

**Premier's Board of Education Award
for
Innovation and Excellence in Education**

NOMINATION FORM

1. School Division: Saskatoon Public School Division No. 13
2. Chairperson: Mr. Gordon Wyant
3. Director of Education: Mr. Terry Pearson
4. Program Nominated: Royal West Campus:
A Centre of Innovation for Young Adult Learners
5. Goal of the Program:
 - To provide flexible programming to meet the needs of young adults who are interested in taking Grade 12 classes in a mature campus-like setting.
 - To assist students with the transition from high school to the next step in their education or their chosen career path.
 - To empower the teaching staff with a decision-making process that allows them to evolve and adapt the program to meet the ever-changing needs of their students.
 - To establish liaisons with other Human Service providers, as well as business sector and justice fields, that will enable Royal West to connect students to the resources that allow them to fulfill their goals.
6. Brief Description of How the Program Addresses the Criteria:

A) Board Involvement/Influence/Participation

Estey School, a K-8 school, closed in the early 1980's. After housing a variety of programs for over twenty years, Estey School was given a new life by the School Board as Royal West Campus in 2002. The Campus has several innovative programs listed below that address the needs of young adult students in the Saskatoon Public School Division:

I. Royal West Campus

Royal West Campus is a Saskatoon Board of Education Centre for Innovation that addresses the needs of students between the ages of 18 and 22 years of age. It offers Grade 12 classes to students who:

- are entering their fifth year of high school and who require more credits to achieve the Saskatchewan Learning 24 credit graduation requirement.
- are 19 years of age or older and have opted for the Adult Status program. The Adult Status track allows students who have only a minimum number of credits to take seven prescribed Grade 12 classes. Upon successful completion of those classes, these students are granted their Grade 12 Adult Status.
- need to address a credit deficiency in a particular subject that prohibits their entry into a post-secondary institution.

The following innovative programs are housed within the Royal West Campus and provide learning/recreation alternatives for young adults:

II. The Online Learning Centre

The Online Learning Centre is a Saskatoon Board of Education initiative that utilizes advances in technology to help facilitate learning. The OLC has two avenues to achieve this:

- Internet-based instruction: This accommodates students who have a more independent learning style as well as students who might for health or other reasons, need to miss a prolonged period of school. A variety of credit classes are offered online.
- Web-based curriculum development: Curriculum materials that incorporate the use of the World Wide Web are developed, tested and passed on to teachers within the Saskatoon Public School Division, thereby, enriching the learning opportunities of all students.

III. Teen Wellness Centre

The Teen Wellness Centre is a joint partnership between the Saskatoon Board of Education and the Saskatoon Health District. The Wellness Centre opens after school hours and offers programming to young adults that promotes:

- positive, healthy relationships while recognizing the diversity that exists in the community.
- leadership opportunities for youth.
- low cost or no cost recreational activities in a safe environment.
- positive lifestyle choices by providing regular in-house access to a sexual/reproductive health nurse, an addictions counselor and a mental health worker.

The Saskatoon Public School Division provides office space at Royal West Campus as well as space for the Wellness room. Full access to the gym is provided. A night caretaker is employed by the Division to extend hours into the early evening.

IV. Royal West Early Learning Centre

To meet the needs of our parent students, the Campus houses the Royal West Early Learning Centre. It is supported by the Saskatoon Public School Division and the Department of Community Resources and Employment to provide 25 subsidized daycare spots. The focus of the Early Learning Centre is to provide a warm, nurturing atmosphere in a professional daycare setting for children between the ages of eighteen months and five years of age. The Early Learning Centre works in conjunction with the Mount Royal Infant Centre which provides care to newborn age up to eighteen months. The Centre has access to the professional services of a Speech Pathologist as well as a Child Psychologist. The Saskatoon Public School Division has provided two classroom spaces to the Royal West Early Learning Centre.

B) Innovative Nature of the Program

Royal West Campus Educational Innovations

The Royal West Campus is an educational innovation that serves the needs of a growing group of students who are 18 and older and wish to complete their Grade 12. The needs of this population are very different from the needs of a regular high school student. We have found that students in this young adult age group may have full-time jobs, child care commitments, long term health issues, or competitive sport opportunities that prohibit them from succeeding in a regular high school setting. Royal West Campus has adapted its delivery model to better suit the needs of these students. In addition to semestered classes, Royal West Campus offers many innovative ideas that allow students an opportunity to succeed. The following delivery models have been developed to serve our students:

I. Extension Classes

An extension class requires the student to attend class at least once a week for an hour where a module of work is issued. Students review the module with their teacher to see if there will be any difficulties and then are asked to have the package completed before the next extension class (a week later). Should students need further assistance they are welcome to visit their teacher in the extension schedule any day of the week. At the completion of each module, a quiz is issued and the next module is begun. Students are provided with a calendar that maps out the pace that they need to follow to complete the course by semester end. A student who accelerates the pace of the module may complete the course early; perhaps enabling them to enter a post-secondary program in term two.

