

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 12, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Partnership Between L'Académie de Rouen and Edmonton Public Schools

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE
STAFF: Janice Aubry, Valerie Leclair, Stuart Wachowicz

INFORMATION

Background

In April 2002 the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Public Schools approved the 14 recommendations to be implemented with the French Language Renewal Project. Recommendation number six read: "Provide opportunities for FSL and French Immersion students to participate in francophone communities in Edmonton, Alberta, Quebec and other countries." It was understood at the time that for language learning to be truly effective students need the opportunity to communicate real life experiences in French to build competency in the language. Efforts have been made to provide additional opportunities in the Alberta area with some success and with some opportunities in Quebec.

In the summer of 2007 representatives of several Académies (regional ministries of education) in France heard of the District and of district results in Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française (DELFL) examinations. There was an interest to partner with Edmonton on the part of at least three Académies. Given the strong academic reputation of Rouen, and the range of benefits they could offer, a decision was made to pursue discussions with Rouen. The result of discussions and a meeting with district leadership in Edmonton on the part of representatives of Rouen, was agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix I), which will be signed in Rouen on December 10, 2008.

The main objectives of this agreement involve partnership in the following areas:

- Cooperation in educational programs
- Joint research
- Student communication
- Teacher development
- Administrator study tours
- Job shadow/study opportunities/exchanges
- And other programs of mutual interest and benefit (e.g. literacy, numeracy, career education, student transitions...)

Alignment With District Priorities

The agreement will enhance the District's ability to provide students "with outstanding educational experiences in an evolving global context." The partnership will increase student access and meaningful contact with students from France, and will help students engage in learning and interact with their partner, while using Canada's two official languages. The arrangement with Rouen will assist the District in building global citizenship.

The partnership strongly supports the effective implementation of Alberta Programs of Study for both French Immersion and French as a Second Language students, who will be primary participants in the initial projects under this agreement. Functional language usage and literacy, intercultural skills development and development of greater understanding of one's own culture and francophone cultures are fundamental components of the provincial curricula, and are also referenced in the District Priorities.

For staff the agreement promises to provide an excellent window for professional growth and development. This is also a component of the District priority statements. The teacher development clauses in the memorandum include collaboration, which will provide district staff with opportunities for further developing their linguistic abilities, as well as expanding their knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy. Activities such as workshops and collaborative sessions through such means as videoconferencing are listed as primary activities. In addition the development of administrator capacity through study tours, reciprocal administrator exchanges and job shadow opportunities will enable district administrators to broaden their understanding of foreign systems and best practices. Through such experiences district leadership will become better prepared to foster global leadership in our staff and students. The opportunities provided through this agreement will support the District in providing professional enhancements, contributing to the District's reputation as an employer of choice.

The presence of school administrators in Rouen on the occasion of the agreement signing, and their visit to the school with which their school will be partnered is a valuable exercise one which will help ensure a better understanding of the partnering schools, and thus lead to more effective use of the partnership opportunity in their schools.

SW:ja

APPENDIX I Memorandum of Understanding



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

**EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #7
OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA, CANADA**

AND

L'ACADÉMIE DE ROUEN

June 9, 2008

Background and Resolution:

Considering the strong cultural ties between France and the Province of Alberta:

Considering the importance of the French language in Alberta, and in Edmonton Public Schools;

Considering that multiculturalism and multilingual education is a most effective means of fostering solidarity between peoples and countries;

The Edmonton Public School District and the above named academy, in order to promote cultural values and better understanding between citizens of both regions – agree to collaborate to encourage and enhance French and English language learning in the partnering regions, and to provide enhanced educational opportunities for students and professional growth opportunities for teachers and school administrators.

This partnership will enable the establishment of international relationships in the area of education, focusing on both the linguistic and cultural components. It will seek to develop a common approach to educational strategies in the learning of a second language and in the prevention of academic failure, two educational priorities of the Académie de Rouen and Edmonton Public Schools.

Therefore a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is hereby signed in due form and agreeing named partners to the contents established in the following agreements:

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 The main objective of the partnering organizations in the cooperative programs developed under this Memorandum is to establish good international relationships in the areas of education, language and culture of benefit to students, educators and citizens in both Edmonton and in the partnering Rouen region of France. The Memorandum will facilitate cooperation related to:

- a. common challenges in education,
- b. promoting the development of French and English language, competence and desirability to become proficient in both languages,
- c. support professional development of educators,
- d. promoting cultural understanding and
- e. support international opportunities in business, cultural and professional exchanges.

II COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

Cooperative activities between Edmonton Public Schools and the French partner will be implemented through the following programs:

2.1 Cooperation in Educational Programs

Identification of areas of mutual interest and need where sharing of information, joint research and partnerships can be beneficial to students and teachers in both partnering areas such as:

- a) implementation and application of language portfolios
- b) strategies for strong second and third language education
- c) issues of literacy and numeracy
- d) Career Focused Education and issues of student transition to work and to post secondary studies
- e) history
- f) intercultural education and issues of multiculturalism in the school setting
- g) distance education
- h) role of technology in education
- i) addressing issues of environmental sustainability
- j) media production

2.2 Joint Research in Educational Issues

To participate in sharing information and in the design and implementation of joint research projects in areas such as:

- a) strategies for motivating students in second and third languages
- b) conditions for success in second language education
- c) role of technology in direct teaching and in distance education

2.3 Student Communication Program

This program would serve to facilitate communication between schools in Edmonton and in the partnering jurisdiction in France, through Internet and video conferencing. This would include:

- a) school twinning
- b) joint educational and cultural projects
- c) projects specifically designed for language enhancement through voice contact and written contact through e-mail

An Internet link between Junior and Senior High schools to help develop common work goals between teachers and schools (via e-mails and Internet twinning- eTwinning) leading eventually to exchanges between classrooms.

Projects can be selected by the partnering schools but will be carried out in accordance with guidelines established jointly by L'Academie de Rouen and Edmonton Public Schools.

2.4 Teacher Development

The Teacher Development program will include:

- a) teacher workshops to become familiar with language instruction and curriculum through class participation and immersion in both Edmonton and Rouen.
- b) teacher preparation programs between the IUFM (Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres) of the académie de ROUEN and the University of Alberta to combine the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching in the field.
- c) teacher practice workshops for French teachers of DNL (Discipline Non Linguistique – in courses other than language) to improve their proficiency in the language of instruction in DNL subjects (such as History and Geography, Mathematics and Physics, Physical Education).

Teacher Development will promote short term in-service and pre-service programs for teachers and teacher candidates in both countries enabling study in a field of competence at participating universities in Alberta and in France. In addition, joint professional development sessions may also be conducted through video conferencing with presentations from educational experts in both Edmonton and in France.

2.5 Administrator Study Tours

Study opportunities for administrative or managerial staff (reciprocal educational visits of School Principals seeking a deeper understanding in the field of Educational Leadership).

The partnership will provide for opportunities for school administrators to tour schools and school systems so that operations in both countries can be compared and awareness and understanding developed of respective cultures.

2.6 Job Shadow/Study Opportunities/Exchanges

a) *Provincial MOU development*: Pursue the development of an MOU between the Province of Alberta and the French Ministry of Education, involving the support of the French Embassy to Canada, which would enable full educator exchanges and the placement of visiting teachers in the partnering jurisdictions. The MOU would also pursue recognition of student study in France and Alberta respectively.

b) *Administrator Education Program*: This program will provide short-term (1-2 weeks) opportunities for school administrators in EPSB with competency in French and administrators from France with competency in English to job-shadow and/or visit each other's workplaces/schools

c) *Job Shadow/Study Opportunities for teachers*: Short-term (1-2 weeks) job shadow/study opportunities between teachers in EPSB who teach French or other subjects in French, and teachers in France who teach English or other subjects in English.

d) *Secondary Student Exchange Program*: French students who are studying English and EPSB students who are studying French will spend time in school and in home settings in Edmonton and in France respectively. These exchanges can be short term (e.g., 3 months) or up to one year in length.

e) *Language and Culture Assistant Program*: This program will place a number of Alberta and French university students as language and culture assistants in both countries for a period extending to one semester.

2.7 Other Programs

Other programs can be identified and developed as needs are identified by the respective partners.

III EVALUATION

Annually, representatives of EPSB and or the partners in France will develop a Report relative to the application of this program. This report will identify what is working well and also suggest proposals for expansion and/or improvement.

IV DURATION

This Memorandum is established for three (3) years, beginning upon signing, and can be cancelled by either party on demand, provided at least six (6) months written notice is given.

During the term of the Memorandum, either party may add provisions for its improvement when agreed upon by both parties.

Unless cancelled by either party, this Memorandum will automatically be renewed for one year periods, until a new agreement that substitutes or modifies it is signed.

This Memorandum of Understanding is executed by the partners subject to availability of funds.

This Memorandum of Understanding, both English and French versions, is signed and both versions equally valid in the Province of Alberta and in the Republic of France.

Agreed and signed in _____ on _____.

Representing Edmonton Public Schools

Edgar Schmidt (Superintendent)

Representing l'Académie de Rouen:

Jean-Jacques Pollet (Recteur de l'Académie de Rouen)