

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 19, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Character Education in Edmonton Public Schools

ORIGINATOR: M. de Man, Department Head Designate

RESOURCE

STAFF: Donna Barrett, Mardi Bernard, Dean Caouette, Barbara Cragg, Judy Craig, Marion de Man, Pat Hogaboam, Barbara Milne, Laurie Sorensen, Janet Stiles, Stuart Wachowicz, Lisa Wright

INFORMATION

This report is provided as a result of a trustee initiative that requested information about the district's present work in character education and the feasibility of a district character education direction.

The report looks at two areas:

1. What is presently happening in the district.
2. Competencies for Success Framework: an examination of a potential initiative which would serve to facilitate the inculcation of character education into all aspects of school life, for those schools who would wish to participate.

What is presently happening in the district:

A questionnaire was distributed to schools (April 23, 2001), requesting information on any character education initiatives that were currently implemented. The questionnaire would give feedback as well on the status and nature of such programs throughout the district.

Of the 130 respondents, 73 district schools indicated they are currently involved in some type of character education (approximately 35 per cent of district schools). Positive responses were acquired from elementary, junior and senior high schools (Appendix I).

The responses showed that there was a wide range of differing programs in place, as well as a range in terms of the degree of implementation. Respondents indicated a multitude of different resources in use.

In terms of the degree of implementation, many are in the initial or early planning phases. It needs to be noted that lacking any kind of benchmark, the identified stage of implementation is subject to individual interpretation. It should also be mentioned, that of the schools that did not officially respond, a number did indicate they do attempt to build into students in the school aspects of character without operating a recognized program.

Schools also reported on the types of resources they are using in their character education or citizenship education program (Appendix II).

The survey indicated that there is a strong increase in the number of schools choosing to focus on the area of developing character and citizenship. This is a very encouraging trend.

Competencies for Success Framework:

Given that there is a rapidly growing interest in the area of character education, an initiative has been proposed to facilitate successful implementation of a character and citizenship focus in district schools.

Background: In an effort to improve achievement for *all* students, educators are searching for practical strategies that enhance the overall classroom and school climate for learning. A significant shift in thinking about the teaching and learning process (overall school culture) is desirable to successfully incorporate and adapt strategies that meet the diverse needs of all learners. Strategies must focus on developing knowledge and building skills that enable students to take action and demonstrate behaviors that support and promote learning and positive achievement for themselves and others.

Elements integrated in this framework of competencies, are designed to build capacity within the individual (intrapersonal skills) as well as between and among individuals (interpersonal skills). This incorporates current research on learning from various disciplines such as cognitive science and behavioral psychology, and the social and emotional sciences. Such multi-disciplinary studies support the inclusion of character education and desirable citizenship qualities that are part of a culture required to achieve broad goals of education in all schools.

This initiative is grounded in the Vision, Mission and Goal Statements as outlined by Alberta Learning (February, 2001). It addresses ways in which we can achieve results directed at “optimizing human potential,” and ways to enable “Albertans to be responsible, caring, creative, self-reliant, and contributing members of a knowledge-based and prosperous society.” This is also consistent with the basic beliefs, commitments and expectations of Edmonton Public Schools as indicated in the Budget Planning Manual 2001-2002.

In order for students to learn and develop these strategies over time, educators must move beyond an awareness level themselves, to model and coach these competencies for and in others. The **Competencies for Success Framework** (Appendix III), is designed to create a culture that fosters and supports an optimal environment for learning. It is based on strategies that develop and support integrity (both personal and professional), as evidenced by congruence of espoused theory (beliefs) with actions.

This framework for building culture and common sense of purpose within schools is flexible, and infuses proven and well-grounded attributes from current theory and practice. (These include elements such as, motivation, hope and resilience, personal and professional growth, health and well-being, consideration of diversity in building community, effective learning strategies and multiple intelligence theory).

The framework supports essential competencies for all learners (as identified by Conference Board of Canada), and elements of the Quality Teaching Standard (as defined by the Alberta Teachers' Association - Alberta Learning) (Appendix IV).

Competencies For Success Framework will build capacity of teachers, students, and parents to be effective in identifying and implementing the **School Instructional Focus**.

For example, **Competencies For Success Framework** will promote and enable participants to:

- grow and embrace change
- build collaborative skills
- encourage and value diversity
- enhance creative problem solving
- promote effective use of resources
- set SMART goals
- monitor and evaluate progress
- celebrate and rejuvenate

Rationale: To make available district-wide professional development that establishes a common foundation for teaching and learning processes; thereby building and supporting a positive school culture for learning. The intent of **Competencies For Success Framework** is to infuse a systemic approach for culture and community building within schools, using proven strategies from a variety of sources and disciplines.

