

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 12, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: An Act to Follow Staff Recognition Program

ORIGINATOR: J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendent

INFORMATION

The *An Act to Follow* initiative 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 36 individuals who are being recognized at tonight's Board meeting.

Sharon Nichols, Educational Assistant, BLA Program, Lee Ridge School

Sharon is a superb educational assistant and "goes the extra kilometer" to ensure that she gets the best results from the students in her classroom. She is aware of student needs, creates partnerships with parents, manages effective classroom organization and routines, and has a clear vision for her work. She was instrumental in creating the partnership with the Hope Mission and the Kids in Action program, supporting needier students and families. In the school community, Sharon has organized programs that help students develop strengths that will enable them to succeed academically. These programs give students positive role models, an outlet for their energy, a safe place to rest and the gift of feeling valued. Sharon is a lifelong learner who is always searching for new strategies, theories, and ideas to use with students. Sharon thought that students were missing the perseverance that comes when a person feels hope for the future. She met with members of The Hope Foundation and attended professional development, Harbours of Hope. The impact was tremendous. Student achievement went up, the students began setting goals for the future and looking ahead to high school graduation and beyond.

John Cates, Technical Analyst, District Technology

John approaches his work with enthusiasm and an unwavering customer service focus. John's level of professionalism is unparalleled and his level of dedication is a model from which all can learn. As a member of the Information Technology Services (ITS) Technical Support Team he continually researches and implements new technologies used by teachers to help educate students. The listening skills he developed as a member of the ITS helpdesk also come in handy as he listens to teachers explaining their technological needs, wishes and roadblocks. John has been appointed to the role of technical coordinator for the SMART board initiative. In this role, John is the team lead in finding solutions to any issues presented by a SMART board, the computer it is connected to, or the connection itself. John recognizes the value of teamwork and actively supports other technical assistants by sharing his experience and knowledge. John's commitment to the District also shows in his support for less advantaged students. For the past several years, John has volunteered to be part of

the technical team supporting the annual Bids for Kids fundraiser evening. John represents ITS in all situations with professionalism, an outstanding service attitude and pride.

Kym Francis, Scott Markine, Kristi Specht, Technology Teaching Team, Hardisty School

“They help me and my classmates here so much you would think they were devoted to us,” a grade seven Hardisty student confidently asserts about the school’s Technology Teaching Team. The collaborative, team approach of these teachers toward integrating technology and implementing Information Communication Technology outcomes as part of their instructional and assessment strategies has vaulted Hardisty to the forefront of the District as a leader in technology use. They work tirelessly to investigate, test and apply various products, applications and programs in the interest of engaging all learners in their classrooms. This exceptional group of teachers believes that teacher learning drives student learning. From helping individual teachers with ideas for activities using various programs, to supporting teachers in their classes when they try something new, to designing and delivering professional development to staff based on the staff’s expressed needs, these teachers are truly focused on the end goal of helping all students learn. These teachers combine the pedagogical principles of differentiation with technology-centered Universal Design for Learning to ensure that students are learning, absorbing and demonstrating concepts in a meaningful manner. One parent states that, “...one of the most important elements of student success is the power of believing. Believing that each student’s dignity matters, that every student has gifts and talents, and that every student can learn and is worthy of teachers’ best efforts. These beliefs are evident in Kym, Scott and Kristi’s classrooms, and students flourish because of it.”

Mary Jane Arthur, Richard Beale, Andrea Belke, Tony Bell, Terry Cairns, Gerald Devost, Cathie Feere, Jacob Fraser, Natalie Gagatck, Kenny Gee, Sarah Gilroyed, Alison Hancox, Angus Hossack, Tricia Kamba, Michele Kelly, Rosemarie Koshman, Daylene Lauman, Bernadette Lyons, Lisa McNeil, Meredith Neale, Linda Nolin, Sheila Pyne, Michelle Rakoczy, Rozina Ramji, Jim Reed, Susan Sawatzky, David Sewell, Mark Sheridan, Zifeng Wang, Ken Whiting, Glenn Wilson, High School Teaching Team, Argyll Centre

The Argyll High School Teaching Team has developed many strategies that contributed to improved student achievement in the past year. They have refined the registration process, developed and implemented an early identification system for students at-risk, and implemented a high school collaborative team that works together to develop strategies designed to increase retention and completion rates. In one year (2006-2007 to 2007-2008) the overall course completion rate increased 31.5 per cent. The team has worked on thoughtful engagement in the course development area and has worked diligently to build units using the Understanding by Design framework. They have improved the flow of communication and information with families and have added an Aboriginal ReachOut Program to support First Nations students in their quest for successful completion of their high school program. The flexibility of the programming in addition to the numerous strategies previously highlighted lead the way in the District as they continuously strive to improve teaching and learning through reflective practice. One Argyll student wrote, “The correspondence model has it’s (*sic*) challenges..., however it has changed my life for the better on many levels... Argyll is just a name, what matters is the connection and the staff are that connection which is why they deserve recognition and support.”

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