

Edmonton Public Schools'
DISTRICT RECOGNITION
2015 - 2016

HONOURS
AND REWARDS
FALL TO THOSE
WHO SHOW THEIR GOOD
QUALITIES
IN ACTION. — ARISTOTLE



Program

Kick-Off Video

Greetings and introductions

Board Chair Michael Janz

Opening Remarks

Board Chair Michael Janz

Sponsor Acknowledgement

Presentations for District Recognition of Service

Presentations for District Recognition of Teams

Presentations for District Recognition of Merit

Closing Remarks

Board Chair Michael Janz

Reception

Atrium, Centre for Education



Message from the Board of Trustees

For over two decades, the District Recognition Program has shone a well-deserving spotlight on the everyday heroes in our District – those people who bring out the very best in our students, school communities and offices.

Tonight, the Board of Trustees welcomes the opportunity to honour our remarkable group of recipients. We realize you may have varied experiences in supporting teaching and learning, but you each share a similar set of qualities that exemplify the true spirit of public education.

To your classrooms, you bring an energy and enthusiasm that encourages learners to realize their potential; to our many offices and school communities, you support, motivate, guide and inspire colleagues, peers, students and parents to strive for excellence.

Your efforts—infused with passion, talent and dedication—have far reaching impact and make a true difference in the lives of our students and their families.

Some of the stories you will hear and read about tonight may be familiar, perhaps something you saw in the news or online. Other stories will reveal the quiet, behind the scenes work happening every day in our schools and offices.

I would like to thank not only those being recognized tonight but also the countless friends, family members and mentors who have stood behind and supported tonight's recipients. Thank you all for upholding the tradition of excellence for which our District is known. I wish you continued success and a wonderful, memorable evening.



Michael Janz

Board Chair

Message from Event Co-Sponsor **Scotiabank**

At Scotiabank, investing in our communities has been a focus for over 180 years. We believe investing in young people is the path to community prosperity.

We aim to support organizations that are committed to helping young people reach their full potential. We believe this is an investment in the long-term security, stability and growth of both our communities and our business.

In that spirit, we have been very proud to sponsor Edmonton Public Schools' District Recognition Program for the past 20 years.

The initiatives undertaken by the district's staff, students, parents and other community members have a positive impact on our children and our community.

We acknowledge all of the nominees for their contributions and achievements.

Individually, you are both inspiring and accomplished. Collectively, you are ensuring our future leaders have the necessary skills and resources they need to support their success.

Brian O'Neill

Director

Edmonton and Alberta North

Scotiabank Commercial Banking

Lon Sokalski

Market Lead

Edmonton and Alberta North

Scotiabank Commercial Banking

Edmonton Public Schools benefits greatly from the considerable contributions made by students, staff, parents and community members. Many people volunteer time, talent and energy that not only exceeds our expectations, but also sets an example for others to follow.

These outstanding achievements and important contributions to our District are recognized through the annual District Recognition Program. There are three types of District Recognition:

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE honours an individual's outstanding professional and/or volunteer contributions to the life of the school or community. Three recipient categories are recognized each year: parents or community members, secondary students and staff members. Nominations are made based on a number of criteria, such as: quality service, commitment and the relationship of the individual's activities to schooling and/or the enhancement of public education.

RECOGNITION OF TEAMS honours outstanding contributions or achievements made by groups through collaborative efforts. Three recipient categories are recognized each year: groups of parents or community members, groups of secondary students and groups of staff members. Nominations are made based on a number of criteria, such as: significant contribution, the achievement of excellence through teamwork and the relationship of the group's activities to schooling and/or the enhancement of public education.

RECOGNITION OF MERIT honours outstanding achievement of individuals who have demonstrated a standard of excellence in an area of endeavour. Three recipient categories are recognized each year: parents or community members, secondary students and staff members. Nominations are made based on a number of criteria, such as: meritorious, innovative, creative or inspiring achievements, leadership and/or endeavours that have brought distinction to the individual, the school, the community and Edmonton Public Schools.

Recognition of Service

CRITERIA: To recognize the contributions made to the District by parents, community members, secondary students, and staff through professional and volunteer service. Focus is on quality service and significant commitment to the life of the school and/or the education community by an individual.

STAFF

Daniel Card, Teacher, M.E. LaZerte School

Since he first started teaching at M.E. LaZerte in the spring of 2014, Daniel stood out as a dedicated teacher and started several initiatives, namely the student social justice club Rotary Interact. Thanks in large part to Daniel's efforts, the Rotary Interact club has organized and implemented campaigns ranging from delivering community food hampers to building awareness about the fight to eradicate Polio and the need for refugee shelter boxes to help families in crisis.

Daniel created the Voices of LaZerte initiative after recognizing the need for students to have a space of their own where they could gather and talk about their ambitious ideas. He repurposed a room in the school and successfully applied for grants to purchase seating, lighting and technology. The room has continued to be a place where students wishing to make a difference—fighting racism, combating crime and highlighting student stories—can feel empowered. Daniel also organizes the student Model United Nations and inspires students to research and understand complex global issues and, more importantly, how they can be part of the solution.

