

**DATE:** February 16, 2016

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Success for Every Student – English Language Learners

**ORIGINATOR:** Sandra Stoddard, Executive Director, Governance, Strategic Services and Support for Schools

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## ISSUE

To provide an update to the Board of Trustees regarding English Language Learners (ELL) and District supports and services to enhance their growth.

## BACKGROUND

This report outlines the current enrolment numbers for ELL in Edmonton Public Schools, related services and supports, and an outline of plans to support an expected increase in enrolment in 2016.

## CURRENT SITUATION

The number of students identified and coded as ELL, as of September 30, 2015, is 22,437. This includes 166 early learners and 1,625 Kindergarten students. This is an increase from 12 613 identified students in 2010-11.

Early Learners	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
166	1625	2130	2309	2362	2172	1891	1789
		Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
		1560	1302	1159	1149	1020	1803

In 2014-2015, four English as a Second Language (ESL) Reception Centres continued to serve schools. These are situated at Harry Ainlay, Jasper Place, J Percy Page, and Queen Elizabeth schools. Schools refer families to the Reception Centres, where they are welcomed by ESL teacher consultants who conduct English language assessments and Intercultural consultants who conduct family interviews. In 2014-2015, the ESL Reception Centres received 709 student referrals. Family interviews were completed with 431 families, and 1492 students received ESL assessments, either at the Reception Centre or by consultants in schools. The number of students identified and coded as Refugees (Code 640) in 2014-2015 was 845, representing four per cent of the total District enrolment.

Since 2013-2014, ESL teacher consultants have been positioned on multi-disciplinary Inclusive Learning Teams assigned to each school. There are currently 9.0 FTE ESL consultants serving schools, for consultation, ESL assessments, classroom coaching, and providing professional learning opportunities.

Our English language learners are a diverse group of students, representing many languages and cultures from around the world. In 2014-2015 approximately 124 languages were recorded as spoken by families in Edmonton Public Schools.

There are currently 6.1 FTE Intercultural consultants and an Intercultural program coordinator, who serve schools, providing cultural bridging, conducting family interviews, providing first language support for meetings and parent conferences, as well as parent information evenings and expulsion hearings. These Intercultural consultants provide language and culture support for the following families: Arabic; Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin); East Indian (Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu); Somali; and Vietnamese.

In addition to the permanent staff employed as Intercultural consultants, the Diversity Education Unit maintains a roster of part-time hourly Intercultural workers, who are called upon to provide service for a variety of languages and cultures. In 2014-2015, first language support was provided for referrals received for the Reception Centres, for 63 languages. Languages with increasing needs for support include Tagalog, Spanish, East African languages from Ethiopia and Eritrea (Amharic, Oromo), and Korean.

In 2015-16, the Diversity Education unit is participating in a District project on 'Supporting Students and Teachers through Digital Reporting.' The purpose of this project is to streamline the process for the creation of a number of reports required by legislation and compliance to District Standards. A focus group comprised of teachers, K-12, was held in November, 2015 to gather feedback on the critical components to include from the ESL Proficiency Benchmarks. This project will serve to improve teacher efficiency by minimizing data entry, having a single point of entry for all student-centric reports, repurposing information, and extracting data to reuse across reports. This synthesis of information will enhance student programming and reporting and reduce teacher workload while still meeting District information needs, policies, and regulations,

Another recent area of focus has been preparing to welcome and support the Syrian newcomers. As of January 31, 2016, a total of 120 Syrian students have been registered in 25 Edmonton Public Schools. This includes approximately 90 Government Assisted Refugees and 30 Privately Sponsored Refugees. With the arrival of newcomers from Syria anticipated to continue throughout 2016, the Diversity Education Unit has been working together with Communications and Student Information, as well as with external partners and agencies, to provide a coordinated response to a potential influx of new students in a short period of time. To date, the following has occurred:

- Key Messages have been prepared and provided to all schools via Assistant Superintendent Memos.
- Key Messages, links to resources, and updates have been posted on the Staffroom website. These also include links for people wanting to help the Syrians through volunteering or donations.
- A meeting with principals from North Central, ME Lazerte, and Eastglen Catchments was held in December 2015, to inform them of known facts and planning to support a potential influx into schools.

- Following the Superintendent's District Leadership Meeting on March 2, 2016, ESL, Intercultural, Literacy, and Inclusive Learning consultants will team up with schools, to provide principals with learning opportunities focused on supporting English language learners.
- Professional learning opportunities are offered by ESL and Intercultural consultants through the District Professional Learning Calendar. In addition, they are preparing a professional learning day related specifically to supporting English language learners who are also arriving as refugees. In addition to including sessions related to creating welcoming environments, and teaching strategies, the day will also include opportunity to talk with Intercultural consultants about questions related to culture, as well as sessions with social workers and mental health therapists on understanding and dealing with trauma, and on building hope and resiliency.
- The District has representation from Diversity Education and Communications on the city-wide coordinated response committee for supporting the Syrian newcomers. There are plans underway with settlement agencies to work together to support children, youth and families as they arrive in our schools.
- The ESL Reception Centre at Queen Elizabeth School has been designated as a temporary 'Reception Hub' for welcoming Syrian newcomers who are Government Assisted Refugees, as referred through Catholic Social Services, and for providing group orientations to the education system and to Edmonton Public Schools. Staffing has been increased, in order to station a team at the Reception Centre, to include an ESL teacher consultant, an Intercultural consultant, and with access to mental health supports through a social worker and mental health therapist.
- A team of consultants is providing weekly orientations to the education system at the hotel where the families are temporarily housed.
- Programs such as All in for Youth (including Schools as Community Hubs, Out of School Time, and Partners for Kids), provide valuable supports to newcomer students and families in many of our schools.
- Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Edmonton Multicultural Health Brokers, and Catholic Social Services are some of the agencies working in partnership with Edmonton Public Schools to provide in-school settlement, language and cultural supports to students and families.

**KEY POINTS**

- Edmonton Public Schools is committed to providing welcoming, safe, inclusive and responsive learning environments for all students. We have been welcoming newcomers to Canada into our classrooms for years.
- Our current ELL population is supported through multi-disciplinary teams in Inclusive Learning and four reception centres, for family orientations, assessments, consultations, coaching and professional development for teachers and staff.
- Community partnerships play a valuable role in supporting newcomers in our schools.
- Edmonton Public Schools is part of a city-wide coordinated response plan to support the Syrian newcomers.

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

N/A

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