

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 11, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Improving Student Achievement at Earl Buxton Elementary School

ORIGINATOR: J. Wilkie, Principal, Earl Buxton Elementary School

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Debbie Jackson, Corrie Ziegler

### INFORMATION

Earl Buxton is an elementary school located in south-west Edmonton. The school offers programming for 432 students in Kindergarten to Grade six. Students with special needs are fully integrated in regular classrooms. By emphasizing and supporting the key roles that are played by parents as partners, teachers as professionals, and students as learners, the Earl Buxton School Community supports *all* students as they strive to achieve excellence in every aspect of their learning.

#### Parents as Partners

Extensive parent involvement supports the belief that education is a shared responsibility. Parents are committed, responsive partners that provide assistance in a variety of ways. Parents volunteer for special events like *Carnaval D'Earl Buxton*, plan and implement programs such as the *Parent Parking Patrol*, and the *Lunch and Learn* program which provides inside noon-hour learning activities (yoga, book clubs, stamping, sports, etc.) during cold winter days. A strong Parent Advisory Committee organizes parent information sessions such as Anti-bullying and Building Self-esteem. Parents have also provided financial support, through fundraising, to upgrade technology in the school to meet the needs of staff and ultimately the learning needs of all students. To further enhance a strong partnership between school and home, *School Zone* is being introduced to all parents and students, and the school website is updated regularly to improve communication with all stakeholders.

#### Teachers as Professionals

The instructional focus at Earl Buxton is student writing. Through teacher professional development opportunities, the direct implementation of the 6 + 1 Traits writing program and sound assessment for learning practices, student writing has improved. The purposeful use of technology as a tool to meet curricular outcomes and enhance learning for all students, is an important school goal. To support this goal a collaborative decision was made to purchase 60 laptops and a smart board and have the wiring upgraded to allow wireless access. As well new computers have been added in every classroom.

Earl Buxton teachers model what it means to be a learner. Not only do they attend District professional development sessions about assessment and technology, they participate in

targeted, school based professional learning opportunities led by District consultants. Staff is also involved in collaborative professional development opportunities through their work with a cohort of schools that includes all staff from Brander Gardens and Brookside schools. These three schools come together regularly, organizing themselves in grade level groups, to plan for learning and share their expertise around differentiation of instruction, assessment for learning and the purposeful use of technology to support numeracy, literacy and citizenship. Through classroom visits, teachers observe teaching and learning in action, and have professional conversations that lead to improved learning for all.

### Students as Learners

Through a variety of learning opportunities, students' intellectual, creative, social and physical abilities are nurtured and challenged. The learning studios at the centre of the school facility are meeting places for students involved in an array of activities and group work, both with peers in their own classes as well as "buddy" classes. French as a second language is offered for students in grades four to six, while all students participate in an exceptional daily physical education program, and consistently learn about the *Pillars of Character* through the process of teaching, encouraging, and modeling the six universal values which are important in all areas of life.

As a way of developing student leadership skills, Earl Buxton students participate in a variety of leadership experiences: student council, safety patrol program, spirit days for the school community, charity drives, and practical actions such as the grade one and two classes making sandwiches for the *Mustard Seed*. All members of the school community understand and put into action care of and service to others.

### Results

In the 2006-2007 school year, students achieved exceptional results in Provincial Achievement Tests (PAT), demonstrating a significant increase in the percentage of students achieving the standard of excellence. In the Grade 3 Language Arts PAT results, student achievement increased from 30.4 per cent to 48.3 per cent achieving the standard of excellence; in Grade 6 Language Arts, the number of students achieving standard of excellence increased from 34.7 per cent to 43.1 per cent. Student achievement increased in math, science and social studies for standard of excellence for Grade 3 and 6 students.

As a result of the skill, expertise and dedication of the staff, the support and assistance from the parents and the community, and the hard work and efforts of the students, everyone at Earl Buxton "Aims for Excellence" as they build bright futures for all.