

Highlights from the October 14, 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

CELEBRATIONS

- Red Deer Public welcomes the world! Lindsay Thurber hosted a welcome luncheon for international students from around the globe
- A team of teachers visited science schools in Calgary to support planning for a new science and technology focus at Glendale Middle School.
- All grade six students at Central Middle spent time with community agencies supported by the local United Way campaign in a "Day of Caring." This supports the new Social Studies curriculum and promoted citizenship and character development. This, along with the "Penny Parade" project is bring the United Way into our schools and working with youth to build a "spirit of community."
- Our high schools recognized excellence in student achievement with Honours Breakfasts and their Academic Awards Nights.
- A memorial service honoured the life of Alice Hogan, a long time teacher and principal who passed away earlier this year.
- The Education Consul with the Chinese Consulate in Vancouver met with District staff to explore expansion of Chinese language and cultural programming in our schools. They are particularly interested in working with us in the development of a Confucius Classroom.
- 'SOUP'er Day continues this year with senior administrators sharing lunch and connecting with staff in our Alternative School Programs.
- The K to 8 Reconfiguration Implementation Committee has been working diligently to support this initiative. The committee is wrapping up its work and looks forward to sharing its decisions on the implementation with the Board of Trustees at its October 28 meeting.
- Board Chair Bill Stuebing met with Dr. David Swann, Leader of the Opposition to discuss changes to the *School Act*, funding challenges and early literacy initiatives. There was genuine interest by Dr. Swann in the priorities of our Board.

New Teachers to the District

Nineteen teachers have joined Red Deer Public this year, many are at the beginning of their teaching careers while others bring previous teaching experiences from other jurisdictions. We are pleased to welcome them to Red Deer Public Schools.

Thurber Students off to Costa Rica

The Science Department at Lindsay Thurber will offer students a Marine Biology experience in Costa Rica during spring break. Given the unique biodiversity of Costa Rica, the field trip will include tours of different ecosystems. The field trip will have an emphasis on biology and allow students to earn credits in the CTS Wildlife strand. Students will also be introduced to Spanish language and gain a better understanding of global citizenship.

Technology Preparation Scholarship

As a result of the leadership demonstrated in the development of the Technology Preparation Program, the Alberta School Boards Association awarded the first ever Premier's Award for School Board Innovation and Excellence to the Board of Trustees for the Red Deer Public School District in 1999.

Technology Preparation, has had a significant impact within our District and across the province in providing students with a goal oriented high school program that uses career development to support student success.

Included in the award was a cheque for \$10,000 provided by Xerox Canada. As a legacy to vision and leadership in developing the program, the Board of Trustees established the Alberta Technology Preparation Scholarship to support graduates of the program from across the province in pursuing further education. To date, nine students from across Alberta have received \$1000 scholarships in support of their continued studies beyond high school.

As is the case with many of our scholarships, the intention was that the scholarship would be supported using the income generated by the fund. Given limited returns, the awards have 'eaten into' the initial principal which will impact the sustainability of the scholarship. The Alberta Career Education Network, which administers the scholarship, is considering future directions that could include looking at means to increase the principal amount of the fund, eventual depletion of the scholarship over the remaining value of the fund, or some alternative in between.

The Board of Trustees will suggest that the Alberta Career Education Network undertake efforts that will support the ongoing operation of the scholarship.

School Act Review

The Minister of Education is undertaking a variety of consultations regarding potential changes to the current *School Act*. The Minister has requested school boards to provide input into the possible replacement of the Act and has prepared a discussion paper that addresses key theme to be considered in the new legislation. The Board of Trustees will have a special meeting to review the discussion guide and provide input to the Minister prior to the October 30 deadline.

North Cottage Historical Designation

Built in 1911, the North Cottage School has historical significance in its design as a four square architectural style and its association with the founding of North Red Deer. The facility serves as home for the North Cottage High School, an alternative school program within our District. Red Deer Public made application to designate North Cottage High School as a municipal Historic Resource. The City of Red Deer has identified requirements that are needed should we wish to proceed with the designation. The Board of Trustees agreed to meet those requirements and request that the city pass a bylaw allowing for such designation.

Correspondence Received:

- Minister of Education – outlining process for a tripartite agreement to improve First Nation student achievement, excellence and success.
- Alberta Education – Annual Report highlighting the 2008/09 school year
- Alberta Child and Youth Services – advising that Red Deer Public will receive three modular child care spaces to improve access to child care services. Two modulars will be located at Lindsay Thurber and one at Mountview.
- St Albert Protestant Schools – requesting a meeting of urban school jurisdictions with no ward electoral systems to discuss issues of common concern.
- Alberta School Boards Association – advising that the Alberta Teachers' Association agreed to join the Government of Alberta in jointly referring the teacher salary increase dispute to independent arbitration
- Canadian Children's Book Centre – is pleased to provide all of our grade one students with a copy of *Let's Go The Story of Getting from There to Here*. More than 540,000 copies of the book will be distributed to grade one students across Canada.