

REPORT FOR PROGRAMS RELATED TO ENHANCED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY FUNDING PROVIDED IN DECEMBER 2003

Literacy Project

In September 2002, the Renfrew County District School Board embarked on a pilot project to establish Literacy teachers in seven of its elementary schools. This 'Literacy Project' was designed to support K-Grade 3 students who need help to improve achievement in Literacy and close the "achievement gap" between the strongest and weakest students.

Students were identified for the program by using a variety of screening methods depending on their age and abilities (generally, students admitted to the program are achieving Level 1 or below on the Ministry of Education's 'Achievement Chart'). Groupings were not to exceed 4 students for Kindergarten students and 6 students for Grades 1-3. The literacy teacher worked with each grouping for 20- 40 minutes each day. A wide variety of formal assessments (PM Benchmarks, Reading Inventories, CTBS, Yopp Singer, Phonemic Awareness, and Letter/Sound identification) were used to monitor the progress of the students in the program. Student success was determined by a number of factors including; monitoring of the progress of the student in the regular classroom, sustaining their progress on the Ministry report card mark, and experiencing progress in reading levels using the standards of the PM Benchmarks.

In September 2003, the RCDSB modified the program to focus service on JK to Grade 2 students and 10 more elementary schools were added to the program. Then in December 2003, the enhancements to the Learning Opportunities Grant were announced by the Ministry of Education and a further eight schools were added to the project. Currently, all of our elementary schools have some portion of dedicated staffing for literacy, except Keys Public School (a Grade 5-8 school) and Calabogie Public School (currently has 25 students with an average class size of 9.4 students).

Each year, our Literacy staffing is reviewed to ensure that it is allocated appropriately to the needs of our system. In February 2004, a consultant report to the Board indicated that there were approximately 425 students in the program, of which 50% have graduated, another 25% have been referred to more intensive support through our Special Education programming and the remaining 25% continue in the program. New referrals are added when space becomes available.

Clearly, funding through the Learning Opportunities Grant has allowed Renfrew County District School Board to provide a valuable support for our youngest students who need help to improve achievement in Literacy.