School Board Trustee (1)

Community Organizations representing LGBTTIQQ issues

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**SEXY
Transcend
Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gays (PFLAG)
LGBTTIQQ Parents
Police Liaison Officer**

Approved: February 2004

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ACB: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-spirit, Questioning

Classification: A: Foundations and Basic Commitments

Code: ACB

Intent

The Board of School Trustees (the “Board”) is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for all students and employees including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. These students and employees, as all students and employees, have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. The letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *B. C. Human Rights Acts* and the *Collective Agreements* shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for individual differences. Specifically, the Board will not tolerate hate crimes, harassment or discrimination, and will vigorously enforce policy and regulations dealing with such matters.

The Board will provide a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, while also promoting pro-active strategies and guidelines to ensure that lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, bisexual and questioning students, employees and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity. The purpose of this policy is to define appropriate behaviours and actions in order to prevent discrimination and harassment through greater awareness of and responsiveness to their deleterious effects. This policy is also drafted to ensure that homophobic complaints are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures. The policy will also raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of people who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. By valuing diversity and respecting differences, students and staff act in accordance with the Vancouver district’s social responsibility initiative.

Leadership

The Vancouver School Board shall ensure that all staff will be able to identify individual discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, as well as work to eliminate the systemic inequities and barriers to learning for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and demonstrate accountability for their removal so that all students are treated with fairness and respect.

All administrators, teachers, counselors, and staff and student leaders will communicate the board's position to their employees, staff and students. In the course of their leadership roles, they will commit to listen to lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, bisexual and questioning youth and their designated support groups and take concrete actions to make schools more welcoming and safer places for these students.

The Board shall consult with the LGBTTTQ Advisory Committee to ensure that policy directions, priorities and implementation of programs and services are consistent with this LGBTTBQ policy.

Counselling and Student Support

The Vancouver School Board is committed to maintaining a safe learning and working environment which actively provides counselling and support to students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. All counsellors provided by the board shall be educated in the knowledge and skills required to deal with LGBTTTQ issues with students. Counsellors will be informed and familiar with all policies with respect to human rights, anti-homophobia, hate literature, discrimination and harassment, and will alert their school community to these policies. Counsellors will be sensitive to lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, bisexual and questioning students as well as students from LGBTTT headed families.

Elementary and secondary schools are encouraged to appoint a staff person to be a safe contact for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. School administrators should inform students and other staff about the location and availability of this contact person. Schools are encouraged in their goal planning to advocate for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and those who are questioning their gender identity. Where students request and where staff are willing to volunteer their time, Gay/Straight Alliance clubs (GSAs) will be encouraged at secondary schools in the district.

Anti-Harassment

Homophobic harassment is demeaning treatment to all students, students' parents or guardians, and employees regardless of their sexual orientation. Harassment based on gender identities is also demeaning to all students and employees. These forms of harassment and discrimination are prohibited under the B.C. Human Rights Code.

Any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, labels, stereotypes, incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification will not be tolerated. Schools will be encouraged to specifically include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student codes of conduct. Please refer to the “General Anti-Harassment VSB Policy”.

Curriculum Learning Resources

Anti-Homophobia Education strives to identify and change educational practices, policies, and procedures that promote homophobia, as well as the homophobic attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. Anti-homophobia education provides knowledge, skills, and strategies for educators to examine such discrimination critically in order to understand its origin and to recognize and challenge it.

The Board is committed to enabling all lesbian, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, bisexual and questioning students to see themselves and their lives positively reflected in the curriculum. Resources should be chosen or updated in order to promote critical thinking and include materials that accurately reflect the range of Canada’s LGBTTTQ communities. Keeping in mind the multi-cultural aspect of the district, as many of the above resources as possible should be available in different languages and in formats easily accessible to ESL students.

Staff Development, In Service and Professional Development

The Vancouver School Board is committed to ongoing staff development in anti-homophobia education and sexual orientation equity for trustees and Board staff, and will assist them to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to identify and eliminate homophobic practices. The Board will provide in-service training for teaching and support staff in anti-homophobia methodologies to enable them to deliver an inclusive curriculum. The Board will also provide in-service training for employees to deal effectively and confidently with issues of homophobia, heterosexism and gender identity and support initiatives that foster dialogue to create understanding and respect for diversity.

School-Community Involvement

The Vancouver School Board is committed to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities and other communities who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity to increase co-operation and collaboration among home, school and the community.

The Board will work to create partnerships that ensure effective participation in the education process by representative and inclusive organizations and LGBTTTQ communities that are committed to the mission of the VSB. (To enable students to reach

their intellectual, social, aesthetic and physical potential in challenging and stimulating settings which reflect the worth of each individual and promote mutual respect, co-operation, and social responsibility.)

The Board will encourage parent advisory councils to reflect the diversity of the District.

The Vancouver School Board will acknowledge through its communication to students, staff, and the community that some children live in LGBTTT-headed families and need to be positively recognized and included as such. Any information to students and parents on anti-homophobia, anti-discrimination and sexual orientation equity needs to be translated into the languages spoken in the home. Parent Advisory Councils and students will be encouraged to engage in dialogue with openly identified LGBTTTQ youth and their organizations.

Employment Equity

The Board of School Trustees (the “Board”) believes in equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, or political beliefs. The letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *B. C. Human Rights Acts* and the *VSB/VTF Collective Agreement* shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance for individual differences.

The Board will ensure that the confidentiality of the sexual orientation and gender identity of staff will be protected. Employees who are out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or transitioning to another gender will be given the support they require to do their work in a safe and respectful environment.

Glossary

Gay: a man who is romantically and sexually attracted to other men. It is sometimes used to refer to the general GLBTQ community, but most often refers to just gay men.

