

Highlights from the May 28, 2008 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

QUICK NEWS AND CELEBRATIONS

- Schools hosted volunteer appreciation events to recognize the important role these individuals play in our schools.
- Katrina Neufeld, from Glendale Middle School, was recognized at the Edwin Parr Awards Dinner as our District nominee as an outstanding first-year teacher.
- 245 middle and high school art students participated in ArtWorks! where professional artists taught students new skills and techniques. Finished projects were featured at a showing at Bilton Contemporary Art.
- Kindergarten children from Normandeau and high school students from Lindsay Thurber learned and worked with seniors from the Golden Circle on an Intergenerational Collage.
- The Foundation approved over \$40,000 in funding for projects to enrich learning for all students in the District. This year's theme is Global Awareness and Understanding.
- With the end of the school year just around the corner, many schools are hosting track and field events as well as field trips.
- Red Deer Public students did very well at the recent Skills Alberta and Skills Canada Competitions. The event allows students to demonstrate their abilities in a variety of career and technology related competitions.
- The Board was pleased to discuss matters of mutual interest with the executive of the ATA local at their annual dinner.

Alberta Education Workforce Planning Initiative

The Department of Education has established a workforce planning initiative to examine future enrollments and staffing needs for education across the province. Superintendent Don Falk is a representative on the working group. The project is looking at attracting, developing and retaining great teachers in Alberta's education system and developing plans and action steps to ensure there are sufficient teachers to meet the needs of a growing Alberta. Adapting to changing demographics is a significant issue across the province.

- student population in Alberta is expected to grow from 593,2000 to 677,952 by 2022, while demand for teachers will increase from 34,700 to 39,652.
- 2000 teachers graduate from Alberta universities each year with 75% teaching in

Alberta. Of those, 25% leave teaching during the first 5 years of their careers.

- With demand already exceeding supply, more teachers will need to be acquired within Alberta as well as from out of province and country, particularly in certain regions and in particular teaching specialties like math, science, second languages and CTS.
- the teaching profession is aging--some jurisdictions have numbers of staff over 45 years of age.
- there is a high concentration of females in teaching--many take leaves during their careers to have families.
- these changing demographics also have implications on facilities and school programming.

The local picture is promising with significant growth anticipated for Red Deer Public Schools over the next 15 years. 70% of students in our city attend our schools. The District is projected to have 11,890 students by 2022. This model is consistent with our own projections and demonstrates a real need for facilities to accommodate our growing population.

Locally Developed Courses

The Board approved locally developed courses for middle and high schools. There are a number of exciting and unique courses that are not part of the provincial curriculum but respond to local interests and provide alternatives for students. Courses in middle school range from Film Study and Business Education to History's Greatest Hits and Science Fiction Reading and Creative Writing. Courses approved at the high school level that will be forwarded to Alberta Education for final approval range from Learning Strategies and Martial Arts to Leadership and Theory of Knowledge.

April Enrolment

9696 students were attending Red Deer Public Schools in April compared to 9643 for the same time last year.

Stakeholder Survey Results

Each year the District surveys parents, students and staff on a variety of topics. Trustees reviewed the latest results that demonstrate continued high levels of satisfaction among stakeholders. Highlights include:

- strong support for the overall quality of education
- academic achievement of students and high standards
- leadership provided by school administration
- student recognition
- meaningful role of School Council
- extra help and support available when needed
- promotion of physical activity, health and wellness
- students encouraged to do their best
- staff at schools care about students
- processes to improve quality of education
- the wide choice of programs available

Schools and the District review these survey results in detail and utilize the information as part of the planning and reporting process.

District Education Plan

The Board approved plans for the next three years as outlined in the *District Education Plan for 2008/09 to 2010/2011*. The plan is the result of significant input from across our community. The plan is also driven by a variety of sources of data. Some new initiatives include:

- implementation of the Substance Abuse Intervention Plan.
- implementation of the District's Nutrition Policy.
- consider implementation of programs of choice and in that context, consider a K to 8 organizational structure for the delivery of these programs.
- develop and implement a common program of early literacy intervention in designated elementary schools based on strong research evidence and success.
- establish a District working group that will address high school completion and improving transition rates to post secondary education including a community-wide pledge to support high school completion.
- utilize best practices and research available through the Accountability Pillar Clearinghouse.
- restructure the District Curriculum Leaders positions to provide strong capable leadership, in particular in the core academic subject areas.
- increase extent to which common feeder schools network work together to support student transitions
- address the learning needs of boys by examining preferred learning styles and ways of adapting instruction.
- focus professional development for teachers on the fundamentals of good pedagogy.
- enable additional collaborative planning time through innovations in calendars and scheduling.
- raise the profile of the Board of Trustees on their important role in public school education.
- develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated information and communications technology plan to support the delivery of instruction.

Aspen Heights Modernization Deferred

With an anticipated budget of \$2.2 and with tenders coming in at more than \$700,000 over budget, the Board agreed to defer the Aspen Heights modernization and have it re-tendered at a later date with consideration for both a 2 and 4 class replacement being considered.

Trustees Remuneration Guidelines

Trustees approved updates to the remuneration guidelines.

Public School Boards' Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards' Association

- PSBAA continues to develop its Foundation program to speak to the core beliefs of public school education.
- ASBA Zone approved our proposed Directive for Action calling for equitable distribution for technology funding.

Correspondence:

Minister of Education – outlined the rationale for competitive proposals for technology funds that was raised as a concern.