

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 14, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee G. Rice, Conference Committee Chair

SUBJECT: Report #1 of the Conference Committee (From the Meeting Held September 30, 2008)

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Report #1 of the Conference Committee from the meeting held September 30, 2008 be received and considered.

Teacher Certificated Resignations Following a Leave of Absence

2. That the Board of Trustees accept the resignations by mutual consent of the following teacher certificated staff in accordance with Clause 18.1.4.c of the Teachers' Collective Agreement:

<u>Case Number:</u>	<u>Resignation Date:</u>
2007-2008-1	August 27, 2008
2007-2008-2	August 27, 2008
2007-2008-3	August 27, 2008
2007-2008-4	August 27, 2008

2007-2008 Board Evaluation

3. That the four-point rating scale for the board evaluation questionnaire be retained for the next board evaluation cycle.
4. That the board evaluation instrument include a section that provides trustees with the opportunity to identify one priority area of improvement.

5. That, for the 2008-2009 board evaluation survey, the administration provide a listing of significant accomplishments over the previous year relative to each of the areas of evaluation.
6. That the 2008-2009 Board Evaluation Committee be charged with recommending and facilitating a process for regular monitoring and assessment with respect to the five areas identified for improvement from the 2007-2008 board evaluation.
7. That each of the board committees be charged with incorporating those areas identified for improvement relevant to the respective committees' mandates into their work plans and reporting progress back to the Committee of the Whole.

* * * * *

Teacher Certificated Resignations Following a Leave of Absence (Recommendation 2)

Clause 18.1.4 of the 2007-2012 Teachers' Collective Agreement states that:

- a) A teacher granted a leave of absence for a school year under clause 18.1.1 will, by March 15 of that year, notify the Superintendent of Schools of the teacher's intentions for the following school year.
- b) A teacher who does not respond by that date will be sent a letter by registered mail to an address agreed upon by the teacher and the Board at that commencement of the leave indicating that the teacher must, within 60 days of the date the letter is mailed, advise the Superintendent of Schools whether or not the teacher will be returning to duty at the beginning of the following year. Copies of the registered letters will be sent forthwith to the Local.
- c) If a teacher does not respond within the 60-day limit, the teacher's contract of employment will be deemed terminated by mutual consent.

These teachers have not met the requirements of the Teachers' Collective Agreement and, therefore, the Board needs to confirm the termination of their contracts of employment by mutual consent.

2007-2008 Board Evaluation (Recommendations 3-7)

The Board conducts an annual self-evaluation for a number of reasons:

- to enable the Board to model its policy of system-wide evaluation as a means of continuous improvement.
- to provide an opportunity for Trustees to reflect on board governance and how they can work effectively as a Board and as individuals in support of the Board's mandate.

The Board charges the Board Evaluation Committee with the task of assisting the Board in conducting an annual board self-evaluation for continued board development and improved board performance with respect to the Board's role and responsibilities. Attached as Appendix I are the Terms of Reference for the Board Evaluation Committee.

Evaluation Process

The areas for evaluation are based on the Board's Role and Responsibilities statement (Appendix II) and reflect the District Mission, District Priorities and the Board's Strategic Plan.

A board evaluation questionnaire was developed and administered to gather individual Trustee assessment on the success of the Board in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities for 2007-2008. The questionnaire was divided into seven sections paralleling the board's roles and responsibilities: decision making, advocacy, leadership and direction, resources, monitoring/evaluating/accountability, reporting/communication, staff relations. Each section had a number of indicators listed for reference and one or two questions. For each question, Trustees were asked to reflect on the identified indicators, give an overall assessment of the board's effectiveness on a four point scale of very effective to very ineffective and to comment on why they rated the board as they did, what is the board doing well, and what does the board need to improve. The results of the individual trustee responses were then compiled and provided to all of the Trustees for a facilitated discussion at a Trustee Retreat.

Evaluation Summary

Overall, a majority of Trustees gave the Board a rating of very effective or effective in its key areas of responsibility. All of the trustees gave an effective or very effective rating to the board in setting priorities and policies to provide overall direction for the district; and in attending to its fiscal responsibilities, budget planning and review and managing district resources.

While there were fewer ratings of ineffective and none of very ineffective, different Trustees had concerns with different areas. These variant and disparate responses provided an excellent opportunity for discussion and deeper understanding of issues among trustees.

