

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 13, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Holyrood School: Character Education Program

ORIGINATOR: M. Romanko, Principal, Holyrood School

RESOURCE

STAFF: Ruth Andrews, Kathryn Babowal, Jill McPhee-Burton, Lisa Pelzer,
Elsa Robinson, Shelley Wells

INFORMATION

Holyrood School is a kindergarten to grade six school serving 452 students. The school has three language programs: English Mainstream, French Immersion and Ukrainian Bilingual. Although there are three programs, school-wide planning and activities predominate and unite the students, staff and parents.

The focus at Holyrood School is on student achievement. Our definition of student achievement includes not only academic growth but social, emotional, physical and cultural growth as well. As Maurice Elias states in his book "Promoting Social and Emotional Learning":

"...schools play an essential role in preparing our children to become knowledgeable, responsible, caring adults ...when schools attend systematically to students' social and emotional skills, the academic achievement of children increase, the incidence of problem behaviors decreases, and the quality of the relationships surrounding each child improves. And students become the productive, responsible, contributing members of society that we all want."

As the motto of the school says, we are "Working Together for a Successful Tomorrow". At Holyrood, we truly believe that we are preparing students for a successful tomorrow by developing the emotional and social skills needed to become responsible, caring citizens and to achieve academic success.

In 1998, staff identified behaviors that were interfering with student academic growth. To address these behaviours a character education program was created. Although staff chose to call it "Character Education", the program includes portions of the Lions Quest Skills for Growing Program, Skills Streaming Program and the Safe and Caring School

Program. The goal was to ensure that students had the social and emotional skills to be successful academically.

Based on staff input, each year a committee identifies the skills and values that will have a school-wide focus. The committee researches the focus for the month and puts together a package of information with accompanying sample lesson plans. The information is shared and discussed at a staff planning meeting. Several of the activities planned are school-wide activities, but most of the daily teaching and support of the skills and values is teacher chosen and based on the needs of the students in the class. The librarian identifies a collection of literature that supports the skill and values. Students who demonstrate the skills and values being promoted could receive a “Caught Being Good” card that is posted on a bulletin board at the main entrance. Each morning when the day’s announcements are being made on the intercom, three examples of the “Caught Being Good” cards are read over the intercom to reinforce what the skills and values may look like and to further promote practice of the skill.

Our Character Education Program also includes a student leadership and community service component. Students have opportunities to take on a variety of leadership roles within the school that not only helps students build a positive working school climate but gives students an opportunity to practice a variety of roles and responsibilities that are the building blocks of responsible citizenship. Students also plan a variety of community service projects throughout the year that promote the themes of study.

We believe that our “Character Education Program” contributes a great deal to the academic success of our students. In 1999-2000, the number of students who achieved the acceptable standard increased in all subjects at the grade six level and in one subject at the grade three level. In grade six more than ninety per cent of our students achieved the acceptable standard in all subject areas and at the grade three level more than ninety per cent of our students achieved the acceptable standard in language arts.

“To reach a child’s MIND a teacher must first capture his/her HEART.”

MR:jj