

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Oct. 2, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A.McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Baturyn School's Instructional Focus: Reading for Meaning

ORIGINATOR: C. McLean, Principal, Baturyn School

RESOURCE Les Hansen, Greg Kostiuk, Craig Wilson

STAFF:

INFORMATION

Baturyn School's Instructional Focus journey began with the district initiative in August 2000. We were extremely fortunate to be included in the piloting of implementing a school wide instructional focus. This process provided us with the tools and strategies to closely examine our practices and improve student learning within our school. During the examination of our results, along with consultation with all our stakeholders, staff, students and parents, it was determined that a focus on improving reading comprehension using higher level thinking skills, would benefit our students' learning in all areas of their schooling.

*A school-wide goal to improve reading comprehension for all students, as measured by Alberta Learning tests, HLAT's tests, and local assessment practices.*

Our "reading for meaning" instructional focus was established and instructional practices were put in place through specific professional development activities. We determined that we wanted our children to excel in reading comprehension, knowing that these skills would transfer to other areas of their learning.

All teachers are expected to:

- Complete the Balanced Literacy 2 year training program
- Teach all components of the B.L. program effectively
- Develop the knowledge and skills to choose and purchase appropriate resources for their students
- Incorporate higher level questioning strategies using Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading, and Bloom's Taxonomy.
- Teach Shared and Guided Reading using the appropriate questioning strategies.
- Participate in all Instructional Focus meetings
- Participate in all professional development opportunities supporting the focus
- Model and expose children to exemplary literature

- Familiarize themselves with our Library's exemplary children's literature collection
- Develop Home Reading Programs for all students
- Assess students' reading comprehension skills regularly
- Develop a professional growth plan addressing the Instructional Focus
- Incorporate reading comprehension strategies in all content areas
- Support the work of the Learning Resources Centre

Students will:

- Perceive themselves as good readers
- Display a love of reading and interest in books
- Continue to practice reading daily, both at school and home
- Be able to comprehend what they are reading at high levels of comprehension
- Be able to share and orally express their ideas fluently
- Be able to write about what they have read using specific strategies and graphic organizers
- Understand curriculum expectations in all subject areas
- Meet or exceed curriculum expectations

Parents will:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and be on time
- Support the Home Reading program for their children
- Volunteer helping students
- Support teachers in their endeavours to improve student achievement
- Support author visits and Artist in Residence programs.

We are now "living our focus" and are proud of our students' achievement. Results on the Alberta Learning Tests have shown a steady rate of growth, in all core subject areas. Information is shared at monthly school assemblies, parent council meeting, through class and school newsletters and our "outside sign". Our students love reading, and are providing leadership and input into book purchases for our library. This is most noticeable at the grades 5 & 6 levels where everyone has "turned on" to books!

As principal supporting the Instructional Focus, I work with groups of readers from each class, teaching guided reading lessons. I also teach Library Arts to both grade 6 classes this year. Another area of enjoyment for me is being the "story-lady" for both Kindergarten classes, whereby I read to them weekly - 20 minutes to each class. Both the children and I look forward to these "readings".

Our Baturyn Leadership Team (BLT) meets monthly, gathers and shares information with staff at our BIG IF monthly meeting. Staff then work together in collaborative teams at our monthly "little IF" meetings. School wide professional development is provided in areas that staff wish to become more knowledgeable in, such as "looking at student work".

All students are involved in recording the number of minutes read this year. Our school wide goal is to achieve one million minutes of reading by June 15, 2002.

Implementation of our Instructional Focus is highly supported by our parents. They truly want the best for their children and we are demonstrating to them how we can make this happen. Teachers take turns presenting students' work in Language Arts (and other core areas) at each Parent Council Meeting. Parents are becoming very knowledgeable about the complexity and importance of the "work" that is done in our school. Extracurricular activities have taken on a 'reading for meaning' focus with the results being highly motivated students, wanting to read, all the time! Reading is what everyone does when they come to our school, waiting for their children, visiting the office or library. We are proud of our students and know that through this "work" we will continue to improve student achievement in all areas of curriculum.

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