

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 29, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Update on the AISI Community Collaboration Project

ORIGINATOR: J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendent
D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Karen Bardy, Gloria Chalmers, Margaretha Ebbers, Ann Mah,
Patti McLeish, Nancy Petersen, Heather Raymond, Corrie Ziegler

INFORMATION

Background: Success for all students is the District's first priority. For some students, this success is impeded by factors beyond the scope of teachers and schools. Additional support from, and collaboration with, community agencies and organizations is often necessary so that success for all students can be achieved. As community resources are limited, the need for a strategic approach to collaborating with community partners is critical. The Community Collaboration AISI project is exploring strategies that maximize limited community resources and result in a win-win situation for students, schools and community partners.

Initially, the Community Collaboration Project involved the 18 high needs schools that offered the Full-Day Kindergarten Program. As a further support to the children in Full Day Kindergarten, the project brought in community partners to support these children and their families. However, as the year progressed, it became clear that this work should involve the entire school. As a result, the project was modified to focus on working with families and community partners school-wide and the participation was expanded to 28 high needs schools. The Full-Day Kindergarten Program was also expanded to include more schools.

School Clusters: Based on information regarding the high social vulnerability areas in Edmonton and the District's high needs list, a unique structure of school clusters across the District has been formed. Each of the school clusters is based within a geographic area that has a significant number of students and families with high needs. The clusters are located in the east, north-central, west, and Mill Woods areas of Edmonton (Appendix I). The City Centre Education Project (CCEP) is also involved as a cluster of schools. As noted in the appendix, each cluster has a coordinator. These coordinators meet regularly with the schools to identify the needs of their students and their families to develop a list of common needs for the cluster. With this information, the coordinator then connects the cluster of schools with the community partner(s) who would be best able to provide supports for these common needs. This has resulted in a more efficient use of services and resources for both the community partners and the schools.

Community Collaboration Work 2007-08: As the project was modified after the first year of implementation, the work in school clusters has only occurred this year. Much has been

accomplished in the past eight months. Each school cluster has established strong working relationships with some key community partners. School clusters are collaborating with each other and are pooling their resources to increase the impact of the supports being obtained for students who are at risk as well as for their families. Some of the key community partners are the Family Centre, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the City of Edmonton, Community Mapping Initiatives, Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, Region 6 Child and Family Services, Capital Health, and the Rotary Club. Examples of supports developed or obtained through this project are listed in Appendix II.

Overall direction to the project is provided by the Project Leadership Team (PLT). This team consists of a principal representative from each school cluster, teachers, coordinators, and representatives from Programs, Student Achievement, Consulting Services, Aboriginal Education, the English Language Support Services Centre, Communications and Planning. A project newsletter has also been developed in order to share information about the work of the school clusters. This newsletter also highlights effective practices from current research and profiles community partners and their resources.

Future Directions: Feedback from the schools indicates strong support for the project and the critical need for coordinators to continue this work. One comment from a project school stated: “Regular, planned meetings with partners both inside and outside of the school, with a purposeful agenda, have taken us a long way toward the better provision of services for our students and families. Our students and families have gained access to services that they otherwise would not have.” Community partners have also indicated strong support for the approach developed through this project. Working with a coordinator and a cluster of schools has allowed the staff with the community agencies to provide better service to the schools and their families.

Next year is the final year of the project and the focus will be on the following:

- Deepening the relationship with current community partners in order to increase the effectiveness of support for students who are at risk and their families
- Providing professional development for school staff on resiliency and asset building in order to create a strength-based foundation for the work
- Building leadership capacity for this work within the District by determining: what can be sustained beyond the life of the project; how can the school clusters and coordination support continue beyond the life of the project; and how can teachers be involved more effectively in the collaboration work.

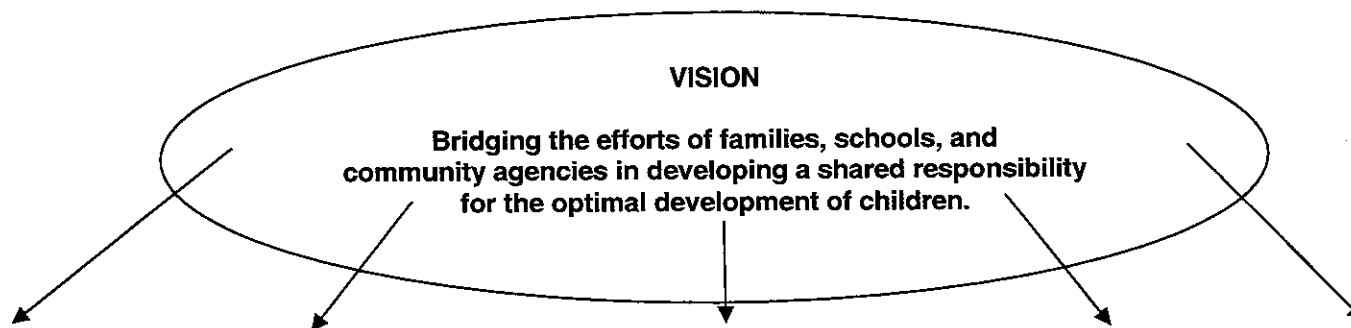
The Community Collaboration AISI Project is an innovative approach to collaborating across schools and with community agencies to support student success. As the project evolves much has been learned. This information will serve to inform the future work with community partners to ensure that bright futures begin here for all staff and students.

