

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 28, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Improving Student Achievement Through Consulting Services: The Student Focus

ORIGINATOR: J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendent

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### INFORMATION

Consulting Services provides leadership for teaching and learning that is committed to success for every student and supports all three Board Priorities. This central decision unit provides support to school leaders, teachers, staff and students through five professional service teams: Field Assessment Team, Special Education Support Team (SEST), Edmonton Regional Educational Consulting Services (ERECS), English Language Support Services Centre, and Teaching and Learning Support Services.

This report concentrates on the services of three teams within Consulting Services, the Field Assessment Team, SEST and ERECS. These teams assist schools in addressing the unique challenges of students with learning difficulties or special needs.

#### Field Assessment Team

The Field Assessment Team consists of a staff of forty consultants including social workers, psychologists and reading specialists who operate through a cost recovery model. Social workers assist the school and parent community when family, school, personal or community problems interfere with student achievement. Intervention is offered in the areas of attendance, emotional/behavioral assessments, conflict resolution and mental health issues. Psychologists provide diagnostic assessments and programming recommendations for students with learning or behavioral concerns. Reading specialists assess the learning needs of students through individual academic assessments that determine achievement level and learning profile. Consultants confer with school staff and parents to provide educational programming suggestions within the classroom context. Social workers and psychologists also provide critical incident response in collaboration with Security Services, Leadership Services and Communications.

#### Special Education Support Team (SEST)

The SEST team is funded through the Edmonton Student Health Integrated Partnership (ESHIP). This team consists of 17 consultants who offer support to students of school age

with severe disabilities and/or complex medical challenges. The unit serves students who are in transition between schools or programs within Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools and Early Childhood Service providers. This trans-disciplinary team provides expertise in the areas of educational behavior programming, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language pathology and transition facilitator services. The team focuses on student success within the school environment and provides a necessary link between educational and external resources that supports families, teaching staff and the school community.

#### Edmonton Regional Educational Consulting Services (ERECS)

ERECS is funded by a grant from Alberta Education and partial cost recovery. This team of 40 consultants offers support across north central Alberta to students between the ages of 2 ½ and 20 who have severe disabilities. The professional disciplines included on the team are: adapted physical education, educational audiology, educational/behavioral programming, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, psychology, consultants for the deaf and hard of hearing and for those who are visually impaired or blind. Services include: assessment of student's strengths and areas of need for educational programming purposes; ongoing support to implement programming recommendations; assistance with access, appropriateness, accountability and appeal responsibilities; and collaboration with other school and community service providers.

#### Summary

These three teams within the larger Consulting Services Unit provide a distinct model of service that enhances student learning. Staff work collaboratively with the school and parent community to ensure students with special needs receive professional assessment and educational programming that supports a *bright future for these students*.