

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 18, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Avonmore School: A Look Inside at the Work We Do

ORIGINATOR: P. Christensen, Principal, Avonmore School

RESOURCE
STAFF: Peggy Dugan, Lynee Jones, Margaret O'Brien, Hazel Quigg, Janet Webb

INFORMATION

Avonmore School, located in southeast Edmonton, is a kindergarten to Grade 9 school serving 365 students. The motto of the school, "All Learners, All Teachers, Together" is reflected in the diversity of the programs offered at Avonmore. It is the district site for two distinct special needs programs - Community Living Skills (formerly known as Trainably Mentally Handicapped) and Community Living Skills behavior assistance (formerly known as Mentally Handicapped Behavior Disordered), housed within the elementary section of the school. The Nellie McClung program, an all girls junior high program, is also located within the school. The uniqueness of these programs within the school contributes to the richness of the school environment.

The instructional focus of the school is Reading Comprehension. To support this focus the elementary program is engaged in balanced literacy and reading recovery. Next year reading intervention will replace reading recovery to support reading rotation in Division I. Next year, Division I students will be placed in smaller groupings and will work on reading for 60 minutes each day. The principal and library technician will facilitate the Division I team reading rotation. Balanced literacy, kindergarten to Grade 6, and the Grade 7 AISI project support the school's instructional focus. The school works closely with the language arts consultant, Irene Heffel, for direction and guidance in the implementation of its instructional focus. The Nellie McClung students act as reading mentors to the elementary students.

The school believes that a strong school culture positively impacts student achievement. Often the entire school hosts whole school science and math fairs. Hands-on learning is at the heart of the work at Avonmore School. To establish a strong sense of belonging in their school, students participate in team building activities such as Hallowe'en, Christmas concert, talent show, running club, etc. Leadership opportunities are provided for the students in activities, for example organized recess and community service. The parents are very supportive and involved in the daily life of the school, in such events as hot dog lunches, pizza lunches and running the school store. This foundation of support and team sets a positive tone in the school, and one where behavioral issues are minimal. Such a strong culture provides a strong anchor for students and encourages a solid commitment to their educational pursuits.

PC:pc