

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 25, 2003

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: District Satisfaction Survey 2003-04

ORIGINATOR: A. Habinski, Executive Director School and District Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Diane Brunton

INFORMATION

The purpose of this report is to inform trustees of the administration's plan to undertake the district's annual satisfaction survey in May 2004.

The district's satisfaction survey process and questionnaires are reviewed annually prior to implementation. During this process suggestions identified throughout the year are considered. Frequent changes to questions are avoided in order to ensure the ability to compare outcomes over time.

During the 2002-03 school year the district satisfaction surveys were examined with the view to support the district's initiative of "Focus on Supporting Teaching and Learning". After extensive consultation and input from Student Achievement Services and Consulting Services a decision was made to reorganize the questions to reflect the Eight Areas of Expectation (staff and parent surveys only). It was also decided that a brochure would be included with the parent and community questionnaires that would provide a brief outline of the district's focus on learning and instruction. Changes to the questions themselves were kept to a minimum, with the addition of a few questions to the parent and staff surveys in the areas of expectation and removal of the computer usage question from all surveys.

It was decided that the annual surveys would not be administered in 2002-03 due to the district's financial situation at that time. The cancellation generated considerable input from many principals and central decision unit managers regarding the value of the information derived from the surveys and strong support for continuing them. A number of schools and central services units chose to conduct in-house surveys using revised survey questionnaires. They received assistance from central staff responsible for the surveys in relation to the data collection, analysis and presentation of results.

It was also recognized that although the district surveys are an important instrument in addressing targets and standards, they do not address all the district's information needs. Other means of collecting information could be used in conjunction with the surveys in order to obtain further insight into stakeholder perceptions. Polling of community perceptions could be explored regarding specific issues of importance to the district. In order to garner more in depth information from school principals regarding their opinions about services

received from central services departments, a number of avenues are available for consideration in addition to the current survey question being asked (“To what extent are you satisfied with the services provided to you by the following areas with Central Services...?”). Other options would be an independent, brief, more specific survey run concurrently or as part of the district survey; using support teams as a means of collecting information on a limited number of questions; or a focus group in the form of Superintendent’s Council to provide reaction to current service and suggestions for improvement. Also important to keep in mind is that implementing any of these options may place additional demands on principals’ time.

It is the intention of administration to conduct the district surveys for the current school year in May 2004. They will be administered following the procedures established for the 2002-03 surveys.

Alberta Learning is planning to gather information as part of their “Accountability Pillar”. They are currently in the process of consulting with school jurisdictions regarding a survey instrument and procedures that will be employed. Consideration is given to survey all grade 4, 7 and 10 students, parents and teachers as well as all board members. The planned implementation is for the month of February 2004.

Edmonton Public Schools’ administration is working with Alberta Learning on the relationship between district and provincial surveys and how best to coordinate their implementation. It may be necessary for the district to modify its survey process and population under study. The district will avoid having staff, students and parents complete two surveys within a relatively short period of time.

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