

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: March 7, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Parkdale School: Advisor Groups and Playground Safety

ORIGINATOR: E. Butler, Principal, Parkdale School

RESOURCE
STAFF: Rachel Becker, Heidi Grainger, Terry Hall, Joanne Harle,
Lisa Kachuk, Lynn Merrell, Bill Monro, Terry Murphy

INFORMATION

Parkdale is a kindergarten to grade 9 school built in 1912 and located in Edmonton's "inner city". The school population includes approximately 250 students, 60 percent of whom have an aboriginal heritage.

Our focus is on providing a student centered educational setting in which all children can acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become successful citizens. We believe that all children can and will learn when the worth and dignity of individuals is acknowledged and when individual differences are recognized and met.

At Parkdale School, we are proud of our students who work hard to model good citizenship. We believe that all members of our school community should have the opportunity to contribute if we are going to develop good citizens. Leadership opportunities are provided throughout the school. Noticeable examples of this in our elementary classes include school patrol, office assistants, library helpers and conflict management teams.

This year we have introduced Advisor Groups in our junior high which meet for 20 minutes at the beginning of each afternoon. Each advisor group has the responsibility of monitoring and adjusting its own behavior. Each group is also responsible for a major area of leadership in the school as well as looking after a division one group during scheduled activities. This relationship enables the younger students to look up to our older students instead of fearing them. The grade nine students team up with the teachers to ensure peer leadership in each group.

The advisor groups also provide a major sounding board through which to obtain valued student input into the operation of Parkdale School. Each group sends a representative to a monthly meeting with the principal to discuss issues which can be initiated by either staff or students.

Another new initiative at Parkdale this year is the involvement of junior high students in the elementary recess program. In an effort to address playground safety, two junior high students on a rotating basis join the teachers who are on supervision at each recess. These junior high students come out of their Physical Education classes where they have been taught to run structured activities on the playground. With the increase in structure we have met several objectives. Firstly, the chances of inappropriate behavior such as bullying and horseplay are reduced by the added structure and supervision. Secondly, our junior high students gain a sense of pride in looking after their younger schoolmates. Thirdly, the structure results in the creation of daily physical education without taking away from other areas of instruction. This structure will be changed again next year, moving the responsibility to a Junior High Leadership option. This is based on feedback which has told us that the exercise has excellent value.

At Parkdale we are confident that a strong sense of belonging, citizenship, and safety will lead to an atmosphere which supports higher student achievement.

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