

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

February 2008

Phase II Multi-Year Planning

The first round of public consultations into the Board's draft plan for St. John's area schools was completed in early February. The Board held three public sessions and one meeting was cancelled because there were no requests to present.

A second round of public hearings has been scheduled for April. Hearings for zones 10 and 11 will be held on April 7 at Brother Rice Junior High and hearings for zones 9, 12 and 13 will take place on April 8 at St. Paul's Junior High.

Laptop Theft

During the weekend of February 15-17, there was a break-in at the District Office in Atlantic Place. Four laptops were stolen, one of which contained private information on 28,000 students. Fifty-six schools in the Avalon East region and Persalvic Elementary in Victoria were affected.

The RNC were contacted immediately. Senior staff consulted with various agencies to address the potential security breach. A media release was issued to notify the public of the incident followed by a letter to parents. We also requested the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner conduct a review of our internal security measures and personal information handling practices.

In response to this incident, we have reviewed our physical and technological security measures and have taken immediate action to enhance our security policies and protocols with respect to the handling of private information and in consultation with our landlord, have strengthened office security.

Strategic Planning Consultations

During the month of February, 14 strategic planning consultation sessions were held throughout the District with employees, school administrators and school council chairs, and community stakeholders.

The feedback provided valuable information for senior management and board trustees on the perceived strengths and challenges for the District. While a number of themes emanated from the discussions, the challenge now will be to analyze the information and identify the critical issues the Board must focus on over the next planning cycle.

A positive outcome from the sessions was the widespread consensus from participants that the consultation exercise was very useful. Many participants commented that they appreciated the opportunity to be part of the planning process.



Facilities Update

The extension for Roncalli Elementary is scheduled to be tendered mid March, and the extensions to Amalgamated Academy and Holy Family Elementary (Paradise) are to be tendered by mid April. Floor plans have yet to be finalized for the new K-6 school for Torbay and the new 7-Level III school for Placentia.

The site selection process is underway for the two new elementary schools for Paradise. Replacement of the Infant Day Care at Booth Memorial High School, which was destroyed by fire last summer, is currently under construction.

Recruitment and Staffing

Recruitment is an ongoing activity for the HR Division. In addition to advertising 18 teaching positions for the current school year, the HR Division began the

recruitment process for the 2008-2009 school year by advertising 13 general pool competitions for the Eastern region of the District. All short-listing and interviews for the general pool competitions should be completed by March 20.

Job Category	# of Competitions
Primary/Elementary	7
Intermediate / Senior High	7
Guidance	1
District Office	3
2008 General Pool Positions	13

We continue to post both internally and externally for vacant and new positions. We are pleased to report that we have hired five new Computer Support Technicians (CST) to support our schools - four for Eastern Region and one for Western Region.

Collective Bargaining – Support Staff

Negotiations continue with CUPE Locals 2033 and 1560. Negotiations have commenced with NAPE for the Student Assistants and Support Staff collective agreements. Meetings are scheduled for mid and late March with both groups.

Director’s Advisory Group

Notices were recently sent out to our schools inviting interested classroom teachers to participate in the 2008 Director’s Advisory Group. The Director’s Advisory Group will be comprised of 15 classroom teachers from throughout the four regions. The first meeting will be held in May.

The first Advisory Group was very successful as it brought many teachers’ concerns to the senior management level. Many teachers reported that participating in the first advisory group was a rewarding professional development opportunity

Leadership Development

The HR Division facilitated four very successful Leadership Development sessions in February. Topics included Student Support Services, Professional Learning Communities, Role of the School Administrator, and Instructional Leadership. A third and final session for our Leadership Development program will be held in April.

Eastern Active Schools Program

During the month of February, hundreds of classroom teachers attended professional development sessions on the Eastern Active Schools Program. This training, which was a collaborative effort between Eastern School District, the provincial government and the City of St. John’s, will help teachers in the delivery of physical activity in the classroom setting.

This program includes 19 schools in the Eastern Region and four rural schools: Matthew Elementary, Random Island Academy, Sacred Heart Academy and St. Augustine’s Elementary.

Supporting Mathematics

We have been successful in obtaining several grants from the Department of Education for various initiatives to assist in the Mathematics Strategy. As an example of what our schools are doing to promote Mathematics, Clarendville Middle School hosted its first Math Fair and it was a great success.

We are also awaiting the report on the Provincial Review of the Mathematics curriculum which will have huge implications on “where we go” from a district level with respect to professional development and assessment in Mathematics.

Eastern Health Launches Youth Magazine

Eastern Health launched a new *Our Health Youth* magazine last month aimed at junior high and high school students. We are pleased to partner with Eastern Health to help distribute the magazine to all junior and high schools in our district.

We view this project as an extension of our already excellent relationship with Eastern Health in promoting Active and Healthy Living in our schools.

Support for Culture Projects

Our District was also successful in obtaining funding from the Department of Education under LEGACY (Learning, Education and Growing Arts & Culture for Youth) component of the Cultural Connections: A Provincial Arts & Culture Strategy. This funding will provide grants to support special student and teacher projects identified as a priority in the areas of the arts and/or culture heritage.

Holy Family Students Publish New Book

It is with great pride that we acknowledge the efforts of the Grade Two students at Holy Family Elementary (Paradise) who have published their own book - The Winter Alphabet. This was a class project the students undertook while they were in Grade One.

We would like to acknowledge Grade One teacher Ms. Florence Power, and Learning Resource Teacher, Ms. Tina Costello, for their guidance, support and encouragement on this special project and for helping to promote a love of reading in their students.

Applause

- Congratulations to Crescent Collegiate student, April Drake, who competed in a field of 10,000 applicants to be honoured as a Classic Achiever by Wendy's Restaurants of Canada. For her efforts, April was presented a cheque for \$5,000. The school received a \$1,000 grant for their sports field.
- Congratulations to Jane Qi, a grade five student at Hazelwood Elementary, on being chosen the provincial winner of the Natural Resources 2007 National Forest Week Poster and Essay contest.

A Little Good News

- For the second year in a row, St. Peter's Elementary school (Mount Pearl) participated in Realtime Cancer's 3rd annual Shave for the Brave. About 40 students (as well as parents and staff) had their heads shaved in an effort to raise money for young adults battling cancer. Students raised almost \$4,100.
- Holy Name of Mary Academy's entire student body, teaching staff and support staff participated in International Stand Up to Bullying Day on Friday, February 15. Each participant gave a toonie for a t-shirt, wrote a personalized anti-bullying message and stood together as one voice against bullying.



- On Friday, February 8 students and staff of St. Bernard's Primary participated in a Math Day which focused on mental math activities in problem solving. All students were actively engaged in hands-on activities with their teachers. Parents and substitute teachers also offered extra help. The day was very productive and many students were turned on to math games. Smiles and cooperation were the side effects.
- Tricentia Academy in Arnold's Cove celebrated Family Literacy Day on January 30th. Students from K-6 gathered in the gym with their parents, grandparents and guardians to read their favourite books. Blankets, pillows and comfy pajamas made the reading event that much more enjoyable. Afterwards, students were treated to a tasty, healthy treat!

EDUCATION WEEK 2008 March 2-8

Learn...Respect...Grow
J'apprends... je respecte... je m'épanouis

Education Week 2008

An opportunity to recognize teachers, parents and the school community for their efforts in helping our children succeed. Thank You.