

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 22, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: District Support for Student Transition to Post-Secondary and/or Work

ORIGINATOR: B. Holt, Executive Director, Instructional and Curricular Support Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jan Anderson, Gloria Chalmers, Sandy Forster, Karen St. Cyr, Stuart Wachowicz, Stephen Wright

INFORMATION

Background and Rationale:

In November 2002 the Board of Trustees approved a recommendation to develop a school to post secondary to work transition model entitled Career Focused Education. The objective of the initiative was to address issues of student transition and school completion by contributing to:

- increased graduation rates
- increased student achievement and course completion
- increased awareness of careers and pre-requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes required to train for and successfully enter a career
- smoother student transitions from grade 12 to post secondary and/or work.

The elements of the revised model, complementary to the district's Teaching and Learning initiative, were reviewed with high school principals in October 2004. The development of the Career Focused Education model has been guided by research, what is working in other areas and discussions with internal and external stakeholders from government, business, industry, post-secondary and parents and students. The model also recognizes the role of public education to develop a well-rounded person, and at the same time to be responsive to the needs of society.

It is known that while 95% of grade 10 students aspire to a university education, less than 20% attend university. In fact less than 40% pursue a post-secondary education. It is also known that the 30% of students who do not currently graduate are composed of many who are capable, yet due to various issues in their lives, or a shortcoming in the education options available to them, are not fully served by present options in high school. Students leaving our high schools need clear ideas regarding career possibilities to avoid what the Conference Board of Canada refers to as "the 10 lost years", prior to identifying a productive career path. One strategy being employed by the district is seen in the work being accomplished by Centre High, helping many students who need a 4th or 5th year to complete high school, transition to post-secondary programs and/or successful careers. Centre High offers a broad spectrum of programming, high school courses, career internships, RAP as well as numerous program linkages with post-secondary and

employers leading to a range of careers. Yet, for a variety of reasons, many students are still not taking advantage of these excellent programs, thus needing additional supports.

The present work being done through Career Focused Education will include efforts to ensure it is fully compatible with the Individualized Career Learner Pathways initiative of Alberta Education. Curriculum staff have been actively involved with Alberta Education and Advanced Education as this provincial plan comes to fruition.

Current actions now being taken through Career Focused Education:

1. Workplace Showcase
2. Community Resource Database (all high schools)
3. Skills Credentialing Tool Pilot
 - Centre High
 - Metro Continuing Education
 - Queen Elizabeth High School
4. CFE Pilot projects
 - Residential Aide J. Percy Page High School
 - Electronics Eastglen High School
 - Interior Design and Marketing Eastglen High School
 - Fluid Power Strathcona High School
 - Fine Arts Learner Pathways to University Victoria School
 - Aviation Queen Elizabeth School
 - 6 year program plans Vimy Ridge Academy
5. Junior High CTS Support Pilot
6. CTS Needs Assessment (with Alberta Education)
7. Career Practitioners
8. Skills Competitions
 - Skills Canada
 - Hilltop Challenge
 - 2x4 Challenge for Teachers
9. Central Support for Off Campus Support:
 - three Curriculum staff members available for school support
 - development of Generic guidelines for Off Campus programming
 - safety Guidelines
 - board regulations being rewritten to comply with new programs and new provincial requirements
 - Community Resource Database
 - Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) – partnership with Careers: The Next Generation (CNG)
 - Workplace Showcase
 - highlight district programs available to assist students following three years in high school: Centre High, Argyll Distance Education, Metro Continuing Education (evening courses)
10. Norquest pilot for students at risk of not completing graduation requirements

The district is maintaining the Career Focused Education Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from Alberta Education, Advanced Education, Alberta Apprenticeship, University of Alberta, Grant MacEwan College, Norquest, N.A.I.T., Federation of Independent Business, SKILLS Alberta, Economic Development Edmonton, Careers (CNG), district schools, Board of Trustees and various representatives of individual businesses and industry. The committee has provided and will continue to provide advice and direction, and will continue to identify opportunities for the district to help students move seamlessly from school to post secondary to work.

SW:dh