

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 27, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Improving Student Achievement at Hardisty School

ORIGINATOR: A. Lowrie, Principal, Hardisty School

RESOURCE
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INFORMATION

Hardisty School is located in east Edmonton in the Capilano area and serves 355 students. In addition to the Regular Academic Program at Grades seven to nine, Hardisty offers the Logos Alternative Christian Program for students in Grades five through nine. Hardisty School is also a district site for the Learning Strategies Program for Grades seven to nine and the Community Living Skills Program for mentally challenged students between the ages of 12 and 16 years.

Hardisty school has been the overwhelming choice of the community they serve. The five distinct programs at Hardisty make the school rich in diversity while being unified in purpose. The community supports the goal of student success through exemplary learning opportunities which are built on a culture of diligence, inclusion and collaboration.

Culture of Diligence

Staff and students collectively demonstrate and model positive behavior. All students are expected to adhere to the "Culture of Diligence" and as such are expected to:

- Come to class on time with a positive learning attitude
- Bring materials to class
- Have homework completed and ready to share
- Develop positive relationships and be responsible
- Show respect to others and self.

When students are consistently challenged to do their very best in creating a culture of diligence, it becomes the norm. The building of this norm is a *shared* responsibility of all staff and students.

Inclusion

Staff constantly works to remove barriers to learning for all students. Staff meet weekly in collaborative groups to refine and discuss curriculum to ensure it aligns with what is being taught. Students at risk, as well as students with special needs are given multiple supports to ensure success. Some examples of support include: more time during certain class periods to better grasp concepts taught; teacher assistant support; and peer tutoring. There is a

consistent emphasis on instilling confidence within special needs students and helping them believe they *are* capable students.

The meaningful integration of technology also serves to support learning for all students, and especially those with special needs, in a variety of ways. Technology offers students alternate or additional means of acquiring and practicing concepts and provides students with various mediums to demonstrate their learning. By eliminating computers as an optional subject and focusing on making technology an integrated teaching and learning tool, staff have witnessed improved participation, increased student self assessment, and a higher quality of work.

Collaboration

Hardisty staff believe that teacher learning drives student learning. Staff constantly hone their professional skills and pass on what they are learning to their students. All teachers meet regularly in collaborative teams to analyze data gathered through the use of technology, which assists in the decisions on how to best program for students.

Staff also collaborate with their colleagues from their cohort group (Winterburn, Ellerslie, and Killarney) to collectively align curriculum, determine common assessments, analyze data and determine effective teaching strategies. This collaborative work has resulted in the formulation of common assessments allowing staff to broaden the base from which they derive data, which helps drive instruction.

To increase the collaborative nature within the Hardisty community of learners, the staff have put in place plans to use School Zone more extensively next year. This medium will enable parents to be active partners in their child's learning.

Summary

The mission statement at Hardisty is: "At Hardisty we work together to develop every student's academic and social potential". This statement drives their instruction and is the cornerstone of decisions made within the Hardisty professional learning community. As staff and students strive for excellence, through the development of a culture of diligence, inclusion and collaboration, they are realizing the goal of creating bright futures for all.