



MEMORANDUM

Date: 03 May 2011

To: Board of Trustees

From: Tim Monds, Superintendent

Originator: Emilie Keane, Associate Superintendent

Subject: **Education Plan Priority Report – Pedagogy and Practices Which Provides Developmentally Responsive Curriculum for All Students Kindergarten – Grade 12**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Trustees receives as information Parkland's Three Year Education Plan Progress Report on the priority; "*Pedagogy and practices which provides developmentally responsive curriculum for all students Kindergarten through Grade 12.*"

BACKGROUND

Schools continue to provide a developmentally responsive curriculum focusing on varying teaching approaches, assessment for learning, and integrating technology into teaching and learning; all with the teacher taking on a greater role as a facilitator of learning. There is strong focus on finding unique ways to collaborate and inform parents of current teacher practices.

Information provided is indicative of the emerging transformational changes in instructional practice that promotes developmentally responsive curriculum for all students Kindergarten through Grade 12.

Administration would be pleased to respond to questions.



**Pedagogy and Practices Which Provides Developmentally
Responsive Curriculum for All Students Kindergarten – Grade 12
PARKLAND SCHOOL DIVISION No. 70
Progress Report**

Presented to Board of Trustees 03 May 2011

By Emilie Keane, Associate Superintendent

Resource People: Learning Services Curriculum Facilitators

REPORTING PERIOD: September 2010 – April 2011

“Developmentally responsive curriculum” continues to be identified as a priority in Parkland School Division’s (PSD) Three Year Education Plan 2011-2014.

In the *Enhanced Understanding of Early and Middle Years Pedagogy in Parkland Schools (April 2009)* report, schools identified several challenges that they face in implementing curriculum that is responsive to the needs of 21st century learners, and intentionally addresses students’ developmental readiness. These challenges were summarized as follows:

- Shifting from the teacher as deliverer of information, to the teacher as facilitator of student learning
- Shifting from teacher in isolation, to teacher working with colleagues, students and parents in curriculum development and assessment
- Creating opportunities to work with colleagues
- Creating meaningful, authentic learning tasks
- Opportunities for interschool collaboration amongst students
- Keeping up with current research
- Educating parents of the shift in pedagogy (teaching methods)

PSD schools continue to address each of the challenges in various ways in their efforts to be responsive to the diverse needs of their students. The provincial transformational initiative “Action on Inclusion” has also added to the importance and relevance of this work as jurisdictions strive to develop inclusive educational settings for students.

The work accomplished in schools in 2009-2010 to address the challenges is ongoing, but the Division has continued its emphasis on this priority in the 2010-2011 school year through aligning its work to the Ministry’s transformation initiatives.

Setting the PSD Direction – Action on Inclusion:

School-based administrators and central office leaders have deepened their understanding about inclusive education. This means understanding what “inclusion” means as a values-based definition, understanding that not all students will be in mainstreamed classrooms, that inclusion values “all” students, and that this is a cultural shift which is messy and creates a sense of uncertainty. The role of technology to enhance and access learning for all students needs to be embedded in our planning and infused in our teaching.

The role of teacher as instructional leader in the classroom has expanded as the teacher focuses on understanding and responding to the learning needs of a broader spectrum of students with more diverse needs. Understanding the learning needs of students and effectively matching that with a developmentally responsive curriculum is a critical part of providing students with quality programming.

Learning Services has worked to provide support for school administrators, teachers and educational assistants in the following ways:

1. Quality Professional Learning Opportunities are focused on effective implementation of new curriculum and on teaching and assessment strategies that respect the diverse learning needs of students. Professional development has also focused on deepening teachers' understanding of the diverse learning needs of students with moderate and severe learning disabilities and the effective strategies to modify and/or adapt curriculum to make it developmentally responsive. This work will be ongoing for several years as curriculum continues to change. Alberta Education is also focusing on this work through the Action on Curriculum Initiative aimed at providing a provincial curriculum that will be differentiated and therefore more developmentally responsive to the diverse needs of students and supportive of teachers and their work.
2. Learning Coaches will support classroom teachers as they create more inclusive educational settings for their students. Learning Coaches will be identified in each school and will be trained as coaches to support their colleagues "at-elbow" in developing programming and effective teaching strategies that is responsive developmentally to the diverse needs within the classroom. Coaching training will commence in June 2011 and will continue throughout the coming years. These "master teachers" will provide a high level of support to all teachers in the system. The Learning Coach model is a significant division initiative aimed at supporting all students and their teachers and is supported in principle by Alberta Education.
3. There is significant emphasis provincially being placed on developing the capacity of instructional staff to build appropriate and multiple pathways for those students not typically successful in the regular classroom and to bring clarity to what we understand about supports and services. There needs to be a continuum of supports and services, and the Division is striving to increase its understanding about how to achieve that. Efforts to create collaborative working relationships with community agencies and the government ministries are ongoing and important to achieving quality programming and seamless access to supports and services needed for many students with a high level of need.

AISI – Critical Thinking Project:

Critical thinking- Through the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS I) project, teachers are creating critical challenges, lessons which pose problems or tasks that engage students in thinking critically about curricular content. All PSD schools are using The Critical Thinking Consortium's (TC²) model as the structure for the critical challenges. As the Division moves into the final year of the AIS I cycle, schools are demonstrating increased expertise in creating effective critical thinking challenges for students that have developed higher critical thinking skills.

Integration of technology into teaching and learning:

Technology enables teachers to collaborate with subject experts, colleagues, students and parents, without having to be in the same building together. For example:

- The Inside PSD Website is providing a space for colleagues to create resources and communicate with each other while working on projects such as AIS I and SLI Tech
- Through Inside PSD, teachers are sharing SMARTBoard™ lesson plans that they have created
- Web 2.0 applications such as educational blogs and wikis are being used as tools to communicate with colleagues, students and parents
- Through videoconferencing, teachers work with colleagues from other schools and school districts and students are able to access experts and other students from around the world as a part of their studies

Teachers are participating in Webinars that are offered through various external PD providers. Technology is an integrated component of teaching and learning, and is not seen as an isolated tool. PSD schools are expanding their use of technology in the following ways:

- Students continue to use Web based resources as interactive learning tools
- Web 2.0 applications provide alternate ways for students to engage in their learning
- The internet is being used a source of information when students are conducting research. Digital resources, such as the *Online Reference Centre* in LearnAlberta provide reliable sources of information
- Interactive white boards (e.g. SMART Board™) are being used by teachers and students.