

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 13, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Acting Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

ORIGINATOR: C. McCabe, Executive Director
T. Parker, Executive Director
B. Tams, Acting Executive Director

RESOURCE
STAFF: Lisa Austin, Michael Ediger, Cindy Skolski, Dorothy Sombach

INFORMATION

TRUSTEE REQUEST #120, NOVEMBER 8, 2005 (TRUSTEE GIBSON): PREPARE A REPORT EXPLAINING WHETHER THE STRATEGIES OUTLINED IN THE HIGH SCHOOL COURSES AND HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES REPORT ARE SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE GOALS IN THE DISTRICT'S THREE-YEAR EDUCATION PLAN. ALSO INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF COURSE COMPLETION DATA TO EVALUATE WHETHER COOPERATIVE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES, SUCH AS ENROLMENT IN THE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM OR WORK EXPERIENCE, CONTRIBUTE TO HIGHER LEVELS OF COURSE COMPLETION. AS AN EXAMPLE, DOES ENROLMENT IN RAP OR WORK EXPERIENCE APPEAR TO CONTRIBUTE TO HIGHER PERCENTAGES OF COURSE COMPLETION FOR APPLIED MATH 20?: The district's legacy statement sets the following targets for high school completion:

- 70 per cent of students will complete high school in **three** years by the end of the 2006-07 school year
- 80 per cent of students will complete high school in **five** years by the end of the 2006-07 school year

The three year high school completion rate for 2003-04 was 60 per cent. This represents an increase of 3 per cent over the previous year. In order for the target to be reached, the average increase in the next three years needs to be slightly more than 3 per cent each year.

Actual and Projected 3-year Rates

Successful completion rates for high school courses are a measure that closely parallel district high school completion rates. The attached graph illustrates the actual combined high school course completion rates at grades 10, 11 and 12 for the last three years, and projections based on these trends for two additional years. Since 2001-02, the leadership staff of high schools have met twice a year to look at the data, analyze their results, share successful strategies to improve student achievement, and modify plans to support students in the successful completion of their courses. High school completion for 2003-04, represents the first cohort of students who benefited from this type of district training.

Each year that district staff have engaged in this work, there has been substantial improvement in the successful completion of courses. Based on this evidence, it is projected that the modest increase in three year high school completion rates for the first cohort of students (3 per cent) will not only be met but be exceeded during the next three years. The line on the attached graph indicates the actual high school completion rates for 2002-03 and 2003-04 and the projected increases for the next three years. These projections suggest a 70 per cent successful completion rate by 2006-07. Data to confirm this target projection will be available from Alberta Education in spring 2008.

Actual and Projected 5-year Rates

The five-year high school completion rate is more difficult to predict for several reasons. Students only attend regular district high schools for three years. Centre High is available for students continuing their studies for a fourth and fifth year. Students can also obtain high school completion status through enrolment in some form of post-secondary schooling, registering in an apprenticeship program or obtaining a high school equivalency diploma (GED). Of these possibilities, the district only has a substantial impact on those students who further their education at Centre High.

The most recent cohort of students for whom there is both three and five year completion rates, started high school in 1999-2000. The three year completion rate for this group of students was 57 per cent. The five year completion rate which was reported for 2003-04 was 69 per cent. This was an increase of 12 per cent. The previous year cohort also showed a 12 per cent increase between the three and five year rates. How can this trend help us to understand the impact of the work done during the current board's term?

It could be assumed for predicting purposes, that the additional percentage of students successfully completing high school in five years will remain stable at about 12 per cent above the corresponding three-year rate for that cohort of students. Projecting ahead, the five year completion rate for 2004-05 will be equal to the three year rate for 2002-03 of 57 per cent plus an additional 12 per cent; a total of 69 per cent. Using the same calculations, the predicted five year completion rate for 2005-06 is 72 per cent and for 2006-07 is 75 per cent. These predictions are based on meeting the three year predictions described earlier. Although this is below the target set by the board, the impact on the five year completion rate of the work done during this board's term will not be apparent until 2008-09. Assuming the prediction for the three year completion rate of 70 per cent in 2006-07 is accomplished, it would follow that the five year completion rate in 2008-09 would be 70 per cent plus an additional 12 per cent; a total of 82 per cent.

