

Highlights from the October 10, 2007 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

QUICK NEWS AND CELEBRATIONS

- It was the last meeting of the term for the Board of Trustees. School Board Elections take place Monday, October 15. Eight candidates, including all incumbents, are vying for the seven positions on the Board of Trustees.
- In recognition of World Teachers' Day, our Board Chair wrote a guest editorial highlighting how staff in our District goes above and beyond to meet the needs of students.
- The Red Deer Firefighters Childrens' Charity donated Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) to Hunting Hills and Lindsay Thurber. An AED is a portable electronic device that automatically diagnoses a person suffering from cardiac arrest and provides appropriate intervention.
- 'Tis the season of award ceremonies as we recognize students for their commitment to striving for excellence.
- City Wide School Council is up and running for another year with Judy-Ann Wybenga serving as chair and Lynn Faris-Wilson as vice chair.
- Thanks and farewell to Margo Lukes for her service to the Board and District over the last three years. We welcome Eunice Muzsik who will be the new Executive Assistant to the Superintendent.
- We look forward to welcoming Cody McClintock who was recently announced as our new Associate Superintendent – Business Services.
- As part of its character education initiative, Oriole Park Elementary kicked off their "Making the World a Little Bit Better" initiative at a recent assembly.
- The Horizons program for gifted and talented students in grades 4 and 5, housed at Annie L. Gaetz, was profiled in a *Red Deer Advocate* feature story.

Life and Learning at GW Smith Elementary

Students, staff and parents shared many of the great things taking place at George Wilbert Smith Elementary School. Located in Sunnybrook, the school also serves students living in Anders Park, Anders Victoria, Anders on the Lake and Aspen Ridge. Now in its 45th year of operation and serving 294 students in kindergarten to grade 5, the

school is "helping one another to grow." GW Smith is a caring school and proud of its strong parental and community involvement. While the "Three R's" are very important at the school, students and staff also focus on the "Three L's" of Leadership, Learning and Love and shared many examples of these values in action.

Red Deer College Traffic Impact Study

Parkland Community Planning Services and the City of Red Deer are conducting traffic impact studies related to access to Red Deer College. Some of the proposals under consideration could have significant impact for vehicle and pedestrian traffic flow, student safety and land use adjacent to Westpark Middle School. Some of the proposals included use of Red Deer Public land at the Westpark site. Trustees expressed their support for the preferred option that would route traffic south of 32nd street on college land.

School Closure Policy Proposed Amendment

Following the closure of Pines Community School, the Board of Trustees reviewed its existing policy on school closure to identify issues and opportunities to improve the process. The Board provided initial approval of amendments to the policy that would see both the school principal and Senior Administration representative on the advisory committee serve as resource persons only and not have a vote so as to maintain a position of neutrality. The policy would also reduce the time frame for the school closure process from six to five months. The policy will be circulated to stakeholders to gather feedback.

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Recent changes to provincial Occupational Health and Safety legislation and regulations have raised the level of awareness and interest in workplace safety. The Board considered a policy to guide and align District practices to the new rules, establish the Board's commitment to health and safety in the workplace and create a framework of responsibilities and expectations. The ultimate goal is to create a culture of health and safety throughout the District. The policy will be circulated for feedback prior to final approval.

September 30 Enrollment

The District's September 30 count was 9785 up 51 students from last year. The District has seen a significant increase in kindergarten and pre-kindergarten numbers,

growth of elementary schools on the north side of Red Deer, as well as more students in all our French Immersion programs.

Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association

- PSBAA University I will provide Trustees with an overview on the value and importance of public school education in our communities.

Correspondence:

- Westwind School Division – support for the District's proposal going the ASBA Fall meeting asking the Department to use the six year transition rate for students pursuing post-secondary learning instead of the four year rate that is currently reported on the Accountability Pillar Report Card. Westwind suggests the government should go even further and use a 7-year transition rate.
- Alberta Education – 2006/07 Annual Report Highlights:
 - providing programs to more than 596,000 students
 - \$5.74 billion invested in education
 - \$579 million spent on school facility projects
 - program of studies designed to ensure students learn what they need to know
 - 75.3% of students achieving the acceptable standard and 19% of students achieving the standard of excellence on PATs
 - 85.4% of students achieving the acceptable standard and 23.3% of students earning the standard of excellence on Diploma Exams
 - 85% satisfaction rating on the quality of education
 - 92% agreement that schools are safe and caring
 - 78.6% high school completion rate
 - 2,500 teachers hired since 2004/05 under the Class Size Initiative.

Trustees were surprised to note that the Department uses the six-year transition rate in reporting its achievement while we are required to use the four-year rate.

- Auditor General – Excerpts from the 2007 Report related to the Department of Education. The report includes a listing of auditing issues of jurisdictions across the province. We are pleased that our diligence to these kinds of issues has resulted in clean management letters on our financial statements. The Auditor General is also calling on the department to develop business cases to support new initiatives.
- Minister of Education – Curriculum Handbooks for Parents and Curriculum Summaries are now available at: www.education.ab.ca/parents/handbooks



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