

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 13, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: E. Schmidt, Acting Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Support for High School Completion
ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Executive Director

RESOURCE

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INFORMATION

Subsequent to the Board of Trustees’ approval of the recommendation to develop a school to post secondary to work transition model, called Career Focused Education in 2002, work began to implement strategies to achieve the stated goals.

The primary goals being:

- increase rates of school completion
- increase student achievement and course completion
- increase among students the awareness of careers and the pre-requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes required to successfully transition to a given career
- smoother transition from grade 12 to post secondary and/or work.

Specific to increasing school completions, a number of strategies have been developed, put into pilot and reviewed recently by a steering committee of high school principals. In some cases strategies have been piloted for a year or more and are now entering full implementation. Others, as discussed below, are being introduced as pilots.

All of the strategies referenced in this report have as their focus the increasing of school completion rates. The steering committee has been developed to ensure that these strategies are indeed appropriate for implementation in the district. They also will serve to provide direction on the future development of initiatives to help schools meet the goals of Career Focused Education. Clear support has been received for the following initiatives:

Initiative	Description	Status
Community Database	This is a web-based site providing up to date information on approved and inspected work sites for RAP, Career Internships and Work Experience. Career related speakers and related resources will be listed as well as listing work locations that are not recommended.	Implementation

Initiative	Description	Status
Workplace Showcase	This provides an opportunity for students completing grade 12, not planning to enter post secondary immediately, to access over 100 employers who can provide employment leading to formal certification, apprenticeship, while some even support university training. Vital information about the workplace is provided to students.	Implementation
Off-Campus Guides	Guides have been produced to assist and direct school based staff in ensuring work experience, RAP and Career Internship experiences are productive, safe and beneficial to students, enhancing their future and contributing to school completion.	Implementation
Career Cruising	A district license has been acquired to enable all junior and senior high schools to have broad access to this Canadian designed career planning and information tool. It has the potential to assist students to be more aware of careers and the prerequisite courses and skills needed for a range of occupations. It assists with long range planning and helps most students to plan to complete high school in three years.	Implementation
Skills Credentialing Tool	EPSB in partnership with the Conference Board of Canada, has piloted this new tool which helps students measure their employability skills. This instrument is becoming nationally recognized and used by many employers, and will give our students an edge future employment.	Implementation
Youth Apprenticeship Program	EPS is involved in a new pilot of the Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) designed as an enriched program for at-risk youth. The program maintains the academic program and provides opportunity to apply that learning in planning, managing and carrying out specific projects.	Pilot
NAIT Initiatives	Career Focused Education involves planning with post secondary institutions. For example, work has begun on a single articulation agreement between NAIT and Edmonton Public Schools that describes various levels of partnership occurring in different schools or programs. The development of pilot projects have begun that focus around one specific school, Amiskwaciy, and other discussions	Pilot

Initiative	Description	Status
	have been focused around NAIT programs - School of Applied Building Sciences. The goal of all projects are to better prepare students in the k-12 setting to ease the transition to articulated programs in post-secondary and the world of work.	
Norquest	The district is in the final stages of seeking approval on a plan which would see students in IOP level programming be enabled to study for occupational certification while still in high school. The pilot would see the post secondary institutions funded by Advanced Education for these students, while still maintaining the courses in our high schools. Initial work with these students will be in summer sessions at Norquest in a cohort of high school aged students.	Pilot (Print Technology)
International Language Credential	To enhance transitions to post secondary and employment the district is involved in a pilot to provide grade 12 students with internationally recognized assessments in a number of languages. Support for this is from Alberta Education	Pilot
Employability Skills Certificate	Based on a project being conducted in Ontario, the district is studying the possibility of developing an Employability Skills Certificate, to provide evidence or a credential, recognized by industry, that the student has developed a sound set of employability skills. This can support the Conference Board's Skills Credential.	Research Phase

The initiatives outlined are being carefully monitored with opportunity for input from school and external stakeholders to help determine how they can be improved. Principals have identified a need for making students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders much more aware of these initiatives, and for the district to continue to solicit support from the business community. It has also been emphasized that there is a need to create awareness in the student body before they leave elementary school. This is an area where a strategy is now being considered. Finally a concern was raised about the need to effectively communicate messages about employability options and requirements to students who have recently arrived in Canada, and who are in the process of learning English.

Through these efforts and others to come, the district can support our schools in making a significant and positive change in rates of school completion, and in the long term success students will experience in their lives.

SW:dh