

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 22, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: “An Act to Follow” Staff Recognition Program

ORIGINATOR: N. Diemert, Leadership Services

INFORMATION

The *Act to Follow* initiative was designed to recognize and celebrate outstanding performances of staff which have resulted in tangible gains in student achievement, and to share the expertise and experience of these staff throughout the district in the An Act to Follow publication.

**Act to Follow, Act 2**

**Val Kirby – Teacher Assistant – Avonmore School**

Val Kirby assists the teacher in a special education classroom at Avonmore School, a position that presents significant daily challenges that only a remarkably patient and positive person can handle. In addition, she has established herself as an integral part of the school community through her dedicated commitment to a wide-range of activities in and around the school. Val’s focus remains clearly on the students in her class, despite her visible presence in so many aspects of the school’s activities. For example, she initiated the idea of putting tennis balls on chair legs to reduce noise and improve the classroom environment . She also developed a math game that never gets stale due to the ever-changing manipulatives in different shapes and colours.

**Linda Christianson and Lorna Eccleston – Teachers – M. E. LaZerte School**

Linda Christianson and Lorna Eccleston are a dynamic duo who share responsibility for the M. E. LaZerte Cosmetology program. You sense this energy as soon as you enter the no-nonsense, task-oriented learning environment they have created. Their multi-activity, multi-level program has students in three different grade levels pursuing studies of various modules at their individual levels of skill. Linda and Lorna have both had successful careers in cosmetology and they fully understand how important it is to learn all the skills that are essential to success in this profession. For example, a successful hairdresser or aesthetician not only has to have good manners and strong interpersonal skills, but also the entrepreneurial spirit and basic knowledge about keeping a business afloat. Linda and Lorna’s program truly focuses on the achievement of these young people, many of whom would otherwise not be in school to experience these successes.

### **Lynn Peacock – Teacher – Evansdale School**

Lynn Peacock loves teaching and, as a result, has established a very special relationship with her students. You will often find Lynn at the students' hockey games, figure skating competitions and other extra-curricular pursuits – she knows her presence means a lot to them. She recognizes the importance of bonding with her students and creating a positive culture in the classroom. Her students do a lot of cooperative learning activities in which she views her role as that of a facilitator. Classroom activities maximize time on task and the students are constantly asked to achieve high standards and show good results on their tests and evaluations. Lynn describes herself as “demanding but not unreasonable”, and her goal is to make learning enjoyable. “You have to cover the curriculum,” she notes, “but if it’s fun, things are easier.”

### **Diane Pysyk – Teacher – Vernon Barford School**

As the lead science teacher at Vernon Barford School, Diane Pysyk works with five other science teachers on staff to ensure that the students receive the best possible instruction. The results of her leadership are clearly evident through the outstanding scores Vernon Barford students accomplished on the 1999 provincial achievement tests in science. No less than 95.2 per cent of the students achieved the acceptable standard (an increase of 2.8 percent over the 1998 results), and 42.4 per cent achieved the standard of excellence (an increase of 19.1 per cent in one year). Diane shares this success with the other teachers, the parents, and the students working together toward a common goal. She considers herself “just one of the spokes in a wheel”, recognizing that the secret of excellence in education is teamwork. There is obviously something special about this modest and unassuming teacher. Diane loves the students and treats them with the utmost respect and gentleness. And she also loves science – so much so that her students can't help but love it too.