

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 13, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: E. Dosedall, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: International Student Update
ORIGINATOR: G. Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE

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INFORMATION

This report provides information regarding the work of decision unit 343, International Programs. The activities in the unit focus mainly although not exclusively on recruitment of and services to international students. Involvement is also undertaken in initiatives such as student exchanges, partnerships and collaborations with schools and districts abroad, and international development projects through funding institutions such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This report describes the work currently underway in these areas.

Background: In January of 1995, the superintendent of schools introduced the International Student Program within the district. The program has been well received by district principals for several reasons, but mainly for the value that international students bring to schools through enhancing cultural and linguistic diversity. Additional factors that have secured the support of schools include the district's successful history as a quality English as a Second Language program provider, capacity in district schools to serve greater numbers of students, and the additional revenues the program generates to schools and the district.

In 1995 Edmonton Public was the only school district in Alberta providing an International Student Program. Work of this nature was well underway in British Columbia. Manitoba and Ontario also had one and three school districts respectively, providing similar programs. Presently, nine Alberta school jurisdictions provide international student programs. As well, private for profit schools and colleges also offer programming of this nature. However, as greater numbers of public school jurisdictions introduce these programs, larger numbers of students are choosing public institutions. This is in part due to the stability, infrastructure, and educational expertise of providers in the public education sector. The International Student Program in Edmonton Public Schools continues to be the largest and most diverse in Alberta, and operates at no cost to the district.

Alberta Learning is supportive of the district's work in international programs and regularly recommends international students to district schools. As well, this year Alberta Learning created a draft document, *The Alberta International Education Strategy*, and has circulated it to education institutions across the province, for input. The administration is currently working from this policy framework to develop a district policy respecting international students and programs. A recommendation regarding policy related to international students will be brought forward for consideration by the board of trustees before the end of April.

The International Student Program: In Alberta and across Canada, competition for international students is strong. In order to encourage these students to choose Edmonton Public Schools, a variety of recruitment strategies occur each year including attendance at education fairs, provision of seminars for parents and students in selected countries, and communications about the program via the Internet and through numerous mail-outs to embassies, consulates, and 19 Canadian Education Centres. High numbers of referrals to the program also come from families and friends of international students. International Programs staff respond to approximately 3,500 requests for information from students each year.

Students: The program has grown every year with the exception of the 1999-2000 school year, when a serious downturn in several Asian economies seriously impacted the numbers of students studying abroad. The situation has improved dramatically, however. For the 2000-2001 school year a total of 251 international student applications have been processed, the highest number ever. This represents a 20% increase in student applications over the year previous, and represents over \$1.445 million to schools and the district. International students in EPS attend 34 schools and come from 24 different countries.

International Development Projects: Several projects are currently either underway, or are being investigated for feasibility for district participation. They are described as follows:

- **Hong Kong Department of Education Leadership in Instructional Technology Project:** The Hong Kong Department of Education filmed extensively in the district last fall, to produce a TV documentary called *IT and Education - Comparing Canada and Hong Kong*. The Cantonese version of the video was broadcast in Hong Kong on Jan. 2 and Feb. 6, 2001. The video will be re-broadcast in English in April.
- **South Africa Teacher Development Project:** This project is funded by CIDA, managed by Alberta Learning, and involves the University of Alberta and Edmonton Public Schools as partners in service delivery. The project is intended to strengthen inservice teacher development in three provinces in South Africa. A study team from the South African Ministry of Education will visit the district during the week of April 22 to 27, to undertake an initial needs assessment for the project.
- **Vietnam Lower Secondary Teacher Training Project:** This unsolicited proposal to CIDA will be submitted this April, in support of the *Asian Development Bank Appraisal Mission for the Teacher Training Project* which was signed on July 28, 1999, in Hanoi, Vietnam. It addresses the provision of skills upgrading for practising teachers. If successful, a consortium of service providers including Edmonton Public Schools will deliver the training program.
- **Vietnam Early Childhood Development Project:** This project is currently being developed for submission to CIDA. The goal of the project is to improve teaching and learning conditions for children in the provinces of Soc Trang, Thanh Hoa, and Ninh Binh, in Vietnam. The project will be designed around an intensive teacher professional development program, supplemented with various interagency strategies, to assist school success for severely disadvantaged. If successful, the project will proceed with funding from CIDA. Participating partners will include the Department of Early Childhood Education and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Vietnam, the Co-operation Office-Vietnam Women's Union (VWU), and three Alberta school jurisdictions including Edmonton Public Schools.
- **Partnership with Instituto Tecnológico de Monterey (ITESM):** Details are currently being negotiated for a group of approximately 30 students from this Mexican education institution to attend a district high school full-time, for one semester next year. The

