

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 10, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

ORIGINATORS: D. Barrett, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools
B. Holt, Executive Director, Instruction and Curricular Support Services
A. Habinski, Executive Director, School and District Services

RESOURCE
STAFF: Meredith Colgan, Dean Power, Les McElwain

INFORMATION

REQUEST #167, SEPTEMBER 10, 2002, (TRUSTEE WOODROW): PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING ANY STUDIES ON THE EFFICACY OF BALANCED LITERACY PROGRAMS VERSUS MEANINGFULLY APPLIED PHONICS (MAP): A recent study of schools in 32 nations found the most critical element in building an effective reading program was the teacher. Effective teachers use programs to meet student needs. Evidence gathered in the district demonstrates that structured reading programs that utilize multiple strategies including phonics development are highly successful. Our goal as a district is to ensure that our teachers know how to select the method that works best for the students in their classes.

The legally prescribed curriculum for the province requires all teachers to include phonics in the teaching of language arts (Attachment 1).

As of last year, a total of eighty-six district schools had some or all of their teachers involved in Balanced Literacy strategies. In forty-eight of these schools, all Division I teachers were using this approach.

Sixty-five teachers in thirteen district schools were using Literacy MAP. Only at Elmwood and Mount Pleasant was an entire program (Cogito) consistently applying MAP strategies. In the other eleven schools, it was being used in some classrooms, generally in grades 1, 2, 3 or 4, and in some special needs situations.

In a number of district classrooms, teachers are using a combination of Literacy MAP and Balanced Literacy strategies successfully.

Our teachers are striving for superb results from all students, and utilize a variety of strategies towards this end. New students with unique talents and needs come to our schools each fall and teachers must be ever vigilant in turning all of them into readers and writers. District results confirm

that our students become better readers when they learn in a structured program that employs multiple strategies including phonics. (A. Mulgrew, 429-8351, and S. Wachowicz, 429-8186)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #198, NOVEMBER 12, 2002 (TRUSTEE BONKO) PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE COST TO SCHOOLS OF SUPPORTING THE JOINT USE AGREEMENT: E.G. STAFF COSTS, UTILITIES AND SUPPLIES AND HOW MUCH MONEY IS RECOVERED THROUGH RENTALS. Edmonton Public Schools provides \$550,000 in operational dollars back to schools that participate in providing after-hours access to their schools under the Joint Use Agreement in the form of the Community Use Allocation. The district further supports the agreement through the administration of Rental Services, a central service unit and with the participation of five exempt staff and one teacher certificated staff member on the various working committees under the Joint Use Agreement (JUA). As a partner in the JUA, our district also contributes one-third of the overall costs of JUA projects of approximately \$10,000 annually.

Each school that provides access covers the cost of custodial services, utilities and supplies from their operational budget that has been subsidized through the Community Use Allocation. Most schools are able to operate on a breakeven basis for these incremental costs. Increased demands on a school's infrastructure such as wear and tear on floors, lighting and washrooms create another level of costs that a school must fund. A full review of costs and budgets would be required by each individual school to determine the true cost of supporting after-hours access under the JUA.

The district recovers approximately \$128,000 annually from fees charged for adult JUA bookings. This revenue is added to the district's contribution and returned to schools under the Community Use Allocation. (M. Colgan, 429-8537)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #199, NOVEMBER 12, 2002 (TRUSTEE ODYSKI) PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- **HOW MUCH MONEY IS COMING INTO THE DISTRICT THROUGH NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES: E.G. GRANTS, DONATIONS, PARENT GROUP FUNDRAISING, INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE DONATIONS WITHIN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT SINCE 1993-94?**
- **WILL THAT AMOUNT OF MONEY INCREASE GIVEN THE CURRENT REQUEST THAT HAS BEEN MADE OF OUR SCHOOLS TO REVIEW THEIR PLANNED EXPENDITURES?**

Donations received at the school and remitted to Central Services, as well as those received centrally are recorded as miscellaneous revenue for the school or decision unit. Starting in 2000-01, Parent Council Donations and other external donations were identified specifically from other miscellaneous revenue. Prior to that, a breakdown was not maintained within miscellaneous revenue for donations. Following is the information for the two years:

Year	Parent Council Donations	Other External Donations
2000-2001	\$1,974,000	\$784,000
2001-2002	\$2,209,000	\$788,000

It is premature to comment at this time on whether the amount of fundraising will increase this year. (D. Power, 429-8141)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #202, NOVEMBER 12, 2002 (TRUSTEE ODYNSKI): PROVIDE INFORMATION ON HOW MANY CLASSES OF 30 OR MORE STUDENTS HAVE BEEN APPROVED FROM K-12 SINCE 1993-94. Prior to the 1995-96 school year, approval for learning groups over 30 required the associate superintendent's approval. In September 1995 the administrative regulation on learning group size (HHB.AR) was revised to reflect a change in approval to the superintendent of schools. The following is information on learning groups over 30 that have been approved by the superintendent. This information is as of September 30th of each school year.

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	# Difference from 1995-96 to 2002-03	% Difference from 1995-96 to 2002-03
Elementary	110	33	25	48	42	23	41	29	-81	-74%
Junior High	485	176	92	85	257	122	125	136	-349	-72%
Senior High	743	642	380	371	510	480	433	519	-224	-30%
TOTAL	1338	851	497	504	809	625	599	684	-654	-49%

(D. Barrett, 429-8035)

REQUEST #214, NOVEMBER 26, 2002 (TRUSTEE HANSEN): PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE ARBITRATION AWARD ON CLASS SIZES FOR 2003-2004 BY DIVISION: The monetary impact of the arbitration award on our district was \$16.2 million over two years. Using projected unit costs for the 2003-2004 school year, this amount equates to 228 full-time equivalent teaching positions. If one assumes that these positions would be subtracted from our current FTE teacher count, this would result in an increase in the district pupil/teacher ratio of 1.38 students (from 21.54 to 22.92). The divisional breakdown would be as follows:

Elementary pupil/teacher ratio would increase by 1.28 students
 Junior High pupil/teacher ratio would increase by 1.38 students
 Senior High pupil/teacher ratio would increase by 1.50 students

While this information provides a “global snapshot” of the impact of the arbitration award on class sizes, it is important to note that there are many variables which affect the organization and distribution of students to classrooms in any particular school. (L. McElwain, 429-8070)

AH:cg

ATTACHMENT I - Selected Outcomes from the English Language Arts Program of Studies