

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 12, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: L. Thomson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: History Centre

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Executive Director

RESOURCE

STAFF: Dr. Marc Arnal, Dr. Cormack, Douglas Davis, Dr. Andrew Gow, Catherine Luck, Darren Sweeney, Stuart Wachowicz

INFORMATION

Administration, in partnership with a number of educational and cultural organizations in Edmonton, has established a History Centre at Queen Alexandra School. This unique concept and partnership will serve to enhance achievement of district students, and provide opportunities for district staff to access resources and expertise that would otherwise not be available.

Background and Rationale

- The new social studies curriculum contains a significant increase in historical content, intended to lead students to engage in research and the development of a sophisticated inquiry process. This will require the enhancement of student research skills in addressing “related questions and issues” outlined in the new social studies curriculum.
- The History Centre will provide teachers and students with sessions designed to develop the students’ ability to apply the inquiry process and develop research skill. The Centre will allow teachers and students to access expertise in history, economics and other areas of study that comprise social studies. The partnering agencies will make available information, a variety of resources and provide activities supportive of implementation of the social studies curriculum. Through these efforts a life-long appreciation of history and other elements of social studies can be cultivated. These opportunities will be available in both official languages.

Partners Collaborating in the Operation of the Proposed History Centre

The History Centre will be operated by Edmonton Public Schools in partnership with:

- Edmonton and District Historical Society (a branch of the Historical Society of Alberta)
- Old Strathcona Foundation
- Campus Saint Jean
- Faculty of Arts, Department of History and Classics, University of Alberta
- Alberta Education
- Rutherford Library and Cameron Library (Special Collections)
- McKay Avenue School

Description

- The History Centre will be located on the third floor of Queen Alexandra School, which was the first site of the University of Alberta, established in 1908. In 1995, the school was designated as one of the most significant historic sites in Edmonton.
- The Centre is a partnership project involving Rutherford Library, University of Alberta, the Old Strathcona Foundation, Edmonton and District Historical Society and the Historical Society of Alberta, who lease the facility.
- The Edmonton District of the Historical Society of Alberta has assumed the costs of refurbishing and upgrading the facility.
- The current administrative offices, which will be shared with the History Centre, are located in the former office of the first president of the University of Alberta, Henry Marshall Tory.
- The facility includes a collection of artifacts and archival materials, both primary and secondary, computer stations with internet access, a microfiche reader, a classroom for project work and a stage area for dramatic re-enactments of historical events. In addition, a loan arrangement, at no cost, with Rutherford and Cameron Libraries, University of Alberta, is in place to provide additional research materials suitable for use by junior and senior high school classes. In the case of rare or fragile materials, copies will be provided.
- The History Centre will work in conjunction with McKay Avenue and will complement the programs offered at that location. The History Centre will provide programs building upon the services delivered at McKay Avenue School, or deliver programs that support follow-up activities at McKay Avenue School and the classroom.
- The McKay Avenue School and its staff will provide additional material and personnel resources to complement and support the History Centre programs.
- The involvement of Campus Saint Jean and French language consultants will enable support to be provided to teachers of French Immersion and teachers of francophone schools.

Benefits to Teachers

- allows teachers access to resources not available in standard classroom settings;
- provides more effective implementation of research and inquiry components in the classroom as required by the new social studies curriculum;
- provides access to experts in historical research and inquiry;
- expands upon teachers' content base for effective delivery of the social studies curriculum in the classroom (develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking, develop skills of historical thinking);
- provides for teacher prepared resource packages to support general and specific curriculum outcomes in the social studies program of study;
- enhances teacher ability to utilize technology as prescribed in the defined Information and Communication Technology (ICT) areas;
- availability of graduate students as additional resource persons to aid teachers in delivery of the program as provided upon request by the Department of History and Classics;
- offers additional opportunities for professional development for social studies teachers through History Centre workshops.

Benefits for Students

- provides students with access to resources not available in standard classroom settings;
- gives students the materials necessary to develop skills in research and inquiry;
- introduces students to primary and secondary resources suitable for grades 4 to 12;
- helps students develop the skills necessary for critically evaluating sources and related issues as defined by the new social studies curriculum;
- enhances the development of skills in reading and writing, preparing research projects/papers (grades 9 to 12) critical thinking (grades 4 to 12);
- provides students with the historical information necessary for a more complete discussion and understanding of related issues and questions as defined by the social studies curriculum;
- develops student skills and knowledge necessary for success at the post-secondary level.
- provides support to French Immersion students in French, and the feasibility of offering sessions in the languages of our Bilingual programs is also being examined.

Staffing and Costs

- The History Centre will be staffed with a 0.6 FTE teacher-historian, who will coordinate the work of developing sessions for students based on the social studies curriculum requirements for K to 12. The staff member will also be able to provide sessions in the historical background related to units of social studies to teachers, and support the staff development work with courses for teachers in partnership with the Department of History and Classics from the University of Alberta.
- Costs for the staff member (0.6 FTE Teacher-historian) will be charged to Curriculum (DU 336). These costs are recoverable based on charges to schools and teachers as identified in this report.
- Administration support at the History Centre will be provided by the Alberta Historical Society and the Old Strathcona Foundation. Some additional support in curriculum document preparation will be provided by the Curriculum unit.
- The University of Alberta will provide support in terms of expert presenters and the Rutherford Library will provide additional resources, including primary and secondary source documents, to help train students and teachers effectively use the enquiry process, and inform teachers of available resources.
- EPSB schools will be charged \$150/class/day.
- Out of district schools will be charged \$450/class/day.
- Teacher sessions will be at a rate of \$50/teachers/session, which would include unit packages.

