

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 13, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: SHAPE – Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere

ORIGINATOR: Angus McBeath, Department Head

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Bev Esslinger, June Klassen, Cindy Skolski, Lorraine Berg, Joanne Bertagnolli, Charlotte Corothers, Will Simpson, Lesley Sonnen, Nancy Spencer, Judy Zilinski

### INFORMATION

This report is intended to provide information regarding a district initiative called ‘Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere’ (SHAPE). The principals involved in the project named this program SHAPE as it reflected the key elements of health, safety, the environment, students, parents and community residents. There are ten elementary schools involved in the project: seven Edmonton Public and three Edmonton Catholic schools. The Edmonton Public Schools are Abbott, Bisset, Earl Buxton, Kensington, Lymburn, Richard Secord and York

In response to principals’ concerns about traffic safety around schools, especially pick-up and drop-off zones, the administration works with the schools, City departments and external agencies to install traffic control signs, establish Parent Parking Patrols and AMA School Patrols, and to construct drop-off zones. However, these initiatives do not always resolve the traffic issues or improve pedestrian safety around schools. As well these types of initiatives respond to traffic issues after a crisis and are not proactive. A means for school communities to address traffic and pedestrian issues before problems escalate is required.

Planning staff reviewed approaches used in other jurisdictions to improve traffic safety around schools and that encouraged walking and bicycling to school. This research identified a successful program called “Way To Go”. This program provides a process and activities to aid schools to resolve traffic issues, improve pedestrian safety, encourage walking and cycling, and build a sense of community among parents, students and neighbourhood residents.

The administration met with City Police Service, Alberta Motor Association, Edmonton Transportation & Streets, Edmonton Transit and other external agencies to identify their programs, services or resources to improve pedestrian and traffic safety, encourage walking and bicycling, and the use of transit service. There are a number of programs in place that can be accessed to address traffic safety at schools. The SHAPE program will co-ordinate the delivery of these resources to the schools. The foundation of SHAPE is that the school

staff, parents, students and the local community work together to identify concerns and to develop solutions that have the support of the participants. A project process is outlined, sample consultation materials, and a toolkit of safety and awareness materials and activities and events are provided.

The SHAPE project is designed to:

- develop a community consultation process driven by parents at the school level
- address traffic issues and pedestrian safety
- encourage more active modes of travel to and from school
- share information with schools about existing programs and resources geared to student safety and active living
- seek co-ordination among agencies delivering existing programs
- determine if a proactive school-based program can be developed for Edmonton elementary schools.

An invitation was issued to schools with identified traffic issues to participate in the pilot project. In order to broaden the project scope, Edmonton Catholic Schools that were located on or adjacent to two public elementary schools and were affected by the same traffic issues were invited to participate. As noted ten schools have volunteered to participate this year.

Funding has been obtained from the federal Go For Green – Active and Safe Routes to School program to prepare materials and facilitate events at the ten schools.

The project principals met and determined that the project will focus on three key activities – a “Walk Day”, a “Bicycle Day”, and a “Bus Day”. Through special funding from Go For Green and Ecology Systems Information Society, Bev Esslinger, one of the district’s Key Communicators, has been retained to organize the activities with school staffs and parents and to prepare the resource materials. These activities are being planned for the spring and will involve the school parents and staff working with the assistance of several external agencies to promote and implement the events. As the plans for the activities are finalized, information will be provided to trustees about the planned events.

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