partnership will also provide opportunities for district students to participate in exchanges with students at the ITESM campus in Guadalajara.

- **Partnership with Universidad Valle de Mexico:** This project allows district staff to attend a 3-week summer language study program in Queretaro, Mexico. Piloted last summer, it will be made available to staff again this year.

School to School Partnerships and Student Exchanges: District schools develop partnerships with schools abroad for the purpose of facilitating student exchanges and collegial relationships. The decision unit supports work of this nature by providing advice and assistance about how to proceed, assisting with delegations of visitors to schools and to the district, and through serving as a liaison between Alberta Learning and individual schools. Currently approximately 10 partnerships are in place between district schools and schools in locations abroad such as China, Korea, Japan, and Germany. In addition, this year 14 district students are participating in reciprocal exchanges. As exchanges do not involve tuition fees, reciprocal exchanges must be approved by Alberta Learning in order to allow the district to access funding.

Strategic Alliances: Recruitment and communications work on behalf of the district's program is accomplished through collaboration with other community education partners. The district has been invited to and participates in the following organizations:

- Alberta Learning International Education Steering Committee
- Alberta Centre for International Education (ACIE)
 - The superintendent sits on the ACIE Board of Governors
 - A member of the administration chairs the Basic Education Committee
- University of Alberta International Education Steering Committee
- Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE)
- Canadian Education Centre Network (CEC), an initiative of the federal government (see Appendix I)

Looking Ahead: International Programs will continue to build on existing areas of activity, specifically:

- International Student Recruitment, providing a number of well-developed platforms and vehicles to enable us to reach international student markets, including fairs, seminars, print guides, and the EPS International Student program web site;
- Contract Training with other institutional partners, to source, develop, and facilitate training contracts;
- Research and Development, producing applied research to assist our success in chosen markets, and advocating for change in government regulations, particularly in the area of immigration. In addition, to continue to develop new means of promoting education programs in Edmonton Public Schools;
- E-learning (distance education), a dynamic and growing educational medium; we anticipate that encouraging students to study online in Canada will become as much a part of our mandate as encouraging students to come to study in Canada;
- Canadian cultural and language orientation programs, to provide information and support to students as a means of encouraging them to choose Edmonton Public Schools as a study destination.

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Appendix I - Canadian Education Centre Network (CEC) Offices

**CANADIAN EDUCATION CENTRE NETWORK
(CEC) OFFICES
2000-2001**

- [Argentina \(Buenos Aires\)](#)
- [Australia \(Canberra\)](#)
- [Brazil \(São Paulo\)](#)
- [Brunei \(Bandar seri Begawan\)](#)
- [Chile \(Santiago\)](#)
- [China \(Beijing\)](#)
- [Colombia \(Bogotá\)](#)
- [Hong Kong](#)
- [India \(New Delhi\)](#)
- [Indonesia \(Jakarta\)](#)
- [Malaysia \(Kuala Lumpur\)](#)
- [Mexico \(Mexico City\)](#)
- [Singapore](#)
- [South Korea \(Seoul\)](#)
- [Taiwan \(Taipei\)](#)
- [Thailand \(Bangkok\)](#)
- [Turkey \(Istanbul\)](#)
- [Uruguay \(Montevideo\)](#)
- [Vietnam \(Ho Chi Minh City\)](#)