

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

January/February 2007

Phase II Multiyear Planning

Phase II planning got underway in CBS, Paradise and Mount Pearl in late December. A considerable amount of information has been collected by the planning committee via meetings with administration, school councils and city planners regarding various scenarios and options to address enrolment trends in this area.

In January, I attended a public meeting at Holy Family Elementary in an attempt to address some of their concerns on overcrowding and enrolment trends at the school. I also met with the Topsail Elementary School Council to discuss similar concerns.

Staff have also been actively collecting information and feedback from school council chairs and principals in the St. John's planning region as we begin a dialogue around the needs and issues of this planning area. In February, I was pleased to meet with the Holy Heart of Mary School Council regarding questions about the future plans for the school.

St. Lawrence Academy

We have been notified that the western boundary of our property has been contaminated by a fuel leak on the adjacent Aylward property. A professional engineer has been commissioned to develop a site remediation action plan. The Department of Government Services and the Department of Environment and Conservation are fully involved with this process and we do not anticipate any interference with normal school operations.

In January, I attended a public meeting with parents of the school to brief them on air quality test results. Mr. Pat Royle, our facilities manager, and Dr. Thakor Patel, microbiologist, were also in attendance.

Capital Update

The design process is underway for the proposed four-classroom extension to Beachy Cove Elementary. A tender call is planned for mid March with construction to begin by early May 2007. A consultant has also been selected to provide design services for the new school in Torbay and construction has begun on the new school in Mobile.

A consultant is in place to assess Roncalli Elementary for an extension and internal renovation. The Department of Education is also in the process of commissioning a consultant to assess the redevelopment of Holy Heart of Mary High School.

St. Anne's Academy in Dunville has been approved for a window replacement and upgrade and the Department of Education has approved an additional \$300,000 to complete maintenance projects in schools throughout the district.

HR Planning

Recruitment is an ongoing activity for the HR Division. Over the past two months, the HR Division filled a total of 42 positions:

Job Category	# of postings
Primary/Elementary	18
Intermediate	7
High School	8
Administration	4
District Office	5

New positions for HR Division

We recently advertised for three new positions in the Human Resources division. These positions include a Senior Administrative Officer and two Human Resources Consultants. These new positions will enable us to take on new initiatives in employee wellness, employee orientation, workplace safety and recruitment.

The Senior Administrative Officer will also be very involved in collective bargaining preparation and labor relations.

New Resources for Programs Division

I am pleased to report that we have added one English Itinerant (7-12), and three Math Itinerants to the Programs Division Team. We are currently in the process of hiring two Managers of Students Support Services and a Senior Education Officer.

Support Staff Information

We continue to staff internal temporary and permanent postings within the bargaining units of each region. We have proceeded with more interviews, specifically in the Avalon East and Burin regions for maintenance and secretarial staff for casual call-in work. We will be reviewing temporary staffing needs in Avalon West while current staffing in Vista region is consistent.

Mathematics Support

In keeping with our focus on Performance Assessment in general and Performance Assessment in Mathematics in particular, two Intermediate Mathematics working committees from both the East/West Region and the Burin/Vista Region have collaborated to develop a practical guide for intermediate mathematics teachers. This guide gives teachers some clear and practical examples of good journaling techniques and ideas about portfolios that they can use with their students.

We are looking forward to receiving feedback from teachers and principals on this document and view it as a primary step in the enhancement of some high quality professional development for our Intermediate Mathematics teachers.

SDS Module Updates

E-Funds, a school fund accounting module within SDS, is being acquired for all schools to replace the various accounting systems currently in use. Usage will be phased in during winter and summer 2007 in order to allow for a controlled roll-out. A request for school participation in a pilot conversion was very favorable with over 20 schools expressing an

interest in migrating to the new accounting system.

E-Service, a time reporting module within SDS, is being acquired for consolidated time reporting for support staff and management. District office will be used as the initial pilot group before it is rolled out to all operating locations.

General Liability Insurance

A briefing note on general liability insurance was forwarded to the School Insurance Division of Treasury Board for consideration. We are recommending that government provide blanket coverage for all schools. This will ensure that all users who want to avail of our facilities for community and recreational purposes will be able to do so without incurring the additional cost of liability insurance. Staff will also check on the cost of general liability board coverage with our current insurance carrier.

