

**DATE:** March 18, 2014

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Trustee Michelle Draper, District Priorities and Governance Committee  
Trustee Ken Gibson, Chair District Priorities and Governance Committee  
Ray Martin, District Priorities and Governance Committee

**SUBJECT:** Development of the District Priorities 2014-2018

**ORIGINATOR:** Dr. Sandra Stoddard, Executive Director Governance and Strategic Support Services

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Sonia Bactor

**REFERENCE:** [Trustees' Handbook : District Priorities and Governance Committee - Section 6.1.5](#)  
[Board Report December 17, 2013: Development of the District Priorities](#)

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**ISSUE**

The Board of Trustees' District Priorities and Governance Committee is seeking approval of the Vision, Mission, Values and 2014-2018 District Priorities (Attachment I).

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That the attached Vision, Mission, Values and 2014-2018 District Priorities (Attachment I) be approved.**

**BACKGROUND**

The District Priorities and Governance Committee is responsible for assisting the Board in identifying and developing the priorities that will guide district operations and the budget planning cycle for the Board's four-year term of office.

To support the Board of Trustees in their work around the establishment of the District's Values and Priorities for 2014-2018, and their review of the Vision and Mission, various activities were undertaken between September 2013 and January 2014. These activities informed the creation of a report (Attachment II) that provided a summary of the data collected through the various initiatives. The report was presented to the Board of Trustees in advance of the January Board Retreat and highlighted the following:

- A historical review of the District's Priorities and reflections on past planning experiences.
- An internal consultation process with key stakeholders to understand what is relevant and current today in the District.
- An environmental scan to assess the District's current state using various initiatives.
- Research on emerging themes, trends and mandates in education and the community around us (e.g., *Elevate Report*, *Education Act*).

- A recommended stakeholder consultation plan (for Board of Trustees' approval) for use once the District, Vision, Mission and Priorities have been drafted to gather further input and feedback.

At the January 2014 retreat, the District Priorities and Governance Committee shared draft Vision, Mission, Values and Priority statements (Attachment III) that were informed by the summative report. Through a facilitated process, the Board of Trustees, in conversation with the District Support Team, revised the draft statements (Attachment IV).

In February 2014, following the Board Retreat, the revised Vision, Mission, and Priority statements were taken out for consultation in order to gather feedback and validation from key educational stakeholders. An online survey, a public consultation evening, the District's Leadership Meeting and the Student Advisory Council meeting were all used as strategies to engage and communicate with staff, students, families and the community around us, regarding the development of a new set of District Priorities.

At the February 5 District Leadership Meeting, the draft Values were shared by the Superintendent as part of a presentation around Vision, Mission, Priorities and budget. The four values of Equity, Integrity, Accountability and Collaboration were well received by District leadership staff.

On February 25, 2014, the District Priorities and Governance Committee reviewed summaries of the feedback gathered from each of these activities. Summaries of the process used for each consultation activity, the levels of participation for each consultation, and the feedback gathered from each consultation are attached as Attachments V-VIII.

In brief, the analysis of feedback gathered from all stakeholders indicates remarkable support for the draft priorities, vision and mission statements. Each of the three priorities received more than 90% support, with priority 2 receiving the highest level at 95.89%. Feedback gathered in the consultation process encouraged careful consideration of language choice and clarity around certain words such as, *success*, *leaders*, *engagement*, and *partnerships*. It was also indicated that it would be beneficial to qualify each priority statement. An intended next step is to develop specific goals supporting each priority. These goals will, in turn, complement and provide clarity.

Based on the consultation feedback and discussion, the District Priorities and Governance Committee established a final set of statements to bring forward for approval (Attachment I). The Committee believes the Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities will inspire and motivate staff, students, families, community partners, the public at large, and the Board itself over the next three years to move Edmonton Public Schools forward in concrete, exciting ways in support of quality educational experiences for all students.

#### **OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The following options have been considered as they are deemed the most admissible:

1. Approve the recommendation as stated.
2. Approve the recommendation with amendments to wording.

3. Not approve the recommendation.

**CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS**

1. If the draft Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities are approved as per Attachment I, Administration will proceed with the next steps to support the work of the District Priorities and Governance Committee. The Committee will keep the Board apprised of progress and changes in timelines should they occur.
2. If the draft Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities are approved as per Attachment I, but with amendments to wording, Administration will proceed with the next steps to support the work of the District Priorities and Governance Committee. The Committee will keep the Board apprised of progress and changes in timelines should they occur.
3. If the draft Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities are not approved, there are negative implications to the budgeting and staffing processes in support of the 2014-2015 school year. This option also poses the potential to lessen educational stakeholders' confidence in the Board.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Once approved, the Communications department will create visual representations of the new Vision, Mission, Values and 2014-2018 District Priorities statements.
- The new Vision, Mission, Values and 2014-2018 District Priorities statements will be communicated to students, parents, community partners, the public at large, and the media through multiple communication channels (EPSB website, Facebook, media releases etc.).
- With the approval of the District Priorities, Administration will utilize the Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities to inform the development of goals, strategies, aligned outcomes/objectives and performance measures.
- This work forms the foundation of a District Strategic Plan for 2014-2018.
- The plan will provide Central and Schools with clear direction, key areas of focus, methods by which the District will succeed and the measures to monitor progress.
- An online dashboard will also be created to visually report on progress of key Strategic Plan areas foundational to the attainment of the priorities.
- Once the Strategic Plan has been developed, it will inform the 2014-2015 school year budget planning process.
- The 2014-15 District budget will be presented for approval by the Board in May or June. The plan and budget will reflect the key areas of focus that the Superintendent will require schools and central departments to focus on. These areas will demonstrate support of the 2014-2018 District Priorities.
- Upon approval of the District budget, Assistant Superintendents and Executive Directors will support schools and central departments in the work to finalize their specific plans for the fall.
- In the Fall of 2014, the Board will meet with the Superintendent, principals and central department leaders to review upcoming plans and results relating to the 2014-2015 school year. Depending upon these results, adjustments to plans may be made at that time.

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I	Draft Statements for Approval
ATTACHMENT II	Phase 1 Report 2014-01-17
ATTACHMENT III	Draft Statements for Retreat (Jan23)
ATTACHMENT IV	Draft Statements for Consultation and Feedback
ATTACHMENT V	Draft Board Priorities Aggregated Feedback
ATTACHMENT VI	Summary of Feedback – Public
ATTACHMENT VII	Summary of Feedback - DLM
ATTACHMENT VIII	Summary of Feedback – Student Advisory

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## **Vision, Mission, Values and 2014-2018 District Priorities For Approval**

### **Vision**

Transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow

### **Mission**

We inspire student success through high quality learning opportunities, supported by meaningfully engaged students, parents, staff and community.

### **Priorities**

1. Foster growth and success for every student by supporting their journey from early learning through high school completion and beyond.
2. Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.
3. Enhance public education through communication, engagement and partnerships.

### **Values**

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Integrity





**Development of the District's  
Priorities (2014-2018):  
Background Research and Feedback**

**January 2014**



## Introduction

Currently, Edmonton Public Schools is in the process of developing a multi-year District Strategic Plan for 2014-2018. Through a common understanding of the mission, vision, priorities, goals and objectives, the Strategic Plan will provide a template for all employees and stakeholders to make decisions that move the organization forward and provides a basis for future decision-making.

The purpose of this report is to provide the 2014-2018 Trustees with resources to support their review of the District's Vision and Mission statements, and to support the development of the District's Priorities and Values for 2014-2018.

The report is structured into five main sections:

1. A snapshot of key information about the District.
2. A brief analysis of the current education landscape.
3. An analysis of internal stakeholder feedback gathered to date.
4. Summary.
5. Appendices (source reports).

Data referred to in this report came from the district Student Information System (SIS) database, unless noted otherwise. Information for this report was collected from the following sources:

- research identifying relevant internal and external documentation;
- surveys;
- district Results Review documents; and
- minutes from the two 2013 Student Advisory Council meetings.

## **Section 1:**

### **Key District Information**

- The District
- Student Demographics
- Our Schools
- District Mission, Vision and Priorities Statements (2011-2014)

## **Section 1: Key District Information**

### **The District**

Edmonton Public Schools is a world renowned school district that has a long tradition of striving for excellence in education. Along with high academic standards, our district is also recognized across Canada for being a leader in progressive thought and action. We believe in creating pathways to success for each and every one of our students. With a strong spirit of creativity, innovation and partnership underlying our efforts, we are dedicated to helping students surpass expectations and achieve to the best of their ability.

As the second largest public school district in Alberta and the sixth largest in Canada, Edmonton Public Schools serves the educational needs of over 80,000 students in over 200 schools and education service sites. The District also offers more than 1,500 continuing education and English as a second language classes to over 25,000 community members annually, including K-12 academic and enrichment programs through Edmonton Public Schools' Metro Continuing Education. In addition, over 1,000 children are enrolled in our early education and early learning programs.

The District is one of the largest employers in Edmonton, with over 10,000 dedicated employees (7,641.7 FTE) and an annual operating budget (2012-2013) of approximately one billion dollars.

### **Student Demographics**

During the 2013 school year, Edmonton Public Schools served approximately 86,554 elementary and secondary school students in the regular day school system. The average number of students from 2009-2013 stood at 82,054.

As of September 30, 2013, approximately half of the students (45,868 or 52 per cent) were in the elementary program (Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 6), while 21 per cent of the students were in the junior high program (Grades 7 – 9), and the remaining 26 per cent were in the senior high program.

The following is a breakdown of students, by grades:

	<b>Pre-Kindergarten</b>	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Elementary (Grade 1-6)</b>	<b>Junior High (Grade 7-9)</b>	<b>Senior High (Grade 10-12)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b># Students</b>	1,048	6,849	37,971	17,889	22,797	86,554

As of September 30, 2013, around 11 per cent of the District's students were identified as students in need of specialized supports and services. These include students who have mild/moderate special needs, students with severe special needs and students who are classified as gifted and talented. The following table shows the breakdown of students by special needs groups:

	<b>Mild Moderate</b>	<b>Severe</b>	<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>	<b>Total Special Needs</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b># Students</b>	5,114	3,309	1,086	9,509	86,554
<b>%</b>	5.91%	3.82%	1.25%	10.99%	100.00%

As of September 30, 2013, 8.81 per cent of students self-identified as First Nations, Metis or Inuit (FNMI) and 21.12 per cent were identified as English Language Learners (ELL). In the last five years, the

number of students in these groups has increased steadily. However, the fastest increase has been the number of ELL students. The following table shows a yearly trend for these populations:

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>FNMI (First Nations, Metis or Inuit)</b>	8.81%	8.82%	8.83%	8.84%	8.81%
<b>Refugees</b>	0.15%	0.27%	0.32%	0.49%	0.53%
<b>ELL (English Language Learners)</b>	14.04%	15.81%	17.79%	19.58%	21.12%
<b>Total District Enrolment</b>	79,897	79,780	80,767	83,272	86,554

During the last two years the District's student population has increased by 3.79 per cent. The student population in Edmonton is growing faster than the total student population in the province of Alberta.

