

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 11, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: An Act to Follow Staff Recognition Program

ORIGINATOR: J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendent

### INFORMATION

*An Act to Follow* was designed to recognize and celebrate outstanding performances of staff that have resulted in tangible gains in student achievement through inspirational teaching and diligent work to support teaching and learning. This report highlights the exemplary work of the four individuals who are being recognized at tonight's meeting.

#### **Amy Peter, Teacher, Coronation School**

Amy is a dedicated educator who consistently works hard to ensure that the students in her Behavior and Learning-Opportunity Program classroom are engaged learners, and are working to their potential. Demonstrating knowledge and understanding of her students' behavioral, emotional and academic needs, she has created a safe and respectful learning environment with clear expectations of success for each of her students. Through regular communication, she has also made positive connections with her parent community, ensuring they are partners in their children's education. She has developed a process with her students' families using a home communication booklet and daily phone conversations, which help to enhance student growth and achievement. This open communication, coupled with her encouragement, support and attention, has helped one withdrawn and non-communicative Grade 5 student become a confident child who is now smiling, taking risks and asking questions. Recently, Amy took on the role of district ambassador when she visited three IB World Schools in the USA. She did a wonderful job promoting Edmonton Public Schools and her school's AISI project with student engagement, learning and performance. Upon her return, she shared the information she had learned with students, staff and parents. This willingness to collaborate, teamed with her deep understanding of curriculum, has garnered her respect from the entire school community. Amy truly embodies the spirit of a team player with her high level of commitment to her district, school, and students. One colleague states, "Teaching with Amy was one of the best experiences of my teaching career. She is an invaluable asset."

### **Norma Hartley, Teacher, Aspen Program at Woodside**

Through her diligent work as a high school humanities teacher, Norma fosters student engagement through dialogue and trust. Student engagement thrives under her 'relationship model', and she welcomes all students who enter her classroom. The students soon learn that she is genuinely interested in their learning and their lives, regardless of their background. By quickly building rapport, she is able to see results from even the most resistant of learners. Norma is also an expert at debriefing with staff and students after an incident. She uses her solution focused counseling training to turn seemingly impossible problems into workable possibilities, allowing students to find their own solutions with confidence. Students often call her after they have left the Aspen Program to let her know how they are doing, knowing that she is interested in their well-being. As an instructional leader, Norma has worked exhaustively to find teaching methods that not only meet individual learning needs but also the needs of the class as a whole. She is committed to raising the achievement levels of students by encouraging student voice, continuously listening and discussing the school's growing AISI design with the students and then sharing their feedback with staff. Students describe Norma as "always willing to help us," "listens when we talk," "she changed my path," and "she'll give until there's a little ounce of happiness in you." Not only a mentor and inspiration in the classroom, Norma's role also includes mentoring student teachers and new staff to excel. She does this by listening, encouraging and guiding staff through case conferences, solution-focused problem solving and collaborative planning. In addition, she has led staff in the design of a Humanities Program that translates current global issues into personal understanding.

### **Fermin Escobar, Head Custodian, Mount Royal School**

Fermin approaches his work at Mount Royal School with a generous spirit, unwavering integrity and a steadfast commitment. He takes great pride in ensuring that the school is a safe, clean and healthy environment in which to teach and learn, which has earned him the respect and appreciation of staff, students and parents. He is described by one staff member as, "The heart of Mount Royal School." His care and concern have created a powerful and positive impact on the entire school community and everyone who enters the school is quick to comment on the cleanliness of the building. Last fall, Fermin was instrumental in organizing the first Mount Royal soccer team, volunteering to coach the team for several weeks prior to the first tournament. He met with the students at recess, lunch and after school to teach them the important skills needed to be a successful soccer player as well as the skills needed to be a solid team player. Fermin played an integral role in helping the team win their first gold medal by teaching them the value of leadership, teamwork and fun. He exemplifies the skills he fosters in children as he is the quintessential team player. Fermin is a 'hero' to many of the school's budding athletes. The school council, together with the soccer team, presented him with a Canadian Olympic jacket at a surprise celebration in his honour. Ultimately, Fermin is an incredible role model of hard work and determination and he has created a wonderful atmosphere that contributes to the scholastic achievement of all Mount Royal students. His position goes beyond head custodian to include the role of mentor, leader, and coach. He is an important and inspiring part of the Mount Royal family.

### **Patricia Davidson, Principal, Minchau School**

Pat's powerful leadership style has allowed her staff to become a truly professional learning community where all members have an active role and voice in the continual improvement of the school. Pat put structures in place that drive all of the school's improvement initiatives. The design revolves around five collaborative grade group SMART teams in which teachers have part ownership by sharing their expertise, supporting each other's learning, and in turn becoming mutual leaders. Teams meet monthly to work through the inquiry process using the SMART model to analyze student achievement data, identify students at risk, set goals and develop action plans for improvement. Through this process staff feel empowered, capable, and have a determining role in the students' academic success. As a result of this structure, there has been continued academic improvement as indicated by the Provincial Achievement Tests, with consistent increases each year over the last three years and significant increases in the *standard of excellence*. Teachers are proud of their students' successes, and their energy, eagerness, and commitment are all due to Pat's solid leadership. With a strong commitment to the ongoing professional development of staff, Pat also restructured the distributed leadership team model, optimizing teachers' strengths while at the same time building leadership capacities within the staff. She strongly believes in the importance of pulling the work of the individual SMART and Leadership teams together for the whole staff and provides team sharing time during monthly curriculum meetings. Pat is truly a gifted educator, innovator and leader whose professionalism, enthusiasm and intelligence have inspired her staff and in turn, have enabled all Minchau students to succeed.

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