

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 24, 2009

TO: Board to Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Update on the Employability Skills Achievement Certificate (ESAC) Pilot

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jan Anderson, Gordon Hanson, Bruce Miller, Lil Rueck, Doug Tarney, Stuart Wachowicz, Stephen Wright

INFORMATION

Introduction and Background:

The Employability Skills Achievement Certificate (Appendix I) is currently awarded to L.Y. Cairns students who demonstrate reliable employability skills, as identified by employers and the Conference Board of Canada (CBOC), but have been unable to successfully complete the requirements for an Alberta High School Diploma or Certificate of High School Achievement (Appendix II).

In 2004 staff at L.Y. Cairns expressed a need for a credible credential for students who are unable to graduate with an Alberta High School Diploma. In 2005 Curriculum staff learned of the Employability Skills Achievement Certificate (ESAC) developed by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in partnership with the CBOC. It was felt that the ESAC had the potential to fill the credential gap that existed in our province. In December 2005 a report was presented to Board (Appendix III) regarding the ESAC pilot and partnership with the CBOC and the TDSB. In 2006, subsequent to discussions with the CBOC and TDSB, Edmonton Public Schools commenced a two-year pilot of the ESAC. This report provides Trustees with an update on the success of the pilot, as well as the potential for the ESAC to be available for students with special needs.

Criteria for the Employability Skills Achievement Certificate 2006-2008:

In consultation with Curriculum staff, the TDSB and the CBOC, the principal and staff of L.Y. Cairns School developed guidelines to define the profile of a student eligible to receive the ESAC certificate. The criteria for the 2006-2008 pilot are shown in the table below, beneath the list of employability skills measured by the certificate.

Employability Skills Achievement Certificate Criteria	
Employability Skills:	
Communicate	Be Adaptable and Responsible
Manage Information	Learn Continuously
Use Numbers	Work Safely
Think and Solve Problems	Work with Others
Demonstrate Positive Attitude/Behaviour	Participate in Projects and Tasks
Requirements: 2,500 hours of schooling in a range of subject areas with an emphasis on the employability and life skills listed above.	

Employability Skills Achievement Certificate Criteria	
2006-08	Proposed 2009
Successful completion of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work Experience 15, 25, 35 ○ Physical Education 10 ○ Mathematics 10-4 ○ English 30-4 ○ Social Studies 10-4 	Successful completion of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work Experience 15, 25, 35 ○ 75% Attendance Demonstrable evidence of employability skills as per the matrix as determined by employer(s) and teacher(s).

Indicators from an Employability Skills Matrix Profile (Appendix IV) adapted from the Employability Skills 2000+ document created by the CBOC, identifies the key learnings which are incorporated annually into the Individualized Program Plan (IPP) for each student. The Employability Skills Matrix is designed to embed instruction and assessment of the employability skills into the range of academic and vocational curriculum in which the student is enrolled. The criteria also allows the Work Experience employer to guide and report on the development of the student's employability skill base.

During the two-year pilot, 45 ESAC certificates have been granted to students from L.Y. Cairns School.

In 2008 Alberta Education implemented the Certificate of School Completion (see Appendix V for requirements), which is designed for students who have participated in special education programming during their 12 years in school. This certificate measures results in academic and vocational courses, but does not measure the “soft” or employability skills, as defined by the CBOC. However, it has opened opportunity to focus on the employability skills that are more difficult to measure through delivery of core curriculum – soft skills such as responsibility, attitude, and how well students are able to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace.

Next Steps Based on Findings of the Two-Year Pilot:

The District plans to move ahead in partnership with the CBOC to revise the criteria, as identified in the table above, ensuring increased accessibility of the certificate and increased recognition by employers. Many L.Y. Cairns students, who are diligent workers with much to contribute, are not able to complete all of the current required academic courses to qualify for the certificate. The proposed changes to certificate requirements for June 2009 will enable students to leave the school system with evidence that they are ready to engage in employment. Students who are able to work independently and demonstrate employability skills through six sessions of Work Experience will be awarded the ESAC when they complete school at L.Y. Cairns.

Curriculum staff will meet with principals, counsellors, and special needs coordinators to discuss possible district-wide application of the revised certificate.