Teacher Staffing Process Revised

The HR division has formally reviewed its staffing procedures and a new set of guidelines has been developed for this year's teacher staffing process. Recruitment will begin in early March for administrators, specialist teachers and guidance counselors. This is earlier than in previous years and reflects our desire to attract more new candidates to our district.

Work is also ongoing for teacher allocations for 2007-08. The HR Division has developed a spreadsheet to model various versions of a teacher allocation formula pending government's announcement for the next school year. We are also conducting meetings with principals on an ongoing basis to look at individual school issues that may have to be considered.

Directors Advisory Group

In an effort to improve communications with teachers, I initiated the development of a Director's Advisory Group. A notice was sent to teachers and those interested could volunteer to be part of the committee for one year.

The first group, which met on February 28th in St. John's, is comprised of 15 teachers from throughout the district. This group represents

large and small schools, urban and rural schools, and various grade levels and subject areas.

Our first meeting was very productive and informative and we will have a follow-up meeting in late April to further discuss issues and brainstorm on solutions.

Student Assistant Update

Three schools received additional Student Assistant time this month based on demonstrated needs. The HR division is continuing with the development of a web-based program to support our call-in system for student assistants.

Occupational Health and Safety

We are monitoring training needs and will be setting up a session as soon as the demand warrants. As part of the OH&S program, we are tracking meetings at each of our sites and have finalized all 2006 OH&S statements for our work sites, contractors, and payroll information.

We are also working on returning support staff to their positions through early and safe return to work (RTW) plans. Recently, an employee in one of our schools returned to work after two years off for an injury.

Skilled Trades Pilot

Meetings are ongoing with the curriculum development team regarding the Skills Trade Program in high school and the intermediate technology program. Visits have been made to the proposed fabrication areas for schools interested in piloting the Skills Trade Program in September 2007. Meetings were also held with the development team for the new intermediate science curriculum which will be implemented in grade seven for September 2007.

Leadership Development

We conducted our third Leadership Development session on February 22nd and 23rd. The topics covered included preparing for the interview, time management, Safe and Caring Schools and a wide range of program updates related to student support services. All sessions were facilitated by board staff and the interest from the participants remains at a high level.

Teacher PD

In addition to the regular curriculum-related teacher PD, we hosted a very successful session for intermediate and high school teachers on the use of the Wellness Room exercise equipment. This was a training opportunity for teachers (not necessarily PE teachers) in the use of the fitness equipment recently provided to intermediate and high schools from the Department of Education.

Active Schools Project

The Active Schools Project at Holy Cross Elementary, Hazelwood Elementary and Vanier Elementary has been deemed a huge success. Meetings have been held with the Department of Education and a representative from "Sport Stacking" to discuss the possibility of several area schools receiving a promotional assembly session on this new activity.

Student Support Services

Student Support Services personnel have been actively reviewing assessment waitlists from the Special Services Teams in all areas of the district and devising plans to address these waitlists of referrals for assessments.

Fine Arts and Culture Strategy

We are currently in the process of ordering music, art and drama equipment as part of Year two of our three-year plan of the Provincial Fine Arts & Culture Strategy. This should result in the purchase of over \$400,000 worth of Arts resources.

We are also excited about partnering with Shallaway to present a teacher workshop with a world-renowned choir that will be performing in St. John's. Consultations have been held in relation to bringing "Team Improve" to all regions of the district.

School Administrators Council

I recently met with the School Administrators Council (SAC) representing the Vista region.

We discussed many issues of importance to administrators, teachers, and students in the Vista region, including technology support, recruitment of student assistants, school scheduling, and the upcoming Provincial SAC

Conference being hosted at Terra Nova Park Lodge.

Discussions were very positive, and we are acting on many of the recommendations brought forward by the Council.

External Reviews – School Development

The school development process involves an external review once every three to four years. This review provides feedback on the validity of the internal review, the School Development Plan and the school's response to the identified needs of its stakeholders (i.e. students, parents, staff and community).

An External Review involves an intensive school visitation by a team external to the school. The team is comprised of district office personnel, teachers and administrators from other schools and often includes Department of Education representatives. During February, Frank Roberts Junior High School, Booth Memorial High School, Discovery Collegiate, and Heritage Collegiate conducted an external review.