Many of the factors that influence students' five-year completion rates are outside of the control of the district. Increases in the percentage of students taking advantage of the programs at Centre High, more apprenticeship spaces in the province and easier post-secondary access for students are all factors that could increase the five-year high school completion rate beyond the projections provided in this report.

Strategies currently in place to support increased high school completion rates

High school completion rates are impacted by what takes place in schools from kindergarten through grade 12. Starting students off with an excellent foundation in literacy skills is supported through a number of initiatives, including best practices identified by schools, at-risk intervention plans and funding for smaller class sizes in grades 1 through 3.

Within the district, a large number of schools have identified and implemented changes in assessment practices that are supported by research. *Assessment for learning* is the umbrella that many of these

strategies fall under. This is a rich set of strategies that can be used daily in classrooms to increase student learning. Research data indicates that *assessment for learning* strategies have a substantial impact on student achievement and positively impact students' motivation to learn. Numerous studies across different grades, subject areas and countries have contributed to this overall research finding. According to one of the major research groups (Black and Wiliam, 1998), "teachers who used *assessment for learning* achieved in six or seven months what would otherwise have taken a year". The impact of these practices is demonstrated for all students, but the impact is greatest for students who are struggling. These practices act to narrow the gap between high achieving and low achieving students while helping both groups to improve achievement. Accelerating and increasing the learning of the group of students most at risk in our district has the potential to substantially increase high school completion rates in the future.

Recent research has identified, through interviews and meetings with teachers using *assessment for learning*, over 50 techniques currently being used in classrooms. The researchers expect this to increase to 100 techniques in the coming year (Leahy, Lyon, Thompson and Wiliam, 2005). The techniques fall under five broad categories:

- Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success.
- Engineering effective classroom discussions, questions, and learning tasks.
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward.
- Activating students as the owners of their own learning.
- Activating students as instructional resources for one another.

At district professional development, high school staffs have had the opportunity to share practices that impact successful completion of high school courses. Most of the identified strategies are examples of *assessment for learning*. Staffs use the high school course completion data and qualitative observations from their classrooms as evidence that these strategies have a substantial impact on both student achievement and motivation. For example, the teachers of Social Studies 13 in one high school:

- examined the Social Studies 13 course outcomes (and outcomes for subsequent years) and revised their assessments to align with these criteria. Then they made the criteria for success more explicit to the learners by providing exemplars of student work that met those criteria.
- provided students with specific feedback on assignments from peers and the teacher, using the exemplars of student work as a guide.
- encouraged students to write individual self-reflections on the progress of their work, comparing previous samples of work to more recent work. Only the students had access to these records of growth; they had ownership of their learning.
- provided feedback to students and gave opportunities to rework assignments. Students were given the choice of one of four similar assignments to hand in for grading purposes.

Evidence that this approach impacted student achievement is overwhelming:

- Using the Curriculum Assessment Materials Program (CAMP) as a guide students' final achievement was measured. Only two students in a class of 30 were unable to demonstrate standards; however both of these students had marks close to the acceptable standard.
- Successful completion of this course at the school increased by 26 per cent over the previous year.
- Only two students on two occasions failed to hand in assignments and had to be asked to attend a lunch hour 'make-up' session.
- Motivation of students and teachers were positively affected by the process as evidenced by numerous anecdotal comments in the hallway and staff room.

- Teachers reported improved relationships with students and a renewed belief that we can achieve success from all students.

This is one story, but many stories like this exist across the district in all grades and subject areas. As our district staffs share the impact of these practices, and become more proficient at implementing them across grades and subject areas, there is reason to be confident that the district will meet or exceed the 3-year target for high school completion rates established by this board of trustees.

Impact of Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) on Completion Rates

With respect to the second part of the question, a comprehensive report was presented to Board this evening outlining initiatives that the district is pursuing with respect to Career Focused Education. Students who earn credits in the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) are part of a larger group of students involved in Career Focused Education, a school to post-secondary work transition model the district initiated in 2002. One of the primary goals of this initiative is to increase rates of high school completion. The program is still in the grassroots stages and, as such, the district does not have sufficient data to determine the impact of the initiative on high school completion rates. The number of students enrolled in RAP during 2004-05 was too small to undertake any meaningful analysis of the relationship of the program to successful course completion or high school completion.