Paul Francis, Teacher, Harry Ainlay School

Paul is a shining advocate for LGBTQ students at Harry Ainlay. He founded the school's Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) that provides a safe space for students in need of support and guidance. Many students that do not identify as LGBTQ can also be found working with Paul, helping to create a supportive community that rallies behind LGBTQ youth and other vulnerable students, making them feel safe and welcome. Through the GSA, students have been able to connect with their peers from other schools and hear inspirational speakers address their interests and concerns. Allison Greckol, department head at Harry Ainlay, says, "Mr. Francis' enthusiasm, compassion and admirable work ethic have provided a great example for both staff and students. His room is a safe environment where students are able to talk, share and grow, cultivating a sense of trust in him that is unrivalled." One of the most anticipated activities every year at Harry Ainlay is the Genderbread campaign. Paul and his students bake and give out gingerbread ahead of Christmas to create awareness around various school community events and issues.

Jovino Inostroza, Head Custodian, George P. Nicholson School

Jovino has provided a healthy and safe environment to Edmonton Public Schools' students for 24 years. Since joining the District in 1992, he has consistently been a professional and compassionate custodian who is deeply committed to contributing to the well-being of students. Teacher Lorelei Campbell has known Jovino for over 13 years and says, "Jovino takes great pride in his work. He understands that a healthy environment allows children to flourish in their learning and our school literally 'shines' with his hard work."

Before coming to Canada, Jovino aspired to be a junior high school math teacher, and later a mechanical engineer, at the University of Concepcion in Chile. Jovino took his skills and love for education to Canada and applied it to his school communities. Jovino actively participates in school-wide events at George P. Nicholson and is attentive to students' needs, whether that means giving them tours of the school's mechanical systems, snowblowing the sidewalks early in the morning or helping them learn about electricity. School staff remark that he embodies the qualities of gentleness, integrity and humility. He not only contributes to his local community but also personally delivered funds raised at George P. Nicholson to a high-needs school in Chile.

Sue Kopchia, Educational Assistant, Highlands School

Sue Kopchia believes that all students can do well when given the right opportunities. She is a favourite with students and works hard to build deep relationships with them, as well as their families. Her service goes above and beyond, supporting and advocating for students who may be struggling in school, home or life. Sue doesn't limit herself to being a behavioural learning assistant, she gets involved in every aspect of the school, like managing bulletin boards and the school library, preparing breakfast and providing office relief work. She is proactive, always anticipating what work needs to be done. Principal Brad Burns says, "If there is a job to do, you can count on Sue." Her work ethic and community involvement extends to her family, with her daughter and husband volunteering on school field trips and collecting food from the food bank for disadvantaged students.

Brad Mamchur, Principal, Riverbend School

Brad Mamchur leads by example and has played a pivotal role in shaping the positive culture at Riverbend School. He fosters an environment where people are encouraged to explore, create, achieve and excel. He actively listens and supports his "Riverbend family" in any way he can, including covering classes during a basketball tournament, travelling abroad with students to Costa Rica or being a cast member in school theatre productions. By getting involved at the ground level, he ensures there are strong supports and programming in place so all students can succeed. "He has been a leader in encouraging professional growth on his team, as well as academic, athletic and artistic growth amongst students," teacher Michael Yuzwenko says of Brad. "He encourages all endeavours with equal enthusiasm and support." Brad strives to make others around him reach their full potential and makes sure he gives them the support they need to get there.

Recognition of Service *continued*

Valinda Oswald, Educational Assistant, Ellerslie Campus School

Prior to being an educational assistant (EA) at Ellerslie, Valinda led their parent council for 15 years. Even before she started working for the District, she could be seen helping in classrooms, reading with students and doing paperwork in the office. On the parent council, Valinda initiated and organized many events and fundraisers from hot dog sales to year-end carnivals. Through those fundraising efforts, the school was able to buy new technology, books, resources and fund field trips. As an EA, Valinda is energetic and positive and always takes the extra time to read with students and research new strategies to help them. Valinda's contributions over the last 20 years are motivated by her passion for learning and community building and are greatly appreciated by the staff.

Colin Powles, Assistant Curriculum Coordinator, Ellerslie Campus School

Every morning, Colin is in the halls greeting students when they come through the door, creating a positive school climate and engaging with students right from the get-go. He consistently demonstrates unwavering commitment to building strong relationships and student success. He is especially active in social justice issues and plans fundraising opportunities for a variety of good causes. Every month, Colin organizes Cash for Care which raises funds to buy parking passes for families whose children need regular care at the Stollery Children's Hospital.

Colin is a champion of the Support Youth Foundation that makes sure Edmonton students have access to healthy lunches. He has spearheaded school assemblies and talent shows and also runs two successful clubs at Ellerslie: the Leadership Club and the Gay Straight Alliance. His effort to reach every student, whether he teaches them or not, means that "students look up to him, respect him and will often go to him for support in their personal lives," says fellow teacher, Julie Marko.

Dave Venters, Carpenter, Facilities Maintenance

Dave's contributions to Victoria School over the past five years have been remarkable. His carpentry skills were instrumental in transforming hallways, classrooms and studios into environments that foster learning and creativity. He takes great pride in his work and has managed to hang over 350 pieces of artwork (including murals) throughout the building to support the vision for the school as a positive and dynamic environment that helps students achieve their potential. Dave demonstrates respect and concern for the work of Victoria School and always ensures a safe and considerate approach to each project.

His advice and assistance was particularly appreciated with the dismantling of the school's old sports-team murals in the gym and replacing them with two murals to begin the process of healing and reconciliation with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit community. "With Dave's support, these murals represent the courage of our students to lead us to reconcile our past and claim the future," says Principal Tami Dowler-Coltman.

