

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 13, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Programming for Senior High School Students with Special Needs and Students at Risk, 2000-2001

ORIGINATORS: Rick Anderson, Wilma Bayko, John Beaton, Dr. Phyllis Cardinal, Ray Cimolini, Bruce Coggles, Mack Fysh, Gord Hanson, Shirley Keith, Noel Kunst, Jennifer Lawley, Ken Marshall, Bob Maskell, Brian McWilliam, Louise Osland, El Probert, Tony Rankel, George Rice, Rosalind Smith, Hans Van Ginhoven

RESOURCE

STAFF: Dan Bateman, Kathy Cammarata, Sheri-Lee Langlois

INFORMATION

A presentation will be made to inform the board of activities that aim to retain through to graduation, students with special needs and those at risk of not completing grade 12. These activities are associated with the ongoing initiative of the senior high school principals to support the board priority regarding the improvement of educational outcomes for disadvantaged students at risk of not completing their schooling.

Mack Fysh, Principal Institutional Services, will provide comparative enrolment information that demonstrates improvement in attracting and retaining senior high students with special needs.

- The enrolment of senior high students with mild/moderate special needs has increased from 1,196 in 1994 to 1,722 in 2000, or 44 per cent. The enrolment of students with severe special needs has increased from 94 in 1994 to 265 in 2000, or 182%. This increase has been most dramatic during the last two years. (Appendix I)
- The percentage of senior high enrolment that is made up of students with special needs increased from 6.06% in 1998 to 9.44% in 2000. By comparison during the same period, the percentage of special needs students in grades one to nine remained stable.

Dan Bateman and Kathy Cammarata, co-chairs of the Senior High Special Needs Coordinators' Committee, will report on the work of the committee as a whole and coordinators individually this year in the following areas:

- Providing inservice opportunities and developing effective resources for English 16/26, Math 16/26, and other courses that are commonly taken by students with special needs
- Increasing student and parent involvement in the development of individual program plans and using the document with the student in an ongoing fashion to note successes, and to improve performance, attendance, and/or behaviour as necessary

- Developing a district individual program plan comment bank that provides goal, objective, and instructional strategy statements specific to senior high programs and students to improve consistency between schools and facilitate accountability for student learning and results
- During the spring pre-enrolment process, working with incoming grade 10 students with special needs to arrange an appropriate program and staffing prior to school opening in September
- Sharing best practices at bi-monthly committee meetings.
- Organizing an annual day-long conference devoted to senior high special education programming and strategies for high school teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators
- Increasing the range of programming available to students with special needs with emphasis on inclusion in regular classes where possible
- Assisting regular program teachers to use new strategies for the inclusion of students with special needs in regular classrooms
- Improving implementation of special accommodations for students with special needs for use throughout the year and for diploma exams.
- Publishing the Assisting Senior High Students with Special Needs handbook, and the Year at a Glance special needs program planning document for the current school year

Efforts towards increased opportunities for success for these students will continue, along with the commitment of the principals and their senior high special needs coordinators. The longer-term plan includes improving consistency among schools in the range of programming available, the supports available to exceptional students, and the increased application of inclusive teaching strategies, especially with students with mild/moderate special needs. Monitoring by coordinators of student achievement (e.g. course completions, meeting individual program plan goals and objectives), attendance and retention rates, behaviour, and student and parent satisfaction with their programs is ongoing.

MF/sll

APPENDIX I - Enrolments of Senior High Students with Special Needs