There were 76 grade 12 students who completed at least 5 RAP credits in 2004-05. These students were considered grade 12 students based on the types of courses they were enrolled in, however, they may have been in high school 3, 4, or 5 years. Of these students 16 (or 21 percent) were coded special needs and 3 (or 4 percent) were coded ESL foreign. Field supervisors of the RAP program, indicate that based on their personal contact with these students, RAP has had a positive impact on school success. (A. Mulgrew)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #123, NOVEMBER 8, 2005 (TRUSTEE GIBSON) PROVIDE IN-DEPTH INFORMATION ON HOW THE NO CHARGE SERVICE FOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS HAS IMPACTED ENROLMENT. As shown in the historical kindergarten enrolment data below, out of the total number of kindergarten aged students in the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public Schools enrolled 79 per cent of the students last year. This is the highest average Edmonton Public has experienced over the past five years. Even though there has not been an increase in the actual number of students enrolled, there was little change in the number compared to last year. In the past, the district experienced a steady decrease in the number of actual kindergarten students enrolled. Compared to last year, the district is transporting 225 more kindergarten students. This also indicates that more kindergarten students are enrolling in Edmonton Public Schools.

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
District Enrolment Totals Kindergarten	5056	4925	4745	4811	4535	4671
AB Health Care Totals Kindergarten	6621	6429	6202	6333	6181	5907
Average Capture Ratio	76.4%	76.6%	76.5%	76%	73.4%	79.1%

(D. Sombach)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #124, NOVEMBER 8, 2005 (TRUSTEE KEIVER) REGARDING THE PROPOSED ADJUSTMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOURS OF OPERATION TO DECREASE RIDE TIMES FOR STUDENTS IN AREAS WITHOUT SCHOOLS, PROVIDE A COST COMPARISON, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT DOUBLE RUNS WOULD INCREASE EXPENDITURES WHILE ALLOWING FOR THE DECREASED EXPENSE FOR SOME BUSES. ALSO INCLUDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF PREDICTED REDUCED RIDE TIMES. Following are two examples of expenditure savings by adjusting school hours and utilizing double runs rather than single runs. For the examples shown, adjustment in school hours would result in a minimal reduction in the ride times; however, further analysis is being done to determine which schools would benefit in the most reduced ride times for their students if the school hours were to change.

It is difficult to implement double runs for alternative program routes because the buses are currently running with less than capacity loads and already stop at three or four schools with the same bus, and the transportation area is large. However, further exploration of this possibility is being completed.

Single Run	Montrose	Mount Royal	Belmont	Overlanders	Sifton
Current Buses (3)	Bus #340	Bus #340	Buses #171, 172	Bus #172	Bus #171
Current School Hours	8:40-3:27	8:43-3:30	8:30-3:30	8:33-3:22	8:38-3:30
Current Early Dismissal	Th 8:40-2:07	Th 8:43-2:10	Th 8:30-2:15	Th 8:33-2:12	No Early Dismissal
Double Run					
Proposed Buses (2)	Bus #172	Bus #172	Buses #171, 172	Bus #172	Bus #171
Proposed School Hours	8:55-3:55	9:00-4:00	8:00-3:00	8:05-3:05	8:10-3:10
Proposed Early Dismissal	Th 8:55-2:55	Th 9:00-3:00	Th 8:00-2:00	Th 8:05-2:05	Th 8:10-2:10
Current Cost	3 buses X \$31,000/bus = \$93,000				
Proposed Cost	2 buses X \$32,000/bus = \$64,000				
Reduction in Expenditure	\$29,000				
Ride Time Saving	little reduction				

Single Run	Belmead	Centennial	Michael A. Kostek
Current Buses (2)	Bus #418	Bus #418	Bus #108
Current School Hours	8:45-3:30	8:45-3:30	8:45-3:30
Current Early Dismissal	n/a	n/a	n/a
Double Run			
Proposed Buses (1)	418	418	418
Proposed School Hours	8:30-3:00	8:35-3:05	9:00-3:30
Proposed Early Dismissal	n/a	n/a	n/a
Current Cost	2 buses X \$31,000/bus = \$62,000		
Proposed Cost	1 bus X \$32,000 = \$32,000		
Reduction in Expenditure	\$30,000		
Ride Time Saving	little reduction		

