

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 25, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Mary Butterworth: Integration of Technology to Improve Student Achievement

ORIGINATOR: P. Harris, Principal, Mary Butterworth School

RESOURCE STAFF: Robert Steenwinkel

INFORMATION

Mary Butterworth School is a junior high school located in north central Edmonton with a population of 575 students in grades seven to nine. Students come largely from Lorelei, Beaumaris, Dunluce, and Baturyn communities but many come from outside the school's attendance area. Mary Butterworth offers a semi-core approach to learning in grade seven (one teacher teaches language arts and social studies and one teacher teaches mathematics and science), regular programming in grades eight and nine, Opportunity and Basic literacy programs, a Resource program for challenged students in mathematics and language arts, and a Gold Card program for honours students.

When Mary Butterworth School opened eight years ago, it was recognized that today's students are exposed to an every-increasing technological world. The opportunity was taken to organize learning in a way that integrated computer technology throughout the core curricula rather than treating computer technology as a separate and distinct course. J. Hobal, the school's first principal, wrote:

"We believe that our school must provide resource-based "hands on" opportunities for learning that focus on and foster the ability of students to analyze information, communicate, define problems, and produce solutions relative to the creative interaction with human, technological, and other resources. New relationships and approaches to curriculum delivery, organization for learning, and teaching and learning will be essential in this integrated broad-based technologically supported learning environment."

This vision has been maintained and has evolved successfully over the past eight years. Students are technologically literate to an enviable degree as they leave grade nine; virtually all of their courses have involved the use of advanced computer technology.

Through the creation of integrated units of practice, grade specific 'traditions' are developing that require both staff and student team building and cooperation skills in order to make technology learning meaningful. This approach allows students to acquire skills that facilitate the transfer of knowledge between disciplines and develop an appreciation for the interrelated nature of knowledge.

Student achievement has shown a steady improvement over the years and the school has developed a reputation for academic excellence. Staff is continuing to pay attention to developing meaningful learning strategies, meeting course objectives, analyzing achievement data and addressing emergent needs, and integrating computer technology across the curricula.

As we begin the 21st century, we believe that Mary Butterworth School will continue to take advantage of leading edge technological innovations that will enhance and improve the meaningful connections that students are making as they challenge the curriculum within a curriculum and continue to be 'learning today for tomorrow'.

PH:jj