

Highlights from the August 26, 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

CELEBRATIONS

- It's back to school as we prepare to welcome 10,000 students on Tuesday, September 1. The year will be filled with many opportunities, as well as a few challenges along the way. The Board of Trustees wishes our students and staff a year filled with success!
- As we look to the year ahead, our focus will be on enabling student learning by:
 - promoting early success
 - engaging students in their learning
 - sustaining a safe and caring environment
 - providing breadth of programming
 - addressing the needs of FNMI students
 - supporting high quality teaching
 - connecting with the community
 - focusing on completion
- A special welcome to the 27 teachers who attended our New Teacher Orientation. 14 joined the District since January while 13 are starting this fall. The orientation included a valuable session by experienced teachers on planning for the first day of school and getting the year off to a positive start.
- Trustees attended the Canadian School Boards' Association Congress. Of particular interest was an update on accelerated technological change in Canada as well as the many opportunities to network and share best practices which will benefit the District.
- The summer conference of the Canadian Association of School Administrators focused on early literacy interventions and supports and included a presentation by Red Deer Public on the success of our Bright Beginnings Program.

The Foundation for Red Deer Public Schools

Michael Keyes, Chair of the Foundation for Red Deer Public Schools shared information on the supports it provides to enhance and enrich learning opportunities for students across the District. For 2008/09, the Foundation supported a variety of projects focused on 'Global Awareness and Understanding' which culminated with Craig Kielburger, founder of Free the Children, speaking at the 12th Annual Striving for Excellence Dinner that recognized 175 students across the District. For 2009/10, the Foundation focus is on "Healthy Active Living.... Healthy Active Learning" with more than 20 school projects receiving support as well as a major project to provide Winter Olympic experiences to middle school students across the District. The Foundation also supports fundraising efforts of schools across the District by providing more than \$90,000 in charitable tax receipting for a wide range of school fundraising projects. The Board of Trustees recognizes and appreciates the important work of the Foundation and the opportunity it provides our community to enrich student learning across the District.

Quarterly Financial Review

The third quarter financial summary for 2008/09 anticipates a net surplus of \$280,505 on \$93 million dollar of revenue. The Board is anxious to receive year-end results in light of potential funding challenges in the year ahead.

Communication of Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams

The protocol on the release of results for the 2008/09 Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations was reviewed. Official results will be released publicly on October 1.

Enrolment Report – June 2009

Our June 30, 2009 enrollment was 9825 compared to 9633 the previous year. We anticipate 2009/10 enrollments to break the 10,000 students mark.

Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association

- PSBAA continues to develop key concepts to be considered for revisions to the *School Act*. This would include provision of natural person powers for school authorities, processes for decisions on school jurisdiction boundaries and allowing for a locally funded connection through local taxation powers for school jurisdictions. The Minister has asked that suggested changes be provided to him by November 9.
- The PSBAA will consider establishing an intergovernmental political action ad hoc committee that support intergovernmental relations and political advocacy on positions of interest and importance for public school boards.
- The PSBAA is using technology such as wikis and blogs to support advocacy on important issues in public education.

Correspondence:

- To ASBA – confirming the Board's strong support for local bargaining and concerns with recommendations suggested in an ASBA report that supports provincial bargaining. The Board believes local bargaining is consistent with the principle of local autonomy for school boards.
- From University of Alberta, Faculty of Education expressing gratitude for the willingness of teachers to provide mentorship to student teachers during field experiences. 76 student teachers were placed in our schools last year.
- From Ministers of Education and Culture and Community Spirit – responding to our letter outlining concerns over Bill 44 and its implications for education.



Dr. Bill Stuebing,
Chair



Bev Manning,
Vice Chair



Gail Holland



Lawrence Lee



Dianne Macaulay



Cathy Peacocke



Jim Watters