(D. Sombach)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #127, NOVEMBER 8, 2005 (TRUSTEE KEIVER) WITH RESPECT TO THE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION LIAISON COMMITTEE, HAS THERE EVER BEEN ANY CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO COORDINATING BUS SERVICES AND ROUTES WITH EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS. IF, WHEN AND WITH WHAT RESULTS? The Student Transportation Liaison Committee deals with Edmonton Transit issues and does consider the coordination of transit routes with Edmonton Catholic Schools. In the recent past, there has been no pursuit of joint yellow bus routes with Edmonton Catholic Schools. However, the

administration will broach the topic with the administration of Edmonton Catholic Schools to determine if there is interest on their behalf to share yellow busing. (D. Sombach)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #128, NOVEMBER 8, 2005 (TRUSTEE COLBURN) IN THE NEXT REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION COSTS BEING BROUGHT TO BOARD, PROVIDE COMPARATIVE INFORMATION ON EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION SERVICES WHERE POSSIBLE. The following charts provide comparative information on the level of service and transportation fees provided by Edmonton Public Schools in comparison to Edmonton Catholic Schools.

	EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Maximum home to stop distance	400 meters	No maximum
Ride Time	Minimize the number of students who have a one-way ride of more than 60 minutes.	No guideline given in documentation.
Video Camera on Buses	No	Yes
Bus Monitors	No	No
Application for Transportation	Parents submit application to school and school forwards to Student Transportation. Hard copy paper application forms.	Parents apply at registration time and school submits to Student Transportation through Student Information System. No paper application forms.
New Applications & Requests for Changes – Turnaround Time	Special Needs, Regular & Alternative – 5 business days	Special Needs – 5 business days Regular & Language – 10 days

	EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2005/2006	EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS 2005/2006
Elementary K-6 (Monthly):		
All Kindergarten	No Charge	19.00
Kindergarten Designated Neighbourhood	No Charge	19.00
Kindergarten Alternative Designated Neighbourhood	No Charge	19.00
Language Programs	42.00	19.00
Alternative (Focus)	42.00	No Busing
Special Needs	14.00	19.00
Edmonton Transit	30.00	19.00
Conditional Rider/Ineligible	42.00	No Busing
Jr./Sr. High (Monthly)		
Edmonton Transit	30.00	23.00
Designated Neighborhood where Edmonton Transit is inadequate (Yellow Bus)	30.00	23.00
Special Needs	30.00	23.00

(D. Sombach)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #129, NOVEMBER 8, 2005 (TRUSTEE ESSLINGER) HOW MANY STUDENTS WITHOUT A DESIGNATED SCHOOL ARE ATTENDING ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS. As shown in the chart below, the number of students without a local or designated school attending an alternative program is 2,396 elementary and 890 junior high students.

	Elementary	Junior High
# of students without a local school attending their designated school	3,107	1,499
# of students without a local school attending a school other than their designated school (not for an alternative program)	4,012	2,909
# of students without a local school attending a school other than their designated school (for an alternative program)	2,396	890
# of students without local schools	9,515	4,408
# of students without a local school attending a school offering an alternative program and being transported by yellow bus	589	13

(D. Sombach)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #130, NOVEMBER 8, 2005 (TRUSTEE FLEMING) PROVIDE CLARIFICATION ON THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS RIDING BUSES TO ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS AS THEY ARE CURRENTLY BROKEN OUT BY CATEGORY IN THE REPORT. A total of 2,131 students are being transported by yellow bus to alternative programs. Following is a breakdown of this category of student.

