

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

ORIGINATOR: S. Stiles, Assistant to the Superintendent

SUBJECT: Multiple Campus Project Evaluation – Year One

RESOURCE

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INFORMATION

Many suggestions over the past few years have come from our provincial government and from school staff and community that we should close small schools because they tend to be an inefficient use of resources, and in order to increase district utilization rates. At the same time, communities continue to voice the importance of a local school, particularly an elementary school, in the community.

Beginning in September 1999, Edmonton Public Schools involved 12 schools in a Twinning Project, which has since been renamed the Multiple Campus Project. This project provided school combinations as an alternative model. The project examined the feasibility, and desirability, of alternate ways of leading and supporting schools for the purpose of further decreasing non-classroom costs. The project relied on the willingness of principals, staff, students, and parents, to experiment with new designs, and to challenge traditional thoughts about schools and school leadership.

The purposes of the project were and continue to be:

1. To provide cost savings that allow small schools to operate on the same funding level as all other schools in the district.
2. To ensure that cost savings occur without effects to student learning and teaching in the classroom, and to more effectively utilize resources in multiple campus schools.
3. To capitalize on the educational opportunities enabled by multiple campus for students, staff, and parents.
4. To increase the viability and to ensure the continued existence of quality small schools.

This report details the summary of the evaluation of year one of the Multiple Campus project.

Overall, the group of schools on the project met and exceeded the goals and results established for year one of the project. In addition there were several unanticipated results. The most significant of these is that these schools have been able to begin to explore alternatives to school leadership and organization. As the district continues to look at alternatives to traditional school and leadership organization, the experiences of these schools will prove invaluable.

APPENDIX I: Results Achieved in Year One

APPENDIX II: School Budget Surplus/Deficit and Enrolment

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Results Achieved in Year One

1. To provide cost savings that allow small schools to operate on the same funding level as all other schools in the district.

In year one of the project, the small school allocation was reduced to each school resulting in a saving to the district of \$362,369. In year two, these savings will be \$298,928 for an overall saving of \$661,297. While some of the schools are small enough to receive one of the two small school allocations, others now have a population that does not qualify for a small school allocation.

Indications early last year were that all schools had a challenge in the form of finances because of onetime start up costs associated with the infrastructure needed to facilitate a multiple campus school. In spite of this, the schools on the project as a whole have finished the year in a more positive financial position than they did upon beginning the project. (Appendix I)

Principals report that there are other cost savings associated with the non-duplication of resources, however due to the one time start up costs associated with multiple campuses, these saving will not be realized until subsequent years.

2. To ensure that cost savings occur without effects to student learning and teaching in the classroom, and to more effectively utilize resources in multiple campus schools.

Principals gathered feedback on an ongoing basis from stakeholder groups in the first year of the project through a formal twinning survey. The stakeholder groups identified were staff, parents, and students.

The majority of parents responding to the survey on the impact of multiple campus believed that there was no impact, a small positive impact, or a large positive impact. While the majority of staff believed there was no impact or a positive impact on school operations, a small percentage of staff indicated a large negative impact. Students indicated a positive impact.

Staff attitudes on the district attitude survey are not comparable to previous years due to changes in the survey, however, results are very similar to district results with the following exceptions:

- Staff in multiple campus schools had slightly higher results in the areas of “school a good place to work”, “say over school decisions”, and “principal provides effective leadership”.
- Staff had significantly lower results in the areas of “district a good place to work”, “say over district decisions”, and “confidence in the leadership of superintendent and board”.

Students generally were close to the district average with elementary students being slightly below district average.

Principals report that the impact on the classroom has been negligible. In comparing student achievement in the multiple campus schools to student achievement levels prior to the project, there has been no significant effect on student achievement. Results show no pattern of increases or decreases in student achievement. There is research to support the positive effect of developing shared leadership capacity in schools on student achievement, therefore future analysis of achievement results in these schools may reveal more information.