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APPENDIX I: - Visual of the Community Collaboration Project

APPENDIX II: - School Clusters: Examples of Supports for Students Who Are At Risk

AISI COMMUNITY COLLABORATION PROJECT 2007-08 School Cluster Groups



East Cluster Group		North Central Cluster Group		West Cluster Group		CCEP Cluster Group		Mill Woods Cluster Group
Abbott, Brad Mamchur	R.J. Scott Lawton, Liz Yule	Balwin, Dean Michailides	Horse Hill, Debbie Gawlik	Athlone, Howard Saumer	Inglewood, Leona Gordey	Delton, Nancy Weber	Norwood, Lorraine Berg	Hillview, Bryan Evans
Highlands, Jennifer Allen	Rundle, Brent Zmurchik	Belvedere, Sandee Lowe	Sifton, Allan Jack	Belmead, Mike Cooper	Prince Charles, Judy Toews	Eastwood, Ken LeLacheur	Parkdale, Marlene Hanson	Lee Ridge, Nigel Butterfield
Montrose, Shauna Paul		Evansdale, Sheila Tingley		Brightview, Tony Kernaghan	Sherwood, Rob Hutchinson	John A. McDougall, Arlene Bowles	Spruce Avenue, Kent Pharis	Tipaskan, Reg Crawford
				Glendale, Gerry Falk	Youngstown, Ken Spillett	McCauley, Wolf Kolb	Coordinator, Nancy Petersen	
Cluster Coordinators: Karen Bardy, Ann Mah PLT Principal Rep: Brad Mamchur		Cluster Coordinator: Heather Raymond PLT Principal Rep: Dean Michailides		Cluster Coordinator: Margaretha Ebbers PLT Principal Rep: Tony Kernaghan		Cluster Coordinator: Nancy Petersen PLT Principal Rep: Arlene Bowles		Cluster Coordinators: Patti McLeish, Ann Mah PLT Principal Rep: Reg Crawford
PROJECT LEADERSHIP TEAM Brad Mamchur, Dean Michailides, Tony Kernaghan, Arlene Bowles, Reg Crawford, Nancy Petersen, Dave Bennell, Helen Dublanko, Frances Soanes, Jeannette Austin-Odina, Heather Raymond, Margaretha Ebbers, Patti McLeish, Gloria Chalmers, Anne Mulgrew, Ann Mah, Karen Bardy, Ingrid Tenkate, Kerry-Ann Kope								

**SCHOOL CLUSTERS:
EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE AT RISK**

There are many examples of supports provided to students and their families that have been put in place through the school cluster-community collaboration work. Some examples are provided below.

1. **Creation of an electronic mentoring program for students with Big Brother Big Sisters:** Through this program, students build a positive, healthy, caring relationship with older student mentors from within the District, using a secured website as a mode of delivery. This program also helps elementary students develop their functional language skills.
2. **Sponsorship from Eight Rotary Clubs in Edmonton:** The sponsorship is for a broad range of activities and services for students; e.g. equipment to create a city garden, purchase of computers, provision of scholarships and awards, and participation in summer camps.
3. **Provision of a success coach from the Family Centre to work with students during school hours and after school:** The success coach supports students who are experiencing issues that interfere with their learning. The coach meets one-on-one with the student to talk through challenges they may be having regarding their learning and to build their confidence and self-esteem.
4. **Provision of help by Vibrant Communities for families in preparing taxes:** This organization provides tax preparation support and also helps families access other benefits that may be available to them.
5. **Access to the City of Edmonton's extra-curricular activities for students:** These activities include sports programs, a latch-key program, On the Right Track, access to a new Green Shack program that is being place on school grounds, and Girl Zone.
6. **Provision of a Roots and Wings family support worker:** The worker works with families to make connections to the school and to obtain community resources that meet their basic needs.
7. **Providing the H.E.R.O.S. program to students from economically challenged neighbourhoods:** This program uses the game of hockey as a catalyst to attract youth to a program offering support for education, self-esteem building, and life skills training. Grade four and five students in three schools from the north-east cluster are involved in the program. It provides, at no cost to students, equipment, ice time, monthly guest speakers, transportation to the rink, snacks, and an awards ceremony. In addition, there is a one week summer hockey camp, all expenses paid. Students can remain in the program until the second year of junior high and they then can join the mentor program from Grades 7-12. Students who graduate as leaders in Grade 12 can qualify for a "Hero Scholarship" which provides funds for post-secondary education.
8. **Provision of a family therapist from the Family Centre:** This therapist provides support to students and families.

- 9. Providing the Soccer Superstars program to students who are at risk:** This program has been developed by some University of Alberta students; the Programs unit and Big Brothers Big Sisters are working with these students on implementation. The program is at no cost to students and is offered during the summer to some students in the north-east area of the District.
- 10. Organizing a National Aboriginal Day celebration with sponsoring agencies:** A number of schools in some of the school clusters have been working on planning a celebration for National Aboriginal Day in June.
- 11. Developing expertise of school staffs in the “Tribes” program:** Schools in one of the clusters is developing the expertise of staff in the Tribes program in order to create positive relationships that focus on asset building within a school environment.
- 12. Provision of resources from donations to the district; e.g. Tools for Schools to the cluster schools:** Communications is working with the school clusters to identify their needs in relation to some of the resources that are donated to the District.
- 13. Provision of family cultural evenings:** Some cluster schools have been working with the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society on offering families monthly community celebrations that focus on Aboriginal cultural teachings.
- 14. Developing a program during spring break and the summer for students:** Some cluster schools have been working with a success coach from the Family Centre and the City of Edmonton to offer recreational programs during spring break and the summer for students who may be at risk.