Alternative Program Students		Type of Transportation
Grade 1-6	265	Riding buses together with students that do not have a neighbourhood school.
Grade 1-6	1,466	Riding buses that are dedicated specifically to alternative program students.
Kindergarten Students	400	Riding AM/PM and noon buses that are dedicated specifically to alternative program students and noon service
Total Bused Alternative Program Students	2,131	

(D. Sombach)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #134 NOVEMBER 8, 2005, (TRUSTEE FLEMING) PREPARE A LETTER FOR THE SIGNATURE OF THE BOARD CHAIR ADVISING THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION THAT THE BOARD IS UNDERTAKING THE COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITY CONSULTATION PROCESS: The attached letter (Appendix I) was forwarded to the Minister of Education on November 16, 2005 advising that Edmonton Public Schools has retained an external facilitator to develop the consultation process and facilitate meetings regarding the Joint Use Agreement. (B. Tams)

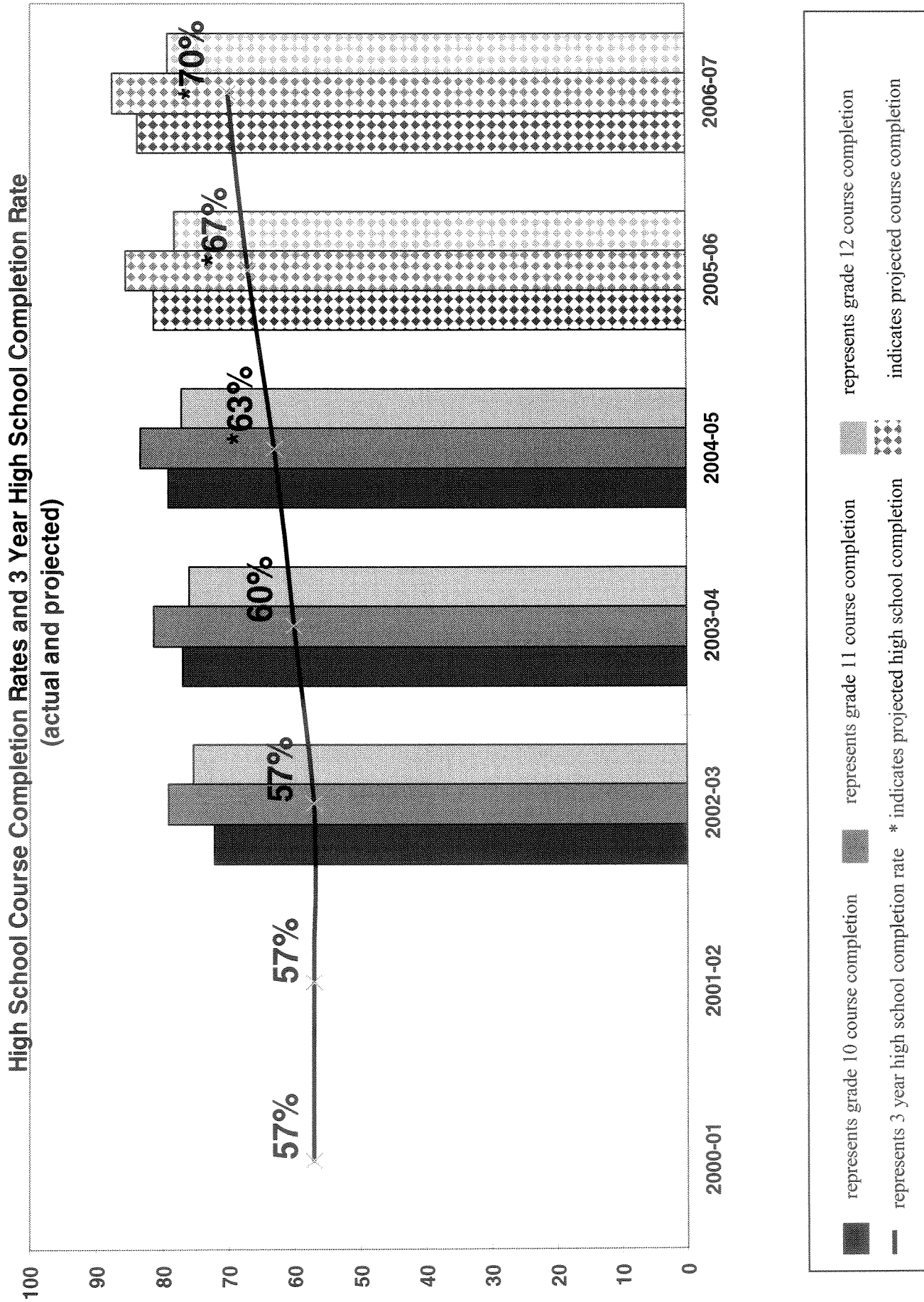
TRUSTEE REQUEST #146, NOVEMBER 29, 2005, (TRUSTEE KEIVER) PROVIDE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE JUNE 28, 2005 MOTION TO REQUEST EMERGENT FUNDING TO COMPLETE ESSENTIAL FACILITY MODIFICATIONS TO ACCOMMODATE STUDENTS FROM OUR CLOSED SCHOOLS. DID WE RECEIVE THE FUNDING AND, IF NOT, HAVE WE TRANSFERRED THE NECESSARY FUNDS FROM CAPITAL RESERVE SO AS NOT TO DETRIMENTALLY AFFECT THE BUDGETS OF THE RECEIVING SCHOOLS: In a letter dated November 15, 2005 from the Minister of Education, the Minister indicated that emergent work completed on receiving schools over the summer should be financed from district Infrastructure Maintenance Renewal (IMR) funding or from operational cost savings derived from the closure of Wellington, North Edmonton, Strathearn and Terrace Heights schools. All IMR program funding for this year has been committed to address the facility maintenance backlog experienced by the district. It is also not possible to use operational cost savings to fund major modernization of schools because savings gained by closing schools have been diverted to all existing district schools to ensure increased Plant Operations and Maintenance (PO&M) funds are available.

