

DATE: November 29, 2011

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Leslie Cleary, Policy Review Committee
Trustee Michael Janz, Chair Policy Review Committee
Trustee Heather MacKenzie, Policy Review Committee

SUBJECT: Review of Board Policy IFA.BP – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

ORIGINATOR: Tanni Parker, Assistant Superintendent Student Learning Services

RESOURCE STAFF: Anne Sherwood, Ros Smith, Kris Wells

REFERENCE: N/A

ISSUE

On March 8, 2011 the Board of Trustees approved the following motion:

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.

RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed new Board Policy IFA.BP – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (Attachment I) be considered for the third time and approved.

BACKGROUND

On April 21, 2011 the 2010-2011 Policy Review Committee approved a draft policy to be posted on the district website for feedback from the public. The web survey was open from May 5 to June 9, 2011 - 2,096 responses were received. Multiple perspectives on sexual orientation and gender identity issues were identified from the policy survey and numerous written and verbal communications were received by Trustees. The Policy Committee reviewed and considered all comments from the online survey. Due to the number of written responses, administration also provided a summary of these comments organized by comment topic, theme and frequency. Through numerous meetings, the Policy Review Committee made adjustments to the draft policy based on the totality of feedback received.

The proposed policy went to public board on November 8, 2011, for first and second reading. The Board of Trustees requested an amendment to the proposed policy prior to bringing it back to public board on November 29. The amendment is reflected in the last paragraph of the proposed policy.

RELATED FACTS

N/A

OPTIONS

N/A

CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS

N/A

NEXT STEPS

Pending approval of the recommendation, the policy will be posted on the district website.

An Administrative Regulation will be developed to support the Board Policy.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Proposed New Board Policy IFA.BP – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

APPENDIX I Draft Board Policy IFA.BP – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity –
Posted for Web Survey

TP:ja

November 29, 2011

Edmonton Public Schools

Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: IFA.BP

TOPIC: Sexual Orientation and Gender
Identity

EFFECTIVE DATE:

ISSUE DATE:

REVIEW DATE:

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION STATEMENT

The Board is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all members of the school community. This includes those students, staff, and families who identify or are perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Board expects all members of this diverse community to be welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported in every school.

All members of the school community have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. This right is guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *Alberta Human Rights Act*, and *Alberta School Act*. These rights shall be supported, and enforced so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for individual differences. The Board will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The Board believes that all sexual and gender minority students, staff, families and same-sex parented families have the right to:

- be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;
- have their confidentiality protected and respected;
- self-identification and determination;
- freedom of conscience, expression, and association;
- be fully included and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel;
- have equitable access to the same supports, services, and protections provided to heterosexual students and families;
- have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence; and
- have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities included, valued and respected within all aspects of the school environment.

The Board is committed to implementing measures that will:

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their harmful effects.
- Ensure that all such discriminatory behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- Improve understanding of the individual lives of sexual and gender minorities and their families, culture, and communities.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that sexual and gender minorities and their families are welcomed and treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community.

The Board understands that institutional and cultural change occurs over time and believes that the provision of an annual report at a public board meeting on progress related to the strategic directions and benchmarks identified in this policy will ensure accountability and demonstrate the District's commitment to supporting our diverse communities.

The Board also recognizes the need to develop and maintain mutually supportive relationships with a variety of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Questioning (LGBTQT) communities in order to ensure the ongoing improvement of the implementation of this policy.

