

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 20, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence

ORIGINATOR: Shirley Stiles, Assistant to the Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jennifer Lawley, Brian McWilliam, George Rice, Judy Soper,
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INFORMATION

The Prime Minister's Awards program began in 1993 to honour the outstanding achievements of Math, Science, and Technology teachers. Awards were given at three levels: national, regional and local. In 1997 the program expanded to recognize the innovative teaching practices of teachers of all disciplines. Awards are presented at two levels: Certificate of Excellence (national level) and Certificate of Achievement (local level). Awards of \$5,000 for the Certificate of Excellence and \$1,000 for the Certificate of Achievement are given to the respective recipient's school.

Certificates of Excellence

Mr. Darwin Martin, Department Head, Eastglen school, has created and implemented a computer enrichment program which challenges and stimulates students with thought-provoking, relevant projects and assignments. A significant component of the program involves business partnerships which connect students to the professional world. As a result of the partnerships with Management Information Group and Vicom Multimedia, students have gained opportunities including direct employment, advanced programming responsibilities and the opportunity to work with professional software developers and high end multimedia equipment. Since 1996, the enrichment program has grown from 22 to 105 students; the yearly attendance rates and retention rates have exceeded 96 per cent. In 1999, students in Darwin's program placed 1st at the Calgary Programmers Society competition, 2nd and 4th at the Provincial Skills web page development competition, and won the Edmonton Public Schools team award for the design of TutorSoft. TutorSoft, which is a provincial diploma preparation software program, is now being used by students across Alberta to prepare for their diploma exams.

Mr. Bill French is a Grade 5 teacher at Lansdowne school. A kind and gentle man, Bill embodies the excitement, patience, and the need to share the true joy of learning that exemplifies excellence in teaching. Each year, he carefully plans an entire year's lessons around a particular concept. Using this year's example of the focus on a fantasy island, Bill integrates all subjects with the fantasy island theme. Math skills are derived from

determining the size of the island, art skills are used in creating two and three-dimensional maps; writing skills focus on various aspects of the island and related field trips, and evolve into a novella for each student that will be published by the end of the school year. Bill sees every challenge as an opportunity to learn and believes in layers of development for skills. While students in Grade 5 do not write the same type of achievement tests as do Grade 3 and 6 students, the students from Mr. French's class went on to do exceptionally well in the Grade 6 provincial tests with 50 per cent achieving the standard of excellence in science and 47 per cent achieving the standard of excellence in Mathematics. Student attendance in Mr. French's class is almost perfect and students with special needs, including those with behavioural disorders, thrive in his class. He believes each child is limitless in his or her potential to grow; that within each is a genius seeking the opportunity to come out. Students participate in the school science fair and have won top prizes at the regional science fair.

Mr. Stephen Gallagher is a teacher of physics and mathematics at W. P. Wagner school. Stephen sees his role as a teacher as much more than a job; it is his passion and he creates a rich learning environment that is filled with greater opportunities for practice and application. Stephen makes math more meaningful by linking it to other subjects, especially physics, and invests in both the latest technology and garage-sale finds that can be modified to create learning tools. The development of the physics course has helped to improve the student skill levels in both math and physics. Young women in his math and physics classes have performed significantly above the standard for young women province-wide. Forty-four per cent scored 80 per cent or better for their final class mark in Math 30 and Physics 30 in 1999. Enrolment in Grade 11 and 12 physics classes has more than doubled during his tenure. Several of his students have competed at the Canada Wide Science Fair and two won in their category. Stephen sees the potential for success for each and every student.

Certificates of Achievement

Four teachers from McNally high school, more than in any other school in the country, received Certificates of Achievement.

Ms. Doreen Czajkowsky, a biology teacher, pays attention to learning styles and uses cooperative teaching techniques, all of which have resulted in students achieving superb results in the courses she has taught. Students in her classes have consistently surpassed the district and provincial percentages for Standard of Excellence and Acceptable Standard. In addition, her caring and thorough attitude towards all students is reflected in her high course attendance and completion rates. Students strive to enroll in her classes.

Mr. Kay Jauch, the department head of Science, is a teacher of science and physics courses who makes extensive use of technology and apparatus such as pulleys, weights, and other devices to demonstrate principles of physics. He connects what is taking place in the classroom with society beyond the classroom. Using a variety of teaching approaches and using the latest and traditional technologies has led to increased enrolment and higher attendance rates in physics in the past two years. Students regularly exceed district and province-wide standards.

Mr. David Oberholtzer teaches English, creative writing and communications. David creates interesting and multi-disciplinary projects including a Victorian Fair designed to

enhance student understanding of the Victorian era while studying Dickens and the 'C' Files which complements *The Crucible* and involves students creating a computer-generated program of dramatic performances and film analysis. Student grades in his classes significantly exceed provincial averages in achievement, and attendance rates in his classes, at 95.6 per cent, exceed the school average.

Ms. Laurel Usher is a department head and teaches history and social studies. Laurel leads staff development in the International Baccalaureate Program, including in-school retreats to improve program approach and assessing other schools interested in offering the program in Canada and the U.S. Student attendance and marks are better than the provincial average; and, significantly, students at all levels perform better in Ms. Usher's classes. Laurel has organized events including the dramatic recreation of major historical events such as the founding of Canada and the Russian revolution. Students in her classes have received first, second, and third places in Edmonton Journal and Greater Edmonton Growth Campaign essay contests.

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