

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 10, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Improving Student Achievement at Belmont Elementary School

ORIGINATOR: D. Kuchta, Principal, Belmont Elementary School

RESOURCE
STAFF: Louise Osland, Corrie Ziegler

INFORMATION

Belmont serves a population of over 300 students and offers regular programming as well as the Logos Christian Alternative Program.

At Belmont School, the skills, knowledge and attitudes of each student are developed to the fullest extent possible within a learning environment that promotes health, well-being and positive relationships. The focus is on development of the total student, which includes growth in intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual areas. Belmont staff are committed to instilling in their students an attitude of success in their program of studies, with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy that will carry through for the rest of their lives.

Belmont has maintained a focus on reading comprehension and writing over the past six years. Through their actions, staff support the belief that the early years are crucial for the development of reading and writing skills in students. Best practices include Balanced Literacy programming in Grades 1 to 4, *6+1Writing Traits* Program and assessment for learning strategies. During the 2008-09 school year, five division one staff and three division two staff are receiving Balanced Literacy in-servicing. In addition, support for struggling readers in Grade 1 continues through the District Reading Recovery Intervention Initiative. Additional guided reading time is provided for students in Grades 2 to 6 who are below grade-level in reading as a way to support their reading comprehension growth.

The staff support numeracy instruction through professional learning opportunities that focus on the best strategies in building mathematics number sense. Professional learning begins with selected staff attending the Math for All (M4A) sessions, which are then shared at the school level. The school has identified a numeracy coach who supports implementation of best practices in all classes. As a result, staff are providing interactive classroom activities, making mathematics make sense from a real world context and building student confidence in number sense.

Student learning is also enhanced through technology. Through the acquisition of video conferencing equipment and interactive white boards, teachers are working collaboratively to integrate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) outcomes throughout the

curriculum. The principal and assistant principal provide modeling and support to classroom teachers in integrating technology outcomes into their student learning activities.

Teachers are engaged in several collaborative, job-embedded professional learning opportunities. They collaboratively plan in grade-level teams twice a year to address common units in mathematics, social studies and science. As part of professional development on writing, staff are provided release time for planning three traits of writing and for grade-level planning in other subjects. In addition, the staff are developing a school-wide writing rubric that aligns with the Provincial Achievement writing rubric. This rubric will provide students with ongoing feedback related to their strengths and needs in writing as well as provide teachers with valuable data to inform instruction.

Belmont staff continue to work in a cohort with staff from Horse Hill and Fraser schools. The three staffs are working collaboratively to develop two common writing genre units and have scheduled common marking time for all three schools to look at student work and refine the writing unit after instruction has occurred.

The work of the staff at Belmont is further bolstered by an active School Council and Parent Association. Recently, the school hosted a Literacy Day Student Conference. It was a tremendous success due in part to the support given by the parent groups and local businesses. Further assistance is given to the school to provide special presentations to recognize the attainment of goals in Character Education, Student Safety and Bullying Awareness.

Belmont staff are committed to helping each and every student become the best that they can be by working in partnership with staff, students and parents. The staff believe that when all stakeholders view each other as partners in education, a caring community is formed around helping students succeed in school and in later life. Staff believe that students are the future and their “Bright Future” begins at Belmont School.

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