Results: Participants will:

- develop and demonstrate a practical understanding of personal mastery (intra and interpersonal skills)
- integrate basic principles of personal mastery into everyday life
- apply knowledge and skills to establish a highly effective paradigm for establishing and supporting school culture (within schools and across district)
- incorporate strategies that address basic psychological human needs thereby positively influencing growth and achievement

Implementation Plan:

- staff development components
- coaching and on-site follow-up (respond to various school contexts and individual school needs, and aligned with **School Instructional Focus**)
- time Line: Pilot starting in October 2001 (4 pilot schools: 2 elementary, 2 secondary).
- incorporate various support resources (K-12 teaching and student resources), and identify gaps for future resource development.

SW:dh

- APPENDIX I: Character Education Survey Responses
- APPENDIX II: Character Education Resources
- APPENDIX III: Competencies for Success Framework
- APPENDIX IV: Essential Competencies Summary

CHARACTER EDUCATION SURVEY RESPONSES

In response to the question “Do you have a character education program at your school?” respondents indicated the following:

Breakdown by type of school

- 130 out of 210 schools responded
- 73/130 schools responded YES (56%)
- 35% of district schools are involved in a character education initiative

School	Have Character Education Program	Do not have Character Education Program	Total Respondents
K-6	51	31	82
7-9	8	14	22
K-9	9	3	12
K-12	2	4	6
10-12	3	5	8
	73	57	130

CHARACTER EDUCATION RESOURCES

In response to the question, “What resources are you using (e.g., books, kits, A.V. materials, human resources, music, curriculum connections, service clubs, etc.)?”

In general, schools identified a variety of the following as helpful supports to their school-wide character education focus:

- books
- kits
- videos
- human resources (staff, community, parents, students)
- drama presentations
- music
- literature
- student leadership teams
- peer support training
- posters
- displays
- curricular materials (relating to Health, Language Arts, Social Studies)
- conflict management training programs
- assemblies
- school-wide themes and projects
- community service

The following programs and/or specific resources were frequently cited in survey responses:

- Quest – Skills for Growing
- Skill Streaming
- Positive Behavior Project
- Dare
- Esteem Builders
- Assist Series
- Conflict Management
- Getting Along With Others
- Second Step
- Safe and Caring Schools
- Six Pillars of Character

COMPETENCIES FOR SUCCESS FRAMEWORK

Critical Learnings Matrix

<u>CRITICAL LEARNINGS</u> Personal Competencies <i>(ME = Intrapersonal)</i>	TEACHING QUALITY STANDARDS	CHARACTER ETHIC <i>(positive attributes)</i>	<u>ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES</u> <i>(Employability Skills - Conference Board of Canada)</i>
1. Self Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emotional states (self-regulations, differentiate feeling states) • self-image and esteem (link to self-talk) • self knowledge – tools/strategies (e.g.: MI – 9 intelligences, EQ, link to perception, personal reflection) 	A, C, D, F, I, K	Respect for ones self Honesty Confidence Self-discipline	1.1 1.2
2. Self-Monitoring and Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perception - attitudes and beliefs (truth as we perceive/believe it to be (unlike habits = actions/behaviors)) • attitudes (how they develop, how to change) • expectations (rational mind, logic vs emotional brain) • stress and eustress (cognitive dissonance) • hope resiliency, intent, purpose (vision/aspirations, link to goal setting, value of humor) 	A, C, D, F, I, K	Respect for others Honesty Flexibility Patience	1.1 1.2 3.1
3. Goal Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • end result thinking (link to vision) • affirm, create and visualize (dominant picture) (FB/FU, +/- memory stored in body, link to eustress) (link to motivation (energy)),	D, E, F, G, K	Responsibility Honesty Commitment Perseverance Excellence Self-discipline	1.2 3.1

<u>CRITICAL LEARNINGS</u> Personal Competencies <i>(ME = Intrapersonal)</i>	TEACHING QUALITY STANDARDS	CHARACTER ETHIC <i>(positive attributes)</i>	<u>ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES</u> <i>(Employability Skills - Conference Board of Canada)</i>
reflection and consequences			
4. Creativity and Wisdom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mind-brain awareness • brain/body connection (what happens when I learn) • strategies for success – perseverance (how I learn best, study skills) • affirmations (tools, strategies and processes) (change the brain/new thinking patterns, scripts) 	A, E, F, G, I, K	Respect for others Respect for Self Consideration Co-operation Perseverance Flexibility Self Discipline Creativity	1.1 1.2 3.1
5. Life Balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roles • states of well-being (physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual) body/brain system (dynamics of energy flow) 	D, F, K	Determination Honesty Responsibility Respect for self Courage Perseverance	1.1 1.2
6. Risk Taking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accountability/locus of control (relate to responsibility for self and others) • comfort zones • goal setting (relate to strategies/visualization, etc.) 	F, G, I, K	Determination Confidence Courage Self Discipline	1.1 3.1
7. Talk (the inner and outer voice) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self talk (link to calculated risks/fears) • dealing with talk from others • how to “encourage” (foster growth for self and others) • being assertive (how to get what I need – not passive/aggressive) 	D, E, F, I, K	Patience Tolerance Respect Assertiveness	1.1 2.1