The district extends its appreciation to the institutions and other organizations who have agreed to partner in this project. The power of partnership to bring together resources, skilled personnel, and collective will to promote improvement is demonstrated in this project. Our students, teachers and the disciplines that comprise social studies will benefit for years to come as a result of this effort.

APPENDIX I: Letter from Daniel Woolf, Dean of Arts

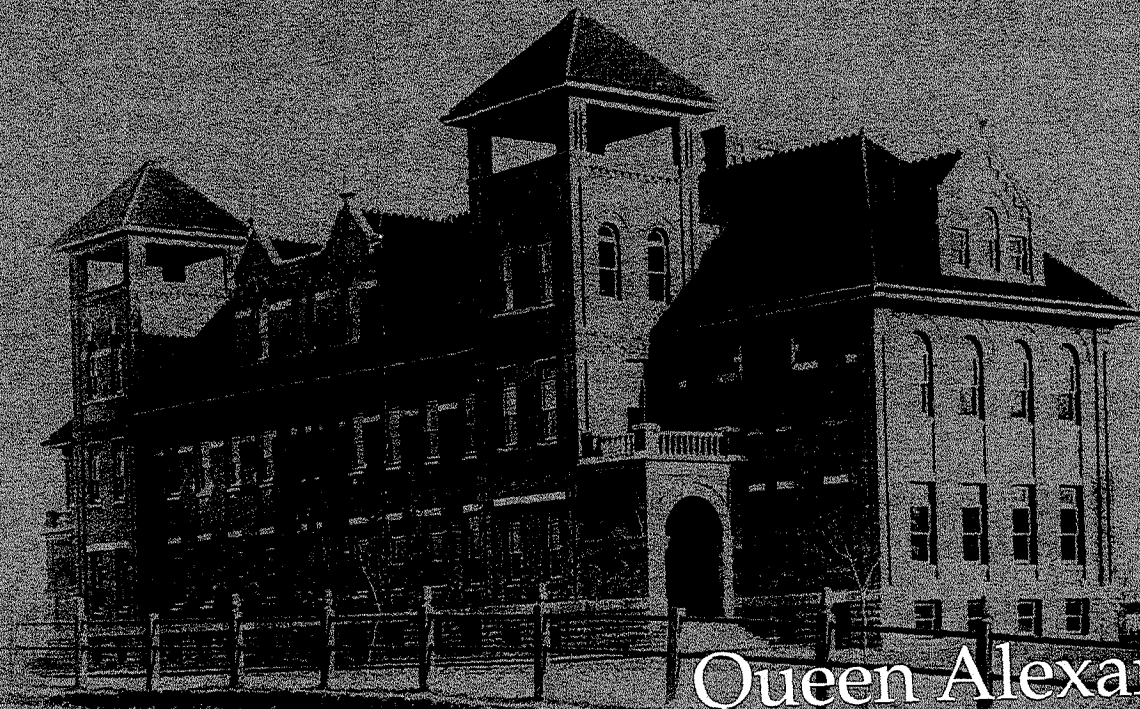
APPENDIX II: Queen Alexandra History Centre Brochure

SW:dh

Celebrate
our Heritage...our history.

*For information about the
Queen Alexandra History Centre,
contact Doug Davis, Curriculum
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Queen Alexandra
history centre



Queen Alexandra history centre

Starting in September 2006, Queen Alexandra School will be the site of a district History Centre. The Centre will have as its primary goal, the attainment of superb results in Social Studies. The Centre will operate as a partnership of the following:

- **Edmonton Public Schools**
- **Edmonton and District Historical Society**
- **Old Strathcona Foundation**
- **Historical Society of Alberta**
- **McKay Avenue School**
- **Faculty of Arts (Department of History and Classics) U of A**
- **Rutherford and Cameron Libraries - U of A**
- **Campus Saint Jean - U of A**
- **Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord**

The Centre will provide presentations and workshops by experts to groups of students on the stories of Edmonton, of Alberta and of Alberta's interaction with Canada and the world. Some partners will make primary documents, artifacts and photographs available to be used for fostering the growth in research and writing skills, and for the enhancement of the knowledge base of students. The Centre will facilitate issues-based enquiry skills and students will access archival material under expert direction, focusing on the analysis of a pertinent issue.

Sessions for teachers will enable them to become increasingly familiar with historical background associated with specific topics of study in the new curriculum. Teachers will be informed about the range of potential information sources to support instruction (print and electronic). Participants will also receive information kits that will be good references to support teaching of specified units. Theatrical reenactments of events important in the history of Edmonton and Alberta will be a part of the program as a result of the Centre's partnership with the Edmonton and District Historical Society, the Old Strathcona Foundation and dramatic troupes. The Centre will work in close partnership with McKay Avenue School for mutual program support.

In addition, the Centre will assist in the infusion of francophone and Aboriginal perspective into topics, as is required in the new curriculum. Many sessions will be available in both official languages and provision will be made to offer some topics in the languages of the district's bilingual programs. The intent, primarily, will be to serve students from grades four through twelve. Some dramatizations and activities may be suitable to grade two and three.

Queen Alexandra is a most appropriate location to house this History Centre. The school was the original site of the University of Alberta, and is Alberta's oldest school in continuous operation. The History Centre will occupy the top floor of the school. Restorations are being paid for through federal-provincial grants by the partnering societies. The Edmonton and District Historical Society, the Old Strathcona Foundation and the University of Alberta will provide staff and expert volunteers, while Edmonton Public Schools will provide a 0.6 FTE Historical Consultant and some administration support.