Helen Whitson, Teacher, Malcolm Tweddle School

Helen spends her days side by side with students, supporting and listening to them whenever and wherever is needed. She is often spotted working with students through her breaks, helping them understand concepts or answering their questions. Her adaptability, patience and ability to connect with students allows her to build trust and gain their confidence. Parent Killi Oselies says, “Helen has instilled in my children the ideas of future growth in our communities, as well as how they can make a difference as citizens of the world.” She has inspired her fellow colleagues with her enthusiasm and dedication to teaching in Canada and abroad, especially in Guinea-Bissau where, 14 years ago, she spent two years teaching. She still regularly returns today. In her outstanding teaching practices and in sharing her passion for international volunteer work, Helen has inspired her colleague Kris Simpson to “do a little more and give a little more at every teaching opportunity.”

PARENT/COMMUNITY**Harvey Duff (1944–2016), Community Volunteer, Kildare School**

Harvey Duff donated his time and expertise helping students learn computing science through Kildare’s Scratch Club. Harvey volunteered in the school’s computer lab every Thursday during lunch, instructing Grades 3 to 6 students who were interested in learning how to code. “Mr. Duff had a caring personality, a good sense of humour and was extremely approachable to the students. He constantly provided students with constructive feedback and suggestions on how they could enhance their projects,” says teacher Janet Wu. Teachers especially appreciated Harvey’s enthusiasm and patience guiding each student, allowing them to work through projects at their own pace. “The program was a great complement to our extra-curricular activities and the school is really grateful that he shared his time with the students,” says Wanita White, library technician at Kildare.

During the summer of 2016, Harvey also organized and led the Google CS4HS Academy for Kindergarten to Grade 12 teachers that provided computing science professional development for teachers. Kildare teacher Diane Shih says, “He cared for public education and wanted to engage in the students’ learning as much as we do. I strongly believe that our club’s success was the result of our collaborative work with Harvey Duff.”

Harvey’s dedication to the District as a teacher, department head, curriculum coordinator, then volunteer after his retirement in 2005, will be greatly missed.

Recognition of Service *continued*

Roberta Lapointe, Parent Volunteer, Delwood School

“Roberta promotes student success by modelling enthusiasm and empathy towards each and every child she meets,” says teacher Gwendolyn Shone, adding, “Mrs. Lapointe’s enthusiasm for children and education seems boundless.” Roberta has been a parent volunteer for nine years but the word “volunteer” doesn’t do her outstanding contributions over this time justice. Jack Geldart, principal of Delwood, boasts, “Mme. Lapointe has in many ways become an unpaid member of the staff. We have come to rely on her in so many ways.” Year after year, Roberta is at Delwood almost every day—stuffing envelopes, helping with last-minute photocopying, delivering newsletters, going on field-trips or reading to the students. With her flair for the arts, Roberta also curates student art displays that make the school hallways come alive.

Roberta’s community service extends beyond Delwood School to serve as role model for others in the community. She works with seniors and acts as a liaison between the school and the community league. Over the last year, Roberta was nominated for the Government of Alberta 2015 Stars of Alberta Volunteer Award, was recognized by Mayor Don Iveson for her long-standing commitment to students and was featured on Global News as they followed her for a day-in-the-life feature about volunteering at Delwood School.

Vera MacKinnon, Community Volunteer, Delton School

Vera understands the importance of creating positive relationships. She very quickly established a rapport with staff and students by committing her time, knowledge and energy to the extended Delton family. Since retiring from her role at the District, Vera has been volunteering two days per week doing administrative duties, helping the office run smoothly. Vera greets students and families by name and creates a welcoming environment for everyone who comes to the school. “Her magical mixture of enthusiasm and optimism serve to empower those students and families with whom she interacts,” says Principal Errol Johnson. Vera goes above and beyond by providing students with food, clothing or anything else they need, and her outstanding commitment to excellence makes her a role model at the school.

Thank You.

Recognition of Teams

STAFF

Dickinsfield Custodial Duo

Fermin Escobar and Maria Estrada make up this team. Maria and Fermin make keeping Dickinsfield School clean and safe for staff and students their biggest priority. The pair complement each other well. After Fermin has finished his duties to perfection, he finds time to play soccer with the students. Maria ensures the school glistens in the evening and gardens at the school in the summer. They both have an incredible work ethic and their kindness and compassion make them an important part of Dickinsfield.

Fermin not only does his job well, he supports the staff so they can do their job well. “He anticipates our concerns and has very often dealt with a problem before we were even aware there was one!” says Principal Mary Butlin. Fermin made such an impact on a student, Fermin was asked to be a mentor and have the student job shadow him as part of the Work Experience program. Maria not only keeps the school spotless, she is also excellent at building relationships. Her smile, personable nature and willingness to help make her a wonderful colleague and example to students. As a team, they work very well together, support one another and make the school a safe and enjoyable place to work.

Ellerslie Campus Kindergarten/Grade 1 Team

The team consists of Amanda Aasen, Kim Campbell, Laurel Clark-Parker, Liesel Knall-Davidson, Ronna May, Teresa Mio, Cara Patterson and Taylor Patterson.

