

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 28, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Acting Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Ottewell School – Focus on the Eight Expectations

ORIGINATOR: J. Klaray, Ottewell School

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Daylene Lauman, Sheila Shortt

### INFORMATION

Ottewell School, located in southeast Edmonton, serves a population of 718 students. It is a district site for Mandarin Bilingual and Opportunity students.

Reading Comprehension was chosen as the school's instructional focus in 2001 based on collaborative staff analysis of both research and the school's achievement data. In the fall of 2003, further analysis of research and data reinforced the belief that reading is the most crucial skill for academic success.

To ensure the successful school-wide implementation of the focus on reading comprehension and the identified best practices, staff needed to build teacher and leadership capacity. In the fall of 2003, the school's instructional leadership team was restructured to include teacher leaders from all curricular areas and all leadership staff.

Staff believed that improving the reading comprehension skills of students would lead to higher levels of achievement in all subject areas, especially if the responsibility for teaching these skills was extended to teachers in all curricular areas. Teachers engaged in cross-curricular professional development and collaboration to implement research based best practices such as "read-aloud think-aloud", graphic organizers in addition to the continuation of SQUIRT, Super Quiet, Uninterrupted, Individual Reading Time. Currently, staff are researching and learning ways to rethink how to use assessment in classrooms to inform teaching practice and improve learning. To support the work of teachers and student learning, the principal makes working with teacher leaders, attending collaboration sessions, meeting with teachers regularly and spending time in classrooms a priority.

Ottewell staff encourages the ongoing support of parents by sharing information about their instructional focus work through newsletters, at School Council meetings, posting information on the school's website and via School Zone.

The instructional focus work has been further advanced this year through the opportunity to partner with Vernon Barford and T.D.Baker schools. Internal and external walk-throughs have assisted staff in gathering evidence about teaching practices that will guide next steps in improving student achievement. The opportunities to collaborate with colleagues have

prompted staff to think about their practice and what they can do to continue to move the work forward and achieve greater success for all students.

Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) funds have supported the purchase of the Academy of Reading program to meet the needs of at-risk students, enlarged the Accelerated Reader program and added quality teaching and learning resources. AISI dollars have also provided time for teacher leaders, identified for each curricular area to address responsibilities related to the implementation of the eight expectations and the leadership of their curricular teams. Professional development with district consultants and time for collaboration have resulted in a move from individual teachers sharing ideas to cross-curricular teams of teachers creating projects together – again supported by the AISI allocation to Ottewell School.

Ottewell's strong focus on reading comprehension, the implementation of best practices across all subject areas, a strong commitment to improved achievement and a collaborative, shared leadership approach to implementation have resulted in steadily improving Highest Level of Achievement and Provincial Achievement Test results. Staff will continue to research, learn and implement best practices to enhance student achievement to achieve superb results from all students.

ES: gj