Lesbian: a woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women. This term originates with the female poet Sappho who lived in a community comprised predominantly of women on the Isle of Lesbos in ancient Greece.

Bisexual: generally used to describe people who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex or gender.

Sex & Gender: it is easy to confuse these two concepts and terms; however, they are different. Sex refers to the biological sex of a person. Gender refers to their societal appearance, mannerisms, and roles.

Transgender: an umbrella term used to refer to people who transcend the traditional concept of gender. Many feel as though they are neither a man nor a woman specifically, and many feel as though their biological sex (male, female, etc.) and their socialized gender (man, woman, etc.) don't match up. Some opt to change/reassign their sex through hormones and/or surgery and some change their outward appearance, or gender expression, through clothing, hairstyles, mannerisms, etc.

Transvestite: more appropriately referred to as "cross-dressing," the term transvestite most often refers to males who dress in the clothing of women. The term drag usually refers to dressing in the clothing and styles of another gender for entertainment purposes.

Transsexual: used to describe those individuals who use hormone therapy and/or surgery to alter their sex.

Two-Spirit: used by some First Nations to describe people in their culture who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

Questioning: people who are in the process of questioning their sexual orientation are often in need of support and understanding during this stage of their identity. They are seeking information and guidance in their self-discovery.

Ally: an individual who is supportive of the GLBTQ community. They believe in the dignity and respect of all people, and are willing to stand up in that role.

Homosexual: a scientific term invented in the 1800's to refer to individuals who are sexually attracted to their own sex/gender.

Heterosexual: created around the same time as 'homosexual' to describe individuals who are sexually attracted to the opposite sex/gender.

Straight: a slang word used to refer to the heterosexual members of our community.

Heterosexism and Homophobia: the term heterosexism refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and more desirable than homosexuality. "Homophobia" is defined as "the irrational fear and hatred of homosexuals." Both of these are perpetuated by negative stereotypes and are dangerous to individuals and communities.

Genderism: refers to the assumption that one's gender identity or gender expression will conform to traditionally held stereotypes associated with one's biological sex.

Sexual Orientation: is a personal characteristic that covers the range of human sexuality from gay and lesbian, to bisexual, transgender and heterosexual orientations.

Gender Identity: a person's gender identity is the way in which they define and act on their gender. Gender Expression is how they express their gender.

Queer: the term queer has a history of being used as a derogatory name for members of the GLBTQ (and Ally) community and those whose sexual orientation is perceived as such. Many people use this word in a positive way to refer to the community; they have reclaimed the term as their own. Not everyone believes this and sensitivity should be used when using or hearing it as there are still many negative connotations with its use.

(These definitions were assembled by Sarah E. Holmes (GLBTQA Resources Coordinator from 2000-2002) in August 2000, revised by Andrew J. Shepard in November 2000, updated again by Sarah August 2002. <http://www.usm.maine.edu/glbta/definitions.htm> University of Southern Maine Safe Zone Project.)

DMT Responsibility: AS-LS

Cross References:

ACA: Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism; FB: Facilities Planning; GBAB: Employment Equity; GBCBA: Sexual Harassment; IGBA: Programs for Disabled Students; IIA: Instructional Materials; IIAE: Hate Crimes and Propaganda; JB: Equal Educational Opportunities; KLB: Public Complaints about the Curriculum/Instructional Materials

Adopted Date:

Monday February 16, 2004

[< ACA-R-2: Multiculturalism and Anti-racism up AD: Educational Philosophy](#)

Edmonton Public Schools

Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: IF.BP	EFFECTIVE DATE: 16-11-2010
TOPIC: Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments	ISSUE DATE: 23-11-2010
	REVIEW DATE: 11-2017

Edmonton Public School Board is committed to creating welcoming learning environments which promote understanding and respect among all members of the school community.

The Board believes that a responsive, safe, caring and inclusive school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. It believes that equity of opportunity, and equity of access to programs, services, and resources are critical to supporting all students in realizing their full potential. The Board expects these beliefs to be reflected in District programs, operations and practices.

The Board recognizes that individual and systemic biases related to race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, physical or mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation exist in society. Therefore, the Board acknowledges that such biases may exist within our schools. The Board believes that such biases are intolerable. Biases result in behaviours that damage the physical, mental and emotional well-being of students and negatively impact their educational, social and career outcomes. Further, they damage relationships with peers, families and community partners. The Board believes staff play a central role in creating environments which acknowledge and promote understanding, respect and recognition of the diversity of students and families within the school community. As students learn by example, all members of the school community are expected to model respectful conduct, inclusive behaviour and an understanding and appreciation of diversity.

The Board is committed to acknowledging, addressing, and eradicating discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying. The Board believes schools have the responsibility to ensure that students and their families feel safe to share these issues and concerns. Within a safe and caring environment, students and their families have the right and responsibility to bring these concerns to the attention of the school staff. The Board expects that school and District staff will be respectful of the concerns of students and their families and will work with them to provide appropriate supports and resolve their issues in a timely manner.

Reference(s):

[GAA.BP](#) - Human Resources Framework

[GBCA.BP](#) - Respectful Working Environments

[GBCA.AR](#) - Respectful Working Environments

[HGAB.BP](#) - Multicultural Education

[HGAB.AR](#) - Multicultural Education

[IAA.BP](#) - Aboriginal Education

[IAA.AR](#) - Aboriginal Education

[IG.BP](#) - Student Behaviour and Conduct

[IG.AR](#) - Student Behaviour and Conduct

[IGD.BP](#) - Student Suspension and Expulsion

[IGD.AR](#) - Student Suspension and Expulsion

[Alberta Human Rights Act](#)

[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)



EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS