

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 28, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent
B. Tams, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Gloria Chalmers, Jose da Costa; David Fraser, Shannon Gentilini, Lorne Parker Heather Raymond, Stuart Wachowicz

INFORMATION

TRUSTEE REQUEST #132, SEPTEMBER 23, 2008 (TRUSTEE ESSLINGER) FURTHER TO TT#110 – PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING WHAT OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE DOING WITH RESPECT TO FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN RESEARCH. The information provided in the September 23, 2008 report originated from traditional research literature surrounding Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK). In response to Trustee Esslinger’s observation, it has been identified that various boards throughout Alberta have collected FDK information with regards to the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI).

The FDK information collected through AISI (Appendix I) is not research in the traditional sense, it is primarily grounded in program evaluation which is often used locally and not normally disseminated beyond the people in the project, the single school jurisdiction, and Alberta Education. AISI information is recorded by school jurisdictions for the purposes of reporting the progress of AISI funded projects to Alberta Education and their respective boards. If the AISI information were disseminated beyond, then it would be subjected to a formal ethics review and participants would be given the option of opting out of the project.

A review of the AISI projects from 2001 to 2007 indicates a number of school jurisdictions chose FDK or Early Intervention projects for Cycle 1 AISI funding. FDK or Early Intervention AISI projects primarily involved children from pre-Kindergarten to the early grades and focused on preparing students for school by improving their readiness for learning (Appendix I). Unfortunately, these projects were proven to be financially unsustainable. As a result, Alberta Education asked school jurisdictions to use other resources to fund FDK programs and the number of FDK projects quickly diminished (Appendix I). Edmonton Public Schools (EPS) is identified as the only FDK, AISI project for the current fiscal year (Appendix I, Cycle 3), due largely to combined funding from various resources. In addition, EPS holds the unique opportunity to be involved in an internationally recognized research study on the effects of FDK (da Costa, 2008).

Fortunately, many children will have FDK available to them as a result of AISI. A number of school jurisdictions in Alberta have continued to implement some form of Early Literacy Intervention or FDK program, without provincial funding (Calgary Board, 2005). At a recent Standing Committee of Public Accounts meeting (2008), Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District stated, “We strongly support full-day kindergarten for children who need it. Not every child needs full-day kindergarten, but where it’s needed, it’s needed, and it makes a difference in terms of the long-term results of our students. We have implemented full-day kindergarten in 28 of our schools now, and we have documented the success of the programs where we’ve implemented that full-day kindergarten.”

The following is a summary of additional findings for AISI funded FDK or Early Intervention projects throughout Alberta:

Fort McMurray Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 32

Cycle 1 AISI Project #220

- The full-time early entry pre-kindergarten (EEP) program implemented a language focused curriculum to prepare and develop literacy skills for disadvantaged and special needs students for kindergarten.
- The students who attended EEP tended to outperform students who did not attend the program.
- EEP created awareness among staff and the school community of the importance in identifying and offering programming for at-risk children at the earliest age possible.

Prairie Rose Regional Division No. 8

Cycle 1 AISI Project #575

- The project focused on Teacher Assistant time in the kindergarten classroom and one-on-one work with at-risk children.
- The project resulted in greater improvements to targeted motor sensory areas.
- Children who participated in the project had greater opportunities to develop understanding and social skills.

Edmonton Catholic Separate School District No. 7

Cycle 1 AISI Project #727

- The FDK project provided an interactive approach to kindergarten in eight inner city elementary schools.
- The schools were situated in communities that had a high incidence of social conditions such as poverty, crime, prostitution, addictions and drug houses, domestic violence, poor housing conditions, chronic unemployment, child abuse, language barriers and illiteracy.
- Young children in these communities often lack the early literacy rich experiences that are necessary to ensure ongoing successes in their learning.
- Extended programming for kindergarten to a full-day allowed time to immerse the children in developmentally appropriate learning experiences and opportunities.
- Providing additional time to students in high needs areas has proven to be one of the most important interventions offered to children who are struggling to acquire foundational literacy skills.
- The extra time at school provided FDK children with increased opportunities to interact with print, develop their oral language, and participate in activities that fostered positive pro-social growth.

