

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 24, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Improving Student Achievement through the work of Facilities Services

ORIGINATOR: J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Laurie Beggs, Will Deys, Pat Dougherty, John Nicoll, Corrie Ziegler

INFORMATION

The goal of Facilities Services is to assist schools in maintaining optimum, healthy learning environments that contribute to bright futures for all. Research identifies a connection between the condition of school facilities and student learning outcomes. A physical environment that is conducive to learning complements the work district staff undertakes to improve student achievement and fully supports the District Priorities. As a unit Facilities Services staff includes members from maintenance, exempt, support, custodial and teaching staff groups.

The Facilities Services umbrella includes:

- Maintenance
- Design and Construction
- Management Services
- Energy Management and the Environment
- Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Print Services
- Building Operations
- The Blackboard Deli

Maintenance staff provide a range of services to schools and district sites in the support and promotion of healthy learning and working environments. Through a planned and proactive approach, the more than 200 staff work collaboratively with school principals and site administrators to ensure that both mandatory maintenance work, as legislated by the Safety Codes Act, Occupational Health and Safety Code and district standards, and ongoing repairs and improvements are completed within budgetary constraints. Every effort is made to ensure that there is the least possible disruption to student learning. Some examples of the work include: removing graffiti; repairing vandalism; cleaning carpets; painting; and attending to building quality and maintenance. Completing lighting upgrades and replacing windows, ensuring that schools are neither too hot nor too cold through boiler service, repair, cleaning and regular maintenance, also contribute to a positive learning and working environment. Installation of FM (frequency modulated) amplification systems that transmit the teacher's voice to students at a constant level regardless of the teacher's distance from

them, allows more effective hearing. Indoor air quality impacts student learning thus monitoring and supporting sites in maintaining air quality is another important service Facilities provides.

Design and Construction staff oversee and complete approximately 650 large projects each year. Creating naturescapes and play areas, room renovations, and floor covering replacements are examples of this work. Staff also create, plan and put out to tender major projects such as new buildings, major renovations of schools, and IMR (Infrastructure, Maintenance and Renewal) projects and are responsible for overseeing the work that is done by the contractors. The department has cultivated a strong working relationship with other decision units, the City of Edmonton, other metro school districts and the Alberta government. Modernizations are currently underway at Victoria, Balwin and Holyrood schools and the tender process is in place for Strathcona, Prince Charles, Eastglen and Forest Heights schools. Facilities is looking forward to the opening of Lillian Osborne School in September 2009, the first new Edmonton Public High School in almost 25 years.

Funding for these departments is derived from a variety of sources including: budget allocation; provincial block funding (Infrastructure Maintenance Renewal Fund and Capital Plan); and cost recovery (through school-generated work orders and repairs). Creation of the Major Maintenance Plan is the responsibility of Facilities Services. Considerable collaboration exists among central decision units in the creation of this and the District's Three-Year Capital Plan.

Facilities staff utilize modern project management techniques including data analysis relating to cost and efficiency. The appropriate use of equipment, knowledge of necessary safety measures and awareness of evolving best practices related to each staff member's specific work responsibilities are areas of focus. To this end all staff are encouraged to participate in ongoing professional development.

Supports to staff and students extend beyond maintenance and design of buildings. Print Services, the Blackboard Deli, and Building Operations all contribute to the safe, healthy and innovative workplaces each employee enjoys. Security Services assists district schools in creating safe and secure learning environments by facilitating emergency preparedness planning, providing 24/7 'live' security monitoring, coordinating services and on-site support for administrators when dealing with emergency situations and providing advice and assistance regarding best practices.

Edmonton Public Schools has established priorities that reflect the importance of learning and working environments that promote learning, health, collaboration, and innovation. One way the District measures success is through the provision and maintenance of functional, safe and well-kept facilities. The complex work in Facilities Services is committed to ensuring this success.

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