## Our Schools

There were 202 District schools as of August 2013. Below is a breakdown of the configuration of schools and educational services as of August 2013:

<b>Elementary</b>	125
<b>Elementary- Junior High</b>	28
<b>Elementary- Junior High- Senior High</b>	5
<b>Junior High</b>	27
<b>Junior- Senior High</b>	3
<b>Senior High</b>	14
<b>Number of Educational Services</b>	12
<b>Number of Learning Stores</b>	5
<b>Total Number of Schools</b>	202

## District's Mission, Vision and Priorities statements (2011-2014)

The District's Mission, Vision and Priority statements for the 2011-2014 term are as follows:

### Our Vision

All students will learn to their full potential and develop the ability, passion and imagination to pursue their dreams and contribute to their community.

### Our Mission

We work with families and community partners to provide safe, caring, healthy, diverse, inclusive and equitable learning experiences that engage students to achieve their full potential in an increasingly interdependent world.

### District Priorities

1. Provide supports and programs that will enable all students to complete high school.
2. Deepen students' understanding of equity and empathy as key citizenship traits.
3. Ensure all students and their families are welcomed, respected, accepted and supported in every school.
4. Promote health and wellness for all students and staff.
5. Listen to staff, honour their contributions, and support their opportunities for collaboration, growth and professional development.

## **Section 2:**

### **The Current Education Landscape**

- Major Canadian Influences
- Major Alberta Influences
- Local Influences
- Common Emerging Themes



## Section 2: The Current Education Landscape

### Major National Influences

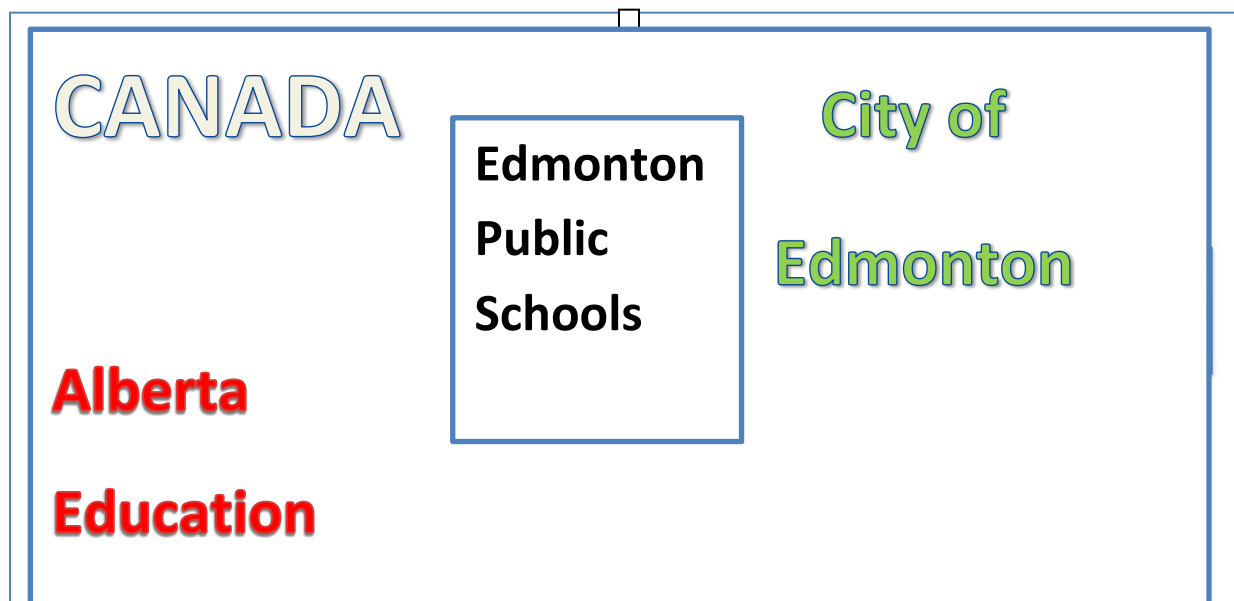
Nationwide, recent demographic data suggest that public schools are faced with increasing linguistic and cultural diversity. One result of these demographic changes is that the education system is increasingly serving students who are in the process of acquiring a second language or who come from home backgrounds that differ culturally or linguistically from the Canadian majority.

Due to changing population demographics in Canada, there will be a significant shift in the proportion of school-aged children over the next 20 years: in 1996, school-aged children and youth (five to 19 years of age) made up 21 per cent of the Canadian population; by 2020, it is estimated that this age group will comprise only 16 per cent of the overall population.

Apart from these developments, there are changes happening in the way education is provided. There is stress to bring education beyond the classrooms. With the help of technology and additional resources, the following trends seem to be the buzzwords in education:

- Virtual Learning;
- Personalized Learning;
- Early Childhood Education; and
- Environmental/Outdoor Education.

The following diagram displays the larger stakeholder organizations that impact the District's work.



**Major influences** in public education fall into three major categories:

- Those involved in providing the strategic direction to public education based on economic and demographic changes (Alberta Education).

- Those that are impacted by those strategies and policies, and that are involved with the operations of public education (Edmonton Public Schools, City of Edmonton and employee unions/staff group representatives).
- Those who are providing operations under different/external strategic systems but can provide learning and knowledge through their own models (Alberta Health Services, post-secondary institutions).

Public education is changing in the context of these major influences. It is not surprising to see that stakeholders are working towards similar goals – those that enable individuals to participate fully and contribute meaningfully to society.

## Major Alberta Education Influences

### 1. *Inspiring Education* ([www.inspiringeducation.alberta.ca](http://www.inspiringeducation.alberta.ca))

Driven by the vision framed by *Inspiring Education*, Alberta Education has set the stage for rethinking public education in the province. *Inspiring Education* presents a vision for education to 2030. The Alberta vision of an educated Albertan is framed by “the Three E’s of education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”:

- **Engaged Thinker:** who thinks critically and makes discoveries; who uses technology to learn, innovate, communicate and discover; who works with multiple perspectives and disciplines to identify problems and find the best solutions; who communicates these ideas to others; and who, as a life-long learner, adapts to change with an attitude of optimism and hope for the future.
- **Ethical Citizen:** who builds relationships based on humility, fairness and open-mindedness; who demonstrates respect, empathy and compassion; and who through teamwork, collaboration and communication contributes fully to the community and the world.
- **Entrepreneurial Spirit:** who creates opportunities and achieves goals through hard work, perseverance and discipline; who strives for excellence and earns success; who explores ideas and challenges the status quo; who is competitive, adaptable and resilient; and who has confidence to take risks and make bold decisions in the face of adversity

Underlying the Three E’s are six core values to be embraced by all who are part of the learning community: opportunity, fairness, citizenship, choice, diversity and excellence

In supporting this vision, Alberta Education expects that education expands beyond the school, making the community a true partner. School districts are expected to fully support the concept that children must be at the centre of all decisions related to learning and to the overall education system. *Inspiring Education* states: “Children and youth of all ages should be supported as individuals... Curriculum should be relevant and available in a variety of forms. It must be accessible; in-person or virtually, collaboratively or independently and at one’s own pace” (p.6).

In support of lifelong learning, education will focus on competency development, focusing on curriculum that allows for more interdisciplinary learning. To measure core competencies schools must offer diverse approaches to assess learner competency. In this more learner-centered environment, the role of the teacher will change from that of a knowledge authority to “an architect of learning - one who plans, designs and oversees learning activities” (p.7). Other than parents and families, Albertans see the teacher as the single most important contributor to student success.

Technology plays a broader role in the classroom, as a readily available tool for imparting information, and hopefully also in support of learner innovation and discovery.

Alberta Education expects the following principles to guide education in our district:

- learner-centered;
- shared responsibility and accountability for results;
- engaged communities;
- inclusive, equitable access;
- responsive, flexible approach;
- sustainable and efficient use of resources; and
- innovation to promote and strive for excellence.

In support of *Inspiring Education*, the province has identified six critical values foundational to education in Alberta:

- **Opportunity** - Learners are exposed to rich learning experiences that enable them to discover their passions and achieve their highest potential.
- **Fairness** - Learners have access to the programs, support services, and instructional excellence needed to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Citizenship** - Learners have pride in their community and culture. They have a sense of belonging and work to improve both the community and the world.
- **Choice** - Learners have a choice of both programs and methods of learning.
- **Diversity** - Learners' differing needs, cultures, and abilities are respected and valued within inclusive learning environments.
- **Excellence** - Learners, teachers, and governors achieve high standards.

## 2. **Education Act**

Alberta's new *Education Act* will come into effect in the 2015-2016 school year. This act will shift the traditional focus from schools to students. Regulations regarding implementation of the act will provide further guidance to the District at that time. In the meantime, the current *School Act* remains in force.

## 3. **2013-2016 Business Plan**

Below are some of the highlights from Alberta Education's *2013-2016 Business Plan* that, given the current district population, are of particular note. Alberta Education will:

- Develop online diploma examination assessment to provide more flexibility.
- Implement the government's Early Childhood Development Strategy in collaboration with other ministries and stakeholders, including an evaluation of models for full-day kindergarten.
- Collaborate with First Nations and the federal government to implement the long-term strategic plan under the Memorandum of Understanding for First Nations Education in Alberta.
- Attract and retain increased numbers of FNMI professionals in the education sector workforce.
- Support school authorities to develop collaborative frameworks with local Aboriginal communities

## 4. **Results-based Budgeting**

In addition, the Alberta government is adopting a new fiscal discipline by implementing results-based budgeting to enhance fiscal discipline within the province. Bill 1, the *Results-based Budgeting Act*, will establish a new approach to government budgeting that emphasizes successful service

delivery outcomes, following a comprehensive review of all programs and services to ensure they address Albertans' priorities as effectively as possible.

Approximately one-third of government programs and services will be reviewed annually in a process led by Alberta Treasury Board and Finance and based on outcomes and priorities identified with input from Albertans. The findings and recommendations of program reviews will be made public, and will form the basis of future budget and policy decisions. This includes programs and services that provide equitable and affordable access to education, support Alberta students to maximize their potential and help prepare them for life, work and the community. Major programs include operating support to school boards and post-secondary institutions, research and innovation and support for capital facilities. Also includes private school support, student health services and teachers' pensions, as well as supports for adult learning including student financial aid.

Alberta Education will continue to review its practices to ensure its focus on core businesses to deliver services that matter the most to Albertans, and to identify areas where better value can be realized. During the period of 2013 to 2016 Business Plan, the Funding Framework will also be reviewed under the Result-based Budgeting initiative. This work will require a great deal of careful planning, and thoughtful and meaningful engagement from those currently involved in supports and services to children, youth and their families, including other partners and stakeholders.

This includes programs and services that provide equitable and affordable access to education, support Alberta students to maximize their potential and help prepare them for life, work and the community. Major programs include operating support to school boards and post-secondary institutions, research and innovation and support for capital facilities. Also includes private school support, student health services and teachers' pensions, as well as supports for adult learning including student financial aid.

## **5. Accountability Pillar**

Education is recognized as key to ensuring a productive and "successful" society. The Accountability Pillar provides school districts with information about their journey towards success for stakeholders. The Renewed Funding Framework in the Accountability Pillar provides districts with some leeway in meeting student needs to improve student success while expecting demonstrable measurable results. The Accountability Pillar is based on a set of common factors that measure outcomes related to the quality of a child's education:

- Safe and caring schools;
- Student learning opportunities;
- Student learning achievement, K – 9;
- Student learning achievement, 10 – 12;
- Preparation for life-long learning, employment and citizenship;
- Involvement; and
- Continuous improvement.

### **Key Alberta Education initiatives that support provincial educational values:**

- Based on the vision and values identified by the Ministry of Education, one of the first transformation initiatives in the education system that Alberta Education has undertaken is Curriculum Redesign <http://education.alberta.ca/departement/ipr/curriculum.aspx>.

