

*Highlights from the April 8, 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools*

## **CELEBRATIONS**

- New 'masterpieces' from budding artists at Mattie McCullough are on display at Central Services—we appreciate how these enhance our hallways.
- Oriole Park recently hosted The Great Canadian Geography Challenge.
- Public meetings on the proposed grade reconfiguration for designated schools are taking place to provide information on the proposal and seek community input.
- The Jazz Bands from Eastview and Hunting Hills are practicing together preparing for their upcoming trip to Anaheim.
- Former Assistant Superintendent Ray Congdon is being recognized with the naming of a Post Doctoral Fellowship in recognition of his exemplary work on the National Board of the Alzheimer Society
- The Admin Appreciation Dinner provided an opportunity to recognize the valued work of administrators across the District.

## **Student Vote Program**

During the last federal election, Vote Canada encouraged schools to participate in a parallel election process to increase awareness of the process, nurture habits of democratic citizenship and increase voter participation. The following teachers had students in their classes participate in the Student Vote Program:

- Sheila Fowler-Green – Eastview
- Erin Lerouge – Mountview
- Klaaske deKoning – Gateway
- Michelle Dyck – Glendale
- Arlee Ripkens – Hunting Hills
- Patricia Orr – Outreach
- Val Carter/Lianna Richmond – Westpark Middle

Teachers shared the value of the experience for students and the opportunities it provided to increase understand of the election process and awareness of the many issues facing voters.

## **Student Receives Major Award**

Meagan McLavish was recognized for being selected to receive the Loran Scholarship valued at \$75,000. The award recognizes academic achievement, extra-curricular involvement and leadership potential. Meagan, a grade 12 student at Lindsay Thurber, is student leadership president, volunteers in the community and is completing a French Immersion diploma. She will attend Faculté Saint Jean at the University of Alberta and plans to pursue a career in medicine. Meagan acknowledged and was appreciative of the many opportunities her education in Red Deer Public has provided her.

## **We Are Thurber!**

Principal Jim Clevette shared information on the life and learning at Lindsay Thurber. A key focus for the school is building capacity and identity.

- The Student Leadership Program is providing great opportunities for students to be involved and make a difference at school and in the community.
- A Music Appreciation Program is expanding opportunities for Pathways students.
- The new Career Centre and Counsellor are having a real impact on students planning their future. Students have already qualified for more than \$385,000 in scholarships.
- The school's Accountability Pillar Report Card was reviewed sharing successes and challenges.
- The Principal's Advisory Council gathers feedback from students about the school.
- An Attendance Task Force is having success looking at why students are not attending and identifying strategies to improve attendance.
- The school is committed to student success and achievement through use of a variety of intervention strategies, tutorial supports as well as working with feeder schools on vertical articulation of curriculum.
- Keeping kids in school is a priority as Thurber looks at ways to enhance high school completion.
- The Link Crew Program is supporting students making a successful transition to high school as well as assisting in student success seminars for grade 9 students.
- The school is pleased with its success in increasing parental contacts as a means to support student success.

## **Three-Year Capital Plan**

While the provincial budget did not include new funding for capital projects, the Board continues to push for capital projects to address pressing enrollment needs through approval of its three year capital plan including:

- new construction of Aspen Ridge – 450 students in kindergarten to grade 5
- two additional modular spaces for each of Mattie McCullough, Mountview and GW Smith
- new construction at Timberstone – 450 students in kindergarten to grade 8
- acquisition of River Glen School to house the Gateway Christian School program
- modernization projects at Annie L Gaetz and Westpark Middle School

The Board is increasingly concerned about its urgent capital needs with many schools exceeding their capacity ratings and demographic projections showing significant growth in the next few years. We are rapidly running out of options to accommodate students.

## **Quarterly Financial Report**

The Board reviewed the District's finances for the first half of the year with a forecast deficit of \$256,000 on its \$95.1 million budget. Instructional operating reserves for schools are expected to be reduced from \$2.5 million to \$700,000 and overall reserves are projected to decline by \$1.1 million from last year.

## **Professional Improvement Leaves**

Trustees approved two full-year Professional Improvement Leaves as per the teacher's collective agreement.

## **Alternative School Acting Principal**

With the retirement of Rob Goring as principal for Alternative School Programs on April 30, the Board appointed Jim Horne, former Associate Superintendent, as acting principal for the remainder of the year. We welcome Jim back and wish Rob all the best.

## **Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association**

Area Trustees met with six local MLAs to discuss diverse issues facing school boards. Red Deer Public shared our community engagement process related to the north side grade reconfiguration as well as our utilization figures and their impact on facility needs.

## **Correspondence Received**

- Rotary Club of Red Deer – while the current economic situation has had a significant impact on returns to the Rotary Career Opportunity Fund, the Rotary Club is committed to continue to fund the scholarships that provide support to 20 students a year of up to \$1500.