

*Highlights from the November 10, 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools*

## **CELEBRATIONS**

- *"We will remember."* Remembrance Day ceremonies were held across the District. Our schools do a tremendous job with moving and powerful ceremonies. Students are very aware of the significance of the day and are most respectful throughout the services.
- Red Deer College hosted its "Report to the Community" that profiled a continuum of learning and innovation. The college serves 7800 credit and 13,000 non-credit students across Central Alberta.
- The District's Recognition and Induction Night was a great evening to honour contributions of staff across Red Deer Public Schools.
- Student absenteeism related to the H1N1 influenza pandemic has declined significantly. Absences are currently at half of what they were two weeks ago. Schools have been able to maintain operations with minimal impact on teaching and learning.
- "Those Who Can, Teach" is a wonderful showcase of our talented art teachers currently showing at bilton contemporary art.
- Lindsay Thurber hosted, "Speak Out", a student engagement initiative from Alberta Education that gives opportunities for student input on what helps them learn best; what are barriers to learning; and how schools and individuals can address these to provide the best learning opportunities for students.
- Trustees appreciated a tour of Mattie McCullough, Aspen Heights and GH Dawe schools and were impressed with the progress on construction projects.

## **Social Studies Teachers Recognized**

The Social Studies Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association recognized the valued contributions of Bryan Burley and Sue Peters. Bryan received an Award of Excellence for distinguished leadership and service to the Council. Sue Peters received an Outstanding Service Award for significant contributions to social studies education within the region. Both are outstanding teachers with a passion for social studies.

## **New Initiative Program**

Twice a year teachers are invited to submit proposals for "New Initiative Projects" that provide funding of up to \$750 to cover substitutes, material and research costs for unique and innovative projects that support the District Education Plan. "It's amazing what motivated and innovative teachers can do with a small amount of money." The following projects received funding this year

- Alternative Art: Strategies for Counseling Intervention: Alternative School Programs
- Art Olympics: Annie L Gaetz

- Boys in Motion Club: Joseph Welsh
- Career Education – FNMI Students: Lindsay Thurber
- Connections Count: Central
- Empowerment Through Drumming: Central
- French Language Animation and Video: Central
- Friendship Club: Glendale
- Literacy Connections: Service Project: Central
- Making Connections—Using Children's Literature in the Math Classroom: Joseph Welsh
- Renaissance Fair Festival: Eastview
- Sensory Integration Strategies and Tools: Elementary Counseling
- Smartboard Technology in the Classroom: Eastview

Trustees heard about "Successful U," a program that received new initiatives support last year. The project saw high school students from Lindsay Thurber host a Positive Life Skills Conference for grade seven students at their feeder schools. This exciting student conference addressed a number of outcomes from the health curriculum including alcohol awareness; self-esteem and peer pressure; choices and decision making; as well as relationship and communications.

## **ASBA Policy Bulletins**

The Board reviewed proposed policies that will be reviewed at the Fall Meeting of the Alberta School Boards Association, including:

- Accountability Pillar: data should not be applied to individual schools
- Funding for SuperNet and Technology: sustainable funding to reflect emerging needs and evergreening
- Funding Model for Facilities: provide sustained funding to provide infrastructure in growing communities
- Infrastructure Preservation Funding: establishing a 2% funding to support facility replacement costs
- Class Size Initiative: methods for calculating CSI averages should include all teachers working directly with students
- Supervision of Extra-Curricular Activities: allowing all appropriately qualified staff employed by a jurisdiction to supervise students in these activities
- Educational Assistants: make training for EAs a priority
- Accommodations for students Writing Provincial Exams: accommodation for ESL students writing provincial exams

## **Alberta Initiative for School Improvement Annual Report**

The annual report on AISI projects was received and approved by the Board. Cycle Three projects in the District focused on Character Education and Enhancing Teaching and Learning Through Effective Assessment Practices. A variety of qualitative and quantitative data are required to assess project results. In particular, student achievement on a number of provincial exams has demonstrated strong improvement in the District's

results. The Substance Abuse Intervention Program has resulted in fewer expulsions, has served 53 students and saw more than 250 students received support from the addictions counselor. The results demonstrate that both projects met their intended goals. Red Deer Public received \$1.3 million last year to support AISI projects. Alberta Education has identified Learning Through Effective Assessment as an exemplary project and wishes to review the program to identify best practices.

## **School and Playground Speed Zone and Time Changes**

Proposed changes by Alberta Transportation would see playground and school speed zones consistent with national standards and across the province. The changes would differentiate between "zones" that would have speed limits and "areas" that would not have speed limits. Time for school zones/areas would be 7:30 am to 4:00 pm on school days while playground zones/areas would be from 7:30 am to 9:00 pm everyday. While a consistent approach would be valuable, the proposed changes raise logistical questions and concerns that require further clarification.

## **Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association**

- The PSBAA is hosting social media sites that support dialogue and discussions on current issues in public school education.

## **Correspondence Sent:**

- Minister of Education: Our Board's suggestions for changes to the *School Act* including advocating for a single system of governance at the local level.

## **Correspondence Received:**

- City of Red Deer: Historical Site Inventory: identifying Central Intermediate School (currently Gateway Christian- Central Campus) as a historic resource.
- City of Red Deer: Request to place a commemorative plaque at North Cottage High School recognizing the centennial of the Village of North Red Deer.
- Central Alberta Child and Family Services: confirming the allocation of a child care modular unit at Mountview Elementary School.
- City of Red Deer: Annexation Approved: city boundaries increase by 3,000 hectares, primarily north and east of the existing boundaries as well as the Heritage Ranch area.
- Venture Magazine: noting that Red Deer Public Schools is the 23rd largest not-for-profit operation in the province with revenues of \$90.4 million.
- Family of Remembrance for Military Members: creating an association for those who have lost family members serving in Afghanistan. They have provided schools across the country with a beautiful calendar commemorating these fallen heroes.