- **A new Provincial Dual Credit Strategy** <http://education.alberta.ca/departement/ipr/dualcredit.aspx> – creating opportunities for students to earn both high school and post-secondary credits for the same course. These credits could also lead to workplace certification or advanced standing in post-secondary programs.
- **A high school flexibility program** – empowering students to show learning through mastery of the subject, rather than linking credits to the number of hours at a desk.
- **Review and replacement of Provincial Achievement Tests** - introducing student-friendly learner assessments to replace existing Provincial Achievement Tests. The new Student Learning Assessments will maintain a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, but will also help educators and parents understand how well students demonstrate competencies such as creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving.
- **The Education Act Regulatory Review** – Regulations related to the new *Education Act* will help provide students with the supports and environment they'll need to succeed. The District will be opening this process up to public and stakeholder input in the summer/fall of 2013.

## Major Local Influences

1. **Elevate Recommendations** [http://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/ELEVATE.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/ELEVATE.pdf)

The City of Edmonton recognizes that communities are the building blocks for the quality of life of its citizens and is aware that a key building block in healthy communities is schools. In collaboration with the provincial government, school boards, community groups, and other stakeholders, the Community Sustainability Task Force was brought together to build innovative partnerships and plans across jurisdictions and to recommend ways that core neighbourhoods can become more vibrant and sustainable. Through this process a total of nine recommendations were made. These recommendations were made within three focus areas, Focus Area C pertains to education. However, recommendation 1 also mentions school boards as one of the stakeholders:

**Recommendation 1** - Bring together the four jurisdictions (federal, provincial, municipal, and school boards) to create innovative partnerships and re-configured policy and funding models designed to assemble a new urban agenda.

Following are the recommendations that will influence District work from Focus Area C – Promote Life-Long Learning:

- **Recommendation 8** - Recognize that education is the foundation of a successful future for both communities and individuals, and that life-long learning is a foundation for community sustainability. Ensure that all community-driven plans include the delivery of life-long learning opportunities for all.
- **Recommendation 9** - Encourage the Province of Alberta to provide innovative and sustainable infrastructure funding to guarantee that existing and new schools are modern, multi-functional and able to accommodate a diversity of programs.

2. **Elevate - School Revitalization Zones**

A working group including members from all the stakeholder groups was formed to create School Revitalization Zones. The School Revitalization Zone Working Group (SRZ) was tasked with, first, examining how “school revitalization zones” could best support community sustainability in mature neighbourhoods, and, second, creating a picture for the Community Sustainability Task Force (CSTF) as to what a successful SRZ might look like, including what steps would need to be taken by

communities, school boards, the City of Edmonton and the Province of Alberta to achieve successful SRZs. The SRZ Working Group explored three main areas:

- To understand if Business Revitalization Zone concepts could be applied to SRZs and to determine what a successful SRZ, rooted in the idea of a full-range learning community, might look like.
- To examine the attractors/detractors to successful, stable community schools as well as to identify the barriers that prevent some schools from remaining vibrant, viable places of learning.
- To explore how collaboration and partnership might assist in the development of SRZs

### 3. **Alberta Teachers' Association**

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) in collaboration with a team of international experts has developed a blueprint for improving education in Alberta. This blueprint is detailed in the 2012 publication [A Great School for All...Transforming Education in Alberta](#). The 12 dimensions identified for focus have themes in common initiatives such as [Inspiring Education](#) and [Elevate](#). Major themes found in this ATA initiative pertain to:

- a. **Redesigning large scale assessments.**
- b. **Curriculum Redesign**- which includes designing updated curriculum to reduce the number of learning outcomes. This initiative provides the profession with the responsibility for developing curriculum that is appropriate for each community.
- c. **Digital Technologies and Learning**- teachers have primary responsibility for determining the appropriate role of technology in shaping students' learning environments.
- d. **Inclusive Learning**- blueprint identifies the need for schools to have the funding they need to honour the right of *all* students to a quality education.
- e. **Professional Development and Autonomy** - seeking to ensure that professional learning opportunities are equitably funded throughout the province, implemented in a manner that allows for coherent professional growth and designed to put teachers at the centre rather than at the edges of school-improvement efforts.
- f. **Teacher Leadership** - as per the ATA's vision, teachers will be at the centre of educational reform, not on the sidelines.
- g. **Early Learning** - hold the Alberta Government accountable to its promise of expanding early-learning initiatives, especially with respect to full-time kindergarten.

## **Common Themes from our External Context**

Stakeholders support working towards improvement to ensure that all students become successful in and beyond school. While the definition of success might vary, they expect that education is meeting the needs, interests and strengths of all students, engaging them in learning and better preparing them for graduation and beyond. The following are the most common emerging from consideration of the external context with respect to student success. Student Success is the purpose of education.

Foundational to ensuring student success are:

- **Accountability** - Accountability is the assignment of responsibility to do tasks in a certain way to produce specific results. Responsibility is assigned to individuals or groups, including educational leaders, administrators, teachers, other school staff, and students themselves. Measures are used to determine whether the process or products meet the desired goals, and criteria are set for whether the targets are met.
- **Equity** - Alberta Education strives to create an environment of equality of worth and embracing the principle of comprehensive inclusion is the foundation upon which all Albertans can enjoy full

citizenship. Equal and equitable inclusion requires a wide range of resources and services to respond to student diversity.

- **Partnerships** - Student success in academics and character and citizenship are of interest to each institution and are best achieved through cooperative action and support. The *Education Act* will formally recognize the role of parents as a child's first and most important teacher. New legislation recognizes that all partners in education – students, parents, teachers, school boards, communities and government – must work together for Alberta to maintain the best education system in the world.

## **Section 3:**

# **Internal (District) Stakeholder Feedback**



### **Section 3: Internal (District) Stakeholder Feedback**

Internal stakeholder perceptions were gathered through consultation with: the outgoing Trustees, the current Trustees, district decision unit managers (schools and central), District Support Team (DST) members and the student members of the Student Advisory Council (2012-2013). Feedback was gathered through three surveys, analysis of Results Review document comments, and 2013 Student Advisory Council meeting(s) minutes.

#### **Surveys**

Surveys were conducted with three groups: outgoing Trustees, current Trustees and the DST.

- The survey of outgoing Trustees focused on their views on achievement of the existing priorities: whether the priorities were effective or not, and what they believed were strengths and weaknesses in those priorities.
- A survey of the new Trustees and the DST, focused on gathering their opinions about what they believe to be the current and future issues that the District may face and also what they believe to be the biggest responsibility of education currently.

Details are provided in Appendix II , III, and IV

#### **Analysis of Results Review Documents**

Feedback from decision unit managers (schools and central) was gathered through their comments on Results Review documents. Comments in the “Challenges” and “Implications” section of the Results Review documents were analyzed. The analysis separated comments from Central Services and comments from schools. Details are provided in Appendix V and VI.

#### **Student Advisory Council (2013) Minutes**

Minutes from the two meetings of the 2012-2013 Student Advisory Council were analyzed for student voice on educational issues and context in the District. Details are provided in Appendix VII

#### **Themes from Previous Sets of the District Priorities (2005-2011)**

In addition to the internal stakeholder feedback, common themes that emerged from all three sets of the previous district priorities are:

- success, growth and development for all students and staff;
- high standard citizenship and conduct;
- health and well-being of all students and staff; and
- collaborative, inclusive and safe learning and working environment for all students and staff

### **Themes Emerging from Internal Stakeholder Feedback**

The District Vision states that “all students will learn to their full potential and develop the ability, passion and imagination to pursue their dreams and contribute to their community”. Within this current district context, the feedback directs a continued focus on student success and identifies the following as most critical to achieve-to support student success.

**Accountability** - The importance of accountability while carrying out district work was strongly emphasized. Terms like achievement, budget, success, literacy, PAT, assessment, tests, Accountability Pillar, reporting, analysis, decisions, resource allocation, funding, etc. were used.

**Citizenship** - Respondents emphasized that apart from producing successful students, the District must produce effective citizens. Terms like success, community, health, inclusion, programs, diverse, engagement, early education, and growth were noted.

**Efficiency vs. Resources** - Limited resources juxtaposed to expanding diverse needs were mentioned numerous times in the responses. Respondents were asking for more efficient use of the given resources. Respondents emphasized the importance of more efficient handling of the District Priorities, increasing the focus and building partnerships that would further increase the efficiency in meeting the District Priorities. Terms like success, catchment, teachers, budget, infrastructure, technology, and engagement were noted.

**Equity** - Equity of opportunity for all was the second most often identified value. Students should have opportunity to have their needs met. Respondents believed that equity is essential for all groups, including FNMI and any vulnerable students. Equity of resources for all the schools was also deemed important. Terms like opportunity, diversity, resources, inclusion, reading, intervention, ELL, FNMI, assessments, programs and language were noted.

**Partnerships** - Respondents stressed building stronger partnerships with parents, communities and other levels of government to increase student success. Parent engagement, open communication and formalized school partnerships were recommended by all the stakeholders. Terms like parents, community, classrooms, achievement, collaborative, families, schools and teaching were noted.

## **Section 4**

### **Summary**



## **Section 4: Summary**

The findings of the internal consultations reflect the external educational context. Public education is a cornerstone of our democratic society; we are influenced significantly by the provincial economic context, Alberta Education and our local social and economic environments. Ensuring student success ensures civic and provincial success. Similarities in values were observed in themes emerging from both external and internal sources: the District should continue to focus on providing high quality opportunities to ensure student success. Setting goals and measuring progress toward them should continue to be important. Success in doing these things will improve the quality of the lives of stakeholders within and beyond the District. Foundational aspects of a system that can support these expectations were identified in both internal and external contexts as:

**Accountability** - With the introduction and maintenance of initiatives like the Accountability Pillar and Results-based Budgeting, the Government of Alberta enhances accountability to ensure they meet their goals and are responsible for their success. Within this context, the District is obligated to fulfill the vision, mission and goals in a transparent, responsible and accountable way.

**Citizenship** - Alberta Education expects that schools play an essential supportive role in producing effective and successful citizens. Producing “Ethical Citizens” is one of three pillars of the *Inspiring Education* initiative. This is echoed in the internal feedback; the need for providing safe and caring environment for the students and producing effective citizens is strongly emphasized.

**Equity** - An equitable and inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving high levels of student success. It is also recognized by the province as the foundation for building a cohesive society and a strong economy. Similarly the District is striving to provide an equitable environment for all of its students.

**Partnerships** - No ministerial order or initiative can succeed without building strong partnerships with the communities it is aimed at. The *Education Act* emphasizes the role of parents as the key influence on a child’s education. It will enhance the role of parents and the community in making educational policy and delivering programming. The City of Edmonton’s *Elevate* policy is heavily focused on building strong community partnerships through initiatives such as School Revitalization Zones. Within a context of expanding diverse needs and limited resources, the importance of multiple, innovative and supportive roles that support all students will be critical.