The team was part of the Not a Box event at Ellerslie South Campus inspired by the book Not a Box by Antoinette Portis. They designed a learning event that had Kindergarten and Grade 1 students working together to study elements of buildings and vehicles, learning techniques for drawing, writing and designing plans. Student groups along with their parent volunteers, chose a box as their base and by the end of the day, they had built an entire city complete with a hospital, vet clinic, car wash, houses and a skyscraper (with an elevator). They even populated it with cars, rockets, airplanes and everything in between. The event instilled a sense of community in the students and inspired their imaginations.

The Not a Box event team engaged the parent community to collect boxes and different craft supplies, and also spent the day acting as leaders to the student groups. Assistant Principal Kathleen Durance says, “The team’s efforts are an example of the power of collaboration to bring authentic learning experiences to our students. They serve as an inspiration to other educators in our District.”

CRITERIA: To recognize the contributions made to the District by a group of parents and community members, the achievement of a significant goal through cooperative group efforts by secondary students, and the excellent contributions made to the District by staff through collaborative group efforts. The focus is on co-operation, participation and excellence in performance by a group of people. Achievement or contribution has brought distinction to the group, the school and/or the District.

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Harry Ainlay Skills Canada Team

The team members are Brent Cox, Sandi Halliwell, Jeff Howlet, Terri-Lynn Hyland, Neil Mazur, Steven Milton, Jaryd Murray, John Neufled, Shirley Rainbow, Colin Veldkamp and Jordan Walker.

The Harry Ainlay Skills Canada Alberta Team (HASCAT) combined their skills and efforts to share, advance and promote the fabrication, construction, cosmetology, fashion technology, robotics and culinary industries to students. Each member's passion for the trades transformed option classes into job-site learning opportunities so students could explore and gain hands-on experiences. Each HASCAT team member spent countless hours training and preparing students for success at the Skills Canada competitions. The time spent before and after school, during lunch hours and even during evenings and weekends is a testament to their dedication to help students achieve their personal goals. They prepared each student for Skills Canada levels as they qualified—local, regional, provincial and national. Students Michael (Raleigh) Timms and Jager Watson who worked on building robots for the competition say, "Throughout the project we were able to play as we experimented with new strategies to build the best robot. We are excited to get the team back together and try again this year."

Jasper Place Physical Education Department

Team members include Sid Brandsma, Matt Burrows, Elise Emmott, Andrea Facendi, Dusty Freimark, Brad Galloway, Lauren Green, Amie Mangan and Eric Munoz.

The Jasper Place Physical Education Department team not only contributes to the success of the athletics program at the school, they also create a sense of community, provide mentorship and are exemplary members of the staff and community. The team works tirelessly coaching, organizing tournaments and special events, and pursuing professional learning opportunities to provide creative programming to students. The list of activities the department has organized over the last few years is extensive and includes a bike-a-thon fundraiser that raised \$75,000 in the first year for the Make a Wish Foundation, karaoke, bubble soccer and a midnight dance party. "You can feel the electricity of teenage energy and the comradeship in uniting as a school at these events," says Jasper Place teacher Anan Ryan.

The department also has one of the most competitive athletics programs in Alberta and hosts numerous tournaments yearly. This past year alone, the team hosted the ASAA 4A Provincial Basketball and Volleyball tournaments, Metro Edmonton Athletic Association basketball finals for all three levels of boys and girls, and multiple junior high school catchment tournaments for basketball and volleyball. On top of all this, the team planned special events like the well-known REB Invitational tournament that features teams from Canada, the United States, Australia and China. Principal Jean Stiles says, "I am extremely proud of this team and all they have accomplished. They are talented, forward-thinking role models who demonstrate commitment to the success of every Rebel in all that they do."

Lendrum Project of Heart Team

Team members are Janine Schmidt and Tiffany Cooper. Janine and Tiffany spearheaded the Project of Heart and other opportunities that seek to embrace First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) culture at École Lendrum School. They oversaw the creation of a sculpture that demonstrates how Lendrum students feel about the residential school system. The display encourages students, staff, community members and visitors to reflect on Canada's FNMI history and provides opportunities for students to contribute to reconciliation. They sought out ways to share this part of history in a safe, respectful and age-appropriate way by giving each student a wooden tile to design. Together, the tiles create a mosaic that hangs in the school in honour of residential school survivors. Taylor Rubin, FNMI cultural liaison for the school, says, "Janine and Tiffany worked hard to create a safe, supportive and caring environment for FNMI students at Lendrum. The project was an inquiry-based, hands-on, collaborative and artistic journey of seeking truth about the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada."

M.E. LaZerte Basketball Coaching Duo

This duo is comprised of teachers Ryan Dunkley and Andrew Parker. By combining their love and knowledge of basketball, with their commitment to making a difference, these two teachers have positively influenced many students.

They transformed their team into a cohesive, successful unit through hard work on and off the court. They brought the team and community together through various events like the dunk-a-thon (featured on CBC News) and through tactics like profiling student and team achievements by sending "shout outs" on Twitter and Instagram. They also supported anti-racism initiatives and fundraisers for cancer research. They reached out to the local community by working with Basketball Alberta to create and lead a clinic called Northside Hoops. Over several weeks, 175 kids, aged nine to 17, got excellent basketball and life skills training by local teachers, coaches and high-level basketball players. Ryan and Andrew held their players to high standards and their team won the consolation side at provincials and the ASAA's Sportsmanship Award. The two coaches were also recognized by their peers and were awarded co-coaches of the year for the 2016 season.

