

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 14, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Improving Student Achievement at Parkview Elementary/Junior High School

ORIGINATOR: S. Millar, Principal, Parkview Elementary/Junior High School

RESOURCE
STAFF: Debbie Jackson, Corrie Ziegler

INFORMATION

Parkview School is a Kindergarten to Grade 9 school located in west Edmonton. The learning needs of the 575 students are met through the following programs: regular elementary and junior high programs; Interactions; Behaviour and Learning Assistance; Mandarin Bilingual Language; Pre-Advanced Placement; and English as a Second Language. Through a variety of learning opportunities, students' intellectual, creative, social and physical abilities are nurtured and challenged.

In the 2007-2008 school year, students achieved exceptional results in provincial achievement tests, demonstrating an increase in the percentage of students achieving the standard of excellence on the Grade 6 and 9 Language Arts Provincial Achievement Tests.

Teachers as Learners

Staff and students attribute an increase in student achievement to the consistent implementation of assessment for learning practices that engage and motivate students to take ownership and responsibility for their learning. Parkview teachers consistently model what it means to be a learner. Teachers analyze data to pinpoint strengths and challenges. As a result, teachers identify and plan next steps for learning for both teachers and students. Through targeted professional development with district consultants, participation in the District Assessment Project Professional Learning sessions, and regularly scheduled collaborative team learning opportunities, teachers have continued to deepen their understanding of sound assessment practices that inform and drive instruction.

Teacher-driven collaboration is moving learning forward for both teachers and students. Collaboration with colleagues in and outside of the Parkview school community has been essential to the continued development of the instructional focus of critical thinking skills and written expression. In subject area and divisional teams all teachers meet regularly to identify and discuss teaching and learning challenges, reflect on their practice, and support each other in the development of effective lessons that purposefully implement research-based best practices. Through classroom visits, teachers observe teaching and learning in action followed by rich professional conversations that lead to improved learning for all.

Students as Learners

Parkview staff work collaboratively to provide a learning environment where students develop skills to become lifelong learners and leaders. A learner can be described as “someone who knows what they know, knows what they don’t know, and knows what to do when they don’t know what to do” (Ruth Sutton, Educator and Author, from her presentation to district staff in September 2005). Because teachers identify, share and clarify learning expectations, students clearly understand what they need to learn and are better able to hit the learning target. Through teacher modeling and opportunities for practice, students have developed peer and self- assessment skills, and are able to identify and meet curricular learning goals.

The purposeful use of technology as a tool to meet curricular outcomes has enhanced communication and improved learning for all students. Through School Zone, students and parents have timely access to information and resources, such as school newsletters and learning assignments as well as student interim and progress reports. The three networked computer labs provide opportunities for students to develop the skills required to choose and use appropriate technologies in a variety of learning situations. Interactive whiteboard technology is used as a tool in classrooms to engage 21st century learners and provide timely feedback for learning. The integration of technology, critical thinking and assessment for learning strategies across the curriculum is preparing students to thrive and contribute in a world that is constantly changing.

At Parkview School, excellence in learning is realized through a culture that encourages and supports teachers and students as learners. This responsive and collaborative model ensures bright futures for all at Parkview School.

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