<u>CRITICAL LEARNINGS</u> Personal Competencies <i>(ME = Intrapersonal)</i>	TEACHING QUALITY STANDARDS	CHARACTER ETHIC <i>(positive attributes)</i>	<u>ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES</u> <i>(Employability Skills - Conference Board of Canada)</i>
8. Conscious Competence (Personal Mastery) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflective practice (critical self reflection) • metacognition (think about my own thinking/processes/habits) • clarify intent and purpose • accept personal responsibility – accountability (results of actions, choices – link to fears, poor responses; forgiveness – link to vision/hope/humor) • integrity (congruence of behavior and espoused belief) (link to truth, perception, risk taking) 	A, B, D, E, F, G, I, K	Patience Confidence Responsibility Integrity Honor Reflectiveness Reliability Purposefulness	1.1 1.2 3.1 3.2

COMPETENCIES FOR SUCCESS

Critical Learnings Matrix

<u>CRITICAL LEARNINGS</u> Social Competencies <i>(WE = Interpersonal)</i>	TEACHING QUALITY STANDARDS	CHARACTER ETHIC <i>(positive attributes)</i>	<u>ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES</u> <i>(Employability Skills - Conference Board of Canada)</i>
1. Connecting with others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relationship skills (building, maintaining, ending) (define/recognize/build healthy relationships) • win-win (strategies for managing conflict) • belonging (tribal, group, symbolic power) (negative/positive pressure; self/other talk) • empathy (developing understanding, shared wins) • synergy (shared learning, motivation, energy flow) 	A, D, E, F, I, J, K	Respect Responsibility Courtesy Flexibility Honesty Co-operation Consideration Kindness Caring Creativity Enthusiasm Friendliness Justice Peacefulness	2.1 2.2 3.1
2. Mentorship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach, share, model (nurture capacity in others) • support networks • coaching • service/generosity (reciprocal energy, build community) • stewardship • natural authority/shared leadership (shared power/power to, not over others) • collaborative/co-operative learning 	A, B, D, E, F, G, J, K	Helpfulness Responsibility Honesty Consideration Co-operation Patience Reliability Caring Kindness Service	2.1 2.2 3.2

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES SUMMARY

Taken from: The Alberta Framework of Essential Competencies for Working, Learning and Living –
Employability Skills Profile: Conference Board of Canada

1. BUILDING PERSONAL CAPACITY

- 1.1 Personal Management – self development, risk management
- 1.2 Managing Transitions – lifelong learning, adapting to change, career development

2. INTERACTING AND COMMUNICATING

- 2.1 Work with Others – Interpersonal communications, building community, teamwork
- 2.2 Communicating – listening, speaking, reading, writing

3. PLANNING AND MANAGING

- 3.1 Thinking – problem solving/decision making, finding information, creative thinking
- 3.2 Achieving Results – providing service, making products, ensuring quality

4. USING DATA AND COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

- 4.1 Numeracy – basic operations, patterns and relations, shape and space, statistics and probability
- 4.2 Computer Technology – computer basics, electronic communications, productivity tools and processes

TEACHING QUALITY STANDARDS

Taken from: Ministerial Order (#016/97)

Descriptors of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Related to Permanent Certification (abridged):

- A. Teachers' application of pedagogical knowledge, skills and attributes is based in their ongoing analysis of contextual variables.*
- B. Teachers understand the legislated, moral and ethical frameworks within which they work.*
- C. Teachers understand the subject disciplines they teach.*
- D. Teachers know there are many approaches to teaching and learning.*
- E. Teachers engage in a range of planning activities.*
- F. Teachers create and maintain environments that are conducive to student learning.*
- G. Teachers translate curriculum and objectives into meaningful learning activities.*
- H. Teachers apply a variety of technologies to meet students' learning needs.*
- I. Teachers gather and use information about students' learning needs and progress.*
- J. Teachers establish and maintain partnerships among school, home and community, and within their own schools.*
- K. Teachers are career-long learners.*