

Highlights from the February 9, 2010 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

CELEBRATIONS

- The meeting began with a moment of silence in honour of Brad and Krista Howe, parents in our District who were tragically killed in an accident leaving five children without a mom and dad.
- The Central Alberta Teachers' Convention included a moving presentation by Craig Scott, whose sister was the first student killed in the Columbine tragedy. The outcome was *Rachel's Challenge* a presentation that motivates students to make a positive change in the way they treat others. Special thanks to District teachers Judy Williams, Don Brookwell and Bruce Strand for their service on the Convention committee.
- "*Connect*", a monthly publication from Alberta Health Services" recognized Jennifer Sundberg for receiving our District's "Friend of Education Award" for her leadership in the implementation of the District Nutrition policy.
- A valued partner in the community, the Central Alberta Refugee Effort, celebrated its 30th anniversary. CARE supports newcomers to Canada and students in our schools
- A provincial workshop looked at the importance of community collaboration to enhance the success of our First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.
- Our 13th annual Town Hall Meeting invited our community to identify what are the essentials in light of potential budget challenges. The Board really appreciated the input from stakeholders. We have a strong reputation for our consultation process. Five trustees from other jurisdictions joined us to learn more about our approach to community engagement. School administrators had their own Town Hall meeting the following day to also identify essentials. The Board will use this information at its upcoming planning retreat.
- Fundraising efforts in our schools throughout the year shows awareness and concern for the needs of many causes. Our response to Haiti is but one example of our efforts to develop character and citizenship.
- "Footloose" is an amazing performance by the music, art and drama programs at Lindsay Thurber. Congratulations to Tara Sampson and Jennifer Mann, who along with a host of other teachers and volunteers made the event such a success.
- The District received an appreciation note for the strong student involvement in the local Olympic Torch Relay Event.

Understanding the Early Years Project

Red Deer Public was pleased to be a partner in the "Understanding the Early Years Project" which looked at how kindergarten children and families are doing and what community supports are available for children in

their early years. The project, undertaken by Family Services of Central Alberta, recognizes the early years are important for preparing students for success in K to 12 and the future. With significant brain development happening between birth and six years of age, it is important that the early years provide the best opportunities for students to achieve their fullest potential. The project encourages strong investment and support of the early years. The 'Early Development Instrument' was administered to kindergarten students on five domains of early development examining how well children are prepared to participate in school. The results provide a wide range of data along different demographic profiles. Red Deer students achieved higher average scores compared to the Canadian sample. The project includes a call for action to develop a community action plan for young children

Exchange Teacher Report

Susan Mueller, a teacher at Glendale, shared her experiences while involved in an exchange program with Kevin Kennedy from Adelaide, Australia last year. While the year was filled with lots of new experiences, opportunities and a few challenges, at the end of the year Susan concluded, "kids are kids... regardless of where they come from." Teaching in a new system is exciting, but it was noted that there was much less structure in the curriculum framework, hours of instruction and use of approved resources which can present some challenges. Overall it was an amazing year of personal and professional growth and Susan appreciated the opportunity.

Information Technology Services Report

Ron Eberts, Assistant Superintendent of Information Technology Services provided an update on projects in schools and across the District. Technology plays a key role in developing 21st century learners. The District has been involved in:

- Creating Efficiencies Through Technology Project" through implementation of a 'virtual server'
- District Server Evergreen: replacement of all school based servers
- Instructional Evergreening Strategy was completed in Westpark Middle, Normandeau, Joseph Welsh and Central Services with more than 300 computers
- Innovative Classroom Technology Initiative: placing computer and projection devices in every classroom as well as a number of SmartBoards
- Development of a new District Student Information System: in conjunction with the Provincial Approach to Student Information

Technology is changing the way teachers teach and students learn. All the work from IT services is geared to support student learning across the District.

Facility Maintenance Plan

The Board reviewed the District Facility Maintenance Plan, a six-year plan that maps out enhancements, repairs and preventative maintenance required in all our facilities. Each year the District uses \$1.6 million in provincial funding to support as plumbing electrical, HVAC, construction and other projects that schools and our maintenance department identify as priorities. The plan ensures the work is affordable, manageable and effective in maintaining our facilities.

Framework for K to 12 Wellness Education

Alberta Education is proposing changes in the programming through the "Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education" which includes health, physical education and Career and Life Management. The framework focuses in on the development of the social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual wellness of students. Included in the plan is the elimination of the Career and Life Management course with the outcomes to be incorporated within other courses and programs. The program also incorporates wellness on other subject areas. High school graduation requirements would change requiring completion six credits in wellness. Changes will begin at high school and then move to K to 9 afterwards.

Teacher Arbitration Award Accepted

The Board acknowledged and accepted the recent arbitration decision that will see teacher salaries increase to 5.99% for the 2009/10 school year. The Board approved the immediate change to the collective agreement with retroactive payment to be made for the February pay period.

Deferred Salary Leave Program

The Board approved the deferred salary leaves of seven teachers.

Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association

- The PSBAA received a notice of motion that would put forth an ad hoc committee to establish a communication protocol to maintain healthy, collaborative relationships among jurisdiction and also that members develop policy in regard to Boards assuming the operation of schools in jurisdictions other than their own would need to be presented to the Minister.

Correspondence Sent

- Minister of Education: outlining the Board's support for the programming and services available through that Alberta Distance Learning Centre in meeting important needs of students in our schools.