

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 13, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: District Staff Development Plan for 2005-2006 to Support Improved Student Achievement and High School Completion

ORIGINATOR: Tanni Parker, Executive Director

RESOURCE  
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### INFORMATION

#### **Background**

The district's AISI project, *Supporting Teaching and Learning*, has provided schools and central staff with a strategic framework to improve student achievement and high school completion rates. Through district professional development sessions, coordinated by Student Achievement Services, schools and central staff have deepened their understanding and implementation of the school and central Expectations which has resulted in gains in student achievement and high school completion rates.

Research has demonstrated that staff expertise is enhanced through high quality, job embedded staff development at the school and central level. Job embedded staff development combines learning while working and creates conditions that enable staff to grow and learn as part of their daily work and routines. This kind of staff development shifts from learning at a workshop, to learning in the workplace.

To that end, plans for staff development sessions for the 2005-06 school year for both school staff and central staff will provide district staff with necessary skills to plan, implement, monitor and communicate about job embedded staff development. The sessions for both school and central staff will contain many common elements. They will be directly linked to improving student achievement and high school completion rates.

Supporting the implementation of effective job embedded staff development is complex work. An effective plan requires the expertise and collaboration of many decision units across the district. Student Achievement Services will be working with staff from Student Assessment, Consulting Services and Staffing Relations and Development to co-plan and co-deliver all staff development sessions this year. School and central leaders also have opportunities for input into the development and delivery of sessions. This input provides valuable perspectives that assist staff in making critical connections to their work.

The district staff development sessions for 2005-2006 will include the following four components:

### **1. Staff Professional Development Sessions at the Centre**

Each principal and their instructional leadership team will attend four sessions at the center: August, October, February and May. Central leaders and selected staff from their Decision Unit (DU) will also attend four sessions at the center, during the same months. Although the two groups will not meet together (as there will be some differences in their staff development sessions) both groups will focus on the following elements of job embedded, staff development:

- Build expertise – based on data, staff will identify one or two skills/strategies that all staff within the decision unit or school will focus on enhancing with the purpose of enhancing achievement or service. Staff will then organize for the necessary learning opportunities (such as inservices, workshops) to support them in building expertise in those identified areas.
- Ensure there is application of the new skills learned in the classroom or decision unit – staff will identify strategies and processes to ensure that what was learned at the inservice, workshop, etc. is transferred to the work place. Through an ongoing cycle of practice and feedback, skills are enhanced.
- Develop a monitoring system – staff will monitor if the identified skills learned and applied are resulting in positive impact on student achievement, core course completion rates, or service to schools.
- Communicate details of the staff development plan to all stakeholders connected to the plan – this includes sharing information related to the who, how, what, when and most importantly the WHY of the staff development plan.

Several decision units will provide support services to schools related to the four areas listed above. This support will increasingly focus on embedding the staff's learning in the day to day work of schools. Consulting Services will provide support through targeted contracts, support in the implementation of school-based intervention plans for students at risk in their schooling, or specific support of effective teaching and learning practices, through a range of professional development modules offered in the areas of: literacy; numeracy; thinking skills; leadership and collaboration; assessment for learning; and foundational best practices. Additionally, throughout the year, a number of district staff development days are offered on these topics, which include keynote sessions delivered by internationally recognized educators with concurrent sessions by district consultants. Student Assessment will assist schools in collecting, analyzing and understanding various sources of data, as well as support in deciding logical next steps in their staff development plan, based on the analysis of the data.

Consulting Services, in conjunction with other decision units, also offers services to assist central units to meet the five expectations for Central Services. In-services to meet the needs of a range of staff groups as well as assistance in the development and implementation of customized staff development plans are available. Examples of support include targeted contracts and services customized to meet the specific needs of the decision unit in their work to meet any aspect of the Central Expectations.

## **2. Instructional Walk-Throughs (IWT) and Central Staff Visits**

New for this year is the formation of school trios. In the spring of 2005, schools formed groups for the purpose of hosting instructional walk-throughs within this grouping. In this way, all schools will have the opportunity to host an IWT next year.

Central decision units will also participate in three visits, at least one of which will be to a school. The other two visits could be to a school, or another decision unit.

The purpose of these visits is outlined below:

- Schools: Host schools will develop a question related to the school's focus or staff development plan, to assist visitors in gathering evidence and providing reflective feedback to the host school. The "data" collected will assist the host school in making informed decisions about next steps in their work to support teaching and learning.
- Central staff: Each decision unit will develop a question, related to the decision unit's staff development plan, which will assist participants in gathering specific feedback related to their service to schools. The feedback collected will assist the decision unit in making informed decisions about next steps in their work to provide superb service to schools, in support of teaching and learning.

