

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 9, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Healthy Interactions Pilot Project

ORIGINATOR: C. McCabe, Assistant to the Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Karen Beaton, David Fraser, Susan Fraser, Ellen Ogilvy, Val Riewe

INFORMATION

Background

Healthy Interactions is a communications/conflict resolution program designed by the ATA and offered collaboratively with school jurisdictions in Alberta (Appendix I). Its primary purpose is to give school staff strategies to effectively handle complaints and concerns from parents and other stakeholders, by teaching them ways to identify the underlying interests of each party. The program focuses on considering the needs of all parties when a concern arises, and seeks to reach consensus in a positive, constructive way. The key to *Healthy Interactions* is that all parties recognize that they share the same goal, although they may approach it from different perspectives. *Healthy Interactions* focuses on opening up the lines of communication and finding this common goal-before issues develop into conflicts. The ATA has successfully introduced the program in several small jurisdictions throughout the province.

In May 2003, Edmonton Public Schools became the first major urban school board to implement the *Healthy Interactions* program as a joint venture pilot project between the district, the ATA Local and the Provincial ATA. A steering committee was established and twelve schools volunteered to be part of the initial pilot group (Appendix II). Teachers and principals saw this as a program which would support the Instructional Focus work, particularly expectations #2 *Professional Collaboration Teams to Improve Teaching and Learning*, and #6 *Engaging Families and the Community*.

Each pilot school asked staff members to volunteer to be trained as facilitators. This training took place over two days in August 2003. Central Services personnel and CUPE 3550 representatives also participated. These facilitators are now sharing their knowledge through planned professional development at their own schools. Costs for the training are shared between the ATA, Personnel Supply Services and the schools.

The program has four modules that are offered by the teacher-facilitators in each school over the course of the year. Facilitators are able to adapt the program to meet the specific needs and circumstances of the school. Attached is a pamphlet which outlines the program, its goals, and the protocol (Appendix III).

Principals and facilitators in the pilot group report that *Healthy Interactions* has resulted in staff more effectively dealing with conflict, and having more time and energy to work with students, parents and with each other. The principals of the schools currently involved indicate that, after four months, teachers are more confident in dealing with parent concerns. They also note improvement in staff communication and in staff relationships. Teachers have commented that the skills have assisted them in IPP meetings, in collaborative team meetings and in teacher/administrator meetings. Many of the participants in the program have indicated that the program has given them skills which have reduced their level of stress.

The administrators involved in the program both from the district and the ATA want to commend the facilitators who are doing tremendous work in the schools. A number of these teachers are also working to develop new support materials for the program.

The current group of pilot schools will continue with phase two of the program in the 2004-05 school year. Twenty-seven new schools have expressed interest in learning more about Healthy Interactions, and we anticipate that a second cohort of schools will be involved in the program next year.

Further information regarding this program is available from Ellen Ogilvy, Principal, Personnel Staff Relations and Staff Development.

CMcC/eo

- APPENDIX I - Healthy Interactions Program Provincial ATA Report (page 3)
- APPENDIX II - Edmonton Public Schools Healthy Interactions Steering Committee
(pages 4 – 5)
- APPENDIX III - EPS/ATA Healthy Interactions Information Pamphlet

HEALTHY INTERACTIONS PROGRAM PROVINCIAL ATA REPORT

Healthy Interactions is an Association-designed communications/conflict resolution program offered collaboratively with individual jurisdictions. The Alberta Teachers' Association sought to help its members meet these challenges by creating a program based on cooperation with school jurisdictions to create a school and community culture of consistency, comprehensiveness and credibility in handling of concerns. Program implementation focuses on all professional staff in the jurisdiction, with the exception of Edmonton Public and Northlands, receiving training in the communication and conflict-resolution skills necessary to handle parental complaints consistently throughout the jurisdiction.

Facilitators from the jurisdiction provide the training within the individual schools and support groups. The program has grown to where central office personnel and support staff from both within and outside the schools have received training. Development of jurisdiction policy and protocols for resolving concerns consistent with *Healthy Interactions* as well as parent and public awareness are components of the program. Facilitators from individual jurisdictions will assist with the summer training for new jurisdictions. The *Healthy Interactions* program truly does create a school culture that works.

First implemented in 2000/01, the program now is active in ten jurisdictions with several more to join in the coming year. In 2002, five additional school jurisdictions became involved in the program: Grande Yellowhead Regional Division No 35, Parkland School Division No 70, St Albert Protestant Separate School District No 6, Peace Wapiti Regional Division No 33 and Prairie Land Regional Division No 25, joining Wetaskiwin Regional Division No 74 (pilot project 2000) and Grande Prairie Roman Catholic Separate School District No 28 (2001). In 2003, Sturgeon School Division No 24 and Edmonton Public Schools became involved as well as a joint project with Safe and Caring Schools in Wabasca through Canada Justice.

We want to commend the tremendous job of the facilitators, a number of whom continue to develop new support materials for the program. It is the commitment of the facilitators, the steering committees, the teachers, administrators and districts who have made *Healthy Interactions* what it is in each jurisdiction.

Edmonton Public Schools
Healthy Interactions Steering Committee
2003-04

Co-chairs: Corinne McCabe [Assistant to the Superintendent]
 Karen Beaton [President Edmonton Public ATA Local

Teachers: Patrick Johner [Aldergrove]; Bill Wright [Dunluce]

Principals: Joan Fouts [Major General Griesbach]; Patti Christensen [Avonmore]

Central Services: Elaine Decker; Kevin Stevenson; Ellen Ogilvy

Parent Representative: Sherry Fairbairn; Margaret Matsuba

CUPE 3550 Support Staff: Trudy Gruebenstein

CUPE 474 Custodial: Doug Luellman

Provincial ATA Representatives: Val Riewe; Susan Fraser

Edmonton Public Schools
Healthy Interaction Pilot Schools

School	Principal/Administrator	Facilitators
Aldergrove	Maureen MacDonald	Elizabeth Anderson; Susen Fischer; Patrick Johner; Nels Olsen; Sheila Warhaft;
Allendale	Darren Sweeney	Tracey Arbuthnott; Robin Knight; Treva Lunan; Wendy Salter
Avonmore	Patti Christensen	Mary Grant; Hazel Quigg;
Bannerman	Elizabeth Norris-Kartz	Karen Gibson; Elaine Megley; Keltey Ziegler
Dunluce	Stephanie Busby	Bill Wright; Joan Kucher; Brenda Marinkovich; Lori Rogan; Victoria Wynn; Corene Zmurchik
Glenrose	Mack Fysh	Lorette Lown; Wanda Musclow
Greenview	Dorothy Cronk	Lyle Watling; Lynda Horvath; Leslie Joliff;

School	Principal/Administrator	Facilitators
Londonderry	Dale Skoreyko	Sue Bell; Ryan Bolichowski; Gil Gomez
Major General Griesbach	Joan Fouts	Nadine Lung
Oliver	Judy Wilkie	Heather Jubenvill
Sherwood	Sandee Lowe	Shirley Dahlseide; Colleen McMorran
Central Services		Barbara Cragg; Dave Fraser; Debbie Scrimshaw; Elaine Decker; Ellen Ogilvy; Stephanie King
CUPE 3550		Rosemary Kostiuk; Trudy Grubenstein; Ian Crichton
ATA		Karen Beaton; Gerald Austria