

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 30, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Meadowlark School's Instructional Focus on Literacy

ORIGINATOR: F. Yeske, Principal, Meadowlark

RESOURCE STAFF: Debra Mielke, Zenia Nemish, Lu Zhang, Christine Zihrul

INFORMATION

Meadowlark School, located in the west central area of Edmonton, is an elementary school serving 300 students. Meadowlark is a district site for the Mandarin Bilingual program with 175 students currently enrolled in the program. In 1998, Meadowlark School underwent an extensive modernization. The school leases space to Consulting Services, the Edmonton Before and After School Care and the Meadowlark Community Play School.

The instructional focus at Meadowlark School is literacy. We believe the key to academic achievement is a strong literacy foundation. Strong literacy skills are critical for learning in all subject areas. This belief and instructional focus provide the foundation for our organization, staffing, timetabling, instructional practices, purchase of resources and professional development.

Four key aspects of our literacy instructional focus include: a Balanced Literacy program across all grade levels, Reading Recovery, professional development and collaboration and a team approach involving all staff, students and parents.

Balanced literacy was introduced at Meadowlark three years ago. All teachers and teacher assistants have been or are being trained. Balanced Literacy has led to consistency and continuity in our programming. It has provided staff with a common language to use when discussing student work with students and parents. In Addition Meadowlark has offered Reading Recovery for two years.

Built into our school plan are opportunities for collaboration and professional development, which are key elements of our instructional focus. Professional development opportunities include Balanced Literacy training, lunch hour literacy meetings, sharing best practices at staff meetings, and involvement in assessment projects. Teachers have collaborative meetings during school time to look at student work together and to plan next steps for instruction and monitoring.

Our literacy focus involves all our staff, students, and parents. Our music teacher, our library technician, our teacher assistants, all contribute to student success in literacy.

Students are encouraged to take ownership of their literacy development through a daily reading program as well as daily homework. We give our students the tools to be strong readers and writers; we make sure they know what excellence in reading and writing looks like; and we expect them to do their best.

Parents are an integral part of our team approach to academic achievement through a strong literacy foundation. Parents volunteer on a regular basis to read with students, to help in classrooms, and to work in the library; they help at home by monitoring homework, by reading to and with their children, and by demonstrating their commitment to education. Fundraising has brought many dollars to the school for resource acquisition.

The acronym TEAM, Together Everyone Achieves More, reflects our belief and practice as we strive to improve student achievement through a strong literacy foundation.

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