EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: September 25, 2018

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Update: Supports for the Whole Child

ORIGINATOR: Nancy Petersen, Managing Director, Strategic District Supports

**RESOURCE
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ISSUE
The purpose of this Strategic Plan Update report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an overview of efforts being taken in support of Priority 3, Goal Two: Support for the Whole Child by providing a snapshot of the role community plays in support of student success across District schools.

BACKGROUND
In 2014, Edmonton Public Schools formally launched its District Strategic Plan for the 2014-2018 term. The District Strategic Plan has three priority areas with supporting goals and outcomes. The plan provides common direction and alignment between the work of the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent of Schools and District staff. The plan serves as the foundation for a District culture of evidence-based decision making, assurance and accountability.

To demonstrate the District's commitment to transparency and accountability, Strategic Plan Update reports were introduced in 2016–2017 as an extension of the Annual Education Results Report (AERR). The reports are intended to provide the Board of Trustees with detailed progress towards the goals and outcomes of our Strategic Plan.

CURRENT SITUATION
This Strategic Plan Update report reflects the work between community members and District schools and is in direct response to Priority 3 Goal Two of the 2014-2018 District Strategic Plan.

KEY POINTS
Strategic Plan Update reports, introduced in 2016-2017, provide an extension of the AERR.

The attached report is focused on the District's school-community relationships.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES
ATTACHMENT I   Strategic Plan Update: Supports for the Whole Child

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EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Strategic Plan Update

Supports for the Whole Child:

A Summary of School-Community Relationships in Support of Student Success

September 25, 2018

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INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan Update Report provides the Board of Trustees with a snapshot of the role community plays in support of student success across District schools. The District's strategic efforts to work with community reflect Priority 3 Goal Two: Supports for the Whole Child, and the outcome and impact of this work resonate across all three Strategic Plan priority areas.

The responsibility to support our 100,000 plus students on their K-12 educational journey is a shared one between District staff and members of the broader community. The diversity and complexity of need across our student body requires expertise, knowledge and opportunities beyond that of education. For all students to engage, learn and thrive in the classroom, no matter their background, capabilities or circumstances, the District needs to work closely with our fellow community stakeholders who share our commitment to the success and well-being of children and youth in the Edmonton area.

To support this work, the Board of Trustees has laid the foundation for community involvement through Board Policy AA.BP Stakeholder Relations. The policy confirms the importance of community partners, identifies the values foundational to working in partnership and articulates the principles that guide our collaborative work with community. The policy also reflects the voice of Alberta Education: *"Schools are most effective in addressing the needs of all children, youth and their families when school authorities, staff members, parents and community partners work collaboratively."* (Alberta Education, 2013)

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Working with members of the broader community looks unique for each District school, as the principal works strategically to form relationships and opportunities with community stakeholders in response to the needs and circumstances of their student population. Principals look at their school data, engage with staff, students and families and assess the community assets available within their broader community to determine what community supports will best enhance and support the conditions relative to student success and achievement.

> "Our work in EPSB schools is largely dependent on the principal's site based leadership."
>
> "Very welcoming and accommodating – I am very impressed with the respective school administrators who are children centered…"
>
> "The mentoring program my organization provides through *School X* receives excellent support from the admin team."
>
> Voices of agency partners, District Feedback Survey 2018

To support District leaders in their work with community stakeholders, the District has developed the School-Community Relationships document. This document defines the various types of school-community relationships that are possible and provides principals with information around expectations to appropriately support and execute each type of relationship.

To help principals manage, organize and record the various community supports within their school, an electronic tool, the School-Community Relationships Tracker Tool, was developed and introduced to school leaders in the spring of 2017. Schools had the 2017-2018 school year to become familiar with the tool and enter their community supports related data.

At the individual school level, the data from the tracker tool helps principals manage community relationships. The data is particularly helpful when there is a change in school leadership. The incoming principal can go directly into the tracker tool to learn about the various community supports within the school and, from this information, is able to reach out to maintain a positive working relationship between the school and the community member. Data entered from all District schools is compiled to provide information at a system level around various aspects of community supports for students.

2018 School-Community Tracker Tool Data

The data from the tracker tool offers insights into the range and nature of community supports across District schools, and helps us understand the strength and impact of these relationships.

