

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board*

*January 2008*

## **Phase II Multi-Year Planning**

The first round of public hearings into the Board's draft Phase II Multi-Year Capital Works and School Organization Plan for the St. John's area will be completed by February 7<sup>th</sup>.

A further refinement of the draft plan will be developed and notices of motion will be made at the March 5<sup>th</sup> public board meeting. A second round of public hearings will be held, where necessary, to invite public feedback. The final vote on the Plan for reorganizing St. John's area schools is scheduled for a public board meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **Facilities Update**

The new Mobile Central High School opened its doors to students and teachers following the Christmas break. While the school is not totally finished, everyone was eager to move in. Some final finishes are being made to a few rooms and later in the year, an official school opening ceremony will be held for the school community.

Design work is currently underway for extensions to Roncalli Elementary, Amalgamated Academy and Holy Family (Paradise). An early spring tender call is expected. Floor plans are being finalized for the new K-6 school in Torbay and for the new high school for Placentia.

## **ISSP Report**

The Minister of Education recently announced substantive and immediate changes to improve the delivery of special education programming in the K-12 education system. These changes are in response to a Government-commissioned report on the Individual Support Services Plan (ISSP) and the Pathways model.

The Department of Education announced key actions stemming from the report which include: simplifying the process for Pathways Two; eliminating the requirement for Child Youth Profiles; developing online alternate courses and

curriculum; reviewing the roles and responsibilities of guidance counsellors and educational psychologists; increasing training and professional development in the ISSP and Pathways models; and providing resources for alternate courses and assessments.

## **Teacher Recruitment**

The recruitment process for the 2008-09 school year is now underway. In anticipation of the high number of job competitions, the general pool competitions have been advertised for the Avalon East region for those teachers who do not hold a permanent contract with the district. Posters have also been distributed to all schools. Permanent teaching staff can apply for specific competitions for which they are interested in as positions become available.

## **Collective Bargaining – Support Staff**

Negotiations have begun with CUPE Locals 2033 and 1560. A number of meetings have already been held and they will continue to meet throughout the month of February.

Meetings with NAPE to commence collective bargaining for both support staff and student assistants will take place in the near future.

## **Strategic Planning Consultations**

As part of our ongoing efforts to develop strategic directions for the Board, we are organizing a fairly extensive strategic planning consultation process during the month of February.

A template for focus groups and meetings with education stakeholders has been developed. All school staff and school councils will be involved in meetings at the school level. Invitations have been sent to school council chairs and community groups to invite participation in the community roundtables. Following an analysis of the feedback, a draft plan will be developed for the Board's consideration and review.

### **Staffing and Recruitment**

In an effort to streamline the seniority and call-in lists for student assistants, we have implemented an online list for Eastern region. Feedback from administrators has resulted in modifications that now make it more efficient and up-to-date. We hope to develop similar lists for all regions in the near future.

Our Human Resources Division staff have spent a significant amount of time recently posting and filling internal and external positions. Applicants for the electrical apprentice and data entry clerk positions were very strong, demonstrating a strong interest in working with the district.

### **School Lockdown Procedures**

During recent meetings with administrators, the issue of school responses to acts of violence has been discussed. Recent incidents also initiated a discussion around the need for consistent lock down procedures for schools to follow as there were no protocols in place.

At our January principals' meetings, a draft lockdown procedures document was distributed to schools. These procedures will assist schools in responding to a number of potential situations when a lock down is more appropriate than an evacuation. We will work with our schools to finalize these procedures by the end of the school year.

### **Job Classification Review**

In Mid-January, representatives from each school district in the province received training from the provincial government's Classification and Review Division on the Hay Rating classification process. Two employees from our Human Resources Division will sit on the School Boards Rating Committee. This committee will meet regularly to rate management positions and submit recommendations to the Classification Division.

### **Occupational Health and Safety**

We received positive feedback from the Workplace Health Safety and Compensation Commission that our Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) minutes from all schools in the region shows that they have held at least one meeting since the beginning of the school year. To be compliant with OH& S standards, schools need to hold at least four safety meetings per year. We will be monitoring

schools in the coming months and are confident that we can meet this objective. Human Resources personnel are also developing a district safety handbook that will outline protocols for reporting safety needs.

### **Student Travel**

It is with great sadness that we learned of the terrible tragedy involving the Bathurst high school basketball team. We sent condolences and offered our support to the local high school and school district.

This tragedy also prompted our senior management team to take a closer look at our student travel policy. As a result of this incident, we immediately banned the use of 15-passenger vans for transporting students. In addition, we will be reviewing a number of other changes to the regulations that will further ensure the safety of our students while travelling to extra curricular events.

### **Character Education - Virtues Project**

As a district we encourage and support our schools in implementing, practicing and maintaining "Character Education" programs such as Lions Quest and Peaceful Schools International membership.

A new program, the Virtues Project, has been introduced to staff at Atlantic Place. Each week there is a new poster depicting a virtue, such as trustworthiness. The goal of the project is to provide the opportunity to reflect on how practicing this virtue may help us both professionally and/or personally and inspire excellence and service in the workplace. These strategies build foundations for safe and caring schools and communities.

### **Applause**

Congratulations are extended to the following teachers on their recent achievements:

- **Norman Littlejohn**, Technology Teacher, St. Francis School, on being named one of Canada's Technology Idols for his involvement with the school's robotics club.
- **James Lynch**, Principal, Mobile Central High School, and **Gerald Mercer**, Principal, Vanier Elementary on being chosen as two of Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2008.