II. Continuous Progress

Continuous progress allows students who leave Royal West Campus prematurely to "mark their spot" in a course. This provides students with an opportunity to leave school to deal with family crises, health problems or financial issues. Should the student return to Royal West Campus they would pick up the course at the same point they left off at but in an extension format. Students are not penalized by being asked to begin the class all over again because they fell victim to one of life's circumstances.

III. Bridging Class

There are a large number of Adult Status students at Royal West Campus, most of who have been out of school for a lengthy period of time. These students often have gaps in the prerequisite skills needed to be successful in Grade 12 classes. A bridging class has been established that begins each semester. Students are provided with the "basic tools" in each of the subject areas that will help them bridge any gaps that may exist. The four core subject areas of Science, Social Studies, Math and English provide the focus for the class.

IV. Altered Time Schedule

Royal West Campus has altered the normal school day to accommodate the needs of its students. Teen parents and those students who have jobs that require them to work into the night, appreciate the 10:00 a.m. start time. There are no breaks between classes, nor recesses and just a 45-minute lunch hour. This allows the last period of the day to be completed at 2:45 p.m. leaving plenty of time to get to work. A lunch hour class provides students with an opportunity to finish their school day even earlier. This noon hour class also opens the door for students who are employed full time, (9:00-5:00) to take a "working lunch" at Royal West Campus. Another major benefit of the Royal West Campus schedule is that it allows the seven teaching staff to have a common preparation period (9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.) Team building, attendance issues and philosophical discussion now have a time slot where all staff can effectively participate on a daily basis. No waiting for the monthly staff meeting!

V. Transitions

A focus of the Royal West Campus staff is to help our students with the transition from high school to the next step in their career or educational path. For some, this next step may be the working world. Links to business and industry are being forged to help students establish a connection to a job field. For others, the path may take them to a post-secondary institution. Royal West Campus is currently in negotiations with the University of Saskatchewan Extensions Division to offer entry-level university classes from

our Campus. This would allow students to finish their high school education and start their university career at the same time. These university classes would have the potential to transfer over to SIAST as well. The 10:00 a.m. start time at Royal West Campus opens the door for an early morning time slot (8:30-10:00) to offer these classes.

VI. Staff/Student Lounge

The traditional concept of a staff room has been eschewed at Royal West Campus. Students and staff have equal access to the lounge/study area. Interacting with students and forging relationships with students is a focus for the entire staff.

VII. Online Learning Centre

The Online Learning Centre, because it is housed in Royal West Campus, has access to the 14 computers that comprise the Royal West Campus computer lab. The lab is linked to the web via a high speed Internet connection. Students who do not have access to the Internet at home can access the Royal West Campus lab and thus are still able to enroll in online classes.

Human Services Innovations

I. Teen Wellness Centre

The Teen Wellness Centre allows youth to tap into health related supports in a setting that is familiar to the student. Health care workers from various fields drop into the Wellness Centre on a regular, scheduled basis. This allows students to establish relationships with the health care workers in a comfortable, trusting atmosphere. As well, youth are encouraged to develop leadership skills through various Teen Wellness sponsored activities (an example would be the Health Expo). Employment skills such as Food Safe, resume writing, etc. are offered to increase the employment marketability of students. Finally, the Teen Wellness Centre opens its doors after school hours for students to partake in leisure activities like pool, air hockey, basketball and break dancing.

II. Royal West Early Learning Centre

The Early Learning Centre provides access to early intervention specialists. A Speech Pathologist, Child Psychologist and frequent contact with Social Workers ensure that the developmental needs of the children are met. An innovative idea is to allow students to utilize the daycare facilities after they complete their studies at Royal West Campus as they transition to the next step in their career path.