The data serves as a snapshot of school-community relationships at a moment in time across District schools within a given school year. There are both strengths and limitations to this data set. These include:

- The data is entered by school leaders, who are the most knowledgeable and best positioned to provide data about the key community supports within their school.
- The data serves as the only summative perspective of the community's contributions across the District.
- The data only reflects information that has been entered and may not fully account for all community contributions across District schools.
- Community supports to schools are nimble and evolving continuously throughout the school year. Thus, the data is not absolute.
- The data is not intended to be interpreted as trend data or used for multi-year comparisons.

Initial data from the tracker tool tells us…
The following information speaks to the capacity and overall commitment the Edmonton community has to support the work of public education.

- Schools entered 1,650 community relationships into the tracker tool. Each entry represents a unique support or benefit to the school community (e.g., contributes a cash donation, supports an after school enrichment program, volunteers as a classroom guest speaker).
- These benefits were delivered through the efforts of 646 community organizations or individual community members.
- Community is committed to the ongoing success of our students, with 88.9 per cent of the relationships carrying forward from last year to this school year.
- Many community members provide more than one support or service within a school community (e.g. a single organization funds morning snack, offers enrichment cooking programming and supports parents).
- Of the 646 community members/organizations, 88.9 per cent support one or two District schools; this speaks to the importance of relationships, demographic proximity and the capacity of the community member.
- The other 11.1 percent of community members/organizations are connected across multiple District schools, ranging from three to 43 schools. These community members are typically organizations that serve the broader Edmonton area as part of their core work and value the opportunity to partner with the District in support of children, youth and families.

A Closer Look at the Benefits of School-Community Relationships

When principals enter a community relationship into the tracker tool they identify the benefit from that relationship to the school community. The following is a summary of these benefits, or in other words, the community's positive contributions towards student success.

Instruction/curricular learning represent 39.5 per cent of entries.
Academic success is fostered through community supports that enhance:

- Alternative program support
- Career Pathways initiatives
- Citizenship and leadership development
- Comprehensive school health and safety
- Curriculum-based learning opportunities
- Early learning
- English Language Learning
- First Nations, Métis, and Inuit student supports
- First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultural awareness
- Literacy development

- Numeracy development

Wrap-around services represent 37.0 per cent of entries.
The overall well-being of students and their families is supported by community through:
- Out-of-school programming
- School-based wrap-around supports for families (e.g., translation supports, access to therapeutic supports)
- School-based wrap-around supports for students (e.g., mental health, Success Coaches)
- School nutrition
- School-sponsored extra-curricular activity
- Support for immigrant and/or refugee students and families

Functional operations represent 13.0 per cent of entries.
School operations are supported by community through:
- Financial support (e.g., donations and sponsorships)
- Leasing of school space
- Support for specific school operations (e.g., vendor contracts)

Positive relationships represent 10.5 per cent of entries.
Schools maintain a positive connection with members of the community to:
- Promote a good working relationship
- Promote the school as a positive asset to the broader community

Key Areas of Community Support

There are key areas of benefit that are foundational for student success and would be commonly supported in partnership with community members across multiple District schools. The work and effort of the community to support each of these areas reflects the engagement and commitment of several community stakeholders, as demonstrated by the following tracker tool data:

Key area of support	Number of community stakeholders identified as providing this support
Career Pathways	42
Early learning	19
Enrichment and out-of-school-time programming	71
Financial support to District schools	75
Literacy learning	47
Numeracy learning	15
School nutrition	45
Student wrap-around supports	92

Acknowledging the Contributions of Community

An important aspect of working with the community is the action of thanking and acknowledging community members for their interest and investment in the well-being and success of students. Each school has its own way of working with their various community members and thanking them in a manner best suited to the nature of their contribution to the school community. Through the data provided in the tracker tool, schools have identified the following ways they recognize and honour community contributions in their school:
- Acknowledgement during a school event, such as an assembly or volunteer appreciation tea.
- Highlight the contribution of the community member on the school website, SchoolZone or in a newsletter.
- Thank you cards and letters.

One of the features of the tracker tool supports schools in their efforts to honour community contributions. When entering community data, principals are able to indicate that the community agency or member's name can be published on the school's website. This acknowledgement is enabled when the community member gives permission for their name to be publicly displayed.

