

**DATE:** March 17, 2015

**TO:** Board of Trustees

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

**SUBJECT:** District Partnership with the Edmonton Public Library  
(Response to Request for Information #058)

**ORIGINATOR:** Dr. Sandra Stoddard, Executive Director Governance and Strategic Support Services

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Aaron Muller, Nancy Petersen

**REFERENCE:** October 21, 2014 Board Meeting (Trustee Janz)

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**ISSUE**

The following information was requested: Provide a brief summary of the District's partnership activities with the Edmonton Public Library.

**BACKGROUND**

There is a natural synergy and a shared commitment to literacy between schools and community libraries. This has resulted in many collaborative initiatives and opportunities between District schools and their community library over the years. The initiatives and opportunities have evolved to reflect today's technologies, a community based focus on library programming and schools working strategically with other service providers within the community to support student growth. Both organizations have a strategic plan that reflects their mutual valuing of high school completion, a focus on literacy and responsibility for developing people's capacity for quality of life.

In 2006 this natural working relationship was formalized with a signed agreement between the District and Edmonton Public Library. This agreement was foundational to a working relationship between the two organizations at a high leadership level. For the next several years senior leaders from both organizations met on a regular basis to engage in dialogue, share outcomes and explore ways of working together. Through a series of staff changes and budget constraints the active working relationship, as defined in the signed agreement between the two organizations, lapsed.

In recent years the District has committed a staff member to sit at the Edmonton Public Library Partnership Management Team table. This table reflects representation from all Edmonton school districts and staff from the library. The library uses this table to share opportunities and seek feedback from school districts around the various school focused programs and services the library offers. The district continues to have a staff member sit at this table.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

The following initiatives reflect some of the opportunities and programs currently happening across our District as a result of the working relationship between the two organizations:

- EPL library card initiative: a program that enables district students to obtain a public library card through their school. Last year over 1500 new library cards were obtained by EPSB students through this initiative.
- How to Be An Information Ninja: a program targeted to grade 8 students with a focus on providing students with the skills and knowledge to critically evaluate and navigate websites and online resources.
- Reading Rockstars: an after school program that promotes literacy skills development.
- Shared professional development between library and district staff around the technical support and managing of a library collection.
- Student field trips to the library to participate in such programs as Makerspace Robotics or Lego at the Library.
- Community library field trips into schools where the library brings its programming expertise directly into district classrooms.

This fall the two organizations reached out to each other to reestablish a positive working relationship at the leadership level. District and Edmonton Public Library leaders met on January 12, 2015 to reaffirm this shared commitment to explore effective, efficient and creative ways of collaborating around a shared responsibility for instilling a life-long love of literacy and learning. Work is being done through a collaborative approach to support the development of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District and the Edmonton Public Library.

NP:np