

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 12, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Improving Student Achievement Through Reading Recovery

ORIGINATOR: J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE  
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### INFORMATION

In 1996-1997, Edmonton Public Schools became the first district in Alberta to provide Reading Recovery in its schools. Reading Recovery is a short term intervention offered in addition to regular classroom instruction for the lowest achieving children in Grade 1. Reading Recovery identifies children at-risk early and supports them in closing the gap in reading and writing achievement. These students meet individually with a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes daily, for a period of 12 to 20 weeks.

Reading Recovery lessons are designed to meet the needs of the hardest to teach children, drawing on a teacher's understanding of a complex theory of literacy instruction. Individualized lessons pay explicit attention to each child's individual needs across essential components of literacy instruction: phonological knowledge, building reading and writing vocabularies, syntactic knowledge, word analysis and construction, all within the context of reading and writing texts.

Teachers in Reading Recovery take part in a year-long initial training based on an apprenticeship model that includes in-services and follow up, on-site school and coaching visits. Training teachers are required to teach four students individually on a daily basis while attending 22 half-day in-services throughout the year. In addition, each teacher-in-training is observed at least five times by the teacher leader (Reading Recovery consultant). Professional development integrates theory and practice. A one-way mirror enables teachers to observe, discuss and reflect on Reading Recovery lessons with the teacher leader and classmates. Reading Recovery teachers develop effective observational skills and a repertoire of teaching procedures that are designed to meet the particular needs of individual students.

Following the initial year of training, Reading Recovery teachers continue to expand their understanding of theory and practice by being a part of a "Continuing Contact" group. Continuing Contact groups meet for in-service sessions, are supported by on-site school and coaching visits and also teach for one another behind a one-way mirror *each year* they continue to teach Reading Recovery.

Edmonton Public Schools' long history of success in Reading Recovery has been enhanced through the District's recent Reading Recovery initiatives, which provide support and

assistance to schools wanting to train teachers. To date, 133 teachers have been trained. Since 1996-97, eight consultants have participated in out-of-District training to become teacher leaders. Many of these teacher leaders have received support through the District's Professional Improvement Leave opportunities. Teacher leaders participate in an intensive program that is career long and includes teaching students and maintaining professional learning.

The true success of Reading Recovery is the fulfillment of the Board's first priority: literacy. One hundred per cent of Reading Recovery students benefit from the intensive intervention. Results (see Appendix I) over Edmonton Public Schools' history with Reading Recovery demonstrate success that exceeds the National Standards. All standards and data are carefully monitored and held by the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery. A minimum of 70 per cent of district students in the program consistently reach grade level fluency in reading and writing within 20 weeks with no further intervention being needed. As each teacher trains in Reading Recovery the District also benefits from the development of literacy expertise and leadership for the remainder of the teacher's career. The number of students, staff and school communities that benefit when a teacher is training, is part of a Continuing Contact group and/or moves on to continue as a teacher leader is difficult to measure, but has a life changing impact. The ripple effect from highly trained and thoughtful teachers, led by a skilled, expert group of teacher leaders, contributes in immeasurable ways to ensure bright futures for all.

ES:gj

APPENDIX I – Reading Recovery Results for 2008-09

APPENDIX II – Reading Recovery Initiative 2008-2009 Survey Responses

APPENDIX III – Schools Offering Reading Recovery in 2009-2010

### Reading Recovery Results for 2008-09

**Chart A - Results of Students Receiving Partial or Complete Programs**

Type of Outcome	
<i>Successfully Discontinued</i>	241 (69.86%)
<i>Recommended as requiring specialist help or long-term reading support (Referred)</i>	70 (20.29%)
<i>Left the school before completing the program (moved)</i>	23 (6.67%)
<i>Progressing, but not able to be continued for other reasons.</i>	11 (3.19%)
TOTAL number of Reading Recovery Students whose programs were concluded.	345
Number of Students "Carried Over" to fall 2009 (will be included in the data for 2009-2010).	101