M.E. LaZerte Career and Life Management Reform Team

Teachers Prambir Minhas and Julian Pacholik make up this team. The pair are being recognized for transforming the Career and Life Management (CALM) course at M.E. LaZerte into something the students looked forward to. The team took the self-taught module course and turned it into a course that gives students enriching and meaningful hands-on experiences. By updating the course, students feel they are able to explore their interests and are more prepared to transition out of school. Assistant Principal Bob Lowry says, "The initiative has helped improve graduation rates. Mr. Pacholik and Mr. Minhas took a risk offering something they believed could change students' transition from high school and, as a result, students tell us they feel better prepared to leave school after taking the course."

Recognition of Teams *continued*

Spruce Avenue School ESL Team

“From the moment I met Joanne Harle, Tom Banks and Karen Richards, I was overwhelmed by the dedication, passion and enthusiasm they have poured into the ESL Welcome Room at Spruce Avenue,” says English as a Second Language (ESL) consultant JJ Kennedy. The ESL Welcome Room is a space for newcomer students to voice their needs, challenges and experiences and feel safe and supported. As the educational assistant on the team, Karen provides language assistance and helps acclimatize students to Canadian culture and encourages students to share their heritage with their classes. It is also an important space for students who may have faced trauma in their lives before coming to Canada to get help expressing their emotions. Joanne, Tom and Karen are committed to creating a learning environment where ESL students are encouraged to reach their language goals. The team is warm and welcoming to all students whether they walk through their doors or wander through the hallways. They continually inspire their colleagues with their dedication to supporting newcomers. “The ELL program they developed is one of the most spectacular I have seen in my 16 years of teaching,” boasts Spruce Avenue teacher Nigel Ranger.

Victoria Support Staff

Team members include Marilyn Baldwin, Caroline Duchscher, Geraldine Geoghegan, Norene Jacobsen, Cheryl Johnson, Tara Lowry, Barb Nason, Jackie Parnell, Bobbi-Jo Robbins, Milagros Torrejon, Brenda Stayko and Krystyna Tyszko.

The support staff at Victoria School commit themselves wholeheartedly to all the students, families and staff at the school. The team provides effective and strong leadership in a large and complex school environment with many moving parts. Teacher Kerri-Lynn Ceyan says, “The team is like a well-oiled machine where they allow the cogs, gears, levers and pulleys to operate smoothly, effectively and efficiently.” The team supports the school in many areas, including administrative and educational support, printing, library and records management and accounting. The team brings together a unique set of knowledge, experiences and skills to make every interaction with staff, students and families meaningful and personal.

Despite the wide-range of student needs at the K to 12 school, the support staff always remains flexible, inclusive and accepting of any questions or issues they encounter. The office processes upwards of 500 applications and registrations yearly and handles the entire process with confidence and sensitivity. Educational assistants provide a number of important programs that make a real difference to the students on a daily basis like providing one-on-one, small group and classroom support, operate the Student Learning Centre and coordinate the distance learning program. Assistant Principal Randy Witte says, “Together our support staff is a strong, cohesive team that supports and participates in all aspects of life at Victoria School. They continually work hard to maintain the level of service that is needed for our school community to feel safe and cared for.” Their commitment to professional excellence and education make a difference in the lives of everyone at Victoria School.

Victoria Custodial Team

The custodial team at Victoria school consists of Orlando Bautista, Rex Caab, Julie Caturas, Isabel Crovetto, Amado DeCastro, Ronald Fernandez, Simplicio Garnica, Alphonse Holtkamp, Monica Inostroza, Pio Jao, Ireneo La Torre, Hegino Luniza and Tecle Mehari.

“The team is dedicated to making sure that Victoria School is a safe and clean environment where students, staff and the community can learn, play and create,” says Assistant Principal Debbie Fedorak. The team’s hard work and professionalism has a real impact on the entire teaching and learning process in the school. “Our teaching staff would not be able to do their jobs properly without the constant support and attentiveness of our custodial team,” says curriculum coordinator Stacey Taylor. The team consistently exceeds all expectations placed on them in a diverse Kindergarten to Grade 12 setting. They are an integral component to maintaining a safe and high-quality learning environment at the school—always expertly anticipating potential hazards and planning for solutions. Some of their many services can include clearing sidewalks after a blizzard, cleaning up after a sick child and preparing for one of the many community events throughout the year. They care about the students and have taken the time to build strong relationships throughout the school community. Teacher Kerri-Lynn Caeyn says, “My students always include our custodial staff in their celebrations, offering a birthday cake or cards of appreciation after a classroom activity. Each member of this hard working team is seen as ‘family’ in every sense of the word.”

Waverley Early Education Team

The Early Education Team at Waverley exemplifies the District’s cornerstones values of equity, integrity, accountability and collaboration on a daily basis with their work with young children and their families. The diverse team of 47 individuals includes speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, a physical therapist, educational assistants, school family liaisons and teachers. Most of the children accessing early education programming have moderate to profound disabilities or delays, making it integral to the future success of students and the communities they live in. The team provides critical intervention for children who need a boost to their physical, emotional, cognitive and communication skill development. “Their dedication to serving children and families comes before convenience and they provide an excellent program with a high level of success,” says Natalie Prytuluk, supervisor for Early Years, Inclusive Learning. The team’s collaboration and adaptability during the program transition allowed them to continue doing their work seamlessly. Team members participated in the Early Years Advisory Committee and provided a first-hand perspective on the challenges and opportunities that would come with expanding the Early Years program. “They met those challenges with grace and a ‘can-do’ attitude,” says Natalie Prytuluk. In the 2015-2016 school year, Waverley had to open three Early Education classrooms late in the year due to enrolment, which meant a realignment of staff and resources each time. Principal Reg Crawford says, “Under the leadership of Tish Banting, the entire team worked together to determine the best way to provide service. This was hard work and involved collaboration, planning and orientation. Throughout the process, the team was professional, calm and very effective at making this happen seamlessly for students and families.”