Calgary School District No. 19

Cycle 1 AISI Project #793

- The FDK program for English as a Second Language (ESL)/Language Delayed children focused on the provision of intensive expressive and receptive oral language opportunities in order for students to acquire the needed oral skills.
- The FDK program received strong support from parents, teachers, and school administrators.
- The most vulnerable students experienced the strongest benefits from the FDK program.
- Targeted instruction and additional time provided to these students was critical in giving them a jump-start for grade one.
- The work of the FDK staff resulted in measurable increases in concrete English language vocabulary, in the ability to complete learning tasks more effectively, and higher engagement levels in learning during school.
- The FDK students outperformed half-day students in reading, language arts, mathematics and all areas of early school assessment.
- Carefully designed FDK programs have demonstrated to be effective tools in narrowing the gap for children, particularly when a developmentally appropriate language and literacy program is implemented.

Northern Lights School Division No. 69

Cycle 1 AISI Project #204

- The FDK program focused on teaching students how to learn and how to be more independent learners.
- About 70 percent of kindergarten students took part in the FDK program.
- At the beginning of the FDK program, 24 percent of the students were identified as having special needs, many having language delays.
- By Grade 1, teachers identified only 9 percent of students as needing assistance to meet or exceed the Grade 1 goals.
- The FDK program was successful in addressing the early disadvantage of many of the children involved - giving the students a lifelong advantage.
- The additional costs of FDK are offset to some extent by future savings.
- The FDK program at Northern Lights School Division was recognized by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Joyce & Showers, 2002) and by Phi Delta Kappan in an article titled, "Learning to Read in kindergarten: Has Curriculum Development Bypassed The Controversies?" (October, 2003).
- The FDK program was also included in the "Great Schools" edition of *Today's Parent* magazine (September, 2005).

Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7

Cycle 1 AISI Project #515

- The extended at-risk kindergarten program identified kindergarten students who were demonstrating a delay relative to the acquisition of literacy skills.
- Teachers provided additional individual and small group programming in literacy instruction during the later part of the school year for at-risk students.
- The program emphasized the importance of developing an interest and love for literacy, knowledge of phonemic awareness and print, as well as a home reading program.

- The development of early reading skills through structured play was proven to be effective for meeting the needs of students who were at-risk in their literacy development.

Lakeland Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 150

Cycle 1 Project #742

- Provided increased early literacy opportunities for kindergarten students.
- Early literacy opportunities included a component to improve the kindergarten students' pre-literacy skills and ensure more readiness for grade one, especially with at-risk students.

Grande Yellowhead Regional Division No. 35

Cycle 1 AISI Project #264 and Cycle 2 AISI Project #10082

- Offered an extended kindergarten enhancement program for a small number of kindergarten students who could most benefit from additional instruction.
- Students who attended the kindergarten enhancement program improved significantly in their oral language.
- Over the course of the three years of measuring student progress in the kindergarten enhancement program, gains between pre- and post- tests using the Brigance Assessment continued to increase.
- The results of the kindergarten enhancement program established a precedent for a FDK program for students needing the extra assistance.
- The board allocated funds out of its reserve to sustain the FDK program for another year, despite the cost to the overall budget of the board.

Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District No.1

Cycle 2 AISI Project #10399

- The Early Intervention Project provided a FDK program for students in 15 schools.
- Schools were selected based on extra-ordinary needs that ranged from high ESL populations, low socio-economic factors, high incidents of single parents or any combination.
- The FDK program gave students more time to develop skills, background information and meet key outcomes in kindergarten.
- FDK children were more prepared to meet the challenges of Grade one.
- When half-day program results were compared (from a group with similar demographics and school profiles as the FDK program) to the FDK results, there was a clear indication that FDK afforded kindergarten students with stronger skills in all areas.

Wolf Creek School Division No. 72

Cycle 2 AISI Project #10432

- Established an early intervention project in the form of a FDK class to enable at-risk students to acquire language and literacy skills necessary for success in grade one.
- The extended instructional hours provided time to enhance students' oral language development, emergent reading skills, and address specific mathematical and early literacy skills while still maintaining the learning through play philosophy.
- Achievement gains were made by the children who attended the FDK program.
- At-risk learners benefitted the most from the FDK program.

Conclusion

In 2003, The Alberta Commission on Learning document, “Every child Learns. Every child succeeds,” included a number of recommendations, one of which supported FDK programs. The report states that a developmentally appropriate FDK program benefits children academically and socially, especially for at-risk children (ACL, 2003). A review of the FDK or Early Intervention projects indicates that findings within AISI are consistent with the literature. Students who are at risk, have mild and moderate special needs, and/or are English Language Learners (ELL) benefit the most from FDK programs. Further, FDK programs demonstrated significant improvements to student achievement with the highest effect size of any type of AISI project (Alberta Education, 2005).

TRUSTEE REQUEST #133, SEPTEMBER 23, 2008 (TRUSTEE RICE) PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING GENDER EDUCATION; I.E., DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION FOR MALES AND FEMALES. For the past decade at least, research has suggested that there are biological differences, and other differences that may be attributed to socialization, that can impact how males and females learn. It is also known that while more males may favour an auditory learning style for instance, so do a significant number of females. Thus, teaching approaches that incorporate a range of learning styles or that differentiate instruction based on perceived need are responsive to both genders. All our AISI projects assist teachers to develop skills that enable teachers to effectively teach both genders. Assessment for learning supports better identification of need; deepening literacy recognizes the need for high levels of reading and writing regardless of gender; differentiated instruction directly addresses varying approaches depending on learning styles and other factors; and integrating technology provides an approach that responds to the current interest of both genders, but perhaps more to males. The district’s alternative programs also provide options for students to match their learning style to program offered – Cogito for those that prefer structure and rigour, Child Study Centre, Science alternative, Primary Years Program and Middle Years IB program for those who prefer a more holistic or inquiry based approach. For some, it is the subject matter that is motivating and here we have the language, sports and fine arts programs. The District has hosted a parent evening on gender, has provided information to schools and has reviewed achievement data from a gender lens. Currently, the District has a gender research teacher cohort that meets on a regular basis with Dr. Heather Blair from the University of Alberta to discuss gender issues and their impact on learning. The insight of the committee helped to surface gender bias in the new mental health toolkit and this was proactively corrected. The toolkit will soon be released. Work from the teacher cohort will be shared as appropriate.

TRUSTEE REQUEST #135, SEPTEMBER 23, 2008 (TRUSTEE HUFF): PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING LAST YEAR AND THIS MONTH REGARDING THE NUMBER OF TIMES REQUESTS FOR SUPPLY TEACHERS OR WORKERS COULD NOT BE FULFILLED DUE TO A SHORTAGE OF STAFF. The following table outlines the total number of supply jobs requested and unfilled for teaching, support and custodial staff. The data is presented for each month for 2007-2008 and for September 2008.

Month	Teacher Total	Teacher Unfilled	Support Total	Support Unfilled	Custodial Total	Custodial Unfilled
2007-2008						
September	4,753	18	4,008	197	1,558	218
October	8,442	101	4,197	316	1,578	326
November	8,382	20	3,279	350	1,663	482
December	5,465	40	2,131	292	1,356	456
January	7,222	88	2,933	398	2,142	989
February	7,552	143	2,787	397	1,963	817
March	7,133	62	2,489	294	1,588	408
April	7,512	77	2,391	262	2,015	560
May	8,830	293	2,798	175	1,725	312
June	6,397	6	2,258	107	1,721	321
TOTAL	71,688	848 (1.18%)	29,271	2,787 (9.52%)	17,309	4,889 (28.25%)
2008-2009						
September	5,529	53	4,301	200	2,089	265

The administration recognizes that there have been issues and concerns related to the shortages for supply support and custodial staff, and the following steps have been taken over the past eight months to address this issue:

- Staff in Personnel Recruitment and Staffing worked with staff in Communications on a successful spring recruitment campaign, which focused on: recruitment posters for schools and post-secondary institutions, print ads with an Aboriginal focus, updating the district website, signage at the Centre for Education and signage over the summer on district fleet vehicles.
- Initial and ongoing contact established with Alberta Employment and Immigration offices, which has resulted in an increase of applications, interviews and acceptance of employment with the District. Edmonton Public Schools will be featured in the November issue of *Labour Market News*.
- In addition to our regular contact with post-secondary institutions, staff in Personnel Recruitment and Staffing have attended Job Fairs at NorQuest, made presentations to students attending the computer programs at Brendin Institute and to students attending Metro Continuing Education, and met with individuals from the Personal Support and Development Network and the Mennonite Center for Newcomers.
- Edmonton Public Schools will be participating in the Canada Career Fair at Northlands on November 14 and 15, 2008 and the MacEwan Career Fair in January 2009.
- The District and CUPE 474 have entered into an agreement to establish permanent Relief Custodians in Personnel Supply Services. These positions have been advertised and we anticipate hiring up to 25 individuals.
- A custodial work experience program has been established for three Metro ESL adult immigrant students.

- Positions continue to be advertised in local newspapers, Government of Canada Job Bank, Workopolis and various websites as necessary.

These steps have resulted in a significant increase in the recruitment of permanent and supply staff and a corresponding reduction in unfilled jobs for custodial and some office support positions. The major areas of concern remain supply administrative assistants and teacher assistants. The administration is continuing to take steps to address this issue.

TRUSTEE REQUEST #137, SEPTEMBER 23, 2008, (TRUSTEE SHIPKA): PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE STATUS OF INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE SCHOOL COMPLETION AND THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK. Over the past year, we have focused on a variety of initiatives to improve school completion and to successfully transition students to post secondary and/or credentialed occupations. In addition to the detailed board report *Career Focused Education – Update* on October 28, 2008, the following provides a brief description of other district work.

Accomplished to date:

- The first pilot of the two-year Print Media Production (PMP) program was completed in August 2008. This program delivered the NorQuest PMP program to district students during the summer which resulted in NorQuest credentials and high school challenge credits. During 2008-2009, the program will be expanded to accommodate more students for the July 2009 delivery. Advanced Education is committing an additional \$200,000 to support this initiative.
- Students may gain credentials in international second languages through the district’s Language Credentialing Service. In 2007-2008, 1,500+ students acquired certification in French, German, Spanish, Chinese or Ukrainian. Cambridge Assessment has approached the District to be a site for the Cambridge English exams. This initiative will support the development of English proficiency.
- Schools, with support from central services, continue to develop programs and locally developed courses aligned with post-secondary institutions and industry (e.g., The Iverson Initiative – for Computer Science, Computer Repairs – for industry A+ certification, Aboriginal Entrepreneurship – for entrance to NAIT programs, Architectural and Mechanical Design (CAD) – for advance credit at NAIT, Sport Performance 15-25-35 – for entrance to University of Alberta).

TRUSTEE REQUEST #149, OCTOBER 14, 2008, (TRUSTEE HUFF) PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: The proposed *Annual Implementation Plan* for 2008-09 is scheduled for presentation to Conference Committee of the Board of Trustees on November 4, 2008. The report is presented in conference under the criterion: “Draft reports brought for consultation and deliberation between the trustees and administration prior to finalizing for consideration at public board, e.g. draft audit report, proposed policy directions, ...”