SW:dh

APPENDIX I - Employability Skills Achievement Certificate

APPENDIX II - Current Alberta Education Certification Requirements

APPENDIX III - December 13, 2005, Board Report “Support for High School Completion”

APPENDIX IV - Sample of the Employability Skills Matrix

APPENDIX V - Alberta Education Certificate of School Completion Requirements

Work Safely

Be Adaptable

Use Numbers

Communicate

Be Responsible

Work with Others

Learn Continuously

Manage Information

Think and Solve Problems

Participate in Projects and Tasks

Demonstrate Positive Attitude and Behaviours


EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Conference Board of Canada
Insights You Can Count On



Employability Skills Achievement Certificate

is awarded to

a student of

who has fulfilled the requirements of this High School Employability Certificate in accordance with the criteria of Edmonton Public Schools and the Conference Board of Canada.

_____ Date

_____ Board Chair, Edmonton Public School Board

_____ Superintendent of Schools, Edmonton Public Schools

_____ Principal, Edmonton Public Schools

Michael Bloom

Vice-President, Organizational Effectiveness and Learning
The Conference Board of Canada

 Developed in cooperation with the Toronto District School Board



CURRENT ALBERTA EDUCATION CERTIFICATION

- Alberta High School Diploma Graduation Requirements
 - Certificate of High School Achievement Requirements (Knowledge and Employability)
- (Note: all existing Alberta Education certificates measure academic achievement and not “Employability Skills”)

ALBERTA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (ENGLISH)	
The requirements indicated in this chart are the <u>minimum</u> requirements for a student to attain an Alberta High School Diploma. The requirements for entry into post-secondary institutions and workplaces may require additional and/or specific courses.	
100 CREDITS including the following:	
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS — 30 LEVEL (English Language Arts 30-1, 30-2)	
SOCIAL STUDIES — 30 LEVEL (Social Studies 30 or 33)	
MATHEMATICS — 20 LEVEL (Pure Mathematics 20, Applied Mathematics 20 or Mathematics 24)	
SCIENCE — 20 LEVEL (Science 20, Science 24, Biology 20, Chemistry 20 or Physics 20)	
PHYSICAL EDUCATION 10 (3 CREDITS)	
CAREER AND LIFE MANAGEMENT (3 CREDITS)	
10 CREDITS IN ANY COMBINATION FROM:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career and Technology Studies (CTS) • Fine Arts • Second Languages • Physical Education 20 and/or 30 • Locally developed/acquired and locally authorized courses in CTS, fine arts, second languages, Knowledge and Employability or IOP occupational courses • Knowledge and Employability or IOP occupational courses • Registered Apprenticeship Program 	
10 CREDITS IN ANY 30-LEVEL COURSE (<u>IN ADDITION</u> TO A 30-LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND A 30-LEVEL SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE AS SPECIFIED ABOVE)	
<p>These courses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35-level locally developed/acquired and locally authorized courses • Advanced level (3000 series) in Career and Technology Studies courses • 35-level Work Experience • 30-4 level Knowledge and Employability course or 36-level IOP course • 35-level Registered Apprenticeship Program • 30-level Green Certificate Specialization 	

CERTIFICATE OF HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT REQUIREMENTS (ENGLISH)
The requirements indicated in this chart are the minimum requirements for a student to attain a Certificate of High School Achievement. The requirements for entry into post-secondary institutions and workplaces may require additional and/or specific courses
80 CREDITS including the following:
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 20-2 OR 30-4
MATHEMATICS 14 OR 20-4
SCIENCE 14 OR 20-4
SOCIAL STUDIES 13 OR 10-2 OR 26 OR 20-4
PHYSICAL EDUCATION 10 (3 CREDITS) ⁰
CAREER AND LIFE MANAGEMENT (3 CREDITS) ⁰
5 CREDITS IN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-level Knowledge and Employability occupational course, or • 30-level Career and Technology Studies (CTS), or • 30-level locally developed course with an occupational focus
AND
5 CREDITS IN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-level Knowledge and Employability Workplace Practicum course, or • 30-level Work Experience course, or • 30-level Green Certificate course
OR
5 CREDITS IN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-level Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) course

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 13, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Acting Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Support for High School Completion

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Executive Director

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jan Anderson, Gordon Hanson, Dave Jones, Shirley Keith, Jennifer Lawley, Karen St. Cyr, Rosalind Smith, Jean Stiles, Stuart Wachowicz, Stephen Wright

INFORMATION

Subsequent to the Board of Trustees' approval of the recommendation to develop a school to post secondary to work transition model, called Career Focused Education in 2002, work began to implement strategies to achieve the stated goals.

The primary goals being:

- increase rates of school completion
- increase student achievement and course completion
- increase among students the awareness of careers and the pre-requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes required to successfully transition to a given career
- smoother transition from grade 12 to post secondary and/or work.

