

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 9, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Kildare School: The Three R's – Reading, Respect, Responsibility

ORIGINATOR: L. Farris, Principal, Kildare School

RESOURCE  
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### INFORMATION

Kildare School, located in northeast Edmonton, serves a diverse student population of 535 students in Grades K-6. It is a district site for the Mandarin Bilingual Program.

Identification of our instructional focus began in the fall of 2001. During that school year, teachers engaged in extensive discussion of our achievement test results. Particular attention was given to steps that might lead to improvement. It quickly became evident that reading comprehension was the area that would be of most value. The following statement, developed during the 2001-2002 school year, expresses our focus:

*The instructional focus at Kildare is a school-wide effort to have all Kildare students show measurable growth in their ability to comprehend a variety of materials through the implementation of a school wide reading focus as measured by the HLATs, and the Alberta Learning Achievement tests.*

*All students will demonstrate growth and an awareness of their ability to read for meaning with the use of reading strategies as measured by grade level assessments. Our focus is Reading for Meaning.*

Two needs were immediately apparent: one, we needed to develop a clearer understanding of how to improve students' reading comprehension, and two, we needed to determine a means of measuring progress. Over the last two years our professional development has centered on reading. All of our teachers are registered for the AISI in-services offered by Consulting Services on improving reading comprehension.

Meanwhile, our ILT discussed the type of measures that could be useful. Achievement test scores and HLATs were an obvious selection. However, these were external measures, and we wanted to establish internal targets and measures. After examining various possibilities, we decided to use the CARS (Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies) and STARS (Strategies To Achieve Reading Success) series, which provides lessons and assessments based on twelve reading strategies. Since the strategies are consistent through the various levels, teachers can build on them year by year. As well, teachers use these strategies as part

of their instruction in various subjects. The CARS (assessment) portion of the series is used to establish targets and review our progress.

We have taken a variety of other steps. Teachers continue to attend in-services, to learn together, and to apply what they learn in their classes. Our school motto, emphasis and activities, the Three R's – Reading, Respect and Responsibility, are all aimed at promoting good citizenship as well as competent, confident learners.

Both internal and external measures show that our students have made achievement gains over the past three years. These gains can be attributed in large part to an environment focused on student success, with specific attention to reading comprehension. We recognize that effective implementation of an instructional focus requires attention to a number of other matters. At Kildare, implementation of our reading focus is built on a base of staff collaboration and development of positive attitudes for learning.

The work of our Grade Coordinators is critical as they guide their colleagues in reviewing student work, sharing lessons, analyzing results and ordering resources. The totality of all these efforts, carried out by a strong and highly skilled staff are, we believe, key to establishing our environment for success and to achievement of superb results from all students.