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APPENDIX I: AISI Projects and Promising Practices Related to Pre-Kindergarten and Full Day/Extended Kindergarten Programming

**AISI Projects and Promising Practices Related to Pre-Kindergarten and
Full Day/Extended Kindergarten Programming**
School Improvement Branch, Alberta Education

AISI Cycle 1 Projects 2001-2003

AISI Project # 220		Early Entry Program
Fort McMurray Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 32		
Scope: 84 Students, Grades preK to K, 1 School		
Purpose	To promote students' language skills.	
Description	Implement a full-time pre-ECS program for at-risk and special needs students.	
Instructional Strategies	Implement full-time early entry pre-kindergarten program with a language focused curriculum to disadvantaged and special needs students. Speech/language services provided including direct therapy and use of community students as role models.	
PD Strategies	Professional development for teacher assistants including language and behavior intervention strategies, Animated Literacy, and needs of students with severe disabilities.	
Parent Involvement	Completed survey.	
Lessons Learned	Students who attended the Early Entry program tended to outperform students who did not attend the program.	
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis	
AISI Project # 575		Kindergarten Intervention Program
Prairie Rose Regional Division No. 8		
Scope: 70 Students, Grade K, 1 School		
Purpose	To identify skills mastered by students and those which require more practice for mastery.	
Description	Provide pre-and-post screening for all kindergarten students to assist in instructional planning.	
Instructional Strategies	1:1 and small group intervention. Teacher assistant support. Focus on gross and fine motor skills.	
PD Strategies	Lead teacher involved in Early Childhood Education Councils annual conference. Consultation with occupational therapist and physical therapist occurred. Literature reviews.	
Parent Involvement	Work with child at home with fine and gross motor skills and attended parent orientation session.	
Lessons Learned	Early intervention in Kindergarten assisted in determining individual student needs for remediation or referral to outside agencies and provided an awareness of motor sensory issues.	
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis	

AISI Project # 727 Extended Experiences for Inner City Kindergarten

Edmonton Catholic Separate School District No. 7

Scope: **165 Students, Grade K, 8 Schools**

Purpose	To enhance the academic performance as well as the social and emotional well-being of ECS children.
Description	Create a full-day kindergarten program for inner-city children.
Instructional Strategies	Extend Kindergarten day for at-risk students. Community-based experiences, literature rich learning environment and engaging in research-based developmentally appropriate practices for young children.
PD Strategies	Linking to and integrating a wide variety of community services, such as: ABC Headstart, Success by Six and Speech-Language Services. Time allocated for collaborative planning. Development of guidelines for identifying students who would benefit.
Parent Involvement	Attended parent effectiveness training classes, volunteered in classroom and introduced to neighbourhood libraries.
Lessons Learned	Additional time to students in high needs areas is one of the most important interventions for children struggling to acquire foundation literacy skills.
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis

AISI Project # 793 Full Day Kindergarten for ESL/Language Delay

Calgary School District No. 19

Scope: **30 Students, Grade K, 2 Schools**

Purpose	To improve students' basic literacy and social skills.
Description	Offer a full-day kindergarten program with intensive oral language activities for at-risk students.
Instructional Strategies	Smaller class size with literacy rich, play-based environment encouraging peer to peer learning and practice of social skills for English as Second Language students.
PD Strategies	
Parent Involvement	Attend parenting program and volunteered in school.
Lessons Learned	Early intervention is effective in new language acquisition and developing learning skills.
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis

AISI Project # 204 Literacy Through Full Day Kindergarten
 Northern Lights School Division No. 69
 Scope: **264 Students, Grade K, 5 Schools**

Purpose	To have all students learn to read at a defined minimum level or beyond.
Description	Offer enhanced ECS programs through providing full-day instruction and/or professional development for teachers.
Instructional Strategies	Full day instruction for kindergarten students. Intensive literacy instruction based on the multi-dimensional approach advocated by leading scholars.
PD Strategies	Staff development on a monthly basis through demonstrations, practice, peer coaching and study of theory.
Parent Involvement	Volunteered in classroom, read with child at home, attended parent training sessions and completed survey.
Lessons Learned	Full-time Kindergarten with a research-based curriculum focusing on the development of learning skills and literacy has improved student learning.
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis

