

# Celebrating Success in District 10

## Getting a Head Start at Goulds Elementary

Goulds Elementary has always believed in providing as many opportunities for literacy development, as early as possible, to ensure maximum success for students.

It is well known that four and five-year-olds enter the school system with a wide range of abilities, experiences and challenges. In order to provide the learning opportunities and experiences that will prepare all of them for the curricular and social demands that will be placed upon them, the school embarked on The Goulds Elementary Early Intervention Program, a literacy-based project which involves parents in a concerted

effort to address the individual needs of students. This program complements other Kindergarten orientation initiatives at the school.

The main goals of The Goulds Early Intervention Program are to prepare pre-school children for a better transition to Kindergarten; to improve their concept of print; to help them develop an appreciation of literature, and to make them familiar with the classroom setting and what is expected of them there. In addition, parents are taught to how to read effectively to their child and are encouraged to become active participants in their child's learning by developing home reading routines.

The Goulds Early Intervention Program began in 2000. Through the Getting Ready program, Kindergarten teachers identified students who

could potentially benefit from early intervention and these children worked with two retired teachers for a period of four months. The program was composed of two main parts. The first part of the program, held in May and June, saw children and their parents attend a series of in-school sessions held three days a week. During these 90-minute sessions, parents and children engaged in such activities as free play, circle time, story time, sharing big books, discussions, listening, following directions, cutting, pasting, rhyming, singing songs, dancing, chanting, playing games and basically experiencing the "language of school". Parents also had an opportunity to meet with school and school board personnel and to learn more about how they could help their child make a successful transition to Kindergarten.

The second aspect of the program involved home-based sessions in July and August, during which time four in-school sessions were held to allow for an exchange of children's books. Parents had access to about 150 books to share with their child at home during this period.

### Positive Impact on Student Learning

The project, which is in its third year of operation, continues to be very successful. Parents say their children are more attentive and expressive during reading sessions; are making connections between print and illustrations, and have an overall increased interest in books and learning. In addition, parents notice their children are learning to share more and to co-operate with others. For their part, parents say they are more

aware of the importance of reading to their children - and how to read effectively to them - and believe their children are better prepared to enter the school environment. Meanwhile, at the school level, Goulds Elementary staff have noted fewer children are in need of intervention from special services personnel upon entering Kindergarten.

With the success of the early intervention program evident, Goulds Elementary expects to continue offering the program in the future.

### District 10 Profile

	2003-04	2002-03
Schools	65	65
Students	29303	29796
Teachers	1842.4	1883.4
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	15.4	15.3