

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 14, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: City Centre Education Partnership (CCEP) Update

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

### RESOURCE

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### INFORMATION

**Background:** In April 2001, the Board approved several recommendations that resulted in the creation of the City Centre Education Project (CCEP). The intention of CCEP was to transform programming for students served by the seven Edmonton Public schools located in Edmonton's city centre. These schools were Delton, Eastwood, John A. McDougall, McCauley, Norwood, Parkdale, and Spruce Avenue. In moving forward as a working collaborative of schools to better meet the learning and life needs of their students, CCEP organized itself around three foundational pillars: Instructional Programming, Interagency Collaboration, and Organizational Structure.

In the spring of 2008, the name of CCEP was changed from Project to Partnership. This change was made to reflect the critical role of partnership and collaboration to the success of students. In addition, the change recognized that CCEP had evolved from a project into a long term, continuous operational model. Currently, the schools serve approximately 1,400 students, down from 1,700 eight years ago. The three pillars still define the structural framework of CCEP.

**Instructional Programming:** The initial 2001 report identified programming elements essential for the success of the students served in CCEP schools. These included full-day kindergarten, research-based literacy and numeracy teaching strategies, Reading Recovery, second language instruction, teacher librarians, programming to challenge all students including the top three to five percent, and no cost school supplies for elementary students. These remain programming priorities. Over the evolution of CCEP additional programming components have emerged as critical to the success of CCEP children and youth. These include: Middle Years Literacy Intervention, teaching strategies to support the increasing number of English Language Learners, assessment strategies that are respectful of the learner, early learning classrooms, and technology in the classroom.

**Interagency Collaboration:** Each of the CCEP schools has become a service hub for students and their families. Professional staff from a number of community agencies work directly in schools. Big Brothers Big Sisters, The Family Centre, The United Way, E4C (a charitable organization defined by compassion, commitment, collaboration and connection), Alberta Health Services (AHS), and Region Six Child and Family Services all work directly in each of

the schools. In addition, many other agencies and community organizations such as Rotary, City of Edmonton, Artstart, Heart of the City Piano, Centre for Family Literacy, and Métis Child and Family Services, provide supports for CCEP students. These partners are critical to the success of the CCEP students.

Through partnership, CCEP is able to offer and facilitate programming beyond that of a traditional school model. Programming and service extends the capacity of the school and enables after school recreation and enrichment programs, enhanced field trip opportunities, Summer at CCEP, cultural experiences, music enrichment, nutrition awareness, literacy supports, and on site therapeutic supports and services for students and families. These supplementary programs and supports are critical in beginning to equalize educational and life opportunities for students who face significant complexities and barriers often associated with poverty.

CCEP's collaborative approach has influenced the development of other collaborative projects in the District and across the province including the District's current Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS) Collaboration Project, *The Way In*, and other Mental Health Capacity Building Projects. These projects have helped create the current provincial interest in wrap-around service for families through their community school facility.

**Organizational Structure:** By working as a cohort CCEP has been able to capitalize on the collective energies and resources of the schools. For example, the schools pool resources to purchase professional development expertise and to secure an assessment team committed to CCEP students. As well, it supports teacher professional learning cohorts across the schools, extends junior high complementary course programming by sharing responsibility across three school sites and facilitates CCEP project-wide events such as the Nina Haggerty Art in the heART Show and Sale, the Alex Decouteau Run, the Story Avenue Writing Workshop, and the Region Six Joint Professional Learning Day.

**Impacts:** There are indicators of success in CCEP schools. These include improved student engagement and participation in the learning process as evidenced by teacher observation and higher percentage of assignment completion in junior high, a significant decrease in junior high out of school suspensions, 100 per cent of CCEP Grade 9 students are now pre-registering for high school, growth in literacy skills based on individual assessments, and positive staff attitudes towards working in CCEP schools. There is evidence of increased parental participation in student learning and school events, as well as anecdotal stories of re-engagement of parents. At this time there still has not been a consistent growth trend observed in Highest Level of Achievement Tests (HLATs) or Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) results across the schools.

**Current Challenge:** At this time, due to declining enrolments in the city centre, CCEP is forced to examine programming and organizational structure. To maintain and continue to evolve the work, the impact of serving fewer students on human and financial resources is under examination. The school communities in collaboration with Planning and community partners will be making recommendations to ensure that learning environments responsive to the varied and complex needs of students served by the schools are maintained and enhanced. School administration, school staff and key CCEP external partners are confident that collaboratively the children and youth who live in the attendance catchment of the CCEP schools will continue to be well served.

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