Addressing Provincial Achievement Tests: 2005-2006

History

Calgary Arts Academy is now in our third year of operation.

Our student population is most diverse. Students are bussed from all segments of the city.
Each year, Calgary Arts Academy has grown: from185 in Sept. 2003 to 247 in Sept. 2004 and to 297 in September 2005. This presents us with a unique challenge at all grade levels.

In Junior High, many students who were initially accepted into our program were coded and/or were not successful in their previous school environment. As we were not able to access school records to ensure appropriateness of placement in August 2003, many coded students were accepted, especially in year seven, eight and nine. The number of students being accessed in year nine also presented a challenge: 9 students in Year 9 in 2003, 10 in 2004 and 17 students in 2005. In 2002-2003, 5 of the nine students were coded. Four of the ten students were coded in 2004-2005. For the 2005-2006 school term, we have 17 year 9 students. 9 students have had previous resource intervention.

Severe code:	One student (59)
Mental Health:	2 students
AD/HD, Social Issues,Hearing Loss:	1 student
LD/AD/HD	1 student
LD	2 students
Low Average	1 student

Plan of Action

For the 2005-2006 term, Calgary Arts Academy has appointed an Academic Achievement / AISI Coordinator. This person is responsible for facilitating the creation of our plan to address the Provincial Achievement Tests. Calgary Arts Academy staff have identified two areas of focus for the 2005-2006 term:

Priority Area 1: Literary Arts
Edited Feb. 2006

Goal: To provide a balanced literacy program through:

- Appointment of Literacy Coordinator for the school. The Literacy Coordinator will attend team meetings as requested. Professional Development will be provided for teachers as requested.

Division 1:	Essentials of Reading and Connections to Writing
Division 1, 2, 3	Focus on using novel studies as part of language curriculum

- Each teaching team will determine what classroom resources are required to ensure student literacy needs are addressed. This will be done with the assistance of the Literacy Coordinator. (Heather Dean) Each teaching team will be provided with an initial budget of $3000.00.

- All staff have participated in professional development with Literacy Expert/Author, Vera Goodman. The first session was scheduled for January 4, 2006. MS. Goodman is scheduled to work with students and staff on Friday, March 10, 2006. Staff received the two books she has published and participate in team discussions and planning regarding the reading and writing process.

- In April, all teaching teams will publish a parent document, outlining their reading and writing program expectations, with an explanation of how parents are expected to assist at home with literacy.

- All students will choose one classic novel that will be read and discussed with each class, following the procedures outlined by Vera Goodman.

- All teaching staff will use activities used to extend vocabulary and facilitate reading comprehension in the classroom setting.

- Staff is encouraged to apply for professional development funding to attend Literacy based professional development.

Priority Area Two: Math

Goals: To focus on hands-on, meaningful, arts immersion teaching and learning.

- All Divisions will determine what math materials are required to ensure successful math programming can take place. Materials will be ordered by January 15, 2006.

- All Divisions will meet as a team to identify areas of focus by January 30, 2006.

Division One

Division One staff have received professional development with Trevor Caulkins (Math Specialist). All staff are presently teaching on the power of ten. Staff have met with artist, Michelle Stonehouse and have been using Visual Art as the Art Form to teach the power of ten.

Division Two

Division Two staff has booked two periods each week when all staff focus on Math Number Concepts. They will continue to focus on math as a team throughout the year, with at least two extended periods weekly. All students will receive a minimum of three math contracts throughout the year. Students will receive two periods of direct math reinforcement teaching through math games and hands-on activities.

Division Three

The Year 6/7/8/9 staff work as a team to deliver the Math Curriculum. The year 6/7 students are multi-aged for math and the year 9 students are now working in homogeneous learning groups, as a method of ensuring all students are on the same page. Homework Learning Contracts are provided for all year 8 and 9 students. These learning contracts are a review of what has already been taught in the classroom setting.

- Multi-media programs will be purchased for all areas of Math curriculum by April 1, 2006.

- All staff will review the document: “Getting Ready For Tests”. Teachers will use this information with the students before writing the Provincial Achievement Tests.

- Teachers will create word problems and questions for the students in order for the students to become confident with the language associated with this form of testing.

- Students will review on-line and work with hard copy tests.

- Staff will review Arts focused math curriculum materials for purchase.