

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 10, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: “An Act to Follow” Staff Recognition Program

ORIGINATOR: L. Osland, Student Achievement Services

INFORMATION

The Act to Follow initiative was designed to recognize and celebrate outstanding performances of staff that have resulted in tangible gains in student achievement through diligent work to support teaching and learning. All individuals being recognized today have consistently implemented the teaching and learning framework through their work in schools or central services. In this report, the exemplary work of these individuals is highlighted through one or two of the expectations for schools or central services.

Terri Allen – Teacher Assistant - Daly Grove School

Daly Grove School has demonstrated how Expectation Four, the realignment of resources (people, time, talent, energy and money) supports and enhances student learning. As a staff, a decision was made to allocate resources to support the addition of a teacher assistant to the school team, to enhance students’ academic learning. Terry Allen has clearly demonstrated that this realignment of resources has made a positive difference for children.

Terry’s work supports the instructional focus at Daly Grove School: to improve thinking skills for all students. As a teacher assistant, Terry works one on one with identified students using the best practices the school has identified to enhance student thinking skills. She spends countless hours working with special needs students who need extra help with reading and math. She also works with students for whom English is a second language, and with students who are working below grade level. Terry works with small groups of students within the classroom, or conducts pull-outs with individual students. Terry’s work supports the work of the classroom teachers and reinforces the best practices that they use.

In addition to her work with students, Terri also handles taking attendance, ordering supplies, troubleshooting computer problems and managing the school-wide reading incentive program. This support for the principal and teaching staff frees them up to be able to maintain their focus in teaching and learning for students.

Roxanne Eyben – Curriculum Coordinator - Bonnie Doon Transition Program

Roxanne has been instrumental in establishing the Bonnie Doon Transition program, created to help at-risk junior high students address academic and social challenges while preparing them to return to their neighborhood school. Through a collaborative process, the south side junior high principals selected Roxanne to head up this program. These principals agreed to

realign their resources to provide the necessary support for the Bonnie Doon Transition program.

Roxanne Eyben's work exemplifies Expectation Two: "developing professional collaboration teams to improve teaching and learning". Roxanne meets with her colleagues every morning to discuss student growth and monitor plans developed to support the students. During these team meetings, it is decided how, as a collaborative team, the staff can best meet the learning needs of these students. As one example, teachers have organized individual tutorials for the students, both before and after school.

It is a testament to Roxanne's dedication that most of the sixty students who enter the program each year successfully return to their neighborhood school. In order to make that happen, Roxanne takes collaboration to another level. She works extensively with community agencies, counselors, probation officers and Bonnie Doon Mall management to find programs and initiatives that support academic success. She also works closely with families to assist them in building the skills needed to help students reach academic success.

Roxanne shares the district's commitment to realizing superb results from all students. "For us, superb results is getting students reconnected with school and helping them overcome whatever barriers they face, to recognize, reach for and realize academic success," says Roxanne.

Kathy Henderson – Teacher - Greenfield School

For Kathy Henderson, grade one teacher at Greenfield School, her strength as a teacher lies with Expectation Three, demonstrating the ability to "identify, learn and use effective research-based teaching practices". Kathy has done especially well in using these best practices with special needs students in her classroom. She uses varied instructional strategies with her students so that each student can achieve success in his/her own way.

"When I first started teaching, students just sat there and listened and we rarely let them talk. But today, using research based best practices, we encourage them to engage with you and to tell us what they know, and that's what makes teaching and learning so much fun."

Kathy provides many accommodations through her programming for individual differences, using strategies that are implemented with fairness and always maintaining and affording student dignity. "Her passion, enthusiasm and commitment are second to none," stresses Karen Linden, principal at Greenfield School. "She respects the students so much and accepts them for who they are...she absolutely believes and supports the district's belief statement that every student is capable of superb results."

Although Kathy will be retiring from the classroom this June, she has no intention of leaving teaching and learning behind. "She may be retiring from the classroom, but she will continue as an educator," promises Karen Linden. "Only now she will be able to help other teachers apply the same approaches and best practices that have been shared collaboratively through professional development sessions and that have worked so wonderfully for our students."

Madeline Turner - Accountant - Budget Services

Madeline's daily work demonstrates knowledge, and competent implementation of all Five Central Services Expectations, but especially the implementation of Expectation Two: "collaboration with schools and other decision units to support teaching and learning." Her generous approach to sharing her expertise and experience with school personnel not only makes their jobs easier, but frees them up to spend more time supporting teaching and learning. Madeline believes that until someone understands the budgeting process, there's no question that you shouldn't be able to ask. She acknowledges that not everyone feels comfortable with the budgeting process and does her best to walk them through what they need to know. It's an approach that has endeared her to countless principals and decision unit administrators throughout the district, who know that no matter what the question, Madeline can help them find the answers.

"She'll really bends over backwards to help anyone," says Jamie Pallet, Director of Budget Services and Madeline's supervisor. It's that kind of knowledge, combined with her patience and understanding, that has made her a favourite with staff throughout the district. She's earned a reputation as being a consummate professional, through her words, actions and deeds that support teaching and learning. "What we do as a district works together... although I don't work directly with students, I am involved with what they do at the schools through their planning and their budgets," says Madeline. Jamie Pallett notes that her work also plays an important role in helping schools focus on teaching and learning. "She makes the budgeting process easier, so that schools aren't bogged down with numbers and principals can spend more time in the classroom."