## **Section 5:**

### **Appendices**

- Appendix I: External Sources
- Appendix II: 2010 – 2013 Outgoing Trustees' Survey Report
- Appendix III: Current Trustees' Survey Report
- Appendix IV: District Support Team Members' Survey Report
- Appendix V - Results Review 2013
- Appendix VI - Student Advisory Council Minutes
  - February 19, 2013
  - May 13, 2013

## **External Sources**

The following links were used for compiling information regarding changes and development in Education:

- Alberta Education Business Plan 2013-2016  
<http://www.finance.alberta.ca/publications/budget/budget2013/education.pdf>
- Alberta Education Business Plans  
<http://education.alberta.ca/department/businessplans.aspx>
- Alberta Education Action Agenda 2011-2014  
<http://education.alberta.ca/media/6432073/actionagenda.pdf>
- Alberta Education Annual Reports  
<http://education.alberta.ca/department/annualreport.aspx>
- Children with Exceptionalities in Canadian Classrooms – Chapter 2: Issues and Trends in Canadian Special Education  
[http://wps.pearsoned.ca/ca\\_ph\\_winzer\\_children\\_8/66/16943/4337661.cw/index.html](http://wps.pearsoned.ca/ca_ph_winzer_children_8/66/16943/4337661.cw/index.html)
- Canadian Council on Social Development – Thinking Ahead: Trends affecting education in the future  
<http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/gordon/part1.htm>
- Blog page of an Ontario education - 4 Top Trends in Education for 2013-2013  
<http://www.edubabbling.com/4-top-trends-in-education-for-2013-2014/>
- Toronto District School Board  
<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/AboutUs.aspx>
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board  
<http://www.ocdsb.ca/ab-ocdsb/Pages/default.aspx>
- Alberta Education – Putting students first  
<http://www.education.alberta.ca/media/6811056/highlights.pdf>
- City of Edmonton *Elevate*  
[http://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/initiatives\\_innovation/elevate.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/initiatives_innovation/elevate.aspx)
- ATA – A Great School for all...Transforming Education in Alberta  
<http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research/PD-86-26%20A%20Great%20School%20for%20All-Transforming%20Education%20in%20Alberta.pdf>

## **2010 – 2013 Outgoing Trustees' Survey Report**

### **Background**

In October 2013, as part of the development of the new District Strategic Plan, a survey was sent to the outgoing Trustees. The purpose of the survey was to gather Trustees' views and reflections on the 2011-2014 District Priorities. This was the first time the District had surveyed the outgoing Trustees for their views on the District Priorities.

The 2011-2014 District Priorities are:

1. Provide supports and programs that will enable all students to complete high school.
2. Deepen students' understanding of equity and empathy as key citizenship traits.
3. Ensure all students and their families are welcomed, respected, accepted and supported in every school.
4. Promote health and wellness for all students and staff.
5. Listen to staff, honour their contributions, and support their opportunities for collaboration, growth and professional development.

The survey was sent using the Fluidsurveys surveying tool and responses were anonymous. Two-thirds of the recipients responded to the survey.

The Trustees were asked the following questions:

1. Reflecting on the 2011-2014 District Priorities, were the priorities identified effective in achieving the District's Vision? Explain
2. Reflecting on the 2011-2014 District Priorities, was the Board able to effectively measure the level of success in achieving the priorities? Explain.
3. In reflecting on the last three years of your term, what were the greatest challenges you faced in setting the direction for the District?
4. In establishing the new District Priorities, are there any priorities that would be critical to continue?
5. In establishing the new District Priorities, are there any other priorities that should be considered?
6. In establishing the new District Priorities, what issues or developments do you see on the horizon that might have an impact on the future direction and priorities of the District? (Challenges and Opportunities for moving forward)
7. In terms of strategic planning, please list three of the Board's strengths over the last 3 years.
8. Please rate how helpful the District Priorities were in conducting your work as a Trustee?
9. Specific to your governance role, what do you think the Board could have done differently to support the District's strategic plan?

## Findings

Responses were analyzed and the following themes emerged from the responses to the survey:

### **Importance of District Priorities**

Respondents appeared to be generally satisfied with the District Priorities. They found priorities to be helpful in guiding their work, goal setting and helpful in achieving the District's vision. Suggestions were made to have priorities that are accountable and measurable. Overall, priorities were deemed valuable and essential for the District.

### **Lack of Measures/Benchmarks**

Lack of measures/metrics or benchmarks appeared to be of concern to most respondents. Respondents appeared to be unable to measure their own work and achievements. This made answering the survey questions related to the Board's success difficult. Respondents also stressed that anecdotal evidence and surveys are not enough to measure their success. They were also concerned about the accountability of their actions due to absence of auditing mechanisms.

### **Limited Resources**

Limited resources, both financial and human, were also a constant theme. Respondents indicated concerns about facing difficulties in making decisions due to limited resources, such as infrastructure challenges.

### **Vulnerable Students**

Concerns regarding vulnerable students were observed. Respondents suggested that the number of vulnerable students is going to increase and the District must ensure enough measures are in place to support that student population.

### **Community Partnerships**

Enhancing connections between the District and stakeholders was stressed, including further development of partnerships between schools and their communities, and between the District and other boards and levels of government.

## Responses summary by question:

1) Reflecting on the 2011-2014 District Priorities, were the priorities identified effective in achieving the District's Vision? Explain
Respondents believe the 2011-2014 District Priorities were effective and helpful in achieving the District's vision. They found priorities well thought out and reaching to the "heart of the vision." However, responses also showed concerns about not being able to measure the priorities with the exception of Priority # 1. Respondents also felt that priorities are not well communicated.
<b>Major Themes-</b> Effective priorities, balanced priorities, lack of measures, lack of communication
<b>Notable quote:</b> <i>I believe that progress was made on each but I don't feel like we have fully achieved any of them. Part of my frustration was with the lack of measures that directly connected to the priorities.</i>
2) Reflecting on the 2011-2014 District Priorities, was the Board able to effectively measure the level of success in achieving the priorities? Explain
Respondents had concerns regarding lack of metrics or measures. It was suggested that anecdotal evidence and a District Satisfaction Survey aren't enough to measure the level of success.
<b>Major Themes-</b> Lack of metrics, anecdotal evidence vs. quantitative measures
<b>Notable quote:</b> <i>No, we need to find better metrics.</i>
3) In reflecting on the last three years of your term, what were the greatest challenges you faced in setting the direction for the District?
Each respondent reported a different challenge that they had to face during their tenure. Limited resources appeared to be the only consistent challenge that all of them faced.
<b>Major Themes-</b> Disconnect between the staff and the Trustees , limited resources, steep learning curve, need for prioritization, infrastructure, lack of measures,
<b>Notable quote:</b> <i>Not being confident that the activities we were supporting were giving us the most bang for our limited buck.</i>
4) In establishing the new District Priorities, are there any priorities that would be critical to continue?
Most respondents suggested that all 5 priorities are important to continue, however if one has to choose then priorities 1, 2 and 3 are most essential to continue.
<b>Major Themes-</b> High school completion, citizenship, equity, increasing support
<b>Notable quote:</b> <i>The ones that are most critical are the first three priorities.</i>
5) In establishing the new District Priorities, are there any other priorities that should be considered?
Responses for this question varied between Trustees. Some emphasized having priorities that are targeted at building stronger partnerships with the communities, while some identified stewardship as a priority. Priorities focusing on increasing support to vulnerable students were also mentioned.
<b>Major Themes-</b> Community outreach and partnerships, stewardship, vulnerable students, FNMI, ELL etc.
<b>Notable quote:</b> <i>Enhancing connections between schools and their broader communities.</i>

6) In establishing the new District Priorities, what issues or developments do you see on the horizon that might have an impact on the future direction and priorities of the District?
Budget and infrastructure issues were mentioned the most. Other issues mentioned were increasing stakeholder expectations, high school completion among vulnerable students and changing community and cultural values.
<b>Major Themes-</b> Budget and infrastructure, changing cultural landscape, vulnerable students
<b>Notable quote:</b> <i>Reaching out and discovering how we can best help one another is paramount in these lean fiscal times.</i>
7) In terms of strategic planning, please list three of the Board's strengths over the last three years.
Respondents found the Board to be courageous, organized, decisive and favoring equity.
<b>Major Themes-</b> Equity, courageous, engaged and innovative
<b>Notable quote:</b> <i>Emphasis on equity.</i>
8) Please rate, on a scale from 1-10, how helpful the District Priorities were in conducting your work as a Trustee?
Responses for this answer averaged at 77%, which indicates that a majority of Trustees found the District Priorities helpful.
<b>Major Themes-</b> Helpful priorities
9) Specific to your governance role, what do you think the Board could have done differently to support the District's strategic plan?
Suggestions included increased accountability through audits. Reporting and goal setting was mentioned more than other efforts that the Board could have made to support the District Strategic Plan. Increased communication with the Superintendent and concentrated focus were also suggested.
<b>Major Themes-</b> Increased accountability, increased communication, focused goals
<b>Notable quote:</b> <i>Set specific goals for the superintendent that are accountable.</i>

## Current Trustees' Survey Report

### Background

In November 2013, as part of the development of the new District Strategic Plan, the District Priorities and Governance Committee sent out a survey to the newly elected Trustees. The purpose of the survey was to seek Trustees' input into the establishment of the new District Priorities.

The survey was sent using the Fluidsurveys surveying tool and responses were anonymous. The survey was available for the respondents until November 29, 2013, with more than 85 per cent of the recipients responding to the survey.

The survey questions were:

1. What is the one thing that the 2013-2017 Board of Trustees of Edmonton Public Schools needs to be focused on in order to ensure student success?
2. What is the greatest responsibility for public education today?
3. With what you know about Edmonton Public Schools, what should be a critical focus in support of student success for the next four years?

### Findings

Responses were analyzed and the following themes emerged from the responses to the survey:

#### 1. Themes pertaining to student success (Question 1 and 3)

##### • Current (Question 1)

**Funding** was mentioned most as the one thing to focus on in order to ensure student success. Respondents mentioned that they must advocate for providing sustainable funding through increased connections with other levels of government and improved connections. Respondents also mentioned **facilities**, **early learning** and **teachers** as other critical aspects to focus on to ensure students success.

##### • Future (Question 3)

Responses varied from building **stronger partnerships** with other levels of government and communities to increasing **literacy** levels. Still, the common theme amongst the responses was **facilities**. Respondents stressed providing each student adequate access to resources – from challenging gifted students to supporting vulnerable students using differentiated instruction. Respondents recommended avoiding **overcrowding** and ensuring successful **student transitions**, which again relate to having adequate facilities.

**Funding** and **facilities** came up as the most mentioned themes in ensuring current and future student success.

## 2. Themes pertaining to today's public education's responsibility (Question 2)

Respondents were unanimous in considering student success to be the greatest responsibility for public education today. Different aspects that would contribute in well-rounded student success were also mentioned by the respondents. These aspects included successful **citizenship, entrepreneurship, literacy and critical thinking.**

### Interesting quotes found in the responses:

1. What is the one thing that the 2013-2017 Board of Trustees of Edmonton Public Schools needs to be focused on in order to ensure student success?
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<b>Major Themes-</b> Funding, infrastructure, facilities, student achievement
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<b>Notable quotes:</b>
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<i>We have to strongly advocate for adequate sustainable funding so we can make the best possible decisions for all our students.</i>
---

<i>I'd favour a voucher where the funding follows the student.</i>
--

<i>Having excellent teachers working with all students in class sizes that enable them to receive direct support when necessary.</i>
--

2. What is the greatest responsibility for public education today?
--

<b>Major Themes-</b> Student success
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<b>Notable quotes:</b>
------------------------

<i>Ensure students have the best possible likelihood to be successful as citizens of our community.</i>
---

<i>Preparing students for success beyond high school.</i>
---

<i>Ensuring that we support students in becoming excellent citizens and valuable contributors to society overall.</i>
---

3. With what you know about Edmonton Public Schools, what should be a critical focus in support of student success for the next four years?
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<b>Major Themes-</b> Stronger partnerships, facilities, overcrowding, vulnerable students
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<b>Notable quotes:</b>
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<i>A primary focus has to be working with our at risk students. The old advertisement of "you can pay me now or pay me later" is so true with these students.</i>
---

<i>Address facility issues, such as, maintenance deficit, overcrowded and undersubscribed schools, to provide the best possible learning environment for all students.</i>
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<i>Ensuring that the community is working with us to ensure success for all students.</i>
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## District Support Team Members' Survey Report

### Background

On November 18, 2013, as part of the development of the new District Strategic Plan, the District Priorities and Governance Committee sent out a survey to the District Support Team members. The purpose of the survey was to gather the DST members' input into the establishment of the new District Priorities.

