

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 7, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Dan Knott School's Instructional Focus

ORIGINATOR: M-L. Cleveland, Principal, Dan Knott School

RESOURCE: Debbie Ball, Dale Cooper, George Heidt, Sig Jensen,  
STAFF: Shauna Paul, Linda Thompson

INFORMATION

Dan Knott School Junior High School, located in Millwoods, serves 445 students and is a district site for Learning Strategies, Behaviour Assistance and English as a Second Language. The staff identified Reading for Meaning as the instructional focus and have made the following commitment: To increase student growth across the curriculum, Dan Knott Junior High has identified Reading for Meaning as the target of our Instructional Focus. All students will show growth through the implementation of a school wide reading comprehension program and application of reading strategies in all subject areas. This growth will be measured by school-based assessments, district HLATS and provincial achievement exams.

In reviewing school and provincial data, the staff believed that reading comprehension had been a significant roadblock for improving student achievement. As a result, two major school wide initiatives were implemented for the 2001-2002 school year: a reading comprehension program and reading across the curriculum using a common best practice. To support the reading program, a curriculum coordinator of reading was appointed and students were placed in homogenous reading ability groups in September, 2001. Less proficient readers were placed in classes with a smaller teacher-student ratio to produce class sizes ranging from 11 to 29 students. All students participated in this program called Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies and Strategies to Achieve Reading Success. Both programs concentrate on 12 reading strategies: Finding the Main Idea, Recalling Facts and Details, Understanding Sequence, Recognizing Cause and Effect, Comparing and Contrasting, Making Predictions, Finding Meaning in Context, Drawing Conclusions and Inferences, Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion, Identifying Author's Purpose, Interpreting Figurative Language and Summarizing. The second initiative, reading across the curriculum, is aligned to Blueprints and implemented through a best practice. Lead Teacher Dale Cooper was instrumental in leading staff through a comprehensive process to determine this first best practice. Staff identified subject specific terminology or vocabulary as a significant area of concern and selected Split Page Notes as the best practice.

Understanding and support for the instructional focus are encouraged and communicated through school bulletin boards, morning and afternoon announcements, newsletters, Parent Advisory Council, Meet the Staff, Open House, telephone on-hold messages, and the outside sign. The fact that our designated feeder elementary schools have also selected reading comprehension as their instructional focus will serve to maintain and strengthen student, parent and community support.

MLC:mlc