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November 28, 2018

Re: Alternate Religious Program at Neerlandia Public Christian School

As a result of recent media articles, some concerns have been raised by members of the Neerlandia community regarding how government legislation affects Neerlandia Public Christian School.

In response to the changes to the School Act regarding a board's responsibility to provide its students and staff with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment, the PPHS Board of Trustees reviewed the related policies and administrative procedures (APs) in June 2018.

Keep in mind, there are 2,388 schools in the province operating under 375 school authorities. As a school authority, PPHS has fifteen community schools under our jurisdiction. Pembina Hills has several policies and administrative procedures in place that make Neerlandia Public Christian School compliant with the government's legislation of **Bill 24: An Act to Support Gay-Straight Alliances**. All of our schools must comply with PPHS board policies and administrative procedures.

Neerlandia Public Christian School is the only school in our division that provides an Alternate Religious Program of instruction in the context of Christian ethics, morals and beliefs. **It will continue to maintain that status and government funding.** NPCS' vision, mission and values will be maintained.

We believe that all students and staff should be able to work and learn in a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe environment and we have met the legislated expectations as outlined in our *Policy 19 - Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Environments*.

We have also updated references to the School Act in *AP 50-09 Student Code of Conduct*. This document serves as a guide and sometimes as a teaching resource to help students understand their responsibilities as participants in a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.

Our APs relating to *60-12 Inclusive Practices* and *60-15 Student Activities and Organizations* have also been fine-tuned to align with amendments to the School Act.

All Policies, Administrative Procedures and Forms are available on the Pembina Hills Public Schools website at www.phpschools.ca/policy-manual/.

Regional Office

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TOGETHER WE LEARN

We care about the safety of each individual student, and seek to honor everyone involved when issues arise. As a school board, we need to abide by the law, and we seek to protect all students and staff through our policies and procedures.

If you have further questions regarding division policies, contact:

Jennifer Tuininga, Board Chair
Jennifer.Tuininga@phpschools.ca
780-284-0971

If you have further questions regarding administrative procedures or programming contact:

David Garbutt, Superintendent of Schools
David.Garbutt@phpschools.ca
780-674-8507

References:

Policy 19 Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Environments.
AP 50-09 Student Code of Conduct
AP 60-01 Curriculum - Provincial and Alternate Programs
AP 60-12 Inclusive Practices
AP 60-15 Student Activities and Organizations