The survey was sent using the Fluidsurveys surveying tool and responses were anonymous. The survey was available for the respondents until November 29, 2013. DST members agreed to provide one response to the survey.

### Findings

Since there was only one unanimous answer, actual responses to each question are provided. Following are the survey questions and the answers provided by the District Support Team.

#### Question pertaining to student success (Question 1 and 3)

##### Current (Question 1)

1. What is the one thing that the 2013-2017 Board of Trustees of Edmonton Public Schools needs to be focused on in order to ensure student success?
---

<b>Answer:</b> Generative governance with respect to stakeholder engagement with a focus on creating policies to support student success.
---

<b>Major Themes-</b> Productivity, stakeholder engagement, student success
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##### Future (Question 3)

3. With what you know about Edmonton Public Schools, what should be a critical focus in support of student success for the next 4 years?
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<b>Answer:</b> An unwavering focus on student achievement by ensuring high quality teaching in high quality learning environments and through effective, meaningful parent engagement.
--

<b>Major Themes-</b> Efficiency, facilities, stakeholder engagement, student success
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#### Question pertaining to today's public education's responsibility (Question 2)

2. What is the greatest responsibility for public education today?
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<b>Answer:</b> Ensuring equity for all students. Equity means every student has a high quality teacher and is learning in a high quality environment. It also means equity for parents in terms of having opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in their child's education.
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<b>Major Themes-</b> Equity, equality, efficiency, facilities, stakeholder engagement
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## **Results Review 2013: Central Services and Schools**

The annual Results Review is a District-wide process where school and central services' results are provided to the Superintendent of Schools and Trustees. Trustees, staff, students, parents, and community members have an opportunity for involvement in the review process. The Board of Trustees approves the results achieved by the District, and communicates these results to staff, parents, and the community.

Here are the major emerging themes identified within the *Challenges* and *Implications* sections of the 2013 Results Review documents prepared by central services and schools.

### **Emerging Themes**

There were common themes found in challenges faced by central services and those faced by rest of the District. Situations that presented these challenges varied. Whereas, challenges in schools originate mainly through many changes in external factors beyond the District's control such as increasing population, increasing student diversity and policy changes at Alberta Education, challenges at the central level appear to originate through internal factors such as process changes, technology changes, staffing challenges. Still, change/development is happening faster than the resources can be provided to accommodate it, resulting in challenges to process efficiencies.

## Schools' and Central Services Results Review 2013

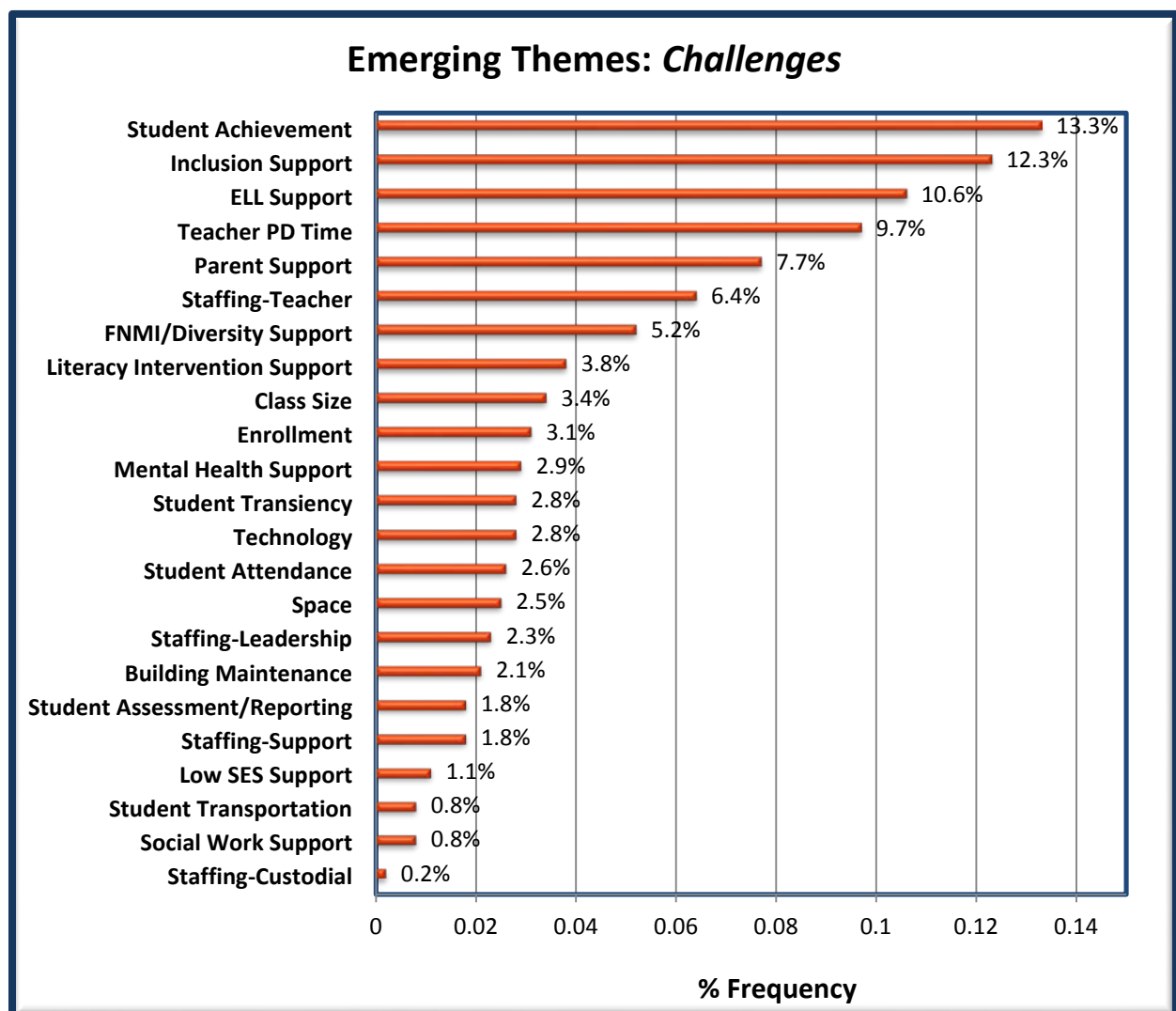
### Emerging Themes: *Challenges*

Figure 1 identifies the emerging themes from the *challenges* section of the Results Review documents. Schools and central decision units were asked:

- *What were the biggest challenges encountered in 2012-2013?*

Each theme is listed in order of frequency based on percentage of times the theme was mentioned within the documents. It is important to note that any discrepancies between the graphs or figures are likely a result of the rounding of numbers.

Figure1



Source: Results Review 2013

**Student Achievement**

Over 13 per cent of the Results Review documents cited student achievement as their greatest challenge. Language learning difficulties and increased numbers of ELL students were identified as factors that impacted achievement. PAT results, diploma exams, and Accountability Pillar results in language arts and math were frequently mentioned as being below the provincial standard. Several reported that student absenteeism, transiency, tardiness and truancy had a negative impact on their achievement results. In addition, lack of resources, teacher expertise and professional development were noted as a reason for low achievement.

**Inclusion Support**

Over 12 per cent noted that it was a challenge for students to receive the necessary supports regarding inclusion. Lack of teacher training, adequate time and resources to meet the diverse range of special needs were cited as a challenge to building a pyramid of intervention within schools. Repeated reference was made regarding the need for expertise to support students with severe mental health needs, behavioural issues, cognitive delays and complex learning needs.

**ELL Support**

Over 10 per cent commented that it was a challenge to provide support and assistance to the increasing number of ELL students in schools. In addition, the ELL population is arriving with more complex learning needs and language issues. Schools are finding it difficult to provide adequate resources to support ELL students and their families.

**Teacher PD Time**

Providing release time for teachers to collaborate within and across decision units and schools with limited resources was cited as a challenge. Lack of access to affordable professional development to build pedagogy and expertise was mentioned repeatedly. The decrease in financial resources negatively impacted the amount of time teachers dedicated to collaboration and training required for diverse learners, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Balanced Literacy, Levelled Literacy Interventions (LLI), and Leader in Me.

**Parent Support**

Schools cited the lack of parent and/or home support as a challenge. The majority of concerns were related to the lack of parent involvement in supporting school activities and reinforcing learnings at home. Schools noted the challenge in supporting the changing demographics and engaging the ELL parent community in school events and initiatives. As well, schools mentioned a significant number of students living in compromised home situations (e.g., transiency, poverty, parent mental health issues).

