

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 26, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Joint Project Between Canadian Islamic Centre (CIC), the Canadian Arab Friendship Association (CAFA) and Edmonton Public Schools

ORIGINATOR: Bob Holt, Executive Director,  
Instructional and Curricular Support Services

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Barbara Cragg, Barry Heffernan, Betty Tams

### INFORMATION

In September 2001, the need to understand and respect the diversity of our school community was accentuated by world events. As a result, a joint initiative was undertaken which linked staff from Consulting Services EPS and representatives from the Islamic, Muslim and Arabic communities. The purpose of the group was to encourage understanding and appreciation of Islamic, Muslim and Arabic culture and faith. This has been accomplished through the creation and compilation of educational resources to be made available to Edmonton Public Schools.

The committee's work has resulted in making the following resources available to district schools:

- Speaker Resource Bureau  
This is a roster of knowledgeable individuals from Islamic, Muslim and Arabic communities who are willing to present information sessions to staff, students and parents.
- An Education Guide to Readily Available Resources  
This is an excellent array of resources to assist staff in broadening their understanding of and access to these communities. This guide will be provided to all district schools.
- Library of Reference Materials  
The communities have reviewed and contributed a package of reference materials which District staff may access free of charge for use in District schools.

The members of the committee have worked diligently to produce the aforementioned materials and have donated generously of their time, expertise and good will. As a result of the committee's work, sessions on the significance and tradition of Ramadan have recently been offered to schools.

The initiative, and information about the resources, will be introduced to school principals and district representatives at a special luncheon hosted by the Canadian Arab Friendship Association and the Canadian Islamic Centre at Al Rashid Mosque on December 12, 2002. All principals will receive a copy of the resource guide for their school and have an opportunity to tour the mosque.

Members of the committee look forward to ongoing opportunities to assist schools in their efforts to promote awareness and understanding of Islam, Muslims and Arabs.

Members of the Committee are:

Nora Abon-Absi, Executive Director of the Canadian Arab Friendship Association

Susan Petryk, M.D., FRCP (C)

Richard Awid, B.Ed, Retired teacher

Sorayaha Awid, B.Ed, Retired teacher

Special thanks to the following contributors:

The Office of the Superintendent

The Resource Guide Volunteers

The district acknowledges with appreciation the Canadian Islamic Centre and Canadian Arab Friendship Association which have so generously shared with Edmonton Public Schools in a proactive effort to promote understanding, communication and education in our school community.

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