

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 27, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Angus McBeath, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Improving the Achievement of At-Risk Students

ORIGINATOR: Tanni Parker, Executive Director

RESOURCE
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INFORMATION

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding the identification, programming and monitoring at-risk students' achievement in our district through a project called Intervention Plans.

Background

The identification and support of at-risk students is an on-going, and complex process. In the past, each school has developed ways to support their struggling and at risk-learners. To assist schools in this work, a process called Intervention Plans was initiated in the fall of 2003. The purpose of this initiative was to formalize the criteria for the identification of at-risk students, share promising practices for working with these students, and collect data on their success based on HLAT results. In September 2004, schools were asked to provide an intervention strategy for all students who do not have an individualized program plan reading below grade level as identified on the May 2003 HLAT and submit this information to the superintendent.

Following the May 2004 administration of the HLATs, the data indicated that 56% of the students that were identified on the at-risk list were reading at or above grade level. Although this data was encouraging for regular students, a decision was made to request that schools provide intervention strategies for two additional at-risk students, English Language Learners (ELL) and Aboriginal students.

Supporting the Achievement of At-risk Students 2004 – 2005

In September 2004, the requirements for supporting the achievement of students at-risk through the Intervention Plan was modified. Schools received a list of students who were reading and writing below grade level and a list of ELL and Aboriginal students in their school.

Table 1 outlines the success of the success of these students on the May 2005 HLAT. Results of the 2004 -2005 year were disaggregated to monitor success with groups of students as outlined below.

Table 1
Percentage of Success on 2004 – 2005 Intervention Plan

Students Identified in the 2004-2005	Reading	Writing
Regular	57.1	66.3
Aboriginal	49.4	52.9
ELL	42.0	57.0

The success of students is inconsistent across groups and it can generally be said that the regular non-coded students demonstrated higher success than identified Aboriginal or ELL students.

Implications

The data collected from this project indicates that additional support must be provided for our ELL and Aboriginal students. The English Language Support Center at John A. McDougall which opened in the summer of 2005 is one way that the district is providing additional support for this group of learners. The center provides quick and accurate assessment of a student’s English language proficiency which is then shared with schools and teachers. In addition in-services to assist teachers in building expertise in working with ELL have been designed and are offered through consulting services.

A focus group for working with principals that have had success with Aboriginal students is currently being piloted. The purpose of this group is to identify best practices in schools and classrooms where there has been success with Aboriginal learners, and then share these practices with other schools. Additional consultants to support teachers of Aboriginal students have also been hired through consulting services to support the work with Aboriginal students across the district.

As well, changes to the format and requirements of the Intervention Plan are currently being made for the 2005 – 2006 school year to assist schools in creating a quality plan for improving the achievement of their at-risk learners. Currently Student Achievement Services is contacting principals of schools that had high levels of success with at-risk students. The purpose of the meeting is to identify the specific practices principals believe had the greatest impact on the achievement of these students.

Summary

The data gathered through the intervention plan project has been invaluable to assist the district in realigning resources to best support our at- risk learners.

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