

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 18, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

ORIGINATOR: M. de Man, Department Head

SUBJECT: Reading: Testing and Strategies Used at the Senior High Level

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INFORMATION

This information is brought forward in response to a trustee request “that a report be brought to board regarding what high schools are doing for those students who are reading at a level lower than grade level; e.g., the kinds of diagnostic tests being administered.”

The senior high schools initially use the following test results to screen the reading vocabulary and comprehension skills of students entering grade 10 and for those who are new to the district:

- Grade 9 HLAT Tests
- Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Tests
- Previous reading assessments that are included in the student cumulative file
- Consultations between the Senior High Special Needs Coordinator and the Junior High School Counsellor when students pre-register for Grade 10
- Woodcock-Johnson batteries
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-2)
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)

Consultants from Multilingual Services assist school staff in reviewing school files that are written in a language other than English and in assessing the needs of students who are new to the district and are not fluent in the English language.

Additional tests provide specific information regarding the reading ability of those students who are found to be struggling when they enter grade 10 or as they proceed through high school. They include:

- Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (K-TEA), 1998 norms
- Test of Written Language (TOWL-3), 1996 norms
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised, 1998 norms, for ongoing skills assessment
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT-3) for basic screening
- Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Battery for comprehensive assessment
- Canadian Achievement Tests

- Touchstone Applied Science Associates (TASA) Reading 2001
- Schonell
- Gates-McGinitie Tests for Comprehension and Vocabulary
- Canadian Test of Basic Skills 3
- Stanford Diagnostic Test
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC III) for intellectual assessment
- Weschler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-2)
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT-3)
- Test of Early Written Language (TEWL-2)
- Basic Reading Inventory (Jerry Johns, 8th Edition)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (WRMT-R)

The following courses are examples of those available to senior high school students who are reading below grade level:

- Reading 10A for those who have not mastered grade 9 Language Arts and Reading 10B/20B for students who are reading at significantly below grade level
- Modified English 10B/23/33 taught by a reading specialist or special education teacher
- English 16/26/36
- English as a Second Language Reading
- Learning Strategies 15/25/35

The Senior High Special Needs Coordinators' role is to modify programming for students with special needs who are enrolled in the 10B/23/33, 14/24, and 16/26/36 courses and to support other teachers. Individualized timetabling, smaller class sizes, Alberta Learning approved accommodations for completion of assignments and exams, and provision of additional tutorial support are examples of modifications that are to improve reading difficulties. A new software package called Auto Skills Reading Program, a computerized reading reinforcement program, has shown to be effective in improving reading skills for senior high-aged students. It is currently used in several high schools. The Benchmark Reading Program is used to assist students whose reading difficulties have led to continual failure and associated emotional/behavioural difficulties. Centre High School uses two new technologies to assist their students: Shared Learning and Teaching Environment (SLATE) and Advance Broadband Enabled Learning (ABEL).

Numerous high schools have chosen skills related to literacy as their instructional focus. A review and implementation of effective reading measures and programming is part of that focus.

A new resource will be available in September 2002 for mathematics and science teachers that will outline the difficulties that students have with the language of these disciplines and that will provide strategies for students to master both text and vocabulary. Consultants in Programming for Student Differences, Reading, and English as a Second Language provide inservices to high schools on teaching reading in the content areas and assist classroom teachers with programming for individual students, upon request.

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