The same letter from the Minister indicated that a total request of \$24,321,000 to upgrade and modernize the six schools had been received, but at this time the Minister did not have additional dollars available to accommodate this request. The Minister suggested that the district may wish to submit the six modernizations the district identified as high priority projects as part of the district's 2006-07 capital plan in order that they might be considered during the next round of capital deliberations. As suggested by the Minister the district will include this request in the 2006-07 Capital Plan. It should be noted that on July 4, 2005 the district submitted an amendment to the province of our current Three-Year Capital Plan 2006-2009 to include costs associated with the emergent upgrades to receiving schools and modernization of six schools.

As a result of the Minister failing to provide emergent funds for the summer fit-up, \$363,000 was transferred from capital reserve to cover expenditures up to August 31, 2005. An additional estimated \$400,000 will be transferred from capital reserve when the work is completed and all service requests are closed so as to not detrimentally affect school and central operating budgets. (M. Ediger, Cindy Skolski)

Appendix I: High School Course Completion Rates and 3 Year High School Completion Rate
Appendix II: Letter to Minister of Education

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EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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November 16, 2005

Honourable Gene Zwozdesky
 Minister of Education
 Rm. 228 Legislature Bldg.
 10800 - 97 Avenue
 Edmonton, AB
 T5K 2B6

Dear Minister ~~Zwozdesky~~:*Gene!*

Edmonton Public Schools recognizes that schools play an important role in the community. During school hours, they are centres of learning, where our staff members work with parents and partners to achieve superb results from all students. In the evenings and on weekends, schools host a variety of community activities. The district remains committed to providing community organizations with ongoing access to our facilities after school hours.

In early 2006, the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools will launch a comprehensive consultation process regarding the Joint Use Agreement. To prepare for this process and to discuss recent concerns that have been raised regarding access to schools, Edmonton Public Schools is holding its own internal Community Use of School Facility Consultation Process later this month.

The district has retained an external facilitator to develop the consultation process and facilitate the meetings. The process will involve representatives from schools and organizations that use our facilities. The consultation will provide our district with a better understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities regarding community access. For example, one of the challenges faced by our district is the cost involved in making our schools available after hours. Although community groups are provided with access to our schools at no or nominal cost, there are costs incurred by our district and individual schools for maintenance, utilities and cleaning when community groups use our facilities.

We look forward to hearing from our stakeholders during this consultation process. Their input will assist our district as we work to continue providing the community with after-hours access to our schools. The results of the consultation will be shared at an upcoming public board meeting within the next few months.

Sincerely,

Bev Esslinger
 Board Chair

BE:cs