**Chart B - Results of Students Receiving Complete Programs**

Type of Outcome	
<i>Successfully Discontinued</i>	241 (77.49%)
<i>Recommended as requiring specialist help or long-term reading support (Referred)</i>	70 (22.51%)
TOTAL number of Reading Recovery Students who received complete programs.	311

#### **Students' Progress in Reading Recovery**

Students' Progress in Reading Recovery is described by one of five outcomes as follows:

- "*Successfully Discontinued*": reading at text level 16 (Balanced Literacy level H-I) or above with an effective processing system in both reading and writing; able to work within the average band of their classrooms; assessed using *The Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* by Marie Clay; required to meet the exit criteria set by Reading Recovery.
- "*Recommended as requiring specialist help or long-term reading support (referred)*": did not reach text level 16 nor develop an effective processing system. Children requiring long-term support are recognized early and this can be viewed as another positive outcome of Reading Recovery.
- "*Left the school before completing the program*": moved away from the school providing the program.
- "*Progressing but were not able to be continued*": left the program for other reasons (e.g. school closures, Reading Recovery no longer provided at their school, extended absences from school, etc.).
- "*Carried Over*": responding to Reading Recovery and will be continuing their program in the next school year.

## Reading Recovery Initiative 2008-2009 Survey Responses

### Survey Responses

In 2008-2009 questionnaires were distributed to school teachers, principals and parents of Reading Recovery (RR) students. The responses were overwhelmingly positive.

- “The training ...has given me a set of skills that I can apply/transfer to any classroom. The program gives struggling students the chance of a lifetime – to become readers at an early point in the schooling. It makes a huge difference in the lives of children to get early intervention while their self-esteem and confidence is still intact.” (Teacher)
- “Reading Recovery has had a very positive impact on our at risk students including some ELL students.” (Administrator)
- “I commend our teachers involved in the Reading Recovery program on their committed attitudes and efforts. They have made a significant contribution to student and staff learning in the area of reading intervention strategies.” (Administrator)
- “The students that took part in the program have shown improvement in their reading. Also, the majority of our students who received support in the previous year continue to be at grade level (the subsequent year).” (Administrator)
- “I am in awe of how much I’ve learned in the last six months. RR has pushed me to think outside the box and pushed me to be flexible in my teaching. It has also honed my ability to assess accurately, analyze and direct my teaching.” (Teacher)
- “RR is a solid, well-rounded literacy program. The professional development and training in continuing contact is invaluable and second to none that I have received at EPSB or the U of A. Being familiar with the theory of RR and Marie Clay has forever changed the way I teach and perceive learning.” (Teacher)
- “The Reading Recovery program works with your child’s individual needs so they learn what they need help with. I am sure he will do just fine in his next grade, thanks for your help!!” (Parent)
- “As a new English speaker, ----- shows a very good pronunciation for the language not only in reading but also speaking.”(Parent)
- “I believe every child should have access to this program. It has the ability to make weak readers strong. If done early and with all children the foundation of the school years are bright.” (Parent)

**Schools Offering Reading Recovery in 2009-2010**

Abbott	McCauley
Athlone	McKee
Avonmore	Malmo
Balwin	MeadowLark
Baturyn	Mee-Yah-Noh
Belmead	Menisa
Belmont	Michael A. Kostek
Belvedere	Montrose
Bissett	Northmount
Brander Gardens	Norwood
Caenarvon	Ormsby
Callingwood	Overlanders
Delton	Parkdale
Duggan	Patricia Heights
Eastwood	Pollard Meadows
Edmonton Christian Northeast	Prince Charles
Edmonton Christian West	Princeton
Evansdale	Queen Alexandra
Fulton Place	Rideau Park
George P. Nicholson	Rundle
Glengarry	Sherwood
Grovenor	Sifton
Hillview	Spruce Avenue
Homesteader	Sweet Grass
Inglewood	Tevie Miller
John A McDougall	Thorncliffe
Kensington	Victoria
Kirkness	Waverly
Lauderdale	Weinlos
Lee Ridge	Winterburn
Lymburn	Youngstown
Major General Griesbach	