

Highlights from the September 24, 2008 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

QUICK NEWS AND CELEBRATIONS

- Thirty International Students from Hunting Hills gathered for a potluck dinner with school liaisons and their host families. Students are pleased with their home stays, excited to be learning in our schools and many are already surprised with how cold it is!
- Trustees are appreciating the opportunities to connect with their liaison schools at a variety of events, meetings and activities.
- The Board has nominated its Nutrition Policy for the Premier's Award for School Board Innovation and Excellence. Our Nutrition Policy recognizes that good nutrition is conducive to student learning and that schools play an important role in influencing the health and well being of students.
- Staff from the Aboriginal Frontline Program were in Hobbema making good connections through cultural teachings as well as visits to schools and the cultural college.
- The Foundation for Red Deer Public Schools held their first meeting of the year with Trustees Lee and Manning serving as liaisons. This year, the Foundation is supporting projects that increase global awareness and understanding.
- The 27th annual Dawe Run was another outstanding event attracting more than 4,500 students. Thanks to all those whose help maintains this great tradition.
- Student enrollment has been greater than schools expected resulting in the hiring of six more positions at the beginning of the year.
- Twelve students were invited to attend the United Way Kick Off Luncheon that featured Hannah Taylor, a dynamic 13-year-old student leader from Winnipeg whose Ladybug Foundation works to address issues of homelessness.

Quality Daily Physical Education and Ever Active School Awards

Having long been recognized as leaders in promoting healthy and active lifestyles for students, a number of our schools have been recognized with Quality Daily Physical Education Awards. Criteria include daily curricular

instruction for all students, intramural activities and school sports which provide opportunity for all students to participate. Schools receiving Diamond Award recognition were:

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| ○ Annie L Gaetz | ○ Central Middle |
| ○ GH Dawe | ○ GW Smith |
| ○ Glendale | ○ Grandview |
| ○ Joseph Welsh | ○ Mattie McCullough |
| ○ Oriole Park | ○ Venture |

In addition to these schools, Westpark Middle received a Platinum Award. Lindsay Thurber and Hunting Hills earned Secondary awards based on the number of opportunities for students are able to be involved in physical activities at their schools.

The Ever Active Schools designation recognizes schools that promote healthy living and physical activity through initiatives that impact the entire school community. Ever Active Schools include:

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| ○ Aspen Heights | ○ Eastview |
| ○ GH Dawe | ○ Glendale |
| ○ Grandview | ○ Hunting Hills |
| ○ Lindsay Thurber | ○ Mountview |
| ○ Oriole Park | ○ Westpark Middle |

New Teachers to the District

Red Deer Public is pleased to welcome 28 teachers who are new to the District. Some are beginning their teaching careers while others have previous experience. New teachers commented on how excited they are to be teaching for Red Deer Public and the wonderful welcome they have received in their schools. We value the opportunity to work with each of them and wish them much success.

West Park Kindergarten Program

Since 2001, West Park Elementary has operated an alternating full-day kindergarten program where students attend two full days per week and alternating Fridays. The Board approved a request to change back to a half-day program to provide more consistency in programming to better meet the needs of children. The change takes place in 2009/10.

Westpark Middle School Loan Request

Westpark Middle received approval to borrow up to \$75,000 from the District to assist in the purchase of a school bus. The loan will be paid off over four years with funds coming from fundraising initiatives.

Summer Facility Improvements

Summer provided opportunities for our Maintenance Department and contractors to complete a number of

facility improvements in our schools. Projects ranged from lighting upgrades and roofing replacements to security upgrades and boiler replacements. While a number of projects were completed, for some, tenders on work has been challenging with costs higher than expected and limited interest from contractors due to the busy construction environment we are in.

2009/10 and 2010/11 School Year Policy

Trustees provided initial approval for school calendars for the next two years. The new version will provide opportunities for additional collaborative planning time for teachers. The policy allows elementary schools to dismiss students two Friday afternoons per month for the purpose of conducting professional learning activities similar to the longstanding practice in our middle schools. Other features of the calendar include:

- a September start date for both calendars
 - 197 school operational days and 185 instructional days
 - three organizational days for staff prior to first day of school for students
 - breaks and holidays consistent with previous calendars
- The policy will be circulated among stakeholders prior to final approval.

Appeals to the Board of Trustees Regulation

Trustees reviewed regulations that will guide appeals to the Board of Trustees.

Alberta School Boards Association

- ASBA Zone 4 meeting included presentations on a review of distributed learning and strategic planning processes for school authorities. There was also discussion on future directions for special education, which is currently under review.

Correspondence

- Central Alberta Governance Circle – notice of meeting with Trustee Holland attending.
- Active Healthy Kids Canada 2008 Report – a comprehensive assessment of indicators that contribute to physical activity behaviours. Canadian children and youth received an overall grade of "D." There was also troubling data on leisure-related screen time.
- World Skills Competition – letter from the Minister of Education encouraging schools to have students attend the competition as spectators.