C) Sustainability of the Innovation

Changing social, economic and employment conditions combined with rapidly advancing technological innovations have changed the world and the educational needs of our society. Students now realize that obtaining a Grade 12 education is the educational base needed to succeed in that world. Unfortunately, these same social, economic and employment conditions might become a barrier, which may prevent a student from completing their education in the traditional length of time. Mental health issues, teen pregnancies, family crises, etc. will also exist and, unfortunately, statistics show no sign of improvement. Therefore, Royal West Campus will be sustainable because some students are facing an increasingly changing world and these conditions. Most students can be successful in the existing collegiate system but for the minority who do not succeed, alternatives are needed. Royal West has established itself as a viable option for young adults to complete their Grade 12.

Relationships with the community have been forged in Royal West Campus' first year. These relationships will be strengthened and over time new ones with neighbourhood communities will be added.

D) Cost of the Innovation Related to Benefits Achieved

The cost sustained to begin Royal West Campus has been minimal. The building, a formal elementary school, is in excellent condition and required only cosmetic alterations. The cost of a caretaker was not incurred as a caretaker was already in place to take care of the array of tenants that existed in the building prior to the conception of Royal West Campus. The staffing of Royal West Campus was initially based on the staff allotment of Mount Royal Collegiate and consequently did not cost the School Division extra staffing dollars. Classroom furnishings, for the most part, existed within the school or were donated by other schools. A full-time secretary was added and 20 used computers were installed. The Early Learning Centre is a Department of Community Resources and Employment self-funded organization with no Board related costs. The Teen Wellness Centre staff, including the program supervisor, are employees of the Health District. This program incurs no cost to the School Board except for minimal caretaking hours and a grant to furnish their Wellness room. The Online Centre existed in another building and was transferred "carte blanche" to the Campus. Truly, one of the remarkable features of Royal West Campus has been the relatively low start up costs combined with the low cost of programming.

E) Client Support for the Innovation

Students have sung the praises of Royal West Campus as they continue to be our best method of advertising!! The Campus is attracting students from all areas of the city and has almost doubled in size in only its second year. Royal West Campus currently has a student population of over 200 students and, as a result, more staff members have been added in Year Two to deal with the influx. Student support has been unequivocally positive. Royal West Campus has removed the stigma that existed for older students in completing Grade 12 within a traditional high school setting. Students have noted that the support network that exists at Royal West Campus coupled with the flexibility in programming offers them the best chance at success. Dealing with only one segment of the high school population, has allowed the Campus to remain small. This has provided opportunities for teachers and students to establish relationships that would not have occurred in a larger setting. The point has not been lost on the students as they frequently comment that the best part of Royal West Campus is the teachers!

Support from the community has been equally as positive. A former elementary school, closed since 1984 because of enrolment decline, has been resurrected and is now being utilized for its intended purpose. A taxpayer's dream! The learning community has embraced the Campus as well. The "school climate" at regular collegiates, gauged by staff at other high schools (most noticeably Mount Royal Collegiate), has improved as the older students no longer exert their influence over young or impressionable students. On a macro level, teachers in the school system are encouraged by the fact that their colleagues at Royal West Campus are allowed to think outside the proverbial "box" and have frequently passed along their support.

A further benefit is the health of these students. The key to a sustainable health care system is prevention. The Saskatoon Health District is excited because they have access to a greater number of student clients, many of those students are considered at-risk in terms of their lifestyle. Educating young adults about health issues and providing access to professionals will, in the long term, save precious health dollars.

All in all, the partners involved in this Campus project have been pleased with the outcome and are excited about the future.

F) Evidence of Improved Student Achievement

The Royal West Campus "Wall of Success" includes the names of those students who successfully finished their Grade 12 graduation requirements. In its inaugural year, the wall inducted 38 students who were in their fifth, sixth or even seventh year of high school. For a multitude of reasons, these students struggled in the normal high school setting, but persevered at Royal West Campus. This taste of success has led a number of our graduates to apply for and successfully gain entry into the University of Saskatchewan and SIAST. For others, graduating from Royal West Campus has opened the door to employment opportunities that did not previously exist. One of the differences that the teaching staff at Royal West Campus has noticed from their previous teaching experiences is a decline in the number of failures at semester end -- solid proof of improved student achievement.

Conclusion

Royal West Campus has managed to "soften the edges" of the traditional high school by establishing relationships with students and providing them with flexible programming to meet their many needs. The students have embraced this learning opportunity. Assisting them with the transition after high school has given students a positive direction -- a focus that will allow them to be productive members of the community.

For further information please visit our website at: <http://schools.spsd.sk.ca/royalwest>