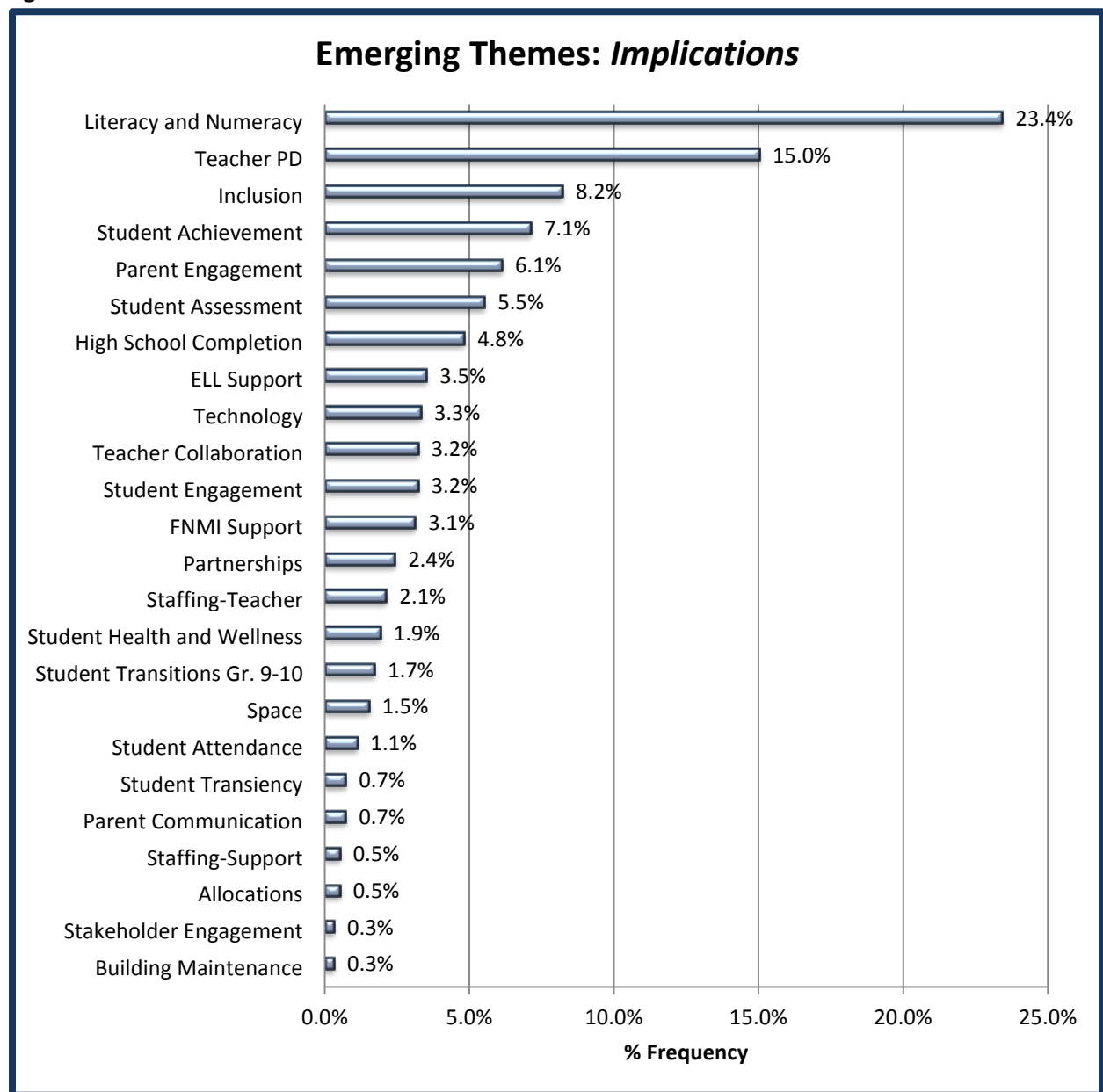
## Emerging Themes: *Implications*

Figure 2 identifies the emerging themes from the *implications* section of the Results Review documents. Schools and central decision units were asked:

- *What are the implications from 2012-2013 that will impact your current year plan?*

Each theme is listed in order of frequency based on percentage of times the theme was mentioned within the documents. It is important to note that any discrepancies between the graphs or figures are likely a result of the rounding of numbers.

**Figure 2**



Source: Results Review 2013

**Literacy & Numeracy**

Results from schools - Language Arts and Mathematics achievement were repeatedly mentioned by schools as needing improvement. Over 23 per cent of the Results Review documents stated that schools were dedicated to improving student literacy and numeracy skills. Schools across all grade levels noted they plan to place available resources and time into teaching literacy and numeracy with the goal of improving PAT results, diploma exams, and Accountability Pillar results. In addition, schools intend to build staff capacity and teacher pedagogy in support of achievement in numeracy and literacy.

**Staffing**

Schools plan to support staff professional development related to pedagogical strategies that impact student learning. Increasing staff capacity, in schools by utilizing the principles of UDL to support diverse student populations, and in central by supporting adequate and relevant staffing, was frequently cited. Schools intend to promote collaborative professional learning days by catchment area, including coaching and modelling sessions, participating in Communities of Practice Sessions (COPS), Balanced Literacy, LLI, and Leader in Me. Repeated reference was made regarding the need to develop staff expertise to better support students with severe mental health needs, behavioural issues, cognitive delays and complex learning needs.

**Inclusion**

Inclusive practices will be enhanced and expanded to include a greater percentage of students for an increased amount of time in the learning day. Schools plan to support and provide assistance for special needs students through small group instruction and use of assistive technology. Schools intend to participate in professional development related to UDL and the effective implementation of the Pyramid of Intervention. Schools cited the importance of working within multi-discipline teams to identify areas of intervention and provide strategies and/or resources to support intervention plans to help special needs students.

**Student Achievement**

Improvements to student achievement were frequently cited throughout the Results Review documents. Schools plan to increase student background information necessary to understand concepts by developing subject-related vocabulary. Targeted literacy interventions for ELL, FNMI, and at-risk learners were identified as ways to improve student achievement. Schools plan to work collaboratively to develop student's writing traits, problem solving and critical thinking skills. Central stakeholders noted need to align resources to support this area.

**Parent Engagement**

Schools cited the need to fully engage and actively involve parents or caregivers in their child's education. That entails working with immigrant populations, working parents, young families with limited resources, high transiency and limited English language skills. Schools plan to work with parents to provide meaningful opportunities to support learning and growth, through the provision of parent information evenings, special events, intercultural language services, ELL and FNMI supports. Improving effective communication between home and school was also cited as an effective strategy to engage parents.

## **Student Advisory Council Minutes**

In the months of February and May 2013 Research, Data and Knowledge facilitated two Student Advisory Councils. High school students were invited to a half day sharing circle meeting with the Trustees. Both of these councils included two sessions each and there were four groups of 14 participants each. Both councils included a different set of student participants. Throughout the sessions, students were permitted to respond freely after each question. In many cases, the conversation drifted to what was on the students' minds, and often was only tangentially related to the direct question.

In this summary document, student responses are grouped by sessions, by questions and according to the themes that emerged in the conversation. The summary reports the most frequently occurring themes, and gives samples from the recorders. Note that the recorders did not extract a verbatim transcript, but tried to capture the main ideas that were presented by the students.

### **February 19, 2013**

#### **Session One – Teaching and Learning**

##### **Question 1: How do you know what you are expected to learn?**

The **teacher** remains the most widely reported source of information about what students are to learn. This is both in and out of class, in addition to teacher-prepared materials. Also important are **online resources**, including independent (static) information on websites, and interactive information through social media. Responses generically grouped as “Academic Skills” refer to general skills and knowledge that students have acquired through their educational experiences, but not in the class in question.

##### **Sample Comments:**

- I would like more individualized instruction.
- It is good to be able to select teachers consistently with my preferred learning styles.
- How does this relate to life? Teachers go out of their way to explain relevance of what we learn – need more of that.
- Teachers explicitly tell students the day's objectives.
- Remind 101 and EDMODO.
- School Share sites.
- I schedule meetings with teachers if I need extra help.
- Big classes make it hard to find out what I need to learn because I get less teacher time.

##### **Question 2: Do you know what to do if you're not learning?**

Students are turning to **Google, YouTube, Khan Academy and other independent online sources**. Behind this are school-based sources, mainly teacher-centered. Peers begin to figure in this discussion.

##### **Sample Comments:**

- Twitter reminders.
- Teacher Skype time.
- Peer tutoring.
- After class tutoring.

- There are no adequate online resources for writing assignments.
- School Academic Support Centre.
- “Peer tutoring can be humiliating”.
- Talk to teacher outside of class.
- Department open door policy.
- Wednesday morning tutorial.
- Group work.
- Working in pairs is helpful; larger groups are distracting.
- STAR program.
- IB/AP programs tend to be closely knit; getting closer to peers makes it easier to help one another.

## Session Two – Preparation for Work

### Question 1: What skills do you believe you require when you leave high school in order to be successful?

Students were confident that they are acquiring the academic skill necessary to move forward, but were less sure of their **non-academic skills**, including applying for post-secondary, workplace skills and personal financial management.

#### Sample Comments:

- Time management.
- Life skills.
- Responsibility – independence/mindset you have out of high school (manage budget, time, license, paying bills, etc.).
- Writing resumes, doing taxes, how to deal with people.
- I am confident that academics have me well prepared for post-secondary.
- High school is not a good prep for post-secondary.
- AP is helpful in bridging earlier work with anticipated post-secondary study.
- How do I apply for post-secondary?
- There is not much support for students who do not attend post-secondary.
- I would like to see more preparation for citizenship.
- How does practical political participation work?
- Non-academic classes are not orderly or well structured.
- Writing is an important skill to have for life.
- You need to learn how to fail and rebuild from that experience.
- I have these skills because I’ve worked really hard on it.
- Give us expectations (work hard, no cheating).
- Communication is very important – take more empowerment myself.

### Question 2: If your school could do one more thing to support your transition after high school to the next phase of your life, what would that be?

There was less clear direction in these responses than in the earlier questions. For the most part, these students were concerned with application to post-secondary school.

**Sample Comments:**

- Sign up opportunity to job shadow a career you want to go in (live through the life).
- More 1 on 1 time with guidance counselors who know more about what we need.
- CALM needs to be a course program through high school (Grades 10, 11, 12) that teaches you resume writing that directly prepares you for after (basic life skills are met).
- CALM-like material should be sprinkled throughout HS and JHS.
- Disappointed in the CALM curriculum (loans, banking, taxes, university applications).
- CALM should be late in high school.
- University paper writing – (need more for this).
- Writing in science and math. Could be way better at it.
- Workshops/field trips specific to the workforce would be helpful.
- Focus on job options (beyond post-secondary information nights).
- Counselors/program or course – need to understand what the field is really about, to experience it so you know what you’re getting into.
- I would like to meet more role models outside of school.
- Get scholarship information and help in grade 10—I need more preparation time.
- Now I’m nervous about registration – need a seminar or this on this or some 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> year student who can come in.
- Hard decision to choose what to go into – so many options – stressful.
- More scholarships information/opportunities.
- Is there a way to set up a mentorship program at the school level? With prior students?

**May 13, 2013**

**Session One – Transitions****Question 1: What helped your transition from Grade 9 to Grade 10?**

The students overwhelmingly reported that deliberate, **targeted welcoming activities** made the greatest contribution to their successful transition. They reported:

- Welcome week activities.
- Targeted activities while they were still in grade 9 (e.g. school visitations).
- Initiation days where the grade 10s were the only students in the schools.
- Leadership class.

Close behind were comments about the welcome they received from teachers. Although many expected high school teachers to be distant and impersonal, some reported that their high school teachers took a personal interest in them and their success; this position was not unanimous, as some students noted that their junior high teachers encouraged students to reach out for support from high school teachers and expressed confidence that the students would be well cared for. Also of note was the importance of the student’s class timetable being well chosen for the student to be comfortable and successful.

Finally, the importance of friendships and other peer relationships was noted.

**Question 2: What advice would you give a Grade 9 student starting high school in the fall?**

The majority of responses here fit neatly into two categories: personal organization and interpersonal relationships.

Under personal organization, students gave the advice to manage time efficiently and not to procrastinate. Further, the virtue of independence was stressed.

For interpersonal relationships, students gave the advice to get to know other people in the school, including teachers and counselors. They were advised to become members of the whole school community, to help themselves feel a sense of belonging.

School activities, clubs, etc. were largely seen as positive and welcoming for students. This was tempered with some caution, as it was noted that some students do not fit into the existing clubs and activities and are estranged from school social activities. It was expressed that it would be good to acknowledge and support these students, but it was also expressed that it is not clear how to best do this.

## **Session Two – Culture**

**Question 1: What has made for a positive culture in your school?**

Responses focused on two main areas: interpersonal relationships and special activities.

Positive culture was reported to be aided by belonging to clubs and teams, to positive student-teacher relationships and to an overall sense of community within the school. Students did have suggestions of ways to improve these. In particular it was noted that clubs and teams are well suited for some students, but others cannot find a club or team that they find welcoming. It was suggested that it would be good to give more leeway for students to create clubs as they see fit, and for schools to have open invitations/recruitments at several points in the year, rather than just in the beginning. It was further noted that school is where most of their friends are.

