

Reviewing Results and Setting Priorities
As published in *Terwillegar Community News*

How are schools doing in ensuring that all children succeed in school? What do we need to be doing differently? Where do we need to focus our efforts? Monitoring results and planning for the next three years are two governance tasks that have occupied the Edmonton Public School Board during the months of November, December, and January.

Each November trustees review the results from the previous year with principals and department heads in central services. It's a time to celebrate the fine work being done in schools by both students and staff, and to understand why goals were met or not met. As a district, the number of students achieving the "standard of excellence" is up – hurray!—but there has been a slight decline in the numbers of students achieving the "acceptable standard." This is troubling, so it is good that the district staff are already responding to this challenge and taking action to turn this decline around. The district's full 2006-07 Annual Report is online at http://www.epsb.ca/board/nov27_07/item12.pdf. Take a peek! In their review meetings, trustees also heard about difficulties with recruiting and retaining support staff, custodial staff, and supply staff, the challenge of managing the costs of text books as courses change, concerns over access to gyms by the community, and the actions underway to ensure the health and wellness of staff and safety of students. This is just a sampling; there were others!

In December the Board began its work on the 2008-11 District Priorities by launching a series of consultation sessions with groups, such as students, business reps, and post secondary reps, as well as posting an online survey until January 25 for all Edmontonians to use. I have not been able to attend all the consultation sessions, but I certainly learned a lot at the sessions that I was privileged to eavesdrop on. The final discussion and selection of the priorities will happen at the February 12th public board meeting. Because these priorities set the stage for all the work in the district for the next three years as well as guide all the budgeting and planning processes, it is a crucial discussion. I invite you to attend. Then next November, we will be reviewing the results connected to these new priorities. I will keep you posted!

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you decide to attend the public board meetings, please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Catherine Ripley, Ward H Trustee, Edmonton Public Schools
887-1002, Catherine.Ripley@epsb.ca