Specific to increasing school completions, a number of strategies have been developed, put into pilot and reviewed recently by a steering committee of high school principals. In some cases strategies have been piloted for a year or more and are now entering full implementation. Others, as discussed below, are being introduced as pilots.

All of the strategies referenced in this report have as their focus the increasing of school completion rates. The steering committee has been developed to ensure that these strategies are indeed appropriate for implementation in the district. They also will serve to provide direction on the future development of initiatives to help schools meet the goals of Career Focused Education. Clear support has been received for the following initiatives:

Initiative	Description	Status
Community Database	This is a web-based site providing up to date information on approved and inspected work sites for RAP, Career Internships and Work Experience. Career related speakers and related resources will be listed as well as listing work locations that are not recommended.	Implementation

Initiative	Description	Status
Workplace Showcase	This provides an opportunity for students completing grade 12, not planning to enter post secondary immediately, to access over 100 employers who can provide employment leading to formal certification, apprenticeship, while some even support university training. Vital information about the workplace is provided to students.	Implementation
Off-Campus Guides	Guides have been produced to assist and direct school based staff in ensuring work experience, RAP and Career Internship experiences are productive, safe and beneficial to students, enhancing their future and contributing to school completion.	Implementation
Career Cruising	A district license has been acquired to enable all junior and senior high schools to have broad access to this Canadian designed career planning and information tool. It has the potential to assist students to be more aware of careers and the prerequisite courses and skills needed for a range of occupations. It assists with long range planning and helps most students to plan to complete high school in three years.	Implementation
Skills Credentialing Tool	EPSB in partnership with the Conference Board of Canada, has piloted this new tool which helps students measure their employability skills. This instrument is becoming nationally recognized and used by many employers, and will give our students an edge future employment.	Implementation
Youth Apprenticeship Program	EPS is involved in a new pilot of the Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) designed as an enriched program for at-risk youth. The program maintains the academic program and provides opportunity to apply that learning in planning, managing and carrying out specific projects.	Pilot
NAIT Initiatives	Career Focused Education involves planning with post secondary institutions. For example, work has begun on a single articulation agreement between NAIT and Edmonton Public Schools that describes various levels of partnership occurring in different schools or programs. The development of pilot projects have begun that focus around one specific school, Amiskwaciy, and other discussions	Pilot

Initiative	Description	Status
	have been focused around NAIT programs - School of Applied Building Sciences. The goal of all projects are to better prepare students in the k-12 setting to ease the transition to articulated programs in post-secondary and the world of work.	
Norquest	The district is in the final stages of seeking approval on a plan which would see students in IOP level programming be enabled to study for occupational certification while still in high school. The pilot would see the post secondary institutions funded by Advanced Education for these students, while still maintaining the courses in our high schools. Initial work with these students will be in summer sessions at Norquest in a cohort of high school aged students.	Pilot (Print Technology)
International Language Credential	To enhance transitions to post secondary and employment the district is involved in a pilot to provide grade 12 students with internationally recognized assessments in a number of languages. Support for this is from Alberta Education	Pilot
Employability Skills Certificate	Based on a project being conducted in Ontario, the district is studying the possibility of developing an Employability Skills Certificate, to provide evidence or a credential, recognized by industry, that the student has developed a sound set of employability skills. This can support the Conference Board's Skills Credential.	Research Phase

The initiatives outlined are being carefully monitored with opportunity for input from school and external stakeholders to help determine how they can be improved. Principals have identified a need for making students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders much more aware of these initiatives, and for the district to continue to solicit support from the business community. It has also been emphasized that there is a need to create awareness in the student body before they leave elementary school. This is an area where a strategy is now being considered. Finally a concern was raised about the need to effectively communicate messages about employability options and requirements to students who have recently arrived in Canada, and who are in the process of learning English.

Through these efforts and others to come, the district can support our schools in making a significant and positive change in rates of school completion, and in the long term success students will experience in their lives.

