

DATE: April 5, 2016

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Engaged and Effective Governance: Student Leadership

ORIGINATOR: Sandra Stoddard, Executive Director Governance, Strategic Services and Support to Schools

RESOURCE STAFF: Thomas Banks, Kent Butt, Alison Caulfield, Simran Dhillon, Jacob Dunn, Bill Howe, Andy Lee, Sandra Marianicz, Nancy Petersen, Lisa Wright, Christian Zukowski

REFERENCE: September 10, 2013 Board Meeting - Motion re Student Trustee/Representative
June 10, 2014 Board Report - Student Representative
June 23, 2015 Board Report - Student Trustee

ISSUE

The following motion was approved by the Board of Trustees on June 23, 2015:

That, as a means to promote active engagement and enhance student voice in the democratic process, the District Legacy Course students be empowered to use the findings from this year's pilot to explore and propose an alternative governance model that builds upon the concept of an elected Student Trustee and establishes system-wide student engagement process to support students across Edmonton Public Schools to have a meaningful voice in public education. A recommendation report that includes timelines to support a Student Trustee election process would be brought forward to the Board of Trustees in January for consideration.

The guiding question that underpins the aforementioned work was developed by District Legacy Course students in the fall of 2015:

How do we build upon the synergy and excitement of the initial year's Student Trustee pilot to find an authentic model of youth voice and leadership that supports our District's cornerstone values and Strategic Plan, is relevant and engaging to youth, is sustainable, and holds the potential to build youth engagement across our system and beyond?

BACKGROUND

The election of Alberta's first Student Trustee was a historic moment for Alberta and Edmonton Public Schools. The District values youth voice and all stakeholders' desire to see a structure in place that supports meaningful engagement between District students and both the Board of Trustees and Administration.

At the June 23, 2015, board meeting the Board approved the recommendation that the students of the 2015-2016 District Legacy course to bring forward a recommendation reflecting a model of student governance to be implemented within the District. The model was to engage students from across the District, provide a structure or means for meaningful student engagement and provide recommended timelines for a Student Trustee election process.

In fall 2015 McNally School took on responsibility for hosting and instructing the District Legacy course and 33 students from across District high schools were registered. All students in the course received an overview of the Student Trustee initiative and a small subcommittee was formed to lead the development of a recommended model of student governance.

The proposed model highlighted in this report, reflects the research, consultation, engagement and developmental work conducted by the District Legacy Course students over the past several months to inform their recommendation of a model of student governance being brought forward at this time. District students, staff, principals, parents, former Edmonton Public Schools Student Trustee - Miss Johannah Ko and former Vancouver Public District Student Trustee, Nicholas Milum, make up the stakeholders engaged during this process. District Legacy course students also reached out to educational organizations who would have a perspective on or experience with youth governance.

RELATED FACTS

- Edmonton Public Schools has 24 high schools composed of students reflecting a variety of cultures, circumstances and abilities.
- The proposed model of student governance has been designed to engage students from across District high schools to ensure the diversity of student voice represents the diversity of the District's student body.
- The proposed model of student governance is structured around the following components:
 1. District high schools
 2. a Student Senate Body
 3. Student Trustees
 4. the Board of Trustees
 5. District staff
 6. an operational budget
 7. defined roles and responsibilities
 8. evaluation
- For a high level overview of components one through six of the model refer to Attachment I, District Legacy Student's Youth Governance Model Template.
- District staff will support an evaluation of the model that includes input from the Student Senate members, the Board of Trustees and staff connected to the model; a summary of this evaluation will be brought forward in June 2017 to the Board of Trustees in a collaborative effort between District administration and the Student Senate.
- The District Legacy course would remain an educational option for District high school students, but would be separate from the role of student governance in the District.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That as a means to promoting the active engagement and enhanced student voice in the democratic process, the Youth Engagement Model proposed herein be approved.**
- 2. That the proposed budget to support costs associated with the implementation of the Youth Engagement Model for the 2016-2017 school year be approved.**

OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. Approve the Youth Engagement Model and proposed budget as presented.
2. Approve the Youth Engagement Model and proposed budget, with amendments.
3. Do not approve the Youth Engagement Model.

CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS

The proposed Youth Engagement model provides the Board of Trustees with direct access to student voice to inform decision-making and supports the Board and Administration in dissemination of information and implementation of initiatives relevant to students. Additionally, the model provides a means for students across all District high schools to actively learn about and participate in democratic governance, gain a stronger understanding of the role of public education, and voice their perspectives about relevant educational issues.

Youth engagement in public education reflects our District's cornerstone values and supports the District Strategic Plan. While all are reflected, the District Legacy students saw a strong connection between youth governance and the following priority areas:

- Priority 1, Goal Two (Success for Every Student) and Goal Three (Success Beyond High School)
- Priority 2, Goal One (A Focus on Well-being and Student Citizenship)

A model of District youth governance reflects the Board of Trustees' sincere commitment to fulfill Priority 3, Goal three, Engaged and Effective Governance.

Similarly, in terms of the District's cornerstone values, this initiative draws students into collaborative roles, between schools, catchments, District staff and our Board of Trustees in an effort to share perspectives and engage in collective problem solving and constructive dialogue about pertinent issues.

In addition, benefits to youth engagement include facilitation of competency development (e.g., critical thinking, information management, innovation, communication, etc.). This model promotes the development of students as engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit as described within the Ministerial Order for Student Learning. Moreover, Student Trustees and Student Senators will be addressing the outcomes of the District's Career Pathways initiative, as participating students will experience governance and have opportunity to work closely with people in political and public service careers.

Such a Youth Engagement Model will provide the Board of Trustees with access to diverse youths' feedback, across all District high schools, on topics or issues of importance. Youth engagement in public education is a topic of heightened interest to policy makers, researchers, and practitioners alike.

