

Highlights from the October 22, 2008 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

CELEBRATIONS

- Lindsay Thurber inducted alumni Rob Norris and Jordan Milne to their Hall of Fame. Norris, from the class of 1988, is a Saskatchewan cabinet minister while Milne, a grad from 2000, has studied internationally, is a lawyer as well as a champion in the fight against cystic fibrosis, a condition with which he lives. Both shared reflections on their Thurber days and its influence on their future success.
- Implementation of the Nutrition Policy is proceeding very well with subcommittees working on strategies for hot lunch programs, vending machines and fundraising.
- Canadian Parents for French met with District officials to discuss French Immersion and French language instruction. Now in its 27th year in Red Deer Public, one out of ten students is enrolled in French Immersion.
- Tommy Banks was the speaker at the PSBAA Lois Hole Lecture and spoke passionately about the need for music education and its link to enhanced student achievement.

The Ultimate Question – Jacob Bildfell Recognized

Jacob Bildfell, a grade 11 student from Hunting Hills High School, was selected as one of ten students in the world to win the Molecular Frontiers Inquiry Prize for asking the ultimate question about anything related to molecules. A panel of eminent scientists from fourteen countries, including nine Nobel laureates, reviews the questions and selects winners who ask the most imaginative and insightful question. Jacob's question was: "If sub-atomic particles cannot continue to be sub-divided forever, what is the composition of the smallest particle since it can be made of nothing but itself and it must have mass?" In the future, Jacob is interested in becoming an aerospace engineer.

Elizabeth Fargey Honoured

Recognized for her meritorious service in the area of social studies education, Elizabeth Fargey, Vice Principal at Central Middle School, received an Honorary Life Membership from the Social Studies Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association. In addition to being an outstanding teacher, Elizabeth has provided

leadership as a workshop presenter, leader for the Telus2Learn website, co-chair of the Historica Fair, developer and author of curricular resources and serving as president of both the local and provincial councils. Elizabeth was appreciative of the Board's support for her involvement in all of these endeavours.

Traffic Study

The City of Red Deer has released a "Traffic Safety Study for Schools," aimed at reducing accidents and injuries around schools. The study was completed in cooperation with the District and focuses on:

- Annie L Gaetz
- Grandview
- Oriole Park
- Gateway
- Fairview
- GH Dawe
- Central
- Eastview

The report identified two areas to increase safety of students around schools: an overall lack of 'road sense' by students; and the low level of walking and cycling to school as compared to a relatively high level of students being driven to and from school.

The study has identified three strategic priorities:

- create safer walking and cycling environments for school-aged children
- incorporate traffic safety awareness into elementary and middle school curricula
- encourage alternative modes of travel to reduce traffic congestion around schools

The City is considering development of "Safe Routes to School" to address these priorities and, subject to budget approval, the initiative could involve a commitment of \$1 million over five years to primarily support infrastructure upgrades.

The study also identified site-specific strategies at school sites including:

- install 'kiss and ride' zones around schools to reduce congestion
- 'no stopping zones' across from schools including monitoring and enforcement
- expanded/reorganized parking lots
- fencing to direct pedestrians
- marked crosswalks at schools

The District is looking to pilot some of these recommendations and evaluate them prior to implementation at other sites. Trustees were interested in strategies that address bus and vehicular congestion around school sites. Information will be shared with schools to consider recommendations and implementation plans.

September 30 Enrolment

The all important September 30th enrollment numbers are in with 9902 students attending Red Deer Public, an increase of 117 students, or 1.2% from last year. The most significant growth is in kindergarten and elementary. A number of schools and programs have grown by more than 10%, particularly in the south end of Red Deer. We also experience increases to our high schools enrolment due to the large number of out-of-district students that are attracted to the wide range of programs and option courses available.

Harassment Policy Amended

In order to meet legislative requirements to address potential violence in the workplace under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the Board considered amendments to Policy 5.06.07 on Harassment. Suggested revisions will be brought back to the Board at its next meeting.

Red Deer – One Smart City!

A survey by the Canadian Council on Learning has named Red Deer as one of Canada's smart cities. The Composite Learning Index measures the many ways Canadians learn whether in school, at home, or within their community. The survey recognizes how learning throughout life is critical for success of individuals, communities and the country as a whole. With a composite score of 93, Red Deer achieved among the highest scores of any single community in Canada.

Public School Boards' Association of Alberta & Alberta School Boards Association

- As part of the PSBAA-U there was an excellent session on 'what does it mean to be an educated person?' which resulted in some stimulating discussion among public school trustee.
- Trustees are interested in the current review of special education taking place in the province.

Correspondence

- Alberta Culture and Community Spirit—requesting clarification on the decision to not designate North Cottage High School as a Provincial Historical Resource in light of information that suggests it does hold historical prominence.
- Canadian Children's Book Centre—once again the Centre has provided every grade one student a beautiful Canadian children's book. This year's selection is *Too Many Books!* written by author Gilles Tibo.