SW:dh

SAMPLE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS MATRIX

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS						Student Name:		
<i>The skills needed as a base for further development.</i>						(W) Working towards independence with assistance		
<i>You will be better prepared to progress in the world of work when you can:</i>						(P) With Prompts		
Communicate						(I) Performs independently		
Employability 2000 + Skill	Basic Performance Skill (B.P.S.)	Student can demonstrate examples of these skills by:	Math	English	CALM	Social	Voc 1	Voc 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read and understand information presented in a variety of forms 	The student can read simple written language and pronounce words with good accuracy so that others can understand.	B- reading a sample paragraph to the teacher and pronouncing words with good accuracy so that the listener understands the meaning of the paragraph at a grade 1-2 level E- reading a sample paragraph to the teacher and pronouncing words with good accuracy so that the listener understands the meaning of the paragraph at a grade 3-4 level P- reading a sample paragraph to the teacher and pronouncing words with good accuracy so that the listener understands the meaning of the paragraph at a grade 4 level or higher						
	The student can read simple written language and accurately retell the information to others in his/her own words.	B-Reading 1 or 2 simple sentences and answer directly stated reading comprehension questions B-Reading basic sight words and know their meaning (define) E- Reading a sample paragraph to Him/herself and then accurately answer directly stated reading comprehension questions P-reading a sample paragraph to him/herself and then accurately retelling the information to the teacher in his/her own words without referring to the paragraph						
	The student can interpret simple diagrams, charts or graphs accurately.	B- using his/her student timetable in order to answer questions about his/her class schedule, class room numbers or times of classes with assistance E- Reading a TV schedule to determine what show is on at a particular time and on what station E- examining a simple employee schedule and determining when a specific person is scheduled to work E- using number charts in math P-reading a bus schedule to determine the time a particular bus will arrive at a bus stop P- creating charts, graphs in math P- using diagrams to make projects in vocational situations						
	The student can read and accurately interpret common signs posted within the community and work places.	B- Understands the meaning of common signs found in the community (e.g. Bathroom, stop, walk, pedestrian crossing, railroad, universal signs) E- Understands the meaning of hazard signs such as explosive, flammable E- Recognizing specific bus stop places E- Recognizes common place names such as Rexall, West Edmonton Mall P- Recognizes WHMIS signs P- Recognizes Traffic signs						

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The personal skills, attitudes and behaviours that drive one's potential for growth.

You will be able to offer yourself greater possibilities for achievement when you can:

(W) Working towards independence with assistance
(P) With Prompts
(I) Performs independently

Demonstrate Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

Employability 2000 + Skill	Basic Performance Skill (B.P.S.)	Student can demonstrate examples of these skills by:	Math	English	CALM	Social	Voc 1	Voc 2
• feel good about yourself and be confident	The student has confidence in him/herself to do a job well.	B- completing routine tasks with prompts B- accepting positive feedback E- speaking positively about themselves and their actions E- attempting more challenging tasks with minimal assistance P-showing confidence when given an assignment that he/she can complete it P-applying for a part time job P- describing his/her abilities in a job interview situation						
	The student is friendly to others and is able to make eye contact from time to time when speaking to others.	B- greeting others appropriately B- sitting around a table in a cafeteria B- attempting to start a conversation B- approaching others and being aware of personal space E- continuing conversations E- showing cheerfulness and being happy most of the time P- participating in social activities with his/her peer group in a positive manner						
	The student demonstrates self-control.	B- Refraining from name calling and put downs with minimal prompts B- Distancing oneself from situations when prompted E- usually remaining calm during times of stress E- trying to be pleasant to others even when things are not going well E- not showing anger or aggression to others P- reacting in a mature manner						
	The student dresses appropriately for various settings.	B- Selecting appropriate clothing with some assistance B- following the dress code at school E- Keeping clothes in good order (clean and tucked in) E- demonstrating a concern for dressing appropriately P- dressing in a manner that is appropriate for a work place setting during a co-op placement P- Being aware of current styles. P- understanding what to wear for specific occasions						
	The student advocates for his/her personal rights.	B- voicing thoughts appropriately B- responding to questions from adults E- expressing opinions to others respectfully P- showing resistance to peer pressure P- approaching adults or seeking out means to gather information						

Certificate of School Completion

A student eligible for the Certificate of School Completion in special education:

- has been a student over a period of at least twelve years
- is in the last year of his or her school programs
- has participated in special education programming
- has worked toward goals and objectives in an Individualized Program Plan that is consistent with the *Standards for Special Education, Amended June 2004*
- is not able to achieve one of the following due to significant cognitive disabilities:
 - Alberta High School Diploma
 - Diplome d'etudes secondaires de l'Alberta
 - High School Equivalency Diploma
 - Diplome d'equivalence d'etudes secondaires
 - Certificate of Achievement (IOP) Certificat de reussite
 - Certificate of High School Achievement (Knowledge and Employability)
 - Certificat de reussite d'etudes secondaires (Connaissances et employabilite).