

DATE: November 28, 2023

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Marcia Hole, Policy Review Committee
Trustee Jan Sawyer, Policy Review Committee
Trustee Saadiq Sumar, Chair, Policy Review Committee

SUBJECT: Policy Review Committee 2023-2024 Work Plan

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director Board and Superintendent Relations

RESOURCE STAFF: Naimo Bille, Nancy Petersen, Wanas Radwan

REFERENCE: [Trustees' Handbook Section 6.1 – Board Committee Protocols Board Policy CH.BP – Framework for Policy Development and Review](#)

ISSUE

The Policy Review Committee (PRC) is presenting its 2023-2024 work plan to the Board of Trustees (the Board) for approval.

BACKGROUND

The PRC is responsible for assisting the Board by ensuring that policies submitted for Board approval are developed and reviewed in accordance with Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review.

The PRC discussed policy development and review for both the remainder of their term and for the 2023-2024 year on September 5, October 11 and November 10, 2023. From these discussions, the committee established an annual plan for policy development and review to be undertaken in 2023-2024, while also accommodating the need for any emergent policy work.

RELATED FACTS

The work plan addresses the following:

- 1. New policy development:** Emerging contexts and existing requirements to align with the *Education Act* support the identification of two areas for new policy development work in 2023-2024. The work to develop these policies is continued from the 2022-2023 Work Plan.
 - **Dispute resolution policy:** To align with Section 41 of the *Education Act*, a new dispute resolution policy is being developed. This policy is being developed with consideration to the review of Board Policy AB.BP Appeals. The first draft of Board Policy AB.BP Dispute Resolution and Appeals was brought forward for first reading in September 2023.
 - **School renaming policy:** In accordance with the September 7, 2021, Board motion, a new policy is being developed to provide direction related to the renaming of schools. This policy will align with Board Policy HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity and supports progress towards the Division's

Anti-racism and Equity Action Plan.

- As part of this work, Board Policy EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles, which includes direction on naming schools, is also identified for review to ensure alignment with the new policy.

2. **Policy review and revision:** The Board is responsible for ensuring all Division policies are in alignment with provincial legislation, reflect current processes and procedures and support the direction set out in existing Board policies. As such, the following policies or area of policy will be supported for review.
 - **School calendar and scheduling:** The review of Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar will continue in 2023-2024. This policy will be updated to align with collective agreement requirements, applicable federal and provincial statutes and regulations. This policy will also include direction around the inclusion of diverse days of significance as breaks for students in the school year calendar, where possible.
 - **Sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression:** The committee will conduct a review of Board Policy HFA.BP Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to ensure language is up to date and aligns with language in the Alberta *Human Rights Act*. The PRC is not seeking to change the intent or purpose of the policy from its original development.
 - The intent of the current policy is to address discriminatory, hostile and unsafe environments that impact the ability of students to feel safe, respected, fully included and capable of ambitious learning in their schools. The policy does not direct or influence the official curriculum taught in Edmonton Public Schools; Division schools follow the Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum, as set by Alberta Education.
 - **Appeals:** Board Policy AB.BP Appeals will be updated in alignment with the *Education Act*. The first draft of Board Policy AB.BP Dispute Resolution and Appeals was brought forward for first reading in September 2023.
 - **Human Resources Framework:** Board Policy FA.BP Human Resources Framework will be updated in alignment with Board Policy HAA.B.BP Anti-racism and Equity. Where relevant, this policy will also undergo further review to align with current practice and processes.
 - **Student behaviour and conduct:** In addition to the above listed policies, Section 33 of the *Education Act* requires an annual review of the code of conduct for students. To comply with this, Board Policy HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct will also be reviewed and updated, if required.
3. **Longer Term Policy Work:** The following policies have been identified by the PRC as policy areas that may require review or revision. Prior to officially initiating either policy for review, the PRC will seek more context related to emerging trends or issues for each policy area. As such, the work to look at the following policies is preliminary and is intended to build the Board of Trustees' capacity around these topics areas. The preliminary work will inform next steps for each of the following policy areas:
 - Board Policy EO.BP Environment
 - Board Policy HA.BP Inclusive Education

This year's work plan also includes the request for funds to support the development of a video to support Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar. The video will serve as a tool to help build people's awareness around the complexity related to the development of the Division's annual school year calendar. The video will be included as part of engagement with stakeholders after first reading of the policy and will also serve as a resource for staff, students and families beyond the development of the policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the PRC 2023-2024 work plan be approved.
2. That the Board approve the expenditure of up to \$15,000 from the Board Initiative Fund for the production of a school calendar video.

