

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 13, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Scott Robertson School: A Place to Shine

ORIGINATOR: T. MacPherson, Principal, Scott Robertson School

RESOURCE
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INFORMATION

Scott Robertson School is a three-decision unit school with five programs spread over two sites in North Edmonton. Within the school site we have a mainstream kindergarten to grade 6 program, an Individual Support Program that services students with severe disabilities, an Early Education program, and the Early Education Outreach program. Our second site services students at Rosecrest who are medically complex and severely disabled.

The mainstream kindergarten to grade 6 program serves approximately 178 students with several students with special needs integrated throughout. The school has exceptional teachers who work closely with parents to ensure the educational needs of the students are met. Some unique aspects to our mainstream program include our Volunteers Inspiring Students To Achieve (VISTA) reading program that sees parent volunteers working with struggling readers, reading recovery and our Project LOVE (Let Older Volunteers Educate). We support our students with many extra curricular activities such as our running club, handball club, drama club, and our handbell choir.

Scott Robertson School is also a district site for the Individual Support Program. This program services approximately 13 students in their year one to six program who have been diagnosed with severe delays in one or more areas of development. All students are on Individual Program Plans and the program focuses on life skills, communication development and community outings. In the past four years, this program has implemented the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Each child uses picture symbols to develop their communication capabilities within their classroom and home environment. These students also participate in monthly community outings to increase their life exposure and experience.

Our Rosecrest site services 14 students from age 4 to 21 who are medically complex and live in a residential setting. Due to their unique medical needs they are unable to leave this setting and receive their educational program at Rosecrest. All of these students are on Individual Program Plans that include gross motor programs, life skills, choice making and community outings. A strong component of this program is the use of technology to meet the student's individual needs. All students have access to assistive technology and each student spends time in our Sensory/Snoezlen room.

Perhaps the greatest growth that has occurred at Scott Robertson over the past four years has been within our Early Education Program. The Early Education Program is an Alberta Learning initiative that runs at no cost to the district and services children age 2 ½ to less than six years of age who have been assessed to have a severe disability in one or more area of development. Funding is provided through Alberta Learning's Program Unit Funding (PUF) and is available for three years or until the child turns six. The program provides intervention by special needs teachers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapist, physiotherapists, behavior consultants and in-home specialists. A unique feature of this program is the in-home visit component that provides each child with a monthly visit where the family and classroom professional work on the skills that are taught at school in the home environment.

This program has shown tremendous growth over the past four year. In 2000 there were three classrooms with 40 students and fifteen staff. For the 2003 – 2004 school year we service 100 students in seven classrooms with approximately 30 staff. We have developed two specialized classrooms within the Early Education program. The first being a Bridge classroom that services students in their last year of PUF who will not qualify for further special needs funding but are still at risk for future school failure. The program is a full day kindergarten that provides extra supports with behavior management, animated literacy, and a high student-staff ratio. The second classroom is one that services students diagnosed or suspected of having Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Our staff have taken specialized training and work closely with community agencies such as Services For Children with Disabilities, Child And Family Services, and the Glenrose.

This year we have introduced a new pilot project for the 2003 – 2004 school year. In partnership with Region 6: Services for Children with Disabilities, we are providing educational services to Early Childhood Services children who have been diagnosed with autism. This program provides a specialized treatment approach both in the school and home environment. Each child is provided with a full time teaching assistant who is specially trained in the Intensive Behavior Intervention approach. We are currently servicing four students this year and hope to expand to eight for 2004 – 2005. All of our initiatives have grown out of collegial discussion concerning what is best for children and they have proven to be fruitful endeavours.

Our greatest growth has occurred in our Early Education Outreach Program. In 2002 – 2003 we participated in a pilot project where our staff went into North Edmonton community kindergartens to assist in identifying kindergarten students who could qualify for the PUF grant and then providing them with speech-language, occupational and physiotherapy supports as well as with behavior interventions. Our intention was to service approximately ten students in three to four schools. However, due to the unexpected need we ended up servicing 41 students in 21 schools. For the 2003 – 2004 school year we anticipated an even greater need and are currently servicing approximately 150 students in 50 schools.

The advantages of the outreach program are clearly evident. We are able to provide immediate supports to students and classrooms while ensuring an integrative setting. The current climate sees a six month to one year wait for speech services as well as occupational and physical therapy services. We have hired speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists who are available for assessment and treatment the minute a

child is identified by their community school. We are also able to provide the community kindergarten with teaching assistant support that results in the benefit of all children in the classroom. Due to the financial climate in most small elementary schools this support would most likely be unavailable to the school. However, due to our high enrolment and specialized funding we are able to provide supports that most school's could not access.

This year we have also expanded our staff-training component of our Outreach program. Scott Robertson school provides monthly in servicing to all the staff that work with the PUF outreach students. We also open this training up to any of the other staff that work in our community schools. We feel that by sharing the best practices with all staff we are working towards improving professional practice as well as promoting a positive attitude towards inclusion at all levels of the school environment.

This growth has resulted in the following staffing data for 2003 – 2004:

	Enrolment	Total Staffing	Total Teachers	Total Exempt (SLP, OT, PT, InHome)	Total Teaching Assistants
Total Early Education Program	267	114.5	9.5	19	74
In School Early Education Program	102	38	9	9	10
Outreach Early Education Program	165	76.5	1/2	10	64

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