

Highlights from the September 26, 2007 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

QUICK NEWS AND CELEBRATIONS

- Kindergarten or grade one students in four schools will be part of "Roots of Empathy", an award winning, evidence-based classroom program that has shown dramatic effect in raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy among school children while reducing levels of aggression and violence. At the heart of the program are a neighbourhood infant and parent who visit the classroom every three weeks over the school year.
- Living and Learning, a conference for parents, by parents, takes place on October 13 at Hunting Hills
- We look forward to Ward Hayward joining the District as our new Assistant Director of Facilities
- The District is involved in a joint traffic study with the City and Red Deer Catholic looking at ways to improve traffic flow, school bus loading and unloading and student safety at our schools.
- Normandeau hosted their "Harvest Soup Lunch" using vegetables grown in the school garden. The naturalization and garden program was an outcome of the school's involvement in the Comprehensive School Health Initiative.
- The David Thompson Health Region hosted their regular Health Symposium that focused on student health and nutrition. We were pleased to see that the District is already involved in a number of initiatives that promote the health and well being of children
- The annual International Student Dinner allowed students from around the world who are studying in our schools to get together—we truly are part of a global community.
- The 26th Annual Dawe Run was another tremendous event with thousands of students participating in this fall tradition.
- The race is on... School Board Elections take place on October 15.

Schools Recognized for Excellence in Physical Education and Activity

Schools in Red Deer Public have earned a reputation for quality daily physical education as well as the promotion of healthy living and physical activity through initiatives that impact the entire school community. 14 of our schools received

Quality Daily Physical Education Awards while 11 schools were designated as Ever Active Schools. The Board acknowledged these schools for their commitment to promoting healthy, active children.

Sharon Schultz Receives National Recognition

Canadian Blood Services recognized Sharon Schultz, an Educational Assistant at Lindsay Thurber, with a national award at a recent ceremony in Ottawa. Sharon was honoured for her instrumental work in organizing student blood drives as well as other volunteer work with the agency. *Give the gift of life and giving for life* are beliefs Sharon lives by and wants to instill in our students.

Cheer Team off to California

The Board approved the Hunting Hills Lightning Cheer Team attending the National Cheerleading Association's Knott's Berry Farm Competition in March 2008.

AADAC Shares Youth Experience Survey Results

AADAC shared results from their province-wide Alberta Youth Experience Survey that measures alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use and gambling activities among Alberta students in grades 7 to 12. Interesting data from the survey includes:

- 36.6% of all students are non-drinkers
- 39.9% of grade 12 students demonstrate risky drinking behavior
- 86.5% of students are non-smokers
- 73.3% of students did not use cannabis in the last year
- 25.4% of students report past-year use of illicit drugs
- 1.4% of students report ever using crystal meth
- 68.6% of males and 57.5% of females gambled in the last year
- with the exception of alcohol, most high school students perceive substance use among their peers to be higher than actual recorded use

This District has many resources and strategies focused on substance use and abuse among students including our District Substance Abuse Action Plan, which focuses on information, prevention and intervention.

The study presents a picture of the overall environment that exists and highlights the challenges for parents and others in dealing with the issues of substance use and abuse in the community

Summer Facility Improvements

Contractors and our maintenance crews were kept busy with a number of facility projects over the summer at a

cost of more than \$1 million. Darren Skrepnyk, Director of Facilities provided an overview of projects that included flooring replacement, roofing work, electrical and lighting upgrades, plumbing work, new sidewalks and landscaping projects. We are pleased with the outstanding work our maintenance and caretaking crews do to get our schools into great shape over the summer.

Nutrition Policy Focuses on Healthy Foods

Trustees gave initial approval to a new policy on nutrition that addresses the growing concern with respect to nutritional health among young people. The policy includes a set of standards for the sale and distribution of food and beverages within the District and also includes strategies and procedures to address the issue of nutritional health among our students. The proposed policy is grounded on several key principles:

- healthy eating is an integral part of growth and development
- good nutrition is conducive to student learning
- an effective school nutrition strategy includes a comprehensive instructional program, appropriate modeling by adults, the promotion of healthy eating practices, and restrictions in the availability of non-nutritious food.

The proposal includes an implementation schedule to support schools in reaching the standards by February 2009. The policy will make its rounds throughout the District to gather further input and feedback from our stakeholders, including students, prior to final adoption in the District.

Trustee Remuneration

As part of its annual review, Trustee agreed to increase their remuneration based on the increase in average weekly earnings that is also used by MLAs.

Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association

- PSBAA University will take place following school board elections to provide Trustees with an overview of public school education in Alberta
- Boards agreed to bylaw changes related to the governance of the ASBA
- Area MLAs will be meeting with Zone 4 Trustees

Correspondence:

- Minister of Education: a follow-up on the Board's invitation to meet to discuss issues facing the District. Minister Liepert would like to meet with the board following Trustee elections
- Association of School Business Officials of Alberta: recognizing the valuable work of Deb Beck on the Information Reporting Committee.

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