

Highlights from the November 25, 2009 meeting of the Board of Trustees for Red Deer Public Schools

CELEBRATIONS

- Staff from Business Services and Finance were acknowledged for their outstanding work in supporting the preparation of the audited financial statement, a major project that went very well.
- Our curriculum team along with teachers from across the District are involved in a book study examining different strategies to use in teaching boys and girls.
- Grade six students from Central Middle School were involved in the "Penny Parade" project with the Central Alberta United Way campaign. Students spent time working in community agencies, raising funds and doing a project to highlight the important work these organizations do within our community. Thanks to Elizabeth Fargey and all the staff involved in this outstanding connection with our community.
- The Minister of Education met with board chairs and superintendents to review and seek feedback on consultations about possible funding issues facing education.
- Bruce Buruma, Director of Community Relations, has been appointed to the Health Services Advisory Council that will seek community feedback on the successes and challenges facing healthcare.

The Life and Learning at Grandview Elementary *Students, Staff, Parents—Now That's Teamwork!*

Working together to provide a healthy, fun, happy learning environment for 309 students, the Grandview Elementary staff includes 17 teachers, 12 educational assistants, two secretaries and two caretakers. The school serves the communities of Downtown, Woodlea, Waskasoo, Parkvale, Rosedale and Grandview with 132 students bussed to school each day. The school's programming includes pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, grades one to five, two Foundations classes, as well as a Stepping Stones program. The school is particularly proud of:

- its character education initiative which is based on the Olympic values of: excellence, respect, peace, leadership, balance, fairness and fun
- its inclusion of special needs students
- a focus on manners and social skills with students
- supports for its diverse student population and developing understanding among each student
- the many service learning projects
- students being responsible as leaders and setting good examples and teaching others
- a strong emphasis on quality student assessment including the use of learning journals and a focus on academic vocabulary

- looking at strategies to better meet the learning needs of boys.
- its work on developing strategies to support success for FNMI students.

The school has shown excellent results on its accountability pillar report. In part this is a result of the analysis and review the provincial achievement test results in order to identify strengths, areas for improvement and areas of weakness and then implementing strategies to support student success.

Financial Statements Approved

The Board of Trustees approved the audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 2009. Key highlights included:

- Total assets of \$91.7 million
- Total revenues of \$93,430,385
- Total expenses of \$93,367,413
- Net surplus of \$62,793

The auditors indicated that the audit was unqualified in that there were no issues or concerns raised throughout the process.

Change of Board Meeting

With the ATA hosting an event on February 10 as part of their "Real Learning First" initiative, the local requested the Board consider changing its meeting to allow Trustees to attend. The session will feature Pasi Sahlberg from Finland and Dennis Shirley, author of the "Fourth Way." The Board agreed to reschedule its meeting to Tuesday, February 9 in order to participate in the event.

Annual Education Results Report

The District had many successes and accomplishments during the 2008/09 school year which are captured in the Annual Education Results Report. Of particular note were outstanding results on the Accountability Pillar Report Card including

- intermediate, high and very high levels of achievement in all measures
- improvements in safe and caring schools, drop out rates, PAT results and diploma exam acceptable
- issues were identified in the diploma exam participation rate and transition rate to post secondary

In addition to commentary on all performance results, the report includes highlights of the many initiatives that support student achievement across the District as well as success stories from each of our schools. The Board of Trustees was very pleased with the many accomplishments in 2008/09 and the work of District staff as well as our students and parents for making this possible.

Revised Budget for 2009/10

The Board approved the revised budget for 2009/10 that reflects actual enrolment figures and other adjustments including the in-year fiscal adjustment of \$900,265 announced by the provincial government. To address current and anticipated funding challenges, Senior Administration reviewed existing budgets and reduced expenditures of \$435,861 including:

- eliminations of local satisfaction surveys
- transfer of operations and maintenance funding
- reduced professional development
- elimination of the wellness program
- reduced staffing in Central Services
- reductions in staff events

The overall deficit for the current year is anticipated to be \$860,333. Potential risk factors that could still affect the budget include the yet to be determined salary adjustment for teachers and uncertainty over the upcoming provincial budget.

October Enrolment

9884 students were enrolled in the District compared to 9879 the year before. It was interesting to note that changes in enrolments at a number of schools compared to the year before vary considerably—both up and down.

Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Alberta School Boards Association

- The PSBAA working group will meet with the Deputy Minister to discuss revisions to School Act.
- the AUMA adopted a resolution supporting natural person powers for school boards that would increase school board's abilities to respond to local matters.
- ASBA Infrastructure Task Force has developed a survey to gather input on facility needs for school jurisdictions.

Correspondence Sent:

- Red Deer MLAs: outlining in-year fiscal adjustments for the District for this year
- ASBALE: indicating Red Deer Public will not renew its membership

Correspondence Received:

- Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools: copy of letter to the Minister of Education responding to our Board's letter to the Minister advocating for one system of public education.
- Alberta Teachers' Association: Government and ATA agree to arbitration to settle teacher salary issue
- Gloria Hulyk: indicating she is stepping down as director for the *Keyboards for Kids* program that provided instruments and instruction to less fortunate students. The Board appreciates Gloria's commitment over the years to the great program.