

Highlights from the September 12, 2007 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

Quick News and Celebrations

- District staff came together for our traditional Kickoff Pancake Breakfast and Rally. The event featured author David Bouchard who shared a powerful message on the importance of reading and promoting literacy. Special thanks to the caretaking and cafeteria staff at Lindsay Thurber for all their efforts.
- 9853 students are attending Red Deer Public Schools. Class and staffing assignments are pretty much finalized to best meet the learning needs of students.
- Meet the Teacher Nights, Pancake Breakfasts, Family Barbeques as well as the start of football season are all signs that it's "Back to School."
- More than 200 grade nine students at Lindsay Thurber attended the "Link Crew" orientation session to high school the week before classes began. The half-day motivational session provided good information on making a successful transition to high school.
- Trustees were thrilled at the announcement of \$6.6 million in provincial funding to support modernization and renovations of GH Dawe Community School.
- The Board of Trustees attended the Premier's Breakfast to hear future directions for the province from Premier Ed Stelmach and to connect with other community leaders.
- Congratulations to Hunting Hills' student Jaydee Bixby who came in second place in the Canadian Idol competition.

New Teachers To District

Trustees met some of our 24 new teachers who joined Red Deer Public Schools at the start of the 2007/08 school year. Each of them is thrilled to be teaching with our District and we're glad to have them in our classrooms.

Red Deer College Expansion

Red Deer Public Schools is proud of its strong connections with Red Deer College. Many of

our students have continued their path of lifelong learning at RDC, which is recognized for its quality of teaching, wide range of programs and providing a good transition for post-secondary education. Red Deer College shared its ambitious plans for expansion of both programs and facilities over the next few years. College President Ron Woodward, Vice President Jim Madder and Associate Vice President Michael Donlevy shared the College's plans of "Building Communities Through Learning." RDC is committed to being the leading comprehensive college serving learners and communities through excellence and innovation. With the strong support of government, business and communities, the college is expanding opportunities for degree granting and completion in the areas of business and liberal arts as well as future growth in the sciences, health and human services. Much of the new construction at the college is meeting the needs of increased apprenticeship and trades training as well as future growth in technologies, manufacturing, business enterprise and applied research. The college's focus is on targeted growth and learning for the future.

Excellent Results On IB and Exams

High school students have the opportunity to take challenging and rigorous university level courses through the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Lindsay Thurber and Advanced Placement (AP) at Hunting Hills. Both schools continue to expand their program offerings and continue to achieve outstanding results on exams:

- 100 students at Hunting Hills wrote AP exams and achieved the weighted average of 3.85 out of 5. 91% of those who wrote passed their exams with 63% earning marks of four or five
- 68 students at Thurber wrote in 118 exams with an overall average 5.09 out of 7 compared to the world average of 4.53

Last year Hunting Hills became an accredited AP school following an extensive audit process. They also added Chinese as a course offering—the first school in Canada to do so. While the school continues to partner with Notre Dame High School in some offerings, it is moving to more stand-alone courses including English. More than 400 students are taking AP courses at Hunting Hills Lindsay Thurber is focusing on expanding the number of full IB Diploma students. This program requires completion of six courses, the Theory of

Knowledge, 150 hours of involvement in creative, active and service activities as well as completion of an extended essay research project. The profile of IB students at Thurber are students who are inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. The program has expanded and offers Japanese IB and is considering additional course offerings. 310 students are registered in the IB program at Thurber. In addition to highly committed students, it was acknowledged that both programs rely on equally dedicated teachers committed to providing challenging and rigorous learning opportunities for students.

Parents Choice Of School Policy

Trustees provided approval for amendments to the policy on Parents Choice of Schools. The recommended changes will ensure consistency in practice between resident and non-residents students and their right to access a school.

ASBA Fall Resolutions

The ASBA will consider policy positions at their Fall Annual General Meeting including a proposal by Red Deer Public to request Alberta Education use the six-year instead of the four-year transition rate on the accountability report card. We believe the six-year rate better reflects the diverse choices of students following high school graduation while still reporting on those students who pursue post-secondary studies.

Correspondence:

- Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority: Collaboration Meeting
- City of Red Deer Annexation Plans: the city is proposing significant annexation and advising the Board of its plans
- Minister of Education: regarding District's expressed interest in considering Public Private Partnerships for new school construction
- Millennium Scholarship Foundation: information on the Foundation's scholarships as well as comments on the significance of student debt.
- Canadian School Boards' Association – Call for action on eliminating GST charged to school jurisdictions.