

DATE: May 25, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Shelagh Dunn

SUBJECT: Motion re: Reporting on the Use of Seclusion and Restraint

REFERENCE: [Trustees' Handbook – Section 5.2.2 – Notices of Motion](#)
[AE.BP Welcoming, Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Learning and Working Environments](#)
[HA.BP Inclusive Education](#)
[HAH.AR Division Seclusion Rooms and Use of Physical Restraint](#)

ISSUE

Notice of motion was served at the May 11, 2021, Board meeting.

BACKGROUND

On September 24, 2019, the Board of Trustees for Edmonton Public Schools passed a [motion](#) advocating for the systemic changes needed to work towards a system where seclusion rooms are no longer needed or used.

On November 1, 2019, the Minister of Education put into place a [Ministerial Order](#) and a [Set of Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Schools](#) which includes a requirement to document and review every instance where a seclusion room and/or physical restraint is used and notify the superintendent or equivalent jurisdictional leader.

In September 2020, the Division issued an [Administrative Regulation on Division Seclusion Rooms and Use of Physical Restraint](#) which provided clarification to the public that that these practices are not to be used as a consequence or punishment and are only to be considered when there is an imminent danger to safety, and lesser interventions are not possible.

RATIONALE

This motion is intended to provide Edmonton Public School Board Trustees with an annual opportunity to review the use of seclusion and restraint in the Division, and an opportunity to hear from Division leaders about the work being undertaken to prevent the need for and use of seclusion and physical restraint in schools. It is also intended to provide the public the opportunity for transparency on the use of these practices and steps being taken to improve safety for students and staff in schools, including the work towards the goal of reducing and eliminating the use of these practices.

This public discussion remains important because of the ethical issues related to seclusion and restraint including questions of human rights and the potential for injury¹. Local advocacy groups and parents have continued to raise concerns about the use of these practices and the emotional impact on students.

Our Board has committed to advocate for systemic change. The provincial government is necessary for this change. However, the work of the Division is also incredibly important. In previous Board meetings, Trustees have been provided with updates on the work to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint,

with information on opportunities for training for teachers and staff, work to build relationships with families and work to provide support to schools in assessing and understanding student behaviour, communication and well-being before a crisis is reached. It is clear that there is more work to be done and while our Board continues to advocate for the larger systemic change that is needed, it is important to provide clear and accessible information to the public about the Division's practices and the Division's work to improve supports provided for students, staff and schools.

RECOMMENDATION

That data on the use of seclusion and restraint are reported to the Board annually, along with work on systemic changes so that these practices are no longer needed or used.

OPTIONS

1. Approve the recommendation.
2. Provide feedback and request changes to the recommendation for approval.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this recommendation, this motion will be referred to Policy Review Committee for inclusion in the annual report on inclusive education under [HA.BP Inclusive Education](#).

¹Scheuermann, B., Peterson, R., Ryan, J. B., & Billingsley, G. (2016). Professional practice and ethical issues related to physical restraint and seclusion in schools. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 27(2), 86-95.

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