Night School Registration

A 16-week night school program is being offered at Gonzaga High School. We have three classes (two Math 3204, one English 3201) being offered, which is in addition to the year-long night school session at O'Donel that is still being offered. An eight-week session (16 classes) is also being planned for the spring which will begin immediately after the Easter break.

School Visits

During the month of January, I had the pleasure of visiting Hoy Name of Mary Academy, Lake Academy, Topsail Elementary, St. Matthew's Elementary and Paradise Elementary (School for the Deaf). I also met with the Bell Island Municipal Council to discuss some of their education-related issues.

During the month of February, I was pleased to participate in the opening ceremonies of Holy Cross Elementary's Winter Carnival activities. I also visited Holy Spirit High School, Gonzaga High School, Beaconsfield High School and

Carbonear collegiate. On March 1st, while on a visit to the Burin Region, I visited Sacred Heart Academy and dropped in to view their school science fair projects.

Canada's Outstanding Principal

Congratulations to Mr. Scott Crocker, Principal, Holy Spirit High School on receiving one of Canada's Outstanding Principals' Awards by the Learning Partnership. This national award recognizes principals who make a measurable difference in the lives of students and their school community.

Robotics Team Heading to Norway

Congratulations to St. Francis School's Junior High Robotics Team on receiving an invitation to the FLL Open Championship in Norway in May. St. Francis was selected as one of two Canadian teams to receive an invitation to attend this event.

French Student of the Year Awards

On January 5th I had the pleasure of attending a special ceremony at Government House as two of our students received French Student of the Year Awards from Lieutenant Governor Ed Roberts.

Congratulations are extended to Laura Riggs, Carbonear Collegiate and Erin Aylward, a Holy Heart of Mary graduate, on receiving the awards for exceptional achievement from the Canadian Parents for French, Newfoundland and Labrador chapter.

Education Week

March 4th -11th is Education Week with the theme, *Live Healthy, Learn Well*. During this week students will be participating in special events to celebrate education. A special thanks is extended to the NLTA who've been organizing this week for 70 years.

This year, we developed a healthy living poster for schools which showed a cross-section of our students involved in healthy and active living activities during the past year. We also ran a small print campaign in local newspapers in support of our schools and their efforts in this area.

CUPE “Lunch is on Us” Day



On Friday, February 2nd, I had the pleasure of visiting Paradise Elementary students at St. Matthew’s Elementary and the School for the Deaf as CUPE Local 1560 members served up a hot lunch for displaced students.

Local President Derrick Barrett and his executive members did a great job and are to be congratulated on organizing such a wonderful event that showed genuine thoughtfulness and concern for the students and their parents.

Ocean Ranger Memorial Service

On February 15th, I was pleased to join with students and staff of Gonzaga High School to remember the 84 lives that were lost on the Ocean Ranger. A prayer service was held followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at the Ocean Ranger Memorial site.

Every year, Gonzaga students organize a prayer service to remember the tragic event as several of the deceased were Gonzaga alumni. 2007 marked the 25th anniversary of the disaster.

I was very impressed with the work that students put into organizing this important event. The students are to be commended for ensuring that we never forget about this tragedy.

Burin Employees Earn 98 per cent Compliance rate on Bussing Audit

The Burin Bus Depot’s fleet of district-owned busses earned an impressive 98 per cent compliance rate, the highest in the province, on the most recent audit conducted by Government Services Department, Motor Registration Division (MRD).

The audit reviewed the overall operations of the facility, with safety as the prevailing factor. Work orders, trip reports, driver and vehicle compliance, training and discipline are a few of the areas reviewed by the audit. Results from two spot inspections completed by MRD were also included.

Your chair and I visited the Burin Region on March 1st and congratulated the staff on achieving this safety milestone and for working to ensure the safety of our children as they travel to and from school.



Holy Trinity Students win National Diabetes Poster Competition

Congratulations to Holy Trinity Elementary students Redmond Hunt and Shalyn Codner, first and third place winners respectively, in the national diabetes educational challenge – Everyone Jump-Kids Changing Diabetes poster contest. Everyone Jump is a national school program designed to raise awareness about the increasing rate of diabetes among Canadian children.