

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 10, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee D. Fleming, Planning and Policy Committee
Trustee G. Gibeault, Chair Planning and Policy Committee
Trustee K. Shipka, Planning and Policy Committee

SUBJECT: Board Policy Review - GFA.BP Reduction of Staff

ORIGINATOR: B. Tams, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE
STAFF: David Fraser, Veda Lastiwka, Mark Liguori, Ellen Ogilvy

RECOMMENDATION

1. That revised Board Policy GFA.BP Reduction of Staff (Appendix I) be introduced.
2. That revised Board Policy GFA.BP Reduction of Staff be considered for the first time.
3. That revised Board Policy GFA.BP Reduction of Staff be considered for the second time.

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Background

This policy was developed in the mid 1990s when the District anticipated the possibility of a large scale reduction in staff as the result of provincial cuts in funding to education. At that time that there were serious and time-consuming attempts to establish workable criteria as stipulated in the policy. It was determined that it would be almost impossible to apply such criteria in the event of multiple lay-offs.

This policy was discussed with members of our staff groups. While there was support for the revised wording, the ATA and exempt staff voiced some concern that the policy was not more specific in terms of criteria for staff reduction.

Rationale

Based on the advice of the original developers of the policy and those who attempted to establish workable district wide criteria, the administration is recommending that the policy be rewritten to provide the superintendent with the authority to reduce staff in a manner that is consistent with collective agreements and considers program and District needs, should the need arise. Repetitive language has been removed from the policy.

Eighty staff members and members of the public responded to the web survey. Of these, 69% felt there were no aspects of the policy which needed clarification. Four individuals queried the meaning of 'natural attrition'. Regarding the use of seniority to determine which staff members should be retained, five respondents supported this criteria and five were opposed to such use. Six respondents voiced concern about the exempt staff group not having the protection of a collective agreement. These respondents tended to have more questions about the criteria that might be used.

Nine respondents wanted to know how the decisions would be made. Of these, one individual felt the board should make this decision, and three suggested the need for guidelines if the superintendent were to make this decision. The desire for concrete criteria is understandable. However, in the mid-nineties administrators attempted to apply the ones outlined in this policy. They report that it was very difficult if not impossible to make fair decisions based on the multiple criteria identified of 'qualifications, experience, skills and length of continuous service'. For example, while we have accurate records of experience and length of continuous service, our records of qualifications may not be complete if the staff member has not provided evidence of additional professional development. Individuals may have taken courses that would enhance their qualifications, but not reported them to the district. Assessment of skills was be fraught with reliability and validity issues, including the consistency of reliability among assessors.

It is difficult to contemplate potential circumstances which might require such reductions. They could be related to selective or across the board funding cuts, rapid decline in enrollment at any or all divisions, or other unknown factors. Therefore, it is recommended that the policy reflect general statements which consider program needs, the needs of the district and the need to adhere to collective agreements, rather than include specific direction.

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APPENDIX I: Revised Board Policy GFA.BP Reduction of Staff

Edmonton Public Schools

Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: GFA.BP
 TOPIC: Reduction of Staff

EFFECTIVE DATE: 08-05-2001
 ISSUE DATE: 09-05-2001
 REVIEW DATE: 05-2006

A. GENERAL

The Board recognizes that a reduction in staff may be necessary in certain circumstances and favours the principle of natural attrition, where practical, to effect this reduction. **If the Superintendent of Schools determines that natural attrition is insufficient to meet the need for staff reduction, the Superintendent or designate shall identify staff to be laid off in accordance with the applicable collective agreement. With respect to teachers and exempt staff, the Superintendent shall make all reasonable attempts to retain an overall staff complement that best meets program and district needs.**

~~Qualifications, experience, skills, and length of continuous services shall be given consideration in identifying staff who are surplus to district needs.~~

~~B. TEACHING STAFF~~

- ~~1. If staff reductions are to be effected, the superintendent of schools shall ensure that the staff retained are those that will best meet the program needs of the district.~~
- ~~2. The superintendent of schools shall recommend to the board the termination of employment of staff who are surplus to district needs.~~

~~C. EXEMPT STAFF—Management~~

- ~~1. If staff reductions are to be effected, the superintendent of schools shall ensure that the staff retained are those that will best meet district needs.~~
- ~~2. The superintendent of schools shall recommend to the board the termination of employment of staff who are surplus to district needs.~~

~~D. EXEMPT STAFF—Non Management~~

- ~~1. If staff reductions are to be effected, the superintendent of schools shall ensure that the staff retained are those that will best meet district needs.~~
- ~~2. The superintendent of schools shall terminate the employment of staff who are surplus to district needs.~~

Reference(s):

[GC.BP](#) - Recruitment, Employment and Deployment of Staff

[School Act](#) Sections 104, 107, 109, 110, 111(6,7,8), 132, 133, 138

Collective Agreement with Edmonton Public Teachers, Local 37 of the Alberta Teachers' Association

Collective Agreements with Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 474, Local 784, and Local 3550

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