

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 25, 2003

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

ORIGINATOR: Donna Barrett, Assistant to the Superintendent
Bob Holt, Executive Director, Instructional and Curricular Support Services

SUBJECT: Focus on Supporting Teaching and Learning – District Interim Measure

RESOURCE

STAFF: Karen Bardy, Susan Burghardt-MacNeill, Ernie Lotz, Ron MacNeil,
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INFORMATION

Focus on Supporting Teaching and Learning is now in its second year of district-wide implementation. Both last year and this year, the Superintendent of Schools established expectations for schools regarding implementation of the instructional focus work. In order to assess the progress of schools in meeting these expectations, the district has developed and implemented a district-wide interim measure.

District Interim Measure

This measure provides an assessment of a school's progress in relation to expectations, based on an individual school visit and discussion with the principal. Last June, these visits were implemented by the Focus on Results team. This past December, principals, teacher-leaders and central services staff who received specialized training, and members of the Focus on Results team made these individual school visits.

Prior to the visit, principals and their Instructional Leadership Teams carefully reviewed each of the eight areas of expectation (Appendix I), noting areas of success, as well as gathering evidence of the work done at their school. During the visit, the principal and visitor discussed areas 1, 2, 3 and 7, and evidence was also shared, adding depth, clarity and reliability to the data gathering process. In addition, the principal and the visitor toured the school, visited classrooms and had discussions with some of the staff and students. Following the visit, the principal completed a self-assessment of areas 4, 5, 6 and 8. This form (Appendix II) was then sent to the Superintendent of Schools.

The individual school forms were compiled into an overall district display of progress regarding implementation of the instructional focus work. This information has been made available to principals, teacher-leaders, and central services staff through Focus training and is currently being displayed for all district staff in the atrium of the Centre for Education.

Progress Achieved

Implementation of the district interim measure has:

- Assisted schools in reflecting on and celebrating the progress they have made in implementing the instructional focus work and in identifying specific next steps
- Identified progress made in implementing the instructional focus work across the district
- Identified district training needs to support the instructional focus work in schools

The summary of information collected through implementation of the district interim measure indicates:

- Schools have identified instructional focus areas in reading, writing, numeracy, and critical thinking.
- There is significant progress across the district in implementing the instructional focus work in all eight areas of Year Two Expectations (Appendix III).
- Areas of greatest progress include:
 - Living a solid school-wide focus through its words, actions, and deeds
 - Setting at least two school-wide SMARTe targets, one around external measures and one around a local interim measure
 - Aligning resources with the school-wide instructional focus
- The district has been able to capitalize on the leadership and expertise of principals and teacher-leaders, and central services staff in organizing guided school visits to schools, sharing of strategies among schools, leading training sessions, and in providing overall leadership for the instructional focus work.

What Has Been Learned

Implementation of the district interim measure has confirmed that we are making progress in areas that truly impact student achievement, as listed below:

- Student achievement improvement efforts must be based on ongoing and rigorous review of student achievement data by school staffs.
- The principal must be an instructional leader to impact student achievement.
- Leadership at all levels in the district must concentrate their efforts on improving student achievement.
- The ongoing collaboration of teachers and principals focused on the sharing of expertise, reflection upon the effectiveness of practices, and examination of student work is integral to continuous learning and improvement.
- District-wide efforts to improve student achievement must focus on classroom teaching and practices that promote learning for every student.

Next Steps

Another district interim measure is planned for June 2003 and will be implemented by district staff. The information gathered through this process will serve as a key source of information, in addition to input from principals and other stakeholders, regarding the shape of training for next year.

DB/BH:ss

APPENDIX I: Year Two Expectations

APPENDIX II: District Wide Interim Measure Summary Page

APPENDIX III: Progress from Year One Expectations to Year Two Expectations