## **3. Leadership Sessions**

Three staff development sessions will support principals, and new for this year, decision unit leaders as well. These sessions will be held in September, December and March. These sessions will be co-planned and delivered with staff from Staff Relations and Development.

The sessions in September and December will focus on the relationship between supervision, staff performance and accountability for achieving district results within the overall context of staff development. In the September session, leaders will gain a better understanding of their responsibilities regarding supervision and evaluation of performance, as well as strategies for developing and implementing a supervision plan for their staff. In the December session, principals and decision unit leaders will focus on the performance management process for non-teaching staff. An optional session will be offered several times throughout the 2005-2006 school year focusing on the formal evaluation process for certificated staff.

Topics for the March session for principals and DU leaders will provide follow-up to the above sessions and content will be based on needs identified by district leaders.

#### **4. Coaching**

Principals as well as central decision unit leaders will be involved in three coaching sessions through out the 2005-06 year: September, December and March. These sessions will be embedded in the leadership sessions described above. Research demonstrates that effective coaching sessions assist leaders in making informed decisions and moving forward in a timely, effective manner. The coaching sessions next year will continue to enhance and build the coaching skills of the participants.

This will be the first year central DU leaders will be involved in coaching training. Central leaders have the opportunity to participate in a foundational coaching session, to understand the basic elements of effective coaching.

Appendix I provides an overview of both school based and central staff development sessions and demonstrates how the district staff development plan has become cohesive and connected to the district plan to achieve superb results.

#### **Summary**

The district-wide staff development plan described above demonstrates an emphasis on effective, job embedded, staff development within the workplace. In the past, staff development has often been viewed as an opportunity to attend a conference, inservice or workshop outside of the workplace, as a stand alone event. The district's staff development plan demonstrates that what is learned at the workshop is only the *first step* in an effective staff development plan. Through the support provided through district staff development sessions, school and central staff will be equipped with the necessary strategies and processes to move what is learned at the workshop to the workplace in meaningful ways. This professional learning will not only improve staff's sense of efficacy and confidence in the delivery of instruction or service, but more importantly, it will positively impact student achievement and high school completion rates.

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APPENDIX I – 2005-2006 District Plan: School and Central Staff Development Plan

**2005-2006 District Plan:  
School and Central Staff Development Plan**

As a district we are working together to improve student achievement and high school completion rates. This work is complex and requires the collective expertise of both school and central staff to ensure superb results from all students. Expertise is enhanced through high quality job embedded staff development at both levels, central and school. Below is an overview of the district staff development plan for 2005-2006 and highlights how both schools and Central Services are working together to ensure superb results from all students.

<i>School Sessions</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Central Decision Unit Sessions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to schools regarding the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the impact on student achievement of the school's professional development plan.</li> <li>• Link data analysis and results to the school's professional development plan to inform next steps.</li> <li>• Emphasis will be on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making connections to the Eight Expectations for schools;</li> <li>• developing the staff's collective capacity to achieve the goals of the school plans;</li> <li>• focusing on results;</li> <li>• demonstrating a sustained commitment to achieving goals.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>August</i> <i>October</i> <i>February</i> <i>May</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to decision units regarding the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the decision units staff development plan, as part of their Decision Unit Plan.</li> <li>• Link data analysis and results to the decision unit's staff development plan to inform next steps.</li> <li>• Emphasis will be on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making connections to the Five Central Services Expectations;</li> <li>• developing the staff's collective capacity to achieve the goals of the Decision Unit Plans;</li> <li>• focusing on results;</li> <li>• demonstrating a sustained commitment to achieving goals.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Instructional Walk-Throughs (IWT) For School Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IWTs will allow schools to assess the impact of strategies for achieving goals set in their professional development plan, as part of their School Plan.</li> <li>• Each school, in the trio, will host one IWT during the school year; guests will be the other two schools in the groups of three.</li> <li>• Hosting schools will develop a question to assist participants in gathering evidence and providing reflective feedback to the host school.</li> <li>• Schools will use what was learned at the IWT to facilitate positive change in their classrooms.</li> </ul>	<p><i>November</i> <i>January</i> <i>April</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Central Staff Visits For Central Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each decision unit will participate in three Central Staff Visits.</li> <li>• Each decision unit will develop a question that will assist participants in gathering specific feedback related to their service to schools.</li> <li>• The visits will take place either in schools or in decision units, including at least one school visit. Student Achievement Services will assist with the coordination of these visits.</li> <li>• Decision units will use what was learned through the visits to continue to enhance service to schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership Session For Principals and Central Leaders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the principal's and decision unit leader's supervision of staff, including monitoring, and supporting staff to enhance professional growth.</li> <li>• Coaches will receive ongoing professional development to enhance their coaching skills.</li> </ul>		
<i>September</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>March</i>