

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 21, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: McDougall School: Early Language Development Project

ORIGINATOR: B. Dean, Principal, McDougall School

RESOURCE

STAFF: Laurie Beggs, Diane Hinves, Nancy Weber

INFORMATION

The McDougall School Early language Development Project began with the district's Early Reading and Writing Success Project in 1996-97 and has continued through the Early Reading Initiative introduced in 1997-98. These district initiatives provided the impetus for our staff to examine the complex needs of our population, to undertake research into various alternative strategies and organizational models, and to develop what we believed would be an improved program for addressing early literacy needs in a high needs school.

In 1996 McDougall School adopted the Success For All model of language arts instruction which involves re-grouping into flexible, small homogeneous groups for reading instruction. This initiative began our research and professional development focusing on improved literacy for McDougall students.

Success For All was continued from kindergarten to grade 9 for the following two years. However as early as 1997-98, the staff recognized that although Success For All had improved the reading levels of many students, there was a significant portion of the student population that was not progressing as well as expected. In support, a small group of staff members decided to meet on a weekly basis to discuss, research and work together to develop a strategy to enhance the literacy level of these students.

The Early Language Development Project continues to evolve, and now includes:

- Assessment:
 - speech/language, phonemic awareness and reading assessments for all kindergarten and grade 1 students as well as any division one students new to the school
 - behavioural screening through teacher referral and assessment
 - frequent assessment of reading by the teacher through running records and informal comprehension activities.

- Programming:
 - extended kindergarten hours
 - morning language arts instruction
 - speech language pathologist team planning and teaching of lessons focused on language processing strategies
 - balanced Literacy, (kindergarten to grade 4), Phonemic Awareness, Lindamood, Reading Recovery and Early Reading Intervention
 - communication lab for all kindergarten to grade 3 students
 - small group pull out for pro-social skills and anger management
 - implementation of paired reading, shared reading and school wide home reading programs.
 - acquisition of a wide range of reading books at multiple reading levels
 - implementation of small class sizes
 - use of a sound amplification system in the classrooms.

McDougall School grade three provincial achievement test results have shown a consistent increase in results, with 39.3 per cent of the students meeting the acceptable level of achievement in 1996 to 57.9 per cent in 1999. In addition, it should be noted that no students achieved the standard of excellence since 1996 whereas 5.3 per cent achieved this standard in 1999.

As well, the recent cohort analysis of grade six and nine provincial achievement test results also show that McDougall students scored either above or with no difference from predicted results.

BD:jj