

*Highlights from the January 13, 2010 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools*

## **CELEBRATIONS**

- The Board appreciated the opportunity to meet with our Red Deer MLAs, the Hon. Mary Anne Jablonski and Cal Dallas to discuss provincial and local issues and concerns facing education and the District.
- Trustees and administration enjoyed the many opportunities to participate in the many Christmas and Winter celebrations in our schools.
- Jazz Night by the Lindsay Thurber Jazz Choir was absolutely outstanding! We are so proud of the wonderful talent we have in our schools.
- The Board noted the passing of Sandra Weidner, former chair of Wolf Creek School Division and president of the ASBA.

## **Real Learning First**

The Board received an update on the Alberta Teachers' Association's upcoming event, "*Real Learning First through the Fourth Way—Learning our way to the next Red Deer*" taking place February 10. The session will include speakers and discussions that will both celebrate and challenge us on a variety of issues related to accountability and assessment. The event will look at how we can best meet the future needs of students so they can realize their individual creative and innovative potential. Information is available at: [reallearningfirst.ca](http://reallearningfirst.ca)

## **Intervention Services Report**

Red Deer Public has a long and proud tradition of meeting the needs of students with special educational needs. Intervention Services shared information on the wide range of congregated and inclusive programming that serves the educational needs of 371 students with severe special needs and 618 students with mild-moderate special needs. Jodi Goodrick, Assistant Superintendent shared highlights of programs and services:

- the Student Health Outreach Service continues to coordinate and provide important services such as psychology, occupational therapy, physical therapy and nursing support for students with mild-moderate needs.
- REACH provides a range of supports and consultations. Workshops are being offered to parents and professionals in the areas such as Autism, Behaviour strategies, Anxiety Disorders.

- Intake procedures for ESL students are being implemented across the District. These include assessments on speaking, listening, reading and writing skills to ensure appropriate placement.
- Sessions on Nonviolent Crisis Intervention are offered to train staff on appropriate responses in situations of escalated behaviours.
- Threat Assessment Training—Levels 1 and 2 have been provided to 67 staff.
- The Venture Middle School Program has transitioned from a centralized model to having programs in place at Central, Eastview and Glendale Middle Schools.
- Bright Beginnings and kindergarten programs are meeting the needs of 127 children receiving funding for severe needs and 87 students with mild/moderate needs.

## **Class Size Report**

Alberta Education established targeted class size averages and provided funding to assist Boards in reaching these targets. Each year, jurisdictions must complete and report on class size averages. This year's average class sizes for Red Deer Public are:

<i>Grades</i>	<i>All Subjects</i>	<i>Core Subjects</i>	<i>Provincial Target</i>
K to 3	18.1	17.6	17.0
4 to 6	22.3	22.2	23.0
7 to 9	22.6	21.6	25.0
10 to 12	24.3	24.3	27.0

While overall, the District continued to improve on class sizes, the reporting is on averages—it is recognized this leads to classes that are higher and lower than the average. A complete reporting of class sizes is provided in the Board Agenda and on the District website.

## **Quarterly Financial Update**

With the first quarter of the fiscal year already complete, the Board reviewed District finances. While the current quarter reports a surplus of \$433,000 due to 'front end' revenues, the Board's budget anticipates a deficit of \$851,494.

## **Future Directions in Arts Curriculum**

Alberta Education has developed a new Arts Education Curriculum Framework that provides a vision and direction for a new program of study.

Arts Education will allow students to learn *in, through* and *about* the arts. The framework includes some key changes to the current program of study. Elementary students will be provided with experiences in dance, drama, music and visual arts. Junior High programs (grades 7 to 9) will provide general instruction and exposure to a variety of art forms as well as an arts education focus for more in-depth study in particular disciplines. High School students would be provided with a variety on one credit modules in the disciplines which could be combined to create 3 and 5 credit courses allowing for a either general or a more focused approach.

## **Correspondence Sent**

- Gloria Hulyk—extending the Board's appreciation for Mrs. Hulyk's special contribution as director of the "Keyboards for Kids" program. The program provides keyboards and lessons to students who otherwise would not be able to participate in such opportunities

## **Correspondence Received**

- Red Deer Community Foundation—the Vital Signs 2009 Report, a check up on the health and vitality of our community as well as issues we are facing.
- Alberta Health Services—results of "The Alberta Youth Experience Survey" regarding smoking, alcohol, drugs and gambling among youth. Of particular note was the gap between perceived and actual use of substances by youth. It also identifies risk and protective factors for consideration.
- Skills Canada Alberta—its 2009 Report to the Community highlighted the World Skills Competition in Calgary in September 2009 and provided information on the 2010 provincial competitions.
- Grande Prairie Public Schools—looking to discuss common interests and issues facing like jurisdictions, public boards of similar size and geography, with the upcoming budget.
- Minister of Education—commending Red Deer Public on its 2009 results on provincial accountability standards.
- Alberta Distance Learning—speculating on potential issues should differentiated funding be reduced for its programs and the impact it may have on schools using its materials to provide alternative course delivery to students.
- Red Deer Christmas Bureau—thanking students and staff for their generous support for the toy drive and in particular, Wim Vanderhook for his support in assisting with pick-up and delivery.