

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ENHANCEMENT FORUM
LEGACY REPORT 2004-2010**

**“STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITY
MAPPING”**

Partner Story – Edmonton Public Schools, Programs Unit

Edmonton Public Schools recognizes the importance of engaging with community in order to impact positively the lives of students within and outside of school. This work is ongoing, constantly evolving, and multi-layered, involving many partners, projects, and initiatives, all intended to provide essential supports for young children, students, and families in the Edmonton community and to build community capacity in responding to needs. These supports are beyond what can be provided by the district but are often created and sustained through the development of sound, collaborative relationships between the district and community partners.

The collaboration with Community Mapping has assisted our district in improving our understanding of the socially vulnerable areas of the city, the increasing cultural diversity and complexity in schools, and the need for effective school-community collaboration within the district.

Strategic Benefits

Since 2006-07, our district has been working closely with the Community Mapping initiative in order to improve our understanding of the changing demographics in the city and therefore district schools. This collaboration has benefitted us in the following ways:

1. Community Mapping has provided us with concrete data on the changing demographics of students and families. Based on this information, Community Mapping developed a range of maps which clearly identified the socially vulnerable areas of the city, and the location of English Language Learners and FNMI students in our district. Recognizing that a higher proportion of ELL and FNMI students had complex needs, this information assisted us in understanding:
 - where there was the highest numbers of students with these complex needs
 - that the large majority of schools in the district had some students from a culturally diverse or FNMI background
 - how some schools had many layers of complexity in terms of their student population

The information from Community Mapping was critical in assisting us in setting priorities in our work with community partners. This information was also included in a report to the Board of Trustees in January, 2007, and increased the understanding of Trustees regarding the socially vulnerable areas of the city, the importance of school-community collaboration and the needs of students who are at risk of not completing schooling.

2. Our involvement with the Community Mapping work has also enabled us to participate in broad, collaborative networks of community partners in the north-central, north-east, west, and south areas of the city. These initiatives have

Using the Mill Woods area as an example, some of the benefits of the Community Mapping work for the school district and community partners in the Mill Woods area are listed below:

- Created demographic maps for the Strategic Alliance for the Advancement of Refugee and Immigrant Children and Families and the Out of School Table work
- Used as a base for writing grants and identifying potential partners for working with at-risk students; e.g. a SCIF grant
- Enabled participation in the Mill Woods Mapping and Beyond initiative including sitting at three of the subcommittees (Steering, Cultural Diversity and Youth)
- Increased the number of after school programs in five Mill Woods schools
- Enabled the provision of space for community groups who were having difficulty obtaining space; e.g. Mill Woods Aboriginal Group
- Facilitated work with several community leagues to identify areas that needed a green shack program in Mill Woods
- Supported the collaboration with the City of Edmonton to start skating programs at schools which have outdoor skating rinks on the same land as the school.
- Engaged schools in participating in Youth Week, provided resources and manpower in planning and executing opening ceremonies
- Provided support to community forums in Mill Woods
- Enabled participation in the Diversity Community Agency Day 2 years in a row
- Provided a based for organizing a PD day for 13 elementary schools which involved 13 Mill Woods agencies in presenting topics