Additionally, there is a growing interest in Alberta to build a provincial structure to support the development of student engagement programs in the area of education governance. Provincial stakeholders are interested in how Edmonton Public Schools will approach youth governance relative to other models employed in Ontario, British Columbia, and the United States.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this recommendation, Governance and Strategic Support Services will:

- Develop and communicate to high school principals, the process to support the establishment of the Student Senate for the 2016-2017 school year; this work would include the provision of supporting forms and communication tools.
- Identify staff with relevant experience to support the Student Senators and Student Trustees, and to provide ongoing mentorship.
- Work with the Student Senate to draft a revised role and responsibilities statement to be brought forward to the District Priorities and Governance Trustee sub-committee for approval and placement in the Trustees Handbook reflecting the roles of a Student Trustee and Student Senator.

- Facilitate the development of a Student Senate Handbook which outlines the Student Senate's governance model.
- Engage with staff from Research and Innovation to develop the evaluation of the model prior to implementation.
- Provide an update on the progress and status of this initiative to a Caucus meeting in October 2016.
- Coordinate the introduction of the Student Senate and Student Trustees at an appropriate upcoming board meeting.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I - District Legacy Student's Youth Governance Model Template

TB:KB:AC:SD:JD:BH:AL:SM:LW:CZ:lw

Legacy Student's Youth Governance Model Template

District High Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each year all District high schools will have the opportunity to elect or select up to a maximum of two students to sit on the Student Senate. • These students will represent the students of their schools (and catchment area) and serve as a conduit for information, communication and engagement between students, the Student Senate and ultimately, the Board of Trustees and District Administration. • To be eligible to be a Student Senate member, students must meet common District criteria; this criteria will be established by staff from Governance and Strategic Supports (GSS), using the criteria developed to support last year's election of a Student Trustee and in collaboration with students from the District Legacy course. • Student Senate members will be identified in the spring of each school year and will serve a one year term of office (e.g., September 1, 2016 to June 29, 2017). • District high schools will develop a Student Senate selection/election process to align with existing youth leadership practices within their school.
Student Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students from across District high schools come together to form the Student Senate. • Once Student Senators have been identified from across District high schools each spring, they will hold an operational meeting prior to the end of the school year to transition from the current Student Senate to the newly elected Senate; this meeting will include activities such as establishing the incoming chair and vice-chair and setting the date for their meeting of the new school year. • The Student Senate will meet formally after school on a monthly basis, have a guiding role and responsibilities statement, and have a chair and vice-chair to support their governance. • District staff will provide ongoing guidance and support to the organization and operations of the Student Senate, including, but not limited to, the senate monthly meetings, preparation for a minimum of three annual public board meetings, processes to support connecting with District schools and students and the ongoing communication between the Student Senate and the Board of Trustees. • The Student Senate will discuss education and youth leadership topics based on the voice of District students. • Through a tri-annual reporting process at public board meetings, the Student Senate will provide youth voice to the Board of Trustees and will be accessible as a source of youth voice to the Board of Trustees throughout the year. • Student Senators will support the preparation and writing of the Student Trustee report for each of the three public board meetings. • Members of the Student Senate will reach out to students in their high school and their catchment schools as appropriate to gain student voice or to engage students in the area of youth governance.

Student Trustee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Senate will elect three members to serve in the role of Student Trustee. • This election will take place amongst Student Senate members and will occur during the first Student Senate organizational meeting for each school year. • The Student Trustees will participate fully in the Student Senate as well as attend a minimum of three public board meetings. • The dates of these meetings will be mutually set between the Board of Trustees and the Student Senate. • At each of selected public board meeting, Student Trustees will provide a written report for Trustees. These reports will reflect topics the Student Senate wishes to bring forward, a summary of Senate activities and provide youth voice/perspective to any Board of Trustee requests for information. • At each of the selected board meetings, one of the three Student Trustees will sit in the Student Trustee chair in McCauley Chambers to actively participate in the meeting on behalf of District students. The other two Student Trustees will sit in the audience and be available to support questions. • The three Student Trustees will be available to attend other District or board events where student voice and representation would be appropriate. • District staff supporting the Student Senate would also provide mentorship and support to the Student Trustees. 										
Board of Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees will invite the Student Trustees to participate in a minimum of three public board meetings a year to bring student perspective to critical educational issues. • As appropriate, Trustees will reach out to the Student Senate during the school year as a source of youth voice or perspective. 										
District Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each year, staff from central decision units will provide logistical support for the implementation of the Student Senate selection/election process for high schools. • Staff from GSS will provide ongoing support, guidance and mentorship to the Student Senate and the three Student Trustees, as well as act as a liaison between the student governance structure (Student Senate) and the Board of Trustees. • Staff from Communications, in collaboration with GSS staff, will provide orientation training to the new Student Trustees and Senate body each year, as well as being available for ongoing or emerging communications support. • Staff from Research and Innovation will provide evaluation support to the model. 										
Annual Budget	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">0.15 FTE of a leadership unit cost for GSS staff support to the model</td> <td style="text-align: right;">21,200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>support for transportation, food, and child care costs to support student participation on the Student Senate</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>funds to the Student Trustees to support expenses related to the fulfilling of their duties</td> <td style="text-align: right;">500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Senate orientation and training</td> <td style="text-align: right;">900</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total annual budget</td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">26,000</td> </tr> </table>	0.15 FTE of a leadership unit cost for GSS staff support to the model	21,200	support for transportation, food, and child care costs to support student participation on the Student Senate	4,000	funds to the Student Trustees to support expenses related to the fulfilling of their duties	500	Student Senate orientation and training	900	Total annual budget	26,000
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