Recognition of Teams *continued*

DISTRICT STAFF AND COMMUNITY

Lillian Osborne Mental Health Collaborative Team

Team members include Jennifer Harris, Kimberly Howard, Jennie McLester and Matthew Wiebe.

“Thanks to the Mental Health Collaborative team, the dialogue around mental health has shifted and our students and staff speak with renewed empathy and courage,” say Lillian Osborne teaching staff Davey Thompson and Lisa Beebe. The Mental Health Collaborative is a partnership between the counselling staff at Lillian Osborne, the Family Centre and Alberta Health Services. Jennifer and her team created an environment that is strengths-based and hopeful, giving vulnerable students a sense of belonging. The team teaches students self-advocacy and helps them recognize and embrace their strengths.

The team excels at helping students transition back to school and re-engage in their education after prolonged absences. One student affected by both trauma and an anxiety disorder had great difficulty getting from home to class and was not able to attend school at all. Jennifer and her team worked with the student to develop a plan that saw them gradually attend more and more classes and they paired the student with a peer mentor. Since the implementation of the plan, the student has not missed one day of classes. A parent of another student says, “The team continually provides great support and guidance which is crucial for my son’s growth and development. I send him to school each morning knowing that the nurturing team at Lillian Osborne is contributing to his success, not only academically but emotionally and socially as well.”

DISTRICT STAFF, COMMUNITY AND STUDENT

Westglen Foundation Fundraiser Team

The team is comprised of administrators Cory MacTaggart and Nancy Lastiwka and parent Marcia Hole.

The team worked hard planning and executing a gala that raised almost \$6,000 dollars for the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation. The team took the Foundation’s cause to heart and fundraised to provide full-day kindergarten to those children who need it most. The Westglen Gala was a night of conversation and music with performances by Westglen alumni and renowned musician and former senator, Tommy Banks. To celebrate the school opening its doors in 1940, the team organized the gala at the Enjoy Centre and had over 75 guests attend. The school community donated many hours connecting with school alumni, former and current members, as well as District staff and Trustees to sell tickets. The team secured donations and gifts-in-kind like flowers and catering from the community to make sure as much of the proceeds went to the Foundation as possible. Foundation board member, Don Lore says, “The event was a tribute to how a passionate and diverse group of people can take an idea, put it into action and make positive things happen.”

PARENT/COMMUNITY AND DISTRICT STAFF

Lauderdale Breakfast Club and Daily Healthy Snack Coordinators

Team members Evelyn Schultz and Sherry Suvanto have spent the last two years transforming Lauderdale's daily Breakfast Club and daily Healthy Snack. Each day, the team coordinates, plans and prepares nutritious meals for Lauderdale students. They both shop for specials and deals, and include different flavours in their meals for students to experience like avocados and dill pickles.

As a result of the program, parents feel supported by their community and school attendance and punctuality has increased. "Both Evelyn and Sherry understand the many challenges our students and families face. They are both committed and believe that through hard work and commitment to kids, they will indeed enhance student learning," says Principal Sheri Long.

The Breakfast Club begins at 8 a.m. but the team will always serve latecomers a meal and show empathy and interest in their lives. The staff relies on the team members and the program to fill their students' stomachs so they can focus on learning and achieving their potential in class. The Lauderdale School staff say, "The success of our students is a direct result of the time, commitment, effort, guidance, opportunities and leadership provided by Evelyn and Sherry."

Waverley Library Team

This team is made up of Joan Crawford, Garry Ingram, Marjory Olsen and Gina Rowland.

The team came together to help Waverley School redevelop its under-used library into an information hub where students could read books, magazines, access computers, do homework and play games. The planned changes were supposed to take three years but the dedicated team did the work in 10 months. Their improvements to the library included changing categories to make it easier to find books, creating and organizing special collections, developing an archive for the school, starting a book club and creating an inviting space that everyone at the school feels comfortable using. Each person that enters the library feels welcome and is greeted by a member of the team who is ready to help in every way they can.

"The team has transformed our school library into a warm and inviting atmosphere that truly is the center of Waverley School. They vigorously promote reading with new books on display, posters of various themes and encourage students and members of the school community to read or gather in the space," says Waverley teacher Martha Lambert.

The team raised the profile of the library and has included all staff at meetings, asking for opinions and providing opportunities to participate in library initiatives. The team also secured extra funds for the project by involving the community and the school's parent council. "Their efforts have been praised and most importantly, the library is now being used all day, every day," says Principal Reg Crawford.

Recognition of Teams *continued*

STUDENT

McNally Dragon Team

The McNally Dragon team is a student-organized group and was the first dragon team formed in Edmonton—almost 30 years ago. The team of 23 students is well-known throughout the city and the District and gives several performances each year, including K-Days, Chinese New Year celebrations and award and graduation ceremonies.