3. To capitalize on the educational opportunities enabled by multiple campus for students, staff, and parents.
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Respecting the need for individual school identities, principals to a lesser or greater degree have joint school functions as it is acceptable to stakeholder groups. For example, many schools now have joint staff meetings, joint professional development, joint school councils, one newsletter, one student council, and joint special events.

Students have been able to realize many benefits, for example the involvement of the high school joint campus students in additional course selections and the involvement of elementary students with junior high students in a first ever school choir.

Increased teacher collaboration among campuses and within campuses is apparent. In several schools teachers that worked in isolation because they were the only teacher teaching a grade, or the only teacher in a department, are now working on collaborative teams with other professionals. All schools are approaching professional development as one staff working together.

Support staff have been able to divide duties according to strengths. For example in most campuses, one administrative assistant does school generated funds for both schools. Most schools have been able to network such that information travels seamlessly via technology, although this continues to be a challenge for some schools.

Principals continue to work at ensuring that the visibility of the principal is maintained in both schools. At the same time, they have been successful at working with changing staff and parent expectations for the principalship and moving to building shared leadership capacity. Staff and parents are now accepting of the team approach to school leadership.

Principals overall reported a very positive start up to the first school year. Principals report that the start up for year two is even more successful, and that they are able to do an even better job of managing their time. In year one, principals believed that the primary impact was on the time of the principal, and on the need, through the transition period, to attend two functions in many areas for both schools. Since the two campuses are now viewing themselves as one school, the need to attend two functions is lessening.

4. To increase the viability and to ensure the continued existence of quality small schools.

Out of the 12 campuses involved, 11 continue to be operational campuses. Westview Village campus remains in open status, however, parents of students at that campus made the choice to send them to the Winterburn site in September, 1999.

The Queen Alexandra/Garneau School has seen an overall increase in enrolment, however program shifts have occurred between campuses. As of September 2000, regular program students at the Queen Alexandra campus were temporarily located to the Garneau campus due to decreased enrolment in the regular program at Queen Alexandra. It is expected that enrolment in the Logos program at the Queen Alexandra campus will continue to grow.

While enrolment at some multiple campus schools shows increases when compared to 1998, significant decreases were seen at Rutherford/Idylewylde school where enrolment decreased by 70 students from 1998. This did take into account the reduction of one class of Learning Strategies that was a result of an overall district reduction in student enrolment in the Learning Strategies program. Decreases were also seen at the Ellerslie Campus. These were predicted as a result of changing community demographics. Significant housing development in the Ellerslie area is expected to add to future enrolment. (Appendix I)

Unanticipated Results in Year One

Pooling funding has resulted in upgrades at one or both campuses that were not possible prior to the project in several instances. An example of this is significant technological upgrades at the Stratford Campus of Jasper Place School.

Principals all report that they have learned to work from a shared, collaborative, leadership approach. Breakthroughs are being realized in shared and distributed leadership models and leadership capacity is being developed. Principals report that secondary leaders and office staff are key in developing this new leadership model. Leadership is developing among teachers. Principals all report changes in how the role of the principal is operationalized. While the responsibilities of the principal remain the same, the actual activities undertaken are changing as the leadership in the school takes on more of a leadership team organization.

APPENDIX II

School Budget Surplus/Deficit and Enrolment

Surplus/Deficit - August 1999 and August 2000

	Jasper Place	Ellerslie Campus	Idylwylde Rutherford	Garneau Queen Alexandra	Mill Creek Ritchie	Winterburn Westview
August 1999	-270,431	5,244	-59,033	87,766	95,291	63,303
August 2000	176,659	29,081	-4,693	1,635	75,019	28,303

School Enrolment as of September 1998, 1999 and 2000

School	1998	1999	2000	Difference between 1998 and 2000
Mill Creek/ Ritchie	286	293	279	-7
Garneau/ Queen Alexandra	192	199	282	+90
Rutherford/ Idylwylde	239	220	169	-70
Ellerslie Campus	596	552	514	-82
Jasper Place	2084	2191	2140	+56
Winterburn/Westview	300	353	410	+110