

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 24, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Edmonton Public Schools' Alliance with the YMCA of Edmonton

ORIGINATOR: B. Holt, Executive Director, Instructional and Curricular Support Services

RESOURCE
STAFF: Karen Bardy, Gloria Chalmers

INFORMATION

Established through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 1998, the alliance between Edmonton Public Schools and the YMCA of Edmonton was created to focus on common interests in relation to children, youth, and families. Since that time, a number of projects and initiatives at both the district and school level have been implemented. This report provides an overview of the current activities of the alliance.

Vision for the Alliance

As part of the MOU, the following vision was created for the alliance:

The Edmonton Public Schools/YMCA alliance is a model for community/education collaboration based on respect, trust, and mutual benefit. Through openness and innovation, we will have a greater impact on the lives of children, youth, families, volunteers, staff, and the community."

Based on this vision, the alliance activities have focused on three main areas:

- "Enhancing success for children and youth" as it relates to the promotion of healthy lifestyles, the provision of child care programs, and the development of program alternatives for children and youth in need."
- "Providing support to parents, youth, and children" as it relates to the collective efforts of home, school, and community organizations.
- "Creating organizational synergy" as it relates to the sharing of knowledge, expertise, facilities and resources.

Current Initiatives

The following initiatives are in place within the district.

Child Care Centres and Day Care Programs: The YMCA currently operates quality child care centres and after care programs in 8 district schools. The YMCA is committed to working

in partnership with any district school that believes such programs would assist parents in the school. A unique partnership has occurred at George P. Nicholson School where there has been an agreement for the construction of space specifically for the YMCA childcare centre. The YMCA has paid for their space and are operating in the school on a cost recovery basis for operational costs.

City Centre Project: Students in the city centre are involved in a range of activities with the YMCA including Kids Club, an after-school program that provides literacy development and recreational activities, an after-school program focused on reading skills, the Type II diabetes prevention program and the Tobacco Free Y Kids Program. One hundred and thirty students attend a two week Kids University Program in the summer. Family activities like a Halloween Howl and Breakfast with Santa also take place. The Y and CCEP are working together on a violence prevention program for boys.

Time-Out Program: This program offers an alternative to suspension for junior high youth. Youth are referred to the YMCA by their school for the length of their suspension. While at the YMCA they participate in workshops designed to provide them with the skills that they need to become successful students. Topics include: anger management, conflict resolution, decision making, problem solving, and other pro-social development skills. As part of the program, youth complete a success plan for returning to school.

LearnNet at the Y: The Argyll Home Education Services Centre and the Edmonton YMCA are partnered to provide programming for students from Grades 7 to 12 who are unable to attend a traditional school. Students attend regular sessions at the YMCA Enterprise Centre in downtown Edmonton. YMCA staff and onsite Argyll teacher/facilitators provide both life skills and academic programming.

Jumpstart Program: This program helps low-income families access physical recreation programs for children and youth, ages 5 through 19. The goal is to increase physical activity for these children thereby preventing disease related to inactivity. Funding is up to a maximum of \$200 per child or youth to enable participation in fitness and sports programs.

Distribution Centre: The district has put in place procedures that enable the YMCA to utilize the services of the Distribution Centre.

YMAP: The YMCA Achievement Program - Youth Immigrant Project is a collaborative effort between the Edmonton YMCA, the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and the Edmonton Public Schools. The project will provide support to high school immigrant youth to help them achieve academic success and develop career related skills. Youth will be involved in a variety of career related learning and work experience activities. The project is currently seeking funders and is hoping to begin a pilot in one high school for the 2005-06 academic year.

GC/KB:ee