The Dragon team members work as ambassadors for the Chinese (Mandarin) Bilingual Program at Edmonton Public Schools and help promote Chinese culture and education in Edmonton through dance. Stephen Tsang, president of the Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association, says, “By showcasing the colourful and vibrant Chinese cultural dance in schools, as well as among various communities in Edmonton, we strongly believe that the McNally Dragon Team plays an integral part in promoting diversity and multiculturalism in Alberta.”

Being one of the 23 members of McNally’s Dragon Team requires dedication and cooperation to create long and complex dance routines. Team members spend hours preparing for events and each student is not only essential to each performance but also each practice, since everyone is needed to carry specific pieces of the dragon. Students must also often give up their weekends and evenings to practice and perform at events. “The team’s hard work and dedication to excellence is reflected in the quality of the performances, and the 2015-2016 team represents our school and the District with distinction,” says McNally assistant principal, Britt Petracek.

Riverbend Leadership Team

Team members include teacher Wes Wintonyk and students Emily Fong, Calais Irwin, Tariro Jaricha, Laren Kobi, Sylvia Luong, Ivy Onisko, Sneha Pooranalingam, Sukiti Sharma, Madison Sheath and Senuki Somatillaka.

The team’s work resulted in a successful partnership between the Lauderdale Kindergarten class and Riverbend Junior High School in support of the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation. Many students at Lauderdale arrive at school with gaps in their learning and social, emotional and language readiness. The Riverbend students were conscientious, caring and responsive to the Kindergartners’ needs. They invited the Kindergartners to many events, including their school spin-a-thon, gala, art show and a benefit concert featuring Martin Kerr and the Jim Cuddy band! The Riverbend team also took on the Hockey Helps Kids program and were given the opportunity to create and show a video at Rexall Place during an Oilers game. As a result of these events and under Wes Wintonyk’s mentorship, the Riverbend Leadership team raised \$63,000 for the Foundation’s full-day Kindergarten program.

Most importantly, the partnership planted important seeds in the minds of the Kindergartners and fostered a positive relationship with their learning environment. Tracy Poulin, director of the Foundation says, “Not only did the kinders have fun with their big buddies but our little ones built positive relationships with these role models. They got the message that school is important and that junior high is a great place to be.” Sheri Long, principal of Lauderdale School adds, “This year-long project is an exemplar to students, staff and the community. Their work and efforts shines a positive light on the role and power of public education in the community.”

Ross Sheppard Student Leadership Team

This team is comprised of students Carmen Chau, Brandon Dundas, Jessica Han, Jenny Lam, Yvonne Lee, Jayant Malhotra, Paul Nam, Jonathan Nguyen, Michelle Pham, Emily Phan, Christian Plaza, Sayla Quach and Duncan Swisscoski.

Year after year, Ross Sheppard students rise to the challenge of being active leaders in their school, donating their time and efforts to improve their community. For the past three years, the leadership team supported the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation by donating their boundless energy and volunteer time. Last year, 12 dedicated Ross Sheppard students made up the leadership team that made a lasting impact on their community through their participation in EdMUDton and Wrap and Roll events. The events are an opportunity for the students to roll-up their sleeves and raise money for the Foundation and its full-day Kindergarten program. Students gave up their Saturday to volunteer at the EdMUDton five-kilometre race and gave up many nights and weekends wrapping gifts a month before Christmas in the Wrap and Roll event at Kingsway Mall. Tracy Poulin, director of the Foundation says, “These fantastic youth showed up on time and spent a minimum of four hours per shift wrapping gifts and dealing with customers. They were polite, hard working and respectful.” The team’s efforts meant that they saw first-hand how acts of service can not only benefit people in their community and affect local issues but also raised close to \$15,000 for the Foundation. Student team member Yvonne Lee learned another valuable lesson when her EdMUDton team was joined by two Syrian newcomers and recalls, “Despite their language barrier, the two students had a fantastic time working the registration table and it was a pleasure for me to be able to help them along their adventure, learning about our culture and community.”

STUDENT AND COMMUNITY

EISA’s Newcomer Orientation Team, Queen Elizabeth

This team is made up of community members Dama Diriye and Oliver Kamau, and students Nimo Abdi, Fatima Al Darwish, Yakot Al Darwish, Abdulmohaimen Al-Muslimawi, Hanan Cabdalla, Sami Hamsho, Rahma Isse, Pacifique Mundagiri, Rwizihirwa Niyonkuru and Amina Sufi.

Each year, the team’s diverse membership works collaboratively to train and facilitate a Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) at Queen Elizabeth School. For the last six years, the team has welcomed newcomer students a week before the start of school to make sure they feel comfortable in their new environment. Because language barriers can place a significant amount of stress on the new students, the program matches them with peers who speak their languages, which helps them adapt to their new situation and life. “Not only does the NOW peer matching help with interpretation, the students also get the opportunity to make friends within their newcomer group and peer-leaders,” says community member Hussein Sugulle. The student team leaders make sure newcomers know the basics like how to open a lock, buy a bus pass, what school resources are available to them and the kinds of clubs and activities they can be a part of. The entire team shows patience and respect to all the students throughout the week, giving them confidence to start the school year. Sherri Ritchie, Queen Elizabeth department head, says, “EISA’s Newcomer Orientation team is an invaluable support to our newcomer students. They make a key contribution to the wellbeing of our students and to the school community”

Recognition of Teams *continued*

STUDENT AND DISTRICT STAFF

District LEGACY Team

This team is made up of more than 60 dedicated Edmonton Public Schools principals, teachers, students and central staff. The Leaders Engaging in Governance and Connecting Youth (LEGACY) team sought to create experiential learning opportunities on leadership and governance models and provide avenues to collaborate and network with other student, business, community and political leaders. The LEGACY course is offered to a student representative from Edmonton Public high schools and is now in its third year, still based on its fundamental principle of honouring student voices. Human Resources director, Laurie Elkow, says, “I continue to be inspired by the passion, commitment and tenacious drive of students within this group, and the unfailing dedication and thoughtful guidance of District staff. The team is a model of youth engagement, student governance, initiative, excellence, service and cross-district collaboration.”

