

Highlights from the April 20, 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

CELEBRATIONS

- The Board heard excerpts of a letter from a student who had been expelled expressing his regrets with past choices and how he has since turned things around for the better including going back to school.
- Meetings on proposed grade reconfigurations are going well and have provided useful and productive input
- The JACKS program for grade eight students across the District provided a wide range of opportunities to explore careers by Joining Adults in Careers with Kids in School.
- A vendor for international travel wrote to the District to acknowledge and extend their appreciation for the purchasing processes used by the District.
- High schools hosted "Lights Out Day" to raise awareness about the environment and ways schools can conserve energy.
- Administrative Professionals Week is recognizing the wonderful work of our many support staff across the District.
- Hunting Hills and the Aboriginal Frontline Program are providing an artist-in residence experience to profile the historical Aboriginal connections of the school's name.
- Red Deer Transit is relocating its terminal during construction of a new parkade resulting in changes to service that will affect students attending Central Middle.

Excellence in Teaching Award

Eight outstanding teachers have been recognized for excellence in teaching. Semi-finalists for the Excellence in Teaching Award include:

- Sandy Cai – Hunting Hills
 - Tania Diletzoy – Lindsay Thurber
 - Mona Knudslien – Westpark Middle
 - Sheena McNiff-Wolfe – Lindsay Thurber
 - Moira Milne – Annie L Gaetz
 - Karen Vanderwater – Annie L Gaetz
 - Darla Mora – Joseph Welsh
- Arthur Pendle from Hunting Hills is a semi-finalist in the SMARTer Kids Innovative Use of Technology Award.

These teachers were selected from 365 nominees across the province for their leadership, creativity, innovation, collaboration and willingness to create positive and stimulating learning environment that motivate students to exceed their own expectations. We are proud of each of these individuals who represent excellence in teaching across the District.

International Services Report

Red Deer Public hosts international students from across the world who choose to come to Alberta to enhance their education. Rob Porkka, Director of International Services provided the Board with an update of the program:

- 98 students from 25 counties are attending middle and high schools in the District during the year. Countries students arrive from include Brazil, Korea, Russia, Japan, Germany, Mexico, China and France.
- The program is involved in coordinated marketing that includes agents and student fairs, school visits, internet exposure, facebook groups, collaboration with international student exchange programs and through the strong reputation of the program.
- Tuition fees for international students are \$9850 with homestays costing of \$700 per month.
- The District provides a range of supports for international students including ESL programming, assigned counselors and administrators and a homestay program.
- Alberta Education provides significant support for international education.
- Our high schools also have international partnerships with schools around the world and participate actively in a variety of international student exchanges. These complement our extensive second languages programming.
- Red Deer Public students benefit from internationalization through diversity and new perspectives provided by international students. We also value opportunities for our students to participate in wide range of international experiences abroad.

Fee Waiver Program

The Board is very proud of its Fee Waiver Program that provides full and partial waivers based on the size of a family and its total household income. \$45,113 in fees were waived for instructional materials, course, textbook and miscellaneous fees this year, down from \$57,610 the year before. 378 students from 256 families received fee waivers through the program.

Relocation of Programs

Over the years, District Special Education Programs have been relocated based on changing needs in schools and the District. Trustees approved the relocation of the following programs for the 2009/10 school year:

- Stepping Stones program at Oriole Park will move to Aspen Heights.
- The three classes that comprise the Venture Middle School Program will be relocated from GH Dawe School to single classes at Eastview, Glendale and Central Middle Schools.
- The Odyssey High School program will be relocated from GH Dawe to Lindsay Thurber.

The proposal included rationale that supports the changes including consistency with the desired outcomes of Board policy, more inclusive programming, opportunities for integration of students within regular programs and services, enhanced opportunities for high school completion and addressing facility needs. The changes will maintain programming albeit at different locations. Meetings will be scheduled with parents to review the changes to these program locations for next year.

Support Staff Salary Increase

The Board approved a salary increase to support staff of 3.1% for next year and an increase of the health spending account to a total of \$500.

March Enrolment Summary

9921 students were attending Red Deer Public Schools in March, an increase of 19 students from September 30.

Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association

- The Board reviewed and approved in principle the PSBAA's "School Act - Proposed Key Positions for Consideration at the Spring Assembly"
- The Board reviewed the PSBAA "Straight Talk" initiative that looks at ways to engage in discussions on what communities want from public school education.
- The Board considered the "ASBA Issues, Budget and Bylaws Bulletin" which will be considered at the spring meeting in June.

Correspondence Received

- Minister of Education – The Department will allocate equipment used in the WorldSkills Calgary 2009 Competition to post-secondary and high schools that apply.