

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 7, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Language Proficiency Assessment Project

ORIGINATOR: M. de Man, Department Head

RESOURCE

STAFF: Janice Aubry, Dan Clarke, Carol Anne Inglis, Darlene Jones, Veda Lastiwka, Judianne Lilley, Jutta McAdam, Elaine Roberts, Brenda Stemmer, Jan Witwicky

INFORMATION

A *Language Proficiency Assessment Tool*, and related procedures, has been developed to meet the needs of Edmonton Public Schools' staff and administration. The "tool" is designed to assess listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency in a specified language. Assessment results may be used:

- by a staff member for any purpose, including developing a professional growth plan;
- by a principal or supervisor for the purpose of supervising or evaluating a staff member's performance; or
- by Personnel Recruitment and Staffing in order to determine suitability or qualifications for:
 - employment with Edmonton Public Schools,
 - positions for which a staff member has made application, or
 - assignments for which a staff member is being considered.

The *Language Proficiency Assessment Tool* may be used for assessing language proficiency of teacher or support staff candidates for all language programs offered in Edmonton Public Schools. It is also suitable for determining, where deemed necessary, the level of proficiency in English of applicants for custodial, support staff, or teacher positions. For all candidates, the same criteria and standards apply when determining language proficiency.

In the assessment process, oral and written communication skills are measured. The assessment process provides information regarding 12 dimensions of the linguistic qualities demonstrated by the candidate during the specific assessment session. Rubrics used for recording assessment results are attached (Appendix I).

Assessment tasks were developed for English and have been adapted and translated for use in assessing Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Ukrainian language proficiency. The tasks are being translated for Cree and Hebrew.

Proficiency Assessors external to the district have been selected because of their experience assessing language proficiency and their own superior proficiency in the language they assess. Each has undergone training in Edmonton Public Schools' guidelines for proficiency assessment and use of the *Language Proficiency Assessment Tool*, and is paid \$85.00 for each assessment completed.

Development for this project has been a collaboration of efforts involving Consulting Services, Personnel Recruitment and Staffing, and Student Assessment. Funding was provided by Personnel Recruitment and Staffing. Completion of this initiative would not have been possible, however, without the many volunteers who contributed to the development of procedures and assessment tasks and validation of the assessment rubrics.

The contributions of many anonymous volunteers are also acknowledged. These individuals allowed their own language proficiency to be assessed so that the assessment process could be validated.

The support of this initiative by Canadian Union of Public Employees Locals 474, Custodial Workers, and 3550, Support Staff, and the Alberta Teachers' Association, Local 37, has been greatly appreciated.

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APPENDIX I – Language Proficiency Assessment Rubrics