

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 23, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Improving Student Achievement by Supporting Successful Transitions from High School

ORIGINATOR: J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

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INFORMATION

Edmonton Public Schools, as a district of choice, provides a range of supports to high school students to prepare them for further study and the world of work. Examples of supports include, but are not limited to: Second Language Credentialing, Registered Apprentice Program (RAP), as well as locally-developed courses for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs. The goal of supporting student transitions is to match high school instruction to the student's actual destination following high school. This is done through programming that is responsive to students' needs and interests and aligns with all three District priorities.

This report and board presentation will focus on an innovative and unique approach to supporting student transitions from high school, through the work of The Skill Centre, Decision Unit 345. This decision unit supports high school students from various high schools across the District, and runs the related Skill Centre Programming at Amiskwaciy Academy.

The Skill Centre, Decision Unit 345

Student Competitions

The Skill Centre provides opportunities for students to showcase their learning in ways that are beyond the mandate of a formal progress report. Examples include: The Provincial Skills Canada Competition, Canadian Culinary Federation Culinary Challenge, Critics and Awards Program (CAPPIES) and the District Career and Technology Studies (CTS) Awards. In addition, the District is continuing to expand the number and range of competitions with F1 in Schools: The Formula One Technology Challenge (i.e., 1/20th scale CO₂ Formula One car races) and aligning CTS Evergreening Funds to Skills Alberta areas.

External Examinations

Students may take part in examinations which provide workplace and post-secondary recognized credentials after completing high school. District developed supports such as

Computer Repairs, which can lead to A+ certification from the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTia), are being utilized. Work is now being undertaken to support the introduction of Apprenticeship Agreement 3400 Level Modules for recognition by Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT).

Dual Credit

Formal articulation agreements that may allow students to receive recognition at the post-secondary level for high school learning have been developed. In this model students are fast tracked into employment with continuing on-the-job learning in the health care field. The Skill Centre decision unit is also closely examining work done at the post-secondary level for high school credit including: “Running Start” and Ontario’s “gotocollege” models. These programs involve students taking post-secondary classes with support at the District level.

The Skill Centre – Programming Located at Amiskwaciy Academy

The Skill Centre provides a unique and innovative program to support students from District high schools in their transition to further study and the world of work. The Skill Centre programming is based on three beliefs:

1. Resources need to be clearly identified and available (including teacher training)
2. Curriculum is clear and provides sequential learning opportunities
3. Recognition of high school learning for preferred entry at a post-secondary institution.

By bringing together educators, business and industry, post-secondary institutions, and government, The Skill Centre has focused on researching and developing programs that serve students in Edmonton Public Schools. By concentrating resources in one location and using career-related programming in a simulated workplace context, the District seeks to develop specific and transferable skills for high schools students. Students register in their home school and select the programs offered at The Skill Centre as option courses within their high school timetable. Through innovative partnerships, The Skill Centre offers four distinct programming areas: Aviation Maintenance; Culinary Arts; Manufacturing/Pre-Engineering; and Health Care.

As the programming at The Skill Centre evolved, it became evident that more than four classrooms were needed to meet district needs. Currently the Manufacturing/Pre-Engineering Program is also being delivered at Lillian Osborne School using the “The Skill Centre Approach”. Other high schools are applying “The Skill Centre Approach”, as they endeavour to provide students with programming in Architectural and Mechanical Design or Financial Literacy/Entrepreneurship.

As part of a five-year research plan, the District is carefully tracking and following the progress of students to see the impact of The Skill Centre’s programming on students’ future career choices, graduation rates and overall student satisfaction. Adjustments will be made, based on data collected, to successfully support student transitions from high school.

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