AISI Project # 515 Extended Kindergarten For At Risk Students
 Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7
 Scope: **98 Students, Grade K, 14 Schools**

Purpose	To improve students' literacy skills.
Description	Provide additional small-group and individualized literacy instruction.
Instructional Strategies	1:1 and small group literacy intervention by teacher during the later part of school year for identified Kindergarten students. Address specific pre-reading skills in Kindergarten while maintaining a "learning through play" orientation.
PD Strategies	Intensive Professional development at district level reinforced by in-class teacher demonstrations and model lessons at each school site.
Parent Involvement	Parent consent for program involvement, read with child at home and attended parent in-services.
Lessons Learned	Developing early reading skills through structured play is effective for meeting the needs of students who are at-risk in their literacy development.
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis

AISI Project # 742 Extended Kindergarten Opportunities

Lakeland Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 150

Scope: **164 Students, Grade K, 3 Schools**

Purpose	To improve early literacy skills.
Description	Provide (a) age appropriate, data driven, theory based teaching, (b) increased one-on-one and small group instruction with various grouping strategies and (c) professional development to increase early literacy opportunities for the students.
Instructional Strategies	Increase literacy opportunities for Kindergarten students including guided reading, shared reading, authentic assessment, peer coaching, leveled resources, response journals, direct vocabulary instruction, daily read alouds and intervention programs.
PD Strategies	School-wide professional development and collaborative planning.
Parent Involvement	Attended literacy evenings and Family Reading Mornings where parents observed teacher in whole group literacy activities and worked 1:1 with their child.
Lessons Learned	Rich literacy program assisted students in improving literacy skills.
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis

AISI Project # 264 Early Intervention

Grande Yellowhead Regional Division No. 35

Scope: **56 Students, Grades preK to K, 3 Schools**

Purpose	To help students meet exit outcomes for kindergarten .
Description	Small early intervention language enrichment classes.
Instructional Strategies	1:1 and small group literacy intervention for identified students using direct instruction. Individual Program Plans developed. Early intervention language enrichment class for at-risk students.
PD Strategies	Teacher collaboration and liaison with teachers from other sites at ECS meetings, attended workshops and purchased several books.
Parent Involvement	Parents invited to attend teacher workshops, participated in Individual Program Plan development, volunteered in the classroom, completed survey and worked with child at home.
Lessons Learned	Coordination of services to identify needs of children is essential. The combined expertise in identification and implementation of goals is integral to the success rate of students.
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis

AISI Cycle 2 Projects 2003-2006

AISI Project # 10082 'A Gift of Time' Kindergarten Enhancement Project

Grande Yellowhead Regional Division No. 35

Scope: **132 Students, Grade K, 11 Schools**

Purpose	To improve the quality of teaching and learning for kindergarten students.		
Description	Provide extensive professional development to acquire research-based best practices to improve the quality of instruction to kindergarten students. Offer an extended kindergarten program for a small number of students who could most benefit from additional instruction. A reduced number of students will allow teachers the time to implement new strategies and internalize them so they become part of the core instructional practices which will then be transferred and applied in the regular kindergarten		
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis Year 1	Link to Project Synopsis Year 2	Link to Project Synopsis Year 3

AISI Project # 10399 Early Intervention

Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 1

First Year Funding: **\$137,788**

Purpose	To develop literacy skills in students and to prepare them for grade 1.		
Description	Provide an early intervention full-day Kindergarten program for students who have extra-ordinary needs that range from high ESL populations, low socio-economic factors and single parent families to explore topics in greater depth and provide greater exposure to literacy and numeracy experiences.		
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis Year 1	Link to Project Synopsis Year 2	Link to Project Synopsis Year 3

