

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 8, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Alberta Response Model

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

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INFORMATION

The following report provides the board with information about the modified delivery model being introduced by the Ma'mōwe Capital Region Child and Family Services.

Background: Because throughout North America outcomes for children have not been as positive as one would want, demonstration projects were implemented and researched to ascertain if other jurisdictions had service delivery models that resulted in more positive outcomes. Based on this research, the Ministry of Children's Services introduced a new conceptual framework, called the Alberta Response Model (ARM), to guide planning and programming in the 18 children's services regions in the province. ARM has the following four components:

1. Differential response – This refers to a two-track response system. The first track, the Family Enhancement Track, will focus on low to medium risk cases to provide strength-based enhanced interventions to empower the family to alleviate the child protection concern. The second track, the Core Protection, will focus on the high-risk cases where there is extreme neglect and child abuse situations.
2. Concurrent/permanency planning – This identifies the requirement that, when a child is placed in care, a plan which stipulates what changes are required for the child to be returned and, in the event that the child cannot be returned, which ensures the involvement of the family in determining some permanent alternatives. The intent is to provide some permanency for the child.
3. Community partnerships – This recognizes the need to work in collaboration with other stakeholders and community resources to develop a continuum of services that encompasses the range from prevention to protection.
4. Parental responsibility – This acknowledges the need for strategies to enhance opportunities for parents to be engaged with their children in ways that enable them to maintain their sense of responsibility and accountability.

These four components fit well with the service delivery framework that was already established by Region 10, Ma'mōwe Capital Region Child and Family Services Authority after extensive consultation with community.

The Ma'mōwe Child and Family Services Authority has had a lead role in testing these components. Ma'mōwe established task teams associated with each component to assist in the development of a plan for this region that is consistent with the provincial framework, as well as a monitoring and evaluation task team. These task teams have included Ma'mōwe staff, as well as representatives from contracted agencies and community stakeholders. Edmonton Public Schools had representation on the community partnership task team.

A provincial regional support team with representatives from various areas in the province, First Nation groups and ministry staff has been established to encourage some consistent processes throughout the province. As well, the ministry's "best practices" group has been available to provide support in areas of research, legal issues, policy development and staff development.

Implementation of ARM in Region 10: Key components of ARM were implemented October 1, 2002. They included:

- All intake calls being screened according to the differential response model which means if the situation is low to medium risk and the family is amenable to services, the case will be closed at the screening level and referred for services provided through the Family Enhancement track; high risk cases will be directed to the Core Protection track
- All plans, in both tracks, include concurrent consideration of long-term needs of the child; in situation where agreements on the long-term care for a child cannot be reached between the social worker and biological parents, a family-based conferencing process will be employed

As well, five projects are in development with Strategic Agency partners and two with educational partners, one with Edmonton Public Schools and another with Edmonton Catholic Schools. These seven projects are scheduled for implementation in November 2002. The projects with the Strategic Agency partners include:

- An entire Ma'mōwe Family Enhancement Unit co-locating with an agency
- An agency unit co-locating and delivering services from one of Ma'mōwe's neighbourhood centres
- A project focusing on reconnecting First Nation and/or Metis children to their cultural backgrounds and extended family members
- Ma'mōwe workers locating at the Boyle Street Co-op, the Bissell Centre and the Boyle McCauley Health Centre to respond to homelessness, extreme poverty, disabling addiction issues and issues confronted by youth
- A project on issues inherent in family violence situations

The education-linked projects involve Ma'mōwe Family enhancement workers locating in the Edmonton Public City Centre Education Project and the Edmonton Catholic Aboriginal Learning Centre to work together with families that meet the criteria for Children's Services support.

It is expected that broad implementation of ARM across Region 10 and throughout the province will take place over the next one to three years.

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