

Highlights from the March 11, 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

CELEBRATIONS

- Choir Kids was another wonderful event. School choirs perform in concert with members of the Red Deer Symphony.
- 50 teachers involved in our mentorship program learned more about Smart Board technology and developing IPPs.
- The District extended its sympathy and support to Trustee Cathy Peacocke on the recent passing of her son Brian.
- Thanks to Tim Hortons who will send two of our students to their summer camp.
- Middle and high school students were involved in four challenging problems as part of the regional Science Olympics
- The Cross Country Ski Loppet was a tremendous success with students being outside and active on a winter afternoon.
- "Suessical the Musical" is a fantastic, active, colourful and energetic musical performed by students from Hunting Hills.
- Central Alberta Medical Imaging sponsors the breakfast and snack program at Fairview—\$5000 was raised at a recent fundraising event.
- Two books from "Whispers from Canada's Past" were launched at Annie L Gaetz. This is an amazing project where students wrote, drew and published children books based on stories from Canada's history.

New Initiatives Program – Round 2

The District provides support for new and innovative projects in our schools. Support of up to \$750 provides professional development, materials and substitute coverage. Projects and schools include:

- Boy Oh Boy I Like to Read—Central
- CTS Food Curriculum Update—Hunting Hills and Lindsay Thurber
- Facilitating Expressions Through Video Technology—Alternative School Programs
- Kitchen Safety and Food Prep-Alternative School Programs
- Showcase Student Learning—Westpark Middle
- Successful You—Glendale and Central

- The Just Right Book—West Park Elementary
- Improving Student Learning and Success for 'At Risk' Students—Lindsay Thurber

Budget Approval Process

The Board amended its policy on approval of its annual budget. The initial budget, which provides planning direction from the Board, is approved in the spring while the fall revised budget is approved to more accurately reflect actual enrollments and costs. The revised policy acknowledges that revenue and expenditures can vary during the year and provides authority to administration to respond to these changes while maintaining the Board's general authority over the budget. The Board also receives quarterly updates and must be advised of significant changes to underlying budget assumptions and risk factors.

Local Authorities Pension Plan

The Board approved in principle a policy outlining eligibility for participation in the Local Authorities Pension Plan. LAPP generally covers non-teaching employees who regularly work 20 hours per week or more. The policy will be circulated for feedback.

Enrollment Report

January student enrolments were 13 short of the 10,000 student mark and up 288 from a year ago:

ECS	818	Middle	2083
Elementary	3404	Senior	3676

Grade Reconfiguration Proposal

A proposal to improve student achievement and success through the reconfiguration of grades in designated schools was received by the Board. The proposal calls for GH Dawe, Glendale and Normandeau to include students from kindergarten to grade eight. A report from administration included the following highlights:

- a wide range of data indicating concerns about student achievement
- acknowledges the significant efforts and hard work by staff to support and improve student learning and success
- recognizes the need for significant changes to address student achievement issues
- suggests the new configuration will support students by reducing transitions and creating different kinds of relationships within schools
- research data supports grade configuration as

a way to address student achievement while recognizing there is research that provides contrary positions.

- offering programs of choice in a range of areas could be more successfully implemented with a K to 8 grade structure
- there are many successful K to 8 schools
- the report also acknowledges challenges and concerns about reconfiguration including the discomfort with change, potential for a limited range of option courses, the possibility that changes may not increase academic achievement, positive and/or negative influences of younger and older students and costs to modify facilities to accommodate students

The Board will share the proposal with the community and provide significant opportunities for discussion and feedback prior to making any decisions on the changes.

Aspen Heights Property Exchange

As part of the modernization project at Aspen Heights, a reconfiguration of the property was necessary. The District and City of Red Deer have proposed an exchange of approximately 220 m² of land that will support the construction plans.

Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association

- Trustees will submit our comprehensive range of health promotion and active living initiatives for the Premier's Award for School Board Innovation and Excellence

Correspondence Sent

- ASBA—concerns on the process for determining Executive Director compensation
- ASBA—feedback on its Transportation Report
- Alberta Education—concerns regarding monitoring for off-campus education and its impact on programs
- Child and Family Services—request for information regarding its decision on modular child care space

Correspondence Received

- From Northland School Division—to the Minister stating its position that their Superintendent is responsible to their Board, not the Ministry
- From Child and Family Services—invitation for Red Deer Public to attend their April Board meeting
- From Medicine Hat Catholic—concern that ASBA report on collective bargaining is biased and unscientific
- From PSBAA—concerns that the Municipal District of Opportunity doesn't allow employees to serve as elected school trustees