

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 25, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Acting Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Strathcona High School – Begin with the End in Mind – Transition from Junior High to High school

ORIGINATOR: R. Smith, Principal, Strathcona High School

### INFORMATION

Strathcona High School, located in south Edmonton, serves a student population of 1,438 students. It is a district site for the Learning Disabled and German bilingual programs. Strathcona's outstanding diploma results and the strong Advanced Placement results contribute to its reputation as one of the finest schools in Canada.

Strathcona offers a wide variety of courses for students. Along with a strong academic program, Strathcona provides opportunities for students to participate in athletics, fine arts, Student Council and club activities. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through the Strathcona Education Fitness Center and courses such as Sports Medicine and Sports Performance. The students and staff are very proud of the success the students have had in athletics while still maintaining a high level of academic achievement.

Strathcona's school wide focus is to have all students improve their critical thinking skills, which staff believe will result in enhanced decision making and communication skills. Student growth is measured by school based assessments and provincial examinations. To support the school's focus, teachers continue to practice and refine the use of effective questioning skills, and strategies such as "chunking" (delivery of information in bite-size chunks) and F.Q.R. (Facts, Questions and Responses), a reading strategy. The staff has adopted a philosophy of looking at each student as an individual. Teachers encourage students to set high, personal standards for achievement and they work with the students to remove barriers that hinder them from reaching their potential. As a professional learning community, the exemplary staff works closely with students to provide a caring, nurturing and dynamic learning environment.

Strathcona staff has worked collaboratively to support students who are at risk of not completing high school. Staff has designed a transition program for all students entering grade 10. This transition program includes: early identification of students at risk; assistance to all grade 10 students to develop effective academic and social strategies; and the provision of opportunities for teachers to build on the successful teaching strategies utilized in junior high settings. The staff has discovered the success of the transition program depends upon collaboration between junior high and senior high staffs and between parent and the school. An additional support program, the "Scona

Connection”, coaches a team of students to act as facilitators for the transition of Grade 10 students into high school. This program prepares students to assume greater responsibility for decision-making through the building of relationships with more experienced students (Grade 11 and 12 students).

At Strathcona, a staff driven “Student at Risk” committee provides support to less successful students in all grades. This committee conducts regular conferences with students and carefully monitors student progress. Tutorials are set up and include sessions on study skills, note-taking and test-taking.

At Strathcona High School, there is a great deal of pride in the continued excellence in learning. Forty-one per cent of Strathcona’s students receive honours. Staff and students are proud of this success and will continue to maintain and enhance these results through a focus on supporting students who are failing courses, resulting in superb results from *all* students.

ES:gj