Reference(s):

AE.BP - [District Vision and Mission](#)

AD.BP - [District Priorities](#)

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

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

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

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

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

IF.BP - [Safe, Caring, and Respectful Learning Environments](#)

GBCB.BP - [District Staff Code of Conduct](#)

GBCB.AR - [District Staff Code of Conduct](#)

GBE.BP - [Health and Wellness of Staff and Students](#)

GBE.AR - [Health and Wellness of Staff and Students](#)

HGDA.AR - [Guidelines for Student Activities and Organizations](#)

School Act - Section 45(8)

Alberta Human Rights Act

Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct

Alberta Teachers' Association Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

May 5, 2011

Edmonton Public Schools

Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: IFA.BP

TOPIC: Sexual Orientation and Gender
Identity

EFFECTIVE DATE:

ISSUE DATE:

REVIEW DATE:

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION STATEMENT

The Board is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning and teaching environment for all members of the school community. This includes those students, staff, and families who identify or are perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Board expects all members of our diverse community to be welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported in every school.

All members of the school community have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. This right is guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *Alberta Human Rights Act*, and *Alberta School Act*. These legal requirements shall be supported, and enforced so that all members of the school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and appreciation for individual differences. Specifically, the Board will not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Board will monitor and enforce all policies and regulations dealing with such matters.

The Board will ensure that school cultures are safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming for all people regardless of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Board believes that all sexual and gender minority students, staff, families and same-sex parented families have the right to:

- be free from harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and violence;
- be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect;
- have their confidentiality protected and respected;
- self-identification and determination;
- freedom of conscience, expression, and association;
- be included, affirmed, and represented in an inclusive, positive, and respectful manner by all school personnel;
- have equitable access to the same supports, services, and protections provided to heterosexual students and families;

- have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, bullying, and/or violence; and
- have their unique identities, families, cultures, and communities valued and affirmed within all aspects of the school environment.

As a result of these beliefs, the Board is committed to implementing proactive measures that will:

- Define appropriate expectations, behaviours, language, and actions in order to prevent discrimination, prejudice, and harassment through greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, their deleterious effects.
- Ensure that homophobic, transphobic, and heterosexist behaviours and complaints will be taken seriously, documented, and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through consistently applied policy and procedures.
- Raise awareness and improve understanding of the lives of sexual and gender minority people and their families, culture, and communities.
- Develop, promote, and implement, inclusive educational strategies, professional development opportunities, and administrative guidelines to ensure that sexual and gender minorities and their families are welcomed and treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the school community.

The Board understands that institutional and cultural change occurs over time and believes that the provision of an annual report at a public board meeting on progress related to the strategic directions and benchmarks identified in this policy will ensure accountability and demonstrate the District's commitment to supporting our diverse communities.

Reference(s):

AE.BP - [District Vision and Mission](#)
 AD.BP - [District Priorities](#)
 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](#)
 IB.AR - [Student Placement](#)
 IF.BP - [Safe, Caring, and Respectful Learning Environments](#)
 IO.AR - [Student Records](#)
 CN.BP - [Managing District Information](#)
 CN.AR - [Creation, Use and Maintenance of District Information](#)

GBCB.BP - [District Staff Code of Conduct](#)
GBCB.AR - [District Staff Code of Conduct](#)
GBE.BP - [Health and Wellness of Staff and Students](#)
GBE.AR - [Health and Wellness of Staff and Students](#)
GC.BP - [Recruitment, Employment, Qualifications, and Deployment of Staff](#)
HA.BP - [Student Programs](#)
HEE.AR - [Decision Authority for Programs, Curriculum, Student Assessment and Instructional Resources](#)
HGDA.AR - [Guidelines for Student Activities and Organizations](#)
HGDJ.BP - [Participation in Interschool Athletic Activities](#)
HGDJ.AR - [Participation in Interschool Athletic Activities](#)
HI.BP - [Teaching and Learning Resources](#)
HI.AR - [Teaching and Learning Resources](#)
HIAA.BP - [Health Instruction Materials](#)
HIBD.BP - [Integrated School Library Learning Commons](#)
HJ.BP - [Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services](#)
JA.BP - [Parent and Community Involvement](#)
JA.AR - [Parent and Community Involvement](#)
School Act - Section 45(8)
Alberta Human Rights Act
Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct
Alberta Teachers' Association Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
