

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 30, 2007

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: B. Holt, Acting Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Community Engagement

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Executive Director

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Karen Bardy, Gloria Chalmers, Margaretha Ebbers

### INFORMATION

#### **Context**

Increasingly, the district is recognizing the importance of engaging with community in order to impact positively the lives of students within and outside of school. This work is ongoing, constantly evolving, and multi-layered, involving many partners, projects, and initiatives, all intended to provide essential supports for young children, students, and families in the Edmonton community and to build community capacity in responding to needs. These supports are beyond what can be provided by the district but are often created and sustained through the development of sound collaborative relationships between the district and community partners.

In the district, through the work of the City Centre Education Project (CCEP) and Programs, we are learning more about what needs to be in place to work in such a collaborative manner with community partners. Both at the school and district level, we are recognizing that in working with community, common goals unite us, that we need to have a broad perspective of students needs across the district, and that we need to establish ongoing and meaningful working relationships with community partners in order to maximize the impact of our work with students and families.

An example of such a partnership is found in the community mapping initiatives that are currently developing in the north-central and north-east areas of the city, as well as Mill Woods. These initiatives involve the coming together of a variety of community stakeholders, including the district, with the purpose of identifying the priority needs of children, youth, and families in these geographic areas and the community resources available to provide support. The district believes that this kind of broad perspective enables us to understand more clearly the nature of the support needed and provided, and to be more thoughtful and deliberate in targeting directions in our work with community.

#### **Future Work**

To enable us to begin to comprehend the extent of district and school engagement with community partners, the Programs unit has developed a picture of community engagement at a point in time in relation to the district's high needs schools (Appendix I). This initial picture focuses on our formal district alliances, major partners in our standing external

committees, as well as some core partners in the CCEP initiative. Additionally, we are aware that many schools have individual community partnerships. The chart will be useful in identifying areas of need and will be used in discussions with the district's external First Nations, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) committee, the district's external cultural diversity committee, and other community partners. In addition, the Programs unit is beginning the development of a resource for district staff on the nature of community engagement and on working collaboratively with community partners.

BH:ee