Numerous special activities were noted, including cultural days, welcome week activities, intramural sports, fun days, barbecues, and charitable events.

A few students noted that structural arrangements, such as timetabling, hallway layout and optional classes were important for developing a positive school culture.

**Question 2: What improvements, if any, would you make at your school?**

Students reported that they would like to see a wider level of recognition of students at school. They were satisfied that certain high-profile students were recognized—sports and academics in particular—but they did not see music and theatre getting recognition, nor do they see students who are simply being themselves and being a part of the fabric of the school community being recognized.

It was noted that some structural arrangements leave some students out of full participation. One example was the ESL program in a school in which international students were constantly congregated together, and they were never well integrated into the school, with students and many teachers not knowing these students well.

A few students raised questions about school funding, expressing concern that sports were over-funded, with artistic activities being under-funded. Others expressed similar sentiments without mentioning funding, but expressing the belief that their school favoured certain activities over others (e.g. football and band over drama).

As noted in Session One, several students noted the difficulties involved with getting some students to attend regularly. These students expressed the desire to find ways to get non-attenders back in school, but were uncertain how this could be accomplished. On a related note, some stated the importance of making school a safe place for all students regardless of their personal or family circumstances; this is seen as important and needed aspect of empowerment for all students.



## **Vision, Mission, and 2014-2018 District Priorities For Retreat**

### **Vision**

All students will learn to their full potential and develop the ability, passion and imagination to pursue their dreams and contribute positively to the world around them.

### **Mission**

We engage with students, families, staff and community partners to provide welcoming, respectful, safe, healthy, inclusive and equitable learning experiences that inspire students to achieve to their full potential in an increasingly interdependent and ever-changing world.

### **Priorities**

1. Success for every student: *early learning, graduation and beyond*
2. Equitable access to welcoming, high quality learning and working environments: *inclusive culture, effective and efficient use of resources, responsive supports and services*
3. Strengthening public education through meaningful engagement, communication and partnerships: *collaboration, accountability and shared responsibility*





## **Vision, Mission, Values and 2014-2018 District Priorities For Consultation and Feedback**

### **Vision**

Transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow.

### **Mission**

We inspire student success through high quality learning communities supported by meaningfully engaged parents, partners, and staff.

### **Priorities**

1. Ensure success for every student through supporting early learning, transitions, high school completion and beyond.
2. Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.
3. Strengthen public education through engagement, communication and partnerships.

### **Values**

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Integrity



## Draft Board Priorities (2014-2018) Feedback Survey Report

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### Survey Highlights

- The survey generated 1947 responses.
- District staff members generated 1445 responses; Parents generated 816; 334 Staff respondents had also identified as a Parent.
- Elementary parents were most responsive.
- The majority of respondents identified as South Edmonton residents; the least number of respondents identified as East Edmonton residents.
- 12% of respondents identified as other than City of Edmonton residents.
- Each of the three draft priorities received more than 90% approval.
- Priority # 2, ***Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments***, generated the most support from the respondents.
- The majority of the respondents found the priorities aligned with the draft Vision and Mission.
- Where comments of concern about a priority were entered the following themes emerged:
  - Vagueness - define terms such as, *meaningfully engaged, transitions, ensure, success, high quality teaching and leader*.
    - *"How does the schoolboard ensure success for students beyond grade 12? How would you be able to make success beyond our doors measurable and how does that make us accountable? What does transition mean? Needs to be clearer."*
    - *"...how can I know if I agree if there are no specifications on how this "success" will be achieved?"*
    - *"Also, how does EPSB define "success"?"*
  - Measures - Respondents also asked to identify indicators that can measure the efficacy of these priorities. For example,
    - *"We must have a way to measure the notion of welcoming. We use the word but do not have a way to say have we really done this."*
  - Resources - Resource challenges were mentioned numerous times by the respondents.
    - *"In my opinion, we must have the resources and support in order to accomplish these priorities and at the present time these are not available"*.
- Following is a detailed breakdown of the responses by stakeholder groups and geography.

# Draft Board Priorities (2014-2018) Feedback Survey Report





## Section 1. Survey Demographics

### 1a. Survey Completion Rate\*

Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Complete		77.30%	1505
Incomplete		22.70%	442
Total Responses			1947




\*All the completed surveys divided by the number of surveys submitted. Technical errors are excluded from the total surveys.

### 1b. Respondent by the stakeholder groups\*







Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Parent		41.91%	816
Staff		74.22%	1445
Student		1.13%	22
Community Member		14.64%	285
Total Responses			1947

\*Respondents were allowed to select as many groups as applied to them, e.g. a respondent could belong to Parent and Staff stakeholder group simultaneously. Each response was counted only once even if it had more than one group selected.

### 1c. Respondent within the Parent stakeholder group

Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Elementary		62.75%	512
Junior High		22.18%	181
High		15.07%	123
Total Responses			816

### 1d. Respondent Location



Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Central		8.27%	161
East		4.47%	87
North		19.05%	371
Non Resident		12.17%	237
South		38.98%	759
West		17.05%	332
Total Responses			1947

## Draft Board Priorities (2014-2018) Feedback Survey Report

### Section 2. Responses

#### 2a. Do you support the following priority?

*Ensure success for every student through supporting early learning, transitions, high school completion and beyond.*

Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		91.45%	1529
No		8.55%	143
Total Responses			1672

#### 2b. If no, why not?



Respondents provided 194 comments in response to this question. Below is a breakdown of comments by the respondent groups and area of residency.

Comments	Central	East	North	NA*	South	West	Total
Community Member	2	0	2	2	2	1	9
Parent	7	3	10	3	32	17	72
Staff	13	5	19	16	36	23	112
Student	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	22	8	32	21	70	41	194

\*NA means Not a City of Edmonton Resident

#### 2c. Do you support the following priority?

*Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.*

Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		95.89%	1587
No		4.11%	68
Total Responses			1655

#### 2d. If no, why not?

Respondents provided 105 comments in response to this question. Below is a breakdown of comments by the respondent groups and area of residency.



Comments	Central	East	North	NA*	South	West	Total
Community Member	2	0	1	0	0	2	5
Parent	2	2	4	2	20	7	37
Staff	10	1	14	10	17	11	63
Student	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	14	3	19	12	37	20	105

\*NA means Not a City of Edmonton Resident

## Draft Board Priorities (2014-2018) Feedback Survey Report

### 2e. Do you support the following priority?

*Strengthen public education through engagement, communication and partnerships.*

Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		93.37%	1535
No		6.63%	109
Total Responses			1644

### 2e. If no, why not?

Respondents provided 147 comments in response to this question. Below is a breakdown of comments by the respondent groups and area of residency.



Comments	Central	East	North	NA*	South	West	Total
Community Member	2	0	1	0	1	3	7
Parent	7	1	6	0	27	14	55
Staff	8	3	16	9	31	17	84
Student	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	17	4	24	9	59	34	147

\*NA means Not a City of Edmonton Resident

## Draft Board Priorities (2014-2018) Feedback Survey Report



### 2f. Do you believe that the three draft Priorities align with the draft Vision statement?

*Transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow.*

Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		89.64%	1315
No		10.36%	152
Total Responses			1467

### 2g. Do you believe that the three draft Priorities align with the draft Mission statement?

*We inspire student success through high quality learning communities supported by meaningfully engaged parents, partners, and staff.*

Responses	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		94.38%	1376
No		5.62%	82
Total Responses			1458

### 2h. Please provide any additional feedback that would assist the Board in finalizing the Priorities.

Respondents provided 482 comments in response to this question. Below is a breakdown of comments by the respondent groups and area of residency.

Comments	Central	East	North	NA *	South	West	Total
Community Member	5	0	4	2	5	4	20
Parent	13	12	27	8	96	35	191
Staff	32	14	42	42	88	52	270
Student	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	50	26	74	52	189	91	482

\*NA means Not a City of Edmonton Resident

## Draft District Priorities: Summary of Feedback - Public Consultation

### Background

In February 2014, a draft set of Vision, Mission, and Priority statements were sent out for consultation in order to gather feedback and validation from key educational stakeholders, both internal and external to the District. An online survey, a public consultation evening, the District's Leadership Meeting and the Student Advisory Council meeting were all used as strategies to engage and communicate with staff, students, families and the community around us, regarding the development of a new set of District Priorities. This is a report of the findings from the Public Consultation evening held on February 3, 2014.

### Methodology

On Monday, February 3, 2014 the Board of Trustees hosted a public consultation workshop to provide more information about the draft priorities and to obtain feedback from various educational stakeholders. Invitations to participate were communicated to community stakeholders including community partners, representation from private sector, business community, post-secondary, parents, staff, students, elected officials and general members of the public.

38 parents, community partners and elected officials were in attendance that evening, along with 12 District staff serving as table facilitators and note-takers. Participants were organized into six mixed table groups to promote dialogue and sharing of perspective amongst and across educational stakeholder groups. Each table was assigned a facilitator to manage the dialogue and ensure that everyone had a chance to share ideas, a note taker to record key themes from the discussions that occurred, and a Trustee to listen and clarify questions as necessary.

A brief PowerPoint was presented to provide context for the evening conversations. In table groups, each participant was asked to individually brainstorm his/her response to the question, "What makes for a great school/school district?" and record his/her responses on sticky notes. The draft priorities were then shared, and tables were invited to participate in a facilitated discussion. Following, individual participants were asked to place each sticky note under the priority where they saw a match. If an idea did not fit under any priority statement, a "parking lot" space was provided. The tables were then invited to share with the larger group. Then, in their individual table groups once again, the draft Vision statement was revealed, and the table facilitator then led a table discussion where participants responded to the question: 'Do the draft priorities support the District's Vision statement?' The same process was then repeated with the Mission statement. Participants were then invited to share final comments. All notes were collected for analysis.

### Summary of Feedback

	Draft statement supports the following:	For consideration:
<b><i>Priority 1: Ensure success for every student through supporting early learning, transitions, high school completion and beyond.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing out the best in each child</li> <li>• Student focused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to define success</li> </ul>

## Draft District Priorities: Summary of Feedback - Public Consultation

<p><b>Priority 2 - Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective and efficient use of our resources</li> <li>• Programming that meets all student needs (inclusive)</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to add the word <i>physical</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to add the word <i>safe</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to add the word <i>healthy</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 3 - Strengthen public education through engagement, communication and partnerships.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships, partnerships, collaboration – social capital and being ‘stronger together’</li> <li>• The need to address both under-utilized and over-crowded schools; right-sizing of the population size is one aspect of a healthy school environment that supports quality learning</li> <li>• Partnerships have the ability to bring resources/supports into schools – they can create equity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to add in “in support of student success”</li> <li>• Suggestion to define <i>partnership</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Vision: Transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 3 priorities emerge out of the vision</li> <li>• Relates to citizenship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>leader</i> with <i>engaged, ethical, entrepreneurial citizens</i> to demonstrate the teaching of responsibility</li> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>leader</i> with <i>citizen</i> – more</li> </ul>

## Draft District Priorities: Summary of Feedback - Public Consultation

		<p>inclusive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to add the word “We” at the beginning of the statement to reflect the responsibility of staff, community partners, parents, students, admin, trustees</li> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>transform</i> with <i>inspire</i> or <i>ensure</i></li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Mission: We inspire student success through high quality learning communities supported by meaningfully engaged parents, partners, and staff.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to engage with families</li> <li>• The complexity of the work of education and the various stakeholders that are involved in the educational journey</li> <li>• The reality that education goes beyond the classroom</li> <li>• Links to the vision and the priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>partners</i> with <i>community</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>learning communities</i> with <i>learning opportunities</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>inspire</i> with <i>ensure</i> to ensure an accountable, measureable, operational mission statement.</li> </ul>

## Draft District Priorities: District Leadership Meeting (DLM)

### Background

In February 2014, a draft set of Vision, Mission, and Priority statements were sent out for consultation in order to gather feedback and validation from key educational stakeholders, both internal and external to the District. An online survey, a public consultation evening, the District's Leadership Meeting and the Student Advisory Council meeting were all used as strategies to engage and communicate with staff, students, families and the community around us, regarding the development of a new set of District Priorities. This is a report of the findings from the District Leadership Meeting held on February 5, 2014.