AISI Project # 10006 Full Day Kindergarten in High Needs Schools

Edmonton School District No. 7

Scope: **400 Students, Grade K, 18 Schools**

Purpose	To develop and improve early literacy skills, increase sense of self-worth, foster independence and decision making skills, and encourage positive attitudes towards learning in students identified as "high needs".		
Description	Implement full-day literacy based kindergarten programs for schools identified as having students with high needs.		
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis Year 1	Link to Project Synopsis Year 2	Link to Project Synopsis Year 3

AISI Project # 10432 Ponoka Elementary Extended Kindergarten		
Wolf Creek School Division No. 72		
Scope: 39 Students, Grade K, 1 School		
Purpose	To enable all students to acquire the language and literacy skills necessary for success in grade one.	
Description	Implement an early intervention project in the form of an extended hours kindergarten class to enable at-risk students to acquire language and literacy skills necessary for success in grade one.	
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis Year 1	Link to Project Synopsis Year 2
		Link to Project Synopsis Year 3

AISI Cycle 3 Projects 2006-2009

AISI Project # 30150		Interagency Collaboration
Edmonton School District No. 7		
Scope: 469 Students, Grade K, 18 Schools		
Purpose	To improve the health and development of students and impact kindergarten achievement.	
Description	Develop an interdisciplinary collaborative service plan to address the complex needs and issues that at-risk children and their families face and provide for parent in servicing, professional development and collaborative opportunities for teachers to continue to deepen their understanding of balanced literacy and early childhood best practices.	
Project Synopsis	Link to Project Synopsis Year 1	

Promising Practices

Full Day Kindergarten	
Edmonton School District No. 7	
Type: Literacy/Language Arts	Focus Area: Behavioural Improvement
Brief Description	Edmonton Public Schools has implemented a full day kindergarten program for schools identified as having students with high needs. The purpose of this AISI project is to improve early literacy skills and develop positive attitudes towards learning. In this session, learn how through a full day program ongoing professional development around a common set of best practices (Balanced Literacy) assisted in building expertise in teachers' ability to teach early reading and writing. In addition, find out how ongoing consultant support and teacher collaboration, around common best practices, ensured change in teacher practice, created a culture of continuous improvement and resulted in improved student achievement.

Key Features	<p>Professional development was the foundation of this full day kindergarten AISI project.</p> <p>The professional development plan for the full day kindergarten teachers had two components. One component consisted of a long term program of professional development which centered on building expertise n the strategies that comprise the Balanced Literacy program. The amount of training changed each year as teachers gained experience and expertise. Teachers in year one were required to participate in 6 in-services and received 3 demonstration/coaching sessions in the classroom. Year two consisted of 4 in-services and 3 demonstration/coaching sessions. Year 3 and beyond consisted of 2 in-services and 2 colleague visits to other kindergarten classrooms. Throughout the training, extensive collaboration occurred among the teachers in the project. This served to further enhance their expertise and ensure change in teaching practice. It was the collaborative dialogue about strategies and the impact on student learning, that created a culture of continuous improvement.</p> <p>The second component of the professional development plan for the full day kindergarten was an additional series of in-services that were developed to support the Balanced Literacy Program. These in-services covered topics that related to the research on full day kindergarten, and other effective research based practices that would continue to build expertise in an already highly skilled teaching group.</p>
Evidence of Effectiveness	<p>Using the Marie Clay's "An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement", the kindergarten students made significant progress as measured by pre and post test results and also comparing year end results from one year to the next.</p> <p>Anecdotal notes from teachers indicated that students made good gains in their demonstration of early literacy skills.</p> <p>Percentage of parents expressing positive attitudes on a survey about the effectiveness of the program and strategies used was high.</p>
Link to AISI Project Information	<p>AISI Cycle 2 Project #10006 Full Day Kindergarten in High Needs Schools</p>

Sources:

AISI Website: <http://education.alberta.ca/aisi/>

AISI Cycle 1 Project Summaries: <http://education.alberta.ca/apps/aisi/cycle1/>

AISI Cycle 2 Project Summaries: <http://education.alberta.ca/apps/aisi/cycle2/>

AISI Promising Practices: <http://education.alberta.ca/apps/aisi/prom/>