

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 12, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosedall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: LearnCanada

ORIGINATOR: G. Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE
STAFF: Karen Andrews, Avi Habinski, Pat Redhead

INFORMATION

The purpose of this presentation is to provide trustees with an update on the LearnCanada project that is exploring the use of a broadband communications technologies to enhance the professional development of teachers. Last fall, the administration shared with trustees that Edmonton Public Schools is involved in the development of a project supported by Canarie Inc. (a non-profit organization funded through Industry Canada). A number of other organizations from the private and public sectors are also involved with this project. The developmental stage has been completed and we are moving towards the implementation stage. There is a strong belief that quality professional development for staff results in enhanced student achievement. The main objective of this project is exploring opportunities available for use of broadband connectivity (e.g. high speed fibre optics) to enhance professional development for teachers. It will include the use of video conferencing for lectures and for interaction among teachers from across Canada. In addition, resources will be developed to support teachers' professional development activities. The materials would be placed in a portal (repository) and transported through the fast link to schools and classrooms across the country.

J. Percy Page School, through its partnership with Shaw Communications, has the broadest bandwidth available to any K-12 school in Western Canada. It will serve as the EPS pilot school for this project. A number of the school's teachers volunteered to participate in this project. These teachers will interact with teachers from the other five school jurisdictions that participate in the project in discussions on curriculum and teaching strategies as well as in the development of resources that would be placed in a portal (repository). Other district staff including consultants from Consulting Services and technical staff from J. Percy Page and District Technology will participate in the project and are expected to gain skills that would be valuable in the expansion of the project to other schools in the district.

The district will undertake a leadership role in the instructional design component of the project and Karen Andrews will represent the district in coordinating the different activities associated with LearnCanada.

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