The board self-evaluation results were used as a point of departure for the Board's discussion, to reflect on practice and identify actions for improvement and on-going monitoring. A number of common themes emerged from the proposed actions for Board improvement including:

- improving our understanding of who, when and how to engage or promote opportunities and processes for community engagement
- greater transparency and exploration of different models of Board decision-making
- enhanced understanding of and communication to the wider community the resources required to meet the varied needs of students
- enhanced clarity and commitment to monitor alignment of District Priorities, Strategic Plan, District Policies, Superintendent's annual goals and budget decisions
- strengthen the understanding of impacts of Board strategies on District results, and of resource limitations on the impact of the Board strategies

As an overarching theme, the Board affirmed the need for greater focus and alignment of Board committees to completion, execution, and performance measurement within the Strategic Plan and key elements of the Plan. Over the coming months, each of the committees for Community Relations, Government Relations, Planning and Policy along with Board representatives on ASBA, PSBC, and Linkages Committee are anticipated to undertake significant work to advance these areas, with the District Priorities, Board Evaluation and Superintendent's Evaluation Committees playing important monitoring and coordination roles. In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the School Closure and Sustainability Review Process and the Multi-Cultural Task Force will undertake time-specific and narrowly focused work to support the Strategic Plan.

Recommendations for Follow-up

The 2007-2008 Board Evaluation Committee was asked to identify recommendations for follow-up arising from the board evaluation process.

- A couple of trustees had indicated discomfort with the 4 point rating scale and asked that consideration be given to a 5 point scale which would allow a mid-range rating. The Board Evaluation Committee noted that a couple of times trustees provided two ratings on a question which tended to cancel out each other in scoring. The reason the committee had originally recommended a 4 point rating scale was to force individuals to rate an item in either the positive or negative range so as to identify areas of strength and challenge. The committee believes that by providing a better

explanation of what the 4 point scale was intended to do up front and providing clear direction on how to complete the survey, i.e. only one rating per item the benefits of a 4 point rating scale can be achieved.

- Trustees suggested that an opportunity be provided in the board evaluation instrument for trustees to identify one overall/priority area for improvement.
- Trustees suggested that a list of significant accomplishments over the previous year relative to each of the areas of evaluation be provided with the board evaluation questionnaire to assist trustees in recalling achievements.
- The committee noted that if the board wishes to make progress in certain areas, it needs to focus on those areas and monitor and assess improvement on an ongoing basis. The committee believes that there are a number of opportunities to focus the board's attention on the areas it wishes to improve.
- The committee also discussed the need for regular reporting to Conference Committee from all board committees on how the work within their mandates support progress in the five areas identified for improvement. (See Board Policy Section B – Board Governance and Operations (Trustee Manual) for the Terms of Reference for each of the respective board standing and ad hoc committees).

AS:mmf

APPENDIX I Board Evaluation Committee Terms of Reference

APPENDIX II Board Role and Responsibility Statement

BOARD EVALUATION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The board evaluation committee consists of three trustees who are responsible for assisting the board of trustees to conduct an annual board self-evaluation for continued board development and improved board performance with respect to the board's role and responsibilities.

The committee will:

- recommend a plan to conference committee for the annual evaluation of the board of trustees in keeping with the terms of reference for the board self-evaluation.
- develop and recommend to conference committee a proposed board result statement based on an analysis of the board's self-evaluation.
- present the board evaluation result statement on behalf of the conference committee to public board for approval.

Terms of Reference

The board shall undertake an annual board evaluation for the purpose of board development and to model its policy of system-wide evaluation as a means of continuous improvement.

The Board Evaluation process should:

- assist the board in identifying board strengths and areas for improvement, and common beliefs and values amongst trustees,
- provide an opportunity for trustees to reflect on how they work collectively and as individuals with respect to the board's mandate and role and responsibilities,
- provide an opportunity for trustees to discuss the board evaluation results in the context of board development, and
- provide an opportunity to recognize the board's accomplishments.
- The Board Evaluation Instrument should:
 - be brief; it should not take more than one hour for completion by each trustee.
 - be specific to the board of trustees of Edmonton Public Schools.
 - measure board performance with respect to the mission statement, the roles and responsibilities of the board, the principles of operation of the board, and the district priorities.
 - measure board performance in both quantitative and qualitative terms.
 - lend itself to ease of aggregating results.
 - provide a basis of comparison of board performance from year to year over the board's three year term.

Board Role and Responsibilities

In accordance with law, Alberta Education directives, community expectations, and in support of the district's mission statement, the board's mandate includes:

- representing the interests of the community and reflecting the values of the community in its decision making;
- serving as an advocate of public education;
- setting priorities and policies to provide leadership and overall direction for the district;
- allocating resources to the district to fulfill its responsibilities;
- monitoring the implementation of policies;
- evaluating the results achieved in the district;
- reporting the results achieved to its public;
- serving as a communication bridge between the community and the district; and
- hiring and evaluating the superintendent of schools.

Revised: September 11, 2007