2018 DISTRICT FEEDBACK SURVEY

What the District Feedback Survey tells us about working with the community
In the 2018 District Feedback Survey, staff, families and community members had the opportunity to respond to questions regarding the role of community in District schools. The following is a summary of feedback received relevant to the District's school-community relationships.

Staff survey data indicates that District staff recognize and value the community contributions within their school:
- 91.2 per cent of staff agreed with the statement, "Edmonton Public Schools as a whole has partnerships that support student success."
- 90.5 per cent of staff agreed with the statement, "My school has partnerships that provide access to supports and services for students with challenging circumstances."
- 93.1 per cent of staff agreed with the statement, "My school has partnerships that support student success."

While District staff are aware of community members who support their school, family survey data indicates that there is an opportunity to increase family awareness around the role of community supports within the school:
- 59.4 per cent of families were aware of partnerships that support student success and 33.9 per cent indicated that they did not know or were unsure.

Community stakeholder survey data reflects the input from community partners as well as members of the broader community. This series of survey questions serves as a community progress report and one source of feedback around how we are doing in our work with community stakeholders.

District Feedback Survey Data: Community Members (varying n size reflects branching of the survey questions: n=12 is a group of agency leaders; n=73 is a cohort of agency staff working in our schools; and n=194 is the entire community stakeholder cohort made up of partners and broader members of the community)	% Community Agreement	% Community Disagreement	% Community Don't Know/Unsure
Edmonton Public Schools uses feedback from parents/guardians, students and the broader community to improve services to students and communities.	74.2 (n=144)	9.3 (n=18)	16.5 (n=32)
I have a positive working relationship with the staff at this school.	94.5 (n=69)	1.4 (n=1)	4.1 (n=3)
It is easy for my organization to connect with individuals/departments in Edmonton Public Schools.	100 (n=12)	--	--
My organization has a positive working relationship with Edmonton Public Schools.	100 (n=12)	--	--
My organization has access to the school space required to support the services and programs we offer.	85.9 (n=73)	7.1 (n=6)	7. 1 (n=6)

Our schools are actively involved in the community.	77.8 (n=151)	9.3 (n=18)	12.9 (n=25)
Our schools are perceived positively by the community.	88.7 (n=172)	7.7 (n=15)	3.6 (n=7)
Our schools feel welcoming.	93.8 (n=182)	5.2 (n=10)	1.0 (n=2)
Our schools respect the diversity of all people (e.g., beliefs cultures, identities and religions).	93.8 (n=182)	5.2 (n=10)	1.0 (n=2)
There are effective decision making processes between myself and school staff.	89.0 (n=65)	8.2 (n=6)	2.7 (n=2)
There is effective communication between myself and school staff.	90.4 (n=66)	8.2 (n=6)	1.4 (n=1)

From this data the following observations can be made:
- Overall, agency leaders who participated in the survey and agency staff working directly in District schools feel they have a positive working relationship with the District.
- Open ended comments, combined with the quantitative results, show there can always be opportunities for improved communication related to decision-making or the sharing of information between schools and agencies.
- Questions including the voice of the broader community members have a slightly lower positive response rate; this is not surprising as members of the broader community would not be as actively engaged in a working relationship with the school.

> "Our inter-agency has had a very positive partnership with the school. From ensuring that we have adequate meeting space, to always acknowledging our efforts, to seeing to it that we are well fed during our lunchtime meetings, the school staff goes out of its way to strengthen and build on this partnership."
>
> Voice of agency partner, District Feedback Survey 2018

NEXT STEPS

Community partners are essential to the academic and personal success of our students. As we strive to work even more effectively and efficiently with our community partners, the District will:
- Continue to establish District processes to support school leaders in their work to form and maintain critical and strategic school-community relationships.
- Provide a central point of contact to assist community stakeholders in their interest and efforts to support student success.
- Engage school principals around the use of the tracker tool to inform the opportunity to improve function for the user and support the gathering of information and data that is accurate, comprehensive and meaningful.

> "Providing quality education in today's changing world and diverse communities is a challenge. EPSB is doing an admirable job with its resources and high demands. Our organization works in three provinces, and EPSB is admired for its organizational structure in catchment areas and the support it creates."
>
> Voice of agency partner, District Feedback Survey 2018