

DATE: February 28, 2012

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Update re Achievement Performance of Students from Closed Schools (Trustee Request #137)

ORIGINATOR: Tanni Parker, Assistant Superintendent Student Learning Services

RESOURCE STAFF: Bruce Cline, Sandy Forster, Darlene Kassian

REFERENCE: November 8, 2011 Board Meeting (Trustee Ripley)

ISSUE

The following information was requested: As follow-up to the Ad Hoc Committee on School Closures and Sustainability Review recommendations around tracking the achievement of students affected by school closures, provide an update on the performance of the children in Fulton Place, Capilano, McCauley, Parkdale, Eastwood, and Spruce Avenue (elementary portion only) schools in 2010-2011 in their new schools.

BACKGROUND

The Highest Level of Achievement Tests (HLATs) are two separate district tests (reading and writing) used to measure outcomes from the programs of study for language arts. Each year, district students in Grades 1 to 9 write the HLATs, with the exception of French Immersion students who do not write HLATs until Grade 2. A multiple-choice test for each grade level is used to assess reading comprehension and a common writing prompt is used to assess written communication.

The Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) provide a common piece of student achievement evidence across the province and within a school authority. Students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 write these tests. The tests are Alberta teacher-created, valid, reliable, and equated to ensure that the tests have the same level of difficulty from one year to the next in order for Alberta Education and school authorities to make valid year-to-year comparisons, and to observe trends over time.

CURRENT SITUATION

The attachments reflect combined cohorts of affected students. Sample size is a critical feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. Thus, a cohort of students from all of the previously identified schools was created to ensure a population size for which some comparisons could be made. It should be made clear though, that even by combining students from all of these schools, it is not statistically valid to compare this closed school cohort with entire district numbers and draw any inference other than possible trends. The cohorts in Attachment I consist of students who wrote at least two years of HLATs prior to school closure. The cohorts in Attachment II consist of students who wrote one PAT in their original school and then one PAT in their new school.

KEY POINTS

- For HLATs, the table provides an aggregated HLAT result by grade cohort. Students were identified in 2010-2011 following school closures. Administration then tracked their HLAT scores for the two years prior to closure. Note that students are only included in the data if they were at a school that had participated in the HLAT in the prior two years. Thus, this number remains constant in order to enable a comparative sampling for analysis.
- Student scores are compared against district scores for each year shown.
- The HLAT results show the percentage of cohort students that achieved a grade level of achievement equal to or greater than their enrolment grade.
- HLAT Reading and Writing results show the majority of affected student scores were similar to or higher in their new school as compared to their previous school results, with the exception of Cohort 2 in writing and Cohort 5.
- PAT cohort results show the percentage of affected students who either achieved the acceptable standard or the standard of excellence.
- The percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard on PATs increased after school closure, with the exception of 2011 Grade 6 Mathematics and 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies.
- The percentage of students achieving the standard of excellence on the PATs increased for all tests after school closure.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I HLAT Results for Students Affected by School Closures

ATTACHMENT II PAT Results for Students Affected by School Closures

BC:mp

HLAT Results for Students Affected by School Closures

Note: Students' scores were excluded from the cohort if they didn't have 3 years of data for comparison or if they were missing HLAT values during the years being compared.

			Percentage of Students Achieving a Grade Level of Achievement Equal To or Greater Than Their Enrolment Grade						
			Reading			Writing			
	Enrolment Grade	Number of Students in Cohort Group	Cohort %	District %	Difference	Cohort %	District %	Difference	
Cohort 1									
	Before Closures (2008/09)	2	76	86.8	84.4	2.4	89.5	88.6	0.9
	Before Closures (2009/10)	3	76	88.2	83.5	4.7	88.2	87.9	0.3
	After Closures (2010/11)	4	76	88.2	83.2	5.0	88.2	87.0	1.2
Cohort 2									
	Before Closures (2008/09)	3	99	77.8	83.9	-6.1	82.8	88.3	-5.5
	Before Closures (2009/10)	4	99	79.8	83.2	-3.4	83.8	86.7	-2.9
	After Closures (2010/11)	5	99	81.8	83.2	-1.4	79.8	85.5	-5.7
Cohort 3									
	Before Closures (2008/09)	4	46	58.7	81.3	-22.6	76.1	86.9	-10.8
	Before Closures (2009/10)	5	46	65.2	82.4	-17.2	65.2	85.0	-19.8
	After Closures (2010/11)	6	46	71.7	82.5	-10.8	76.1	86.0	-9.9
Cohort 4									
	Before Closures (2008/09)	5	20	55.0	81.0	-26.0	65.0	86.5	-21.5
	Before Closures (2009/10)	6	20	65.0	82.5	-17.5	60.0	85.4	-25.4
	After Closures (2010/11)	7	20	75.0	83.4	-8.4	80.0	86.7	-6.7
Cohort 5									
	Before Closures (2008/09)	6	31	58.1	82.8	-24.7	61.3	87.8	-26.5
	Before Closures (2009/10)	7	31	64.5	84.0	-19.5	38.7	85.8	-47.1
	After Closures (2010/11)	8	31	58.1	81.5	-23.4	48.4	87.0	-38.6
Cohort 6									
	Before Closures (2008/09)	7	34	55.9	84.0	-28.1	58.8	86.5	-27.7
	Before Closures (2009/10)	8	34	47.1	81.9	-34.8	50.0	85.7	-35.7
	After Closures (2010/11)	9	34	58.8	80.7	-21.9	70.6	86.6	-16.0

PAT Results for Students Affected by School Closures

Elementary Cohort		# of Students	% of Students Achieving the Acceptable Standard*			% of Students Achieving the Standard of Excellence		
			Cohort %	District %	Difference	Cohort %	District %	Difference
Before Closures	Grade 3 Language Arts 2008	43	65.1	77.1	-12.0	4.7	15.7	-11.0
After Closures	Grade 6 Language Arts 2011	42	83.3	83.8	-0.5	9.5	20.6	-11.1
Before Closures	Grade 3 Mathematics 2008	39	61.5	77.2	-15.7	10.3	25.8	-15.5
After Closures	Grade 6 Mathematics 2011	38	50.0	75.4	-25.4	10.5	22	-11.5

Junior High Cohort		# of Students	% of Students Achieving the Acceptable Standard*			% of Students Achieving the Standard of Excellence		
			Cohort %	District %	Difference	Cohort %	District %	Difference
Before Closures	Grade 6 Language Arts 2008	21	76.2	79.5	-3.3	0.0	21.1	-21.1
After Closures	Grade 9 Language Arts 2011	20	85.0	80.1	4.9	10.0	18.6	-8.6
Before Closures	Grade 6 Mathematics 2008	20	65.0	75.2	-10.2	5.0	18.1	-13.1
After Closures	Grade 9 Mathematics 2011	19	73.7	68.7	5.0	15.8	23.1	-7.3
Before Closures	Grade 6 Science 2008	20	60.0	76.2	-16.2	5.0	27.8	-22.8
After Closures	Grade 9 Science 2011	19	68.4	78.9	-10.5	10.5	29.1	-18.6
Before Closures	Grade 6 Social Studies 2008	20	65.0	78.5	-13.5	5.0	26.6	-21.6
After Closures	Grade 9 Social Studies 2011	19	63.2	71.9	-8.7	10.5	25.6	-15.1

* As per Alberta Education's Achievement Test results reporting practice, the Acceptable Standard includes students who achieved the Standard of Excellence.