### Methodology

On Wednesday, February 5, 2014 during DLM, the Superintendent engaged approximately 225 District leaders (central and school-based) for feedback on the draft Vision, Mission and Priorities. Superintendent Robertson shared a brief PowerPoint highlighting the activities undertaken to date to support the establishment of the draft vision, mission, priorities and values. After the PowerPoint, principals and central leaders proceeded to breakout sessions. Each breakout session was led by an Assistant Superintendent who facilitated the overall process for their leadership group.

Breakout rooms were set up with posters of the draft vision, mission, and priorities. In each breakout room, there were small table groups of 6 – 8 principals and central leaders. Each table was asked to select one individual to serve as a note-taker, and one individual to serve as a reporter.

The following question was presented for participants to respond to:

*"Reflect upon the following:*

- *The philosophy of Inspiring Education,*
- *The mandate of the new School Act,*
- *Your results review and planning documents*
- *The needs of the students you serve*

*Do the draft vision, mission, and priorities align with and support your work? If yes, how? If not, what is missing?"*

Each participant was asked to take turns sharing their ideas in their table group and to provide input into the vision, mission and priorities. Note-takers at each table were provided a template upon which to record ideas, themes and key discussion points that arose specific to each statement. Reporters were then asked to share high level themes with the large group. All notes were collected for analysis.

### Summary of Feedback

	Draft statement supports the following:	For consideration:
<b><i>Priority 1: Ensure success for every student through supporting early learning, transitions, high school completion and beyond.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The journey of a child's education</li> <li>• The engagement of every student regardless of grade level or ability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>ensure</i> with <i>support, provide, create, increase</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to revise</li> </ul>

## Draft District Priorities: District Leadership Meeting (DLM)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaks to the continuum of learning - Lifelong learning and the continuation of education</li> <li>• Addresses individual students, thereby supporting inclusion</li> <li>• Supports high school completion and the world of work</li> <li>• Supports the new curriculum design</li> <li>• The pursuit of equity</li> <li>• Supports the Vision statement – leaders of tomorrow</li> <li>• Supports the Mission statement</li> <li>• And beyond acknowledges more than academic success, but ability to be successful as a family member, community leader, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>statement to say “<i>Ensure every child achieves to their full potential through...</i>”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to remove the word <i>transition</i> as it is a strategy</li> <li>• Suggestion to replace <i>and beyond</i> with <i>lifelong learning or the world of work or career transitions</i> to make it clear that it means transition between high school and beyond</li> <li>• Suggestion to add the phrase <i>through a continuum of support from</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to define <i>success</i>,</li> <li>• Suggestion to define <i>early learning</i> versus <i>early education</i></li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Priority 2 - Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a safe, healthy, (welcoming) respectful, positive, inclusive culture/climate/community</li> <li>• Quality learning environments to include highly qualified/quality teachers, Professional Development, instructional environments</li> <li>• Staff and students</li> <li>• Access to supports and services (staff and students)</li> <li>• Equitable, effective and efficient use of resources to provide quality environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>environment</i> with <i>communities</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>provide</i> with <i>create, build</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to add the word <i>equitable/equity</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to define <i>high quality</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to add the word <i>safe</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to add the word <i>healthy</i></li> </ul>

## Draft District Priorities: District Leadership Meeting (DLM)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports collaboration, and staff and community engagement (building relationships)</li> <li>• Alignment of initiatives – streamlining</li> <li>• Equity and choice through the use of high quality learning environments</li> <li>• Alignment with Mission</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Priority 3 - Strengthen public education through engagement, communication and partnerships.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to communication</li> <li>• Transparency of decision making</li> <li>• Importance of developing partnerships</li> <li>• Equity and the District's values</li> <li>• Alignment with Mission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to state <i>communication</i> first then <i>engagement</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>strengthen</i> with <i>promote, encourage, enhance, garner support</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to add the word <i>intentional, strategic</i> or <i>meaningful</i> in front of <i>partnerships</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Vision: Transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects what is happening in schools</li> <li>• Supports the range of students and programs</li> <li>• Focus is on the student</li> <li>• Leader suggests beyond academics</li> <li>• The word <i>transforming</i> supports that there is much we can do now and in the future. It supports the fact that education is transforming and the word could be the springboard for conversations with the public on the changes that are occurring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>transforming</i> with <i>developing, fostering, enhancing, supporting, cultivating, enriching, elevating, engaging, empowering</i></li> <li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>leader</i> with <i>citizens, ethical citizens, ethical and engaged citizens, contributing citizens, productive citizens, lifelong learners and leaders.</i></li> </ul>

## Draft District Priorities: District Leadership Meeting (DLM)

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	<p>Provides the opportunity to have these conversations and does not allow for status quo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Redefines how we see/define leadership - a big shift, and a great opportunity to do this.</li></ul>	
<b><i>Mission: We inspire student success through high quality learning communities supported by meaningfully engaged parents, partners, and staff.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Value of engaging parents, families and partners – the larger community</li><li>• Recognizes that it cannot be done alone</li><li>• Supports the priorities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggestion to add the word <i>students</i> and to change the order so that staff are not at the end, e.g., <i>engaged students, parents, staff and partners</i></li><li>• Eliminate confusion over the terminology and what learning communities mean for the general public i.e. “we” at the beginning, “learning communities” in the middle and the placement of staff at the end. A variety of rewording options were offered.</li><li>• Suggestion to replace the word <i>learning communities</i> with the word <i>learning opportunities</i> or to remove it completely so that it focuses on teaching and learning.</li></ul>

## Draft District Priorities: Student Advisory Council

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### Background

In February 2014, a draft set of Vision, Mission, and Priority statements were sent out for consultation in order to gather feedback and validation from key educational stakeholders, both internal and external to the District. An online survey, a public consultation evening, the District's Leadership Meeting and the Student Advisory Council meeting were all used as strategies to engage and communicate with staff, students, families and the community around us, regarding the development of a new set of District Priorities. This is a report of the findings from the Student Advisory Council meeting held on February 10, 2014.

### Methodology

On Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup> 2014, the Board of Trustees hosted a Student Advisory Council meeting to gain a student's perspective or response to the draft priorities. 39 students from grades 10 through 12 were invited to participate in the event, representing 21 District high school programs. The students were grouped in one of three talking circles. Each circle had approximately 13 student participants, a facilitator, a note taker and Trustees.

A PowerPoint was presented to the large group to provide context around the governance model and the process of a Board developing a set of priorities. Then, in their circles, students were asked to respond to two questions that would provide student voice and perspective towards the draft priorities. The two questions used to support this process were:

1. What makes a great school for all?
2. Looking back over your years in school, what do you believe is the one most important thing schools should focus on to ensure student success?

The circle facilitator posed each question and then, with the use of the talking stone, went around the circle and students responded individually. The circle note taker captured each student's response. The process was repeated for the second question. All notes were collected for analysis.

### Summary of Feedback

The following themes emerged as important from the overall voice of the students:

- Respectful learning environments
  - Being respected for who you are as an individual
  - Teachers and school staff treating you in a respectful manner
  - Respect for how a person learns
- Welcoming school environment/ a sense of community
  - All staff being warm and inviting to students
  - All students being accepted and welcomed in both the school and the classroom
  - Schools that seek out student voice and participation e.g. global cafes hosted for students by students
- Supports available for students/people to have meaningful relationships with
  - A range of supports and available in various times and ways (i.e. formal booked times in the school day with a school counsellor, after school, at lunch, a mentor, a success coach etc.)

## Draft District Priorities: Student Advisory Council

- Information around school programs, career readiness, mental health supports etc.
- Teachers who know who “I” am and really care about me
- Adults who can relate to and talk with youth (almost like a friend, but not)
- School can be stressful – how can that be lessened? Are there people a student can go to when they are feeling overwhelmed?
- Opportunities and choices
  - Sports, clubs, talent shows – things to create an active and social culture within the school
  - Related to how person learns
  - Ability to explore future potential careers or jobs (help understand what a person is or is not good at)
- Real world engagement
  - Schools that reflect diversity
  - Chances to connect with students from other schools
  - Bridging to post-secondary
  - Career exposure to ‘real life biologist, not the biology teacher’
- Learning how to learn and being a critical thinker
  - Experiences that reflect both academic and hands on learning experiences; problem solving and becoming an independent learner

	Emerging student voice that supports the draft statement:	For consideration:
<b><i>Priority 1: Ensure success for every student through supporting early learning, transitions, high school completion and beyond.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Post-secondary institutions and people from the world of work need to come into high schools and provide students with information and show them opportunities that exist for them</li> <li>● Having counsellors that help students develop their goals and plans for their futures (trained expertise in this area is critical; people in these roles need to show initiative and reach out to students)</li> <li>● Strong support for schools that are engaging, spark student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do students learn how to have balance in their lives – school, work, outside interests such as sports or music (very stressful, feels like there is no help with this)</li> <li>● Ensure opportunity for exploration so students can find out what they are really passionate about</li> <li>● Need to learn about the things that are necessary for life success (financial skills, life decision making, critical thinking and problem solving skills)</li> </ul>

## Draft District Priorities: Student Advisory Council

	<p>interest and have classes and opportunities for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity and choice in programming – academics, sports, the arts, vocational classes</li> <li>• Transitions are important – between grades 6 and 7 and then from grades 9 to 10 (lots of support needed at both these times)</li> </ul>	
<p><b><i>Priority 2 - Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School is welcoming, safe, inclusive, diverse</li> <li>• The school should feel like a “tight knit” community where you have many different opportunities, access to information, meaningful relationships and the teachers genuinely care about the students</li> <li>• Good teachers who really care about students – each individual student – is critical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for staff (principals included) to ensure they know how to connect, talk with and support a young adult</li> <li>• Opportunities to network and engage with other young people – from other schools, alumni who come back from post secondary to talk about life beyond or after high school, career mentors from the world of work to help students develop the skills and attitudes necessary to be successful in the work environment</li> <li>• Pressure to succeed – bar is high – how can teachers help shift the focus from “the mark” to students being successful in their learning; how else can success look?</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Priority 3 - Strengthen public education through engagement, communication and</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive support for meaningful services or supports that are embedded directly in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools need to reflect diversity (have multi-cultural events)</li> <li>• Schools need to include</li> </ul>

## Draft District Priorities: Student Advisory Council

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<b><i>partnerships.</i></b>	<p>their school. E.g. Success coaches of the STAR Program or the child care at Braemar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School is a community</li><li>• Support for having facilities at the school for students – fitness room, cafeteria, dance studio</li></ul>	<p>everybody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore the opportunity to extend the connections between students at other schools (network with peers from across Edmonton)</li></ul>
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