The LEGACY course offers quality, student-focused learning in a non-traditional format. The course was a result of hundreds of staff and student collaborative hours with the majority of the work occurring outside of regular school hours and required travel to attend meetings and project-related activities. The LEGACY team’s efforts also led to the presentation and adoption of the Student Senate and establishment of cross-District student networks that further promote student engagement and service in the community. Student senator, Christian Zukowski, says, “The LEGACY course empowers students to push the boundaries of conventional education and put what they’ve learned to use in real-world situations.”

Thank You.

Recognition of Merit

STAFF

Tom Davey, Assistant Principal, Strathcona School

Through Tom Davey's leadership and meticulous planning, Strathcona's Remembrance Day ceremonies have grown from having a dozen participants to over 1,500 in only a few years. The annual celebration has seen veterans, members of the military and holocaust survivors give their personal accounts of the sacrifices made by Canada's armed forces in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping missions. Although the event is voluntary, it now has nearly perfect attendance from students and staff, with everyone contemplating and commemorating those who have sacrificed their lives. Tom brings together student volunteers serving as master of ceremonies, ushers, readers, presenters and performers. Involving the students in every aspect of the ceremony has created respect amongst the students for the event's history and tradition. They take great pride in organizing the event and with Tom's leadership, have turned the ceremony into a vital part of the school's culture. "Remembrance Day has special significance for our school," says Principal Hans Van Ginhoven. "Tom's initiative has made remembering stories of the past part of the Scona story."

CRITERIA: To recognize the outstanding achievement or exemplary performance of an individual parent or community member, secondary student or district staff member who has demonstrated a standard of excellence in an area of endeavour. Focus is on achievements, leadership or contributions that are meritorious, innovative, creative, or inspiring and have brought distinction to the individual, the school, the community and the District.

Kevin Falcone, Teacher, Harry Ainlay School

Kevin Falcone's environmental stewardship and vision at Harry Ainlay has lead to the founding of the Harry Ainlay Sustainability Team (HASTE). His creativity, hard work and dedication to HASTE has transformed the Southeast courtyard into a garden that provides fresh food to the school's culinary arts program, provides additional classroom space and a space for students to eat their lunch in warm weather. Kevin put countless hours into collecting and planting perennials, outdoor furniture and student art to make the space usable and inviting. Through HASTE, Kevin has created awareness about local and global environmental challenges and engaged students to confront them. Allison Greckol, social studies department head, says, "Over a number of years, his vision and labour have contributed to the culture of responsible citizenship and student leadership at Harry Ainlay." Kevin takes the time to research and apply for grants for various projects and was awarded an Evergreen Foundation and Toyota on the Trail grant for the garden. One of Kevin's student's, Mason Rubik, remembers, "It seemed like Mr. Falcone was always writing letters for grants, whether it was early in the morning before school or late afterwards, he made sure students received the best opportunities." Students will be able to apply their learnings at the local and international levels thanks to the experiences they gained through HASTE.

Recognition of Merit *continued*

Cheryl Steiner, Lunchroom Supervisor, Delton School

Cheryl Steiner has served as the lunchroom supervisor for over a decade and has coordinated the snack program for two years. Every day, Cheryl prepares nutritious food and snacks for over 400 students and leads a team of five lunch supervisors. Assistant Principal Dao Haddad says, “The importance of Cheryl’s role cannot be overstated. She provides our students with healthy snacks in the morning, creating an optimal environment for learning.” She has proven to be a leader in the school and always conducts herself professionally, keeping track of many details and working well with a variety of individuals. She is always willing to help out in other areas of the school, such as participating in the school’s Welcome Barbeque and jumping into the office whenever needed. Her biggest strength is her passion for education and her genuine interest in the students. She is deeply involved in the well-being of Delton students and their community, with many of them affectionately calling her Miss Pinky. She treats all staff and students with respect and compassion and always offers a hug, smile or cup of tea.

Simon Williams, Assistant Principal, Michael A. Kostek School (formerly at Kenilworth School 2015-2016)

Simon was the visionary behind Franco 7—an immersive experience for junior high and high school students to guide Grade 7 students. The District-wide event is the result of Simon’s leadership, innovation and careful planning to create a relevant, engaging opportunity for students to be immersed in French language and culture. The activities organized throughout the day not only enrich French language learning, they also tie in First Nations, Métis and Inuit workshops and core subjects like social studies, science and math, making it a truly cross-curricular experience. Simon organizes everything from bookings to presenters, and also creates resource guides for students and teachers to prepare them for the day. What makes these activities so successful is the passion, time and energy Simon puts towards the event. Nicole Kingston, teacher at École Kenilworth says, “Simon has helped create memories for these students that will remain for many years to come.” She added, “The proof is in the number of Grade 7 students who request to be a part of the event again once they reach high school, helping make memories for the new Grade 7 participants.”

Thank You.

Thank You.

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