

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 14, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Acting Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Inglewood School – Focus on Reading Comprehension

ORIGINATOR: B. Boruszczak, Principal, Inglewood School

RESOURCE
STAFF: Dianne Birenbaum, Pauline DeCol, Dale Mandryk, Wendy McNeil

INFORMATION

Inglewood School, located in north-west Edmonton, serves a student population of 165 students. Inglewood's full day kindergarten and grade one to six regular program, serve a diverse group of students with a wide range of needs and abilities.

In 2001 staff made a decision to initiate an instructional focus on writing as the most effective means of improving instruction and student achievement. This decision was based on analysis of data from Highest Level of Achievement Test (HLAT) results, grade three and six Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) results and teacher-awarded marks.

Teachers participated in staff professional development sessions that supported the implementation of best practices in writing which included daily oral language, making connections to literature, modeling writing and using graphic organizers. In addition, students' writing was featured throughout the school on bulletin board displays and in regular installments of the school's newsletter. Growth in the students' writing skills is evident when looking at the data from PAT's in Language Arts. From 2000-2001 to 2004-2005 the grade three results have come up from 80% acceptable standard to 95% while grade six results have gone from 76% acceptable standard to 93% for students who wrote.

As the Inglewood staff team continued to look at results, it became clear that another area of achievement should take priority in the development of best practices. Students' writing skills had grown, but the results in reading achievement fell below expectations. This analysis resulted in the revision of the instructional focus to address the challenges in reading comprehension. Consultation with parents indicated high levels of support for this shift in focus.

Through research by the collective staff team and with the support of a district consultant, a number of best practices in the teaching of reading skills were reviewed during the 2004 – 2005 school year. Collaboration with the Inglewood parent community demonstrated strong support for the introduction of a home reading program. This collaborative process led to the selection of the best practices of home reading, teacher modeling and the teaching of highly effective strategies to improve reading comprehension.

Inglewood School is now in the process of implementing their new instructional focus and use student responses to reading as the interim measure. The provision of specific learning outcomes and rubrics guide students in their quest to learn, grow and do their very best.

In the spring of 2005, a Trio was formed with Glendale, John A McDougall schools. The teachers from the three schools participate in some common professional development and scheduled intervisitations. This partnership provides teachers with the opportunities to collaborate on strategies to build expertise, ensure change in practice, monitor growth and communicate the nature of this involvement with the community. Teachers at all three schools are involved in instructional walk-throughs, using a structured protocol. Collegial conversations based on observation during the walk-throughs go a long way toward improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching through observation, feedback and use of data.

Staff feel the application of identified best practices in reading will continue to enhance student achievement for all students at Inglewood School.