OPTIONS

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

1. Approve the PRC 2023-2024 work plan as written.
2. Provide feedback and request changes be made to the PRC 2023-2024 work plan.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The work of the PRC reflects the committee's best efforts to fulfill the expectation to complete policy work required for alignment to provincial legislation and the Board's commitment to reviewing and revising existing Board policies. The review and revision of these policies will be informed by stakeholder engagement and will involve a multi-year commitment.

NEXT STEPS

Policy review activities will proceed, in alignment with the approved work plan.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Policy Review Committee 2023-2024 Work Plan

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Policy Review Committee 2023-2024 Work Plan

PURPOSE

- The Policy Review Committee is responsible for assisting the Board in reviewing Board policy by ensuring that Board policies submitted for Board approval are developed and reviewed in accordance with Board Policy CH.BP Framework for Policy Development and Review.
- The main objective of the work plan is to recommend an annual plan for policy development and review to be undertaken in 2023-2024, while also accommodating the need for any emergent reviews.

ACTIVITIES

The Policy Review Committee Work Plan 2023-2024 includes the following:

New Policy Development	
Policy	Summary
Dispute Resolution	<i>Education Act</i> requirement; continuation from 2022-2023 work plan that was brought forward for first reading in September 2023.
School Renaming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles 	In accordance with the September 7, 2021, Board motion and to align with Board Policy HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity; Board Policy EA.BP Infrastructure Planning Principles is part of this review to reflect alignment with the new draft policy; continuation from 2022-2023 work plan

Policy Review and Revision	
Policy	Summary
AB.BP Appeals	Align with <i>Education Act</i> , current practice and dispute resolution policy development; continuation from 2022-2023 work plan that was brought forward for first reading in September 2023.
FA.BP Human Resources Framework	Align with the Division's 2021-2022 Anti-racism and Equity Action Plan and to align with Board Policy HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity; continuation from 2022-2023 work plan.
GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar	Add clarity to calendar and scheduling policies, including guiding values and the inclusion of diverse days of significance; align with Board Policy HAAB.BP Anti-racism and Equity; continuation from 2022-2023 work plan.

HFA.BP Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	Opportunity to align policy language with the Alberta <i>Human Rights Act</i> ; will retain the current intent of the policy to address discriminatory, hostile and unsafe environments that impact the ability of students to feel safe, respected, fully included and capable of ambitious learning in their schools. There is an opportunity to reinforce that the policy is not a means to direct curriculum. Curriculum is set by Alberta Education.
HG.BP Student Behaviour and Conduct	Annual review required under the <i>Education Act</i> .

Longer Term Policy Work	
Policy	Summary
EO.BP Environment	The work to look at these policies is preliminary and is intended to build the Board of Trustees' capacity around these topics. This work may involve environmental scans; exploring emerging trends, issues and evidence related to each topic. The preliminary work will inform next steps for each policy area.
HA.BP Inclusive Education	

SUPPORTING ACTIONS/INFORMATION REQUESTED FROM ADMINISTRATION

- The committee may conduct public engagement in support of many of the policies outlined in this work plan. These engagement activities will require support from Strategic Division Supports, Infrastructure Planning and Division Support Services. However the timing and extent of this engagement for each of these policy areas has yet to be determined.

REQUESTED RESOURCES

- Resources are required to support the development of a video as a teaching tool for the review of Board Policy GCA.BP Approval of the School Year Calendar. The anticipated cost for this resource is \$15,000, including translated subtitles.