

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

February 2009

Facilities Update

We were very pleased with the Provincial Government's recent announcement of approximately \$70 million for major school projects in our District. This funding is slated for the following projects:

- Planning for new schools to replace Davis Elementary, Carbonear and St. Teresa's Elementary, St. John's.
- Extension of cafeteria and new classrooms: Beachy Cove Elementary;
- New classrooms: Roncalli Elementary (St. John's);
- Extension for the addition of new classrooms: St. Bernard's Primary;
- Extension for the addition of new classrooms and a challenging needs suite: St. Edwards School (Kelligrews);
- Extension to replace portable classrooms and replacement of gymnasium: Virginia Park Elementary;
- Extension for additional classrooms: St. Peter's Junior High and Upper Gullies Elementary.

On February 26, we were also pleased to welcome back teachers and students to St. George's Elementary. By all accounts, everyone is happy with the school renovation project.

Student Support Services Pilot Project

The Government document, *Focusing on Students – The ISSP and Pathways Commission Report*, released in December 2007, called for a review of the current model of Special Education. Stemming from this review, the Department of Education - Student Support Services Division, announced a three-year pilot project beginning September 2009.

The Eastern School District will have 31 schools participating in the project representing all four regions and including four inclusion pilot schools. The pilot is a "needs-based" model based upon a

submission of a school profile outlining the needs of all students who will need supports.

This new profiling process will provide schools an opportunity to present the level of staffing required to support the student with "pervasive" needs (previously termed categorical students) and will no longer require submission of individual applications. Both pilot and non pilot schools will continue to receive a non categorical special education allocation based on the current provincial formula.

Each school profile will be presented to the Department of Education-Student Support Services Division by senior district level staff in a collaborative effort to staff schools to meet the identified needs.

Teacher Research as Professional Development

In partnership with the Department of Education, the District is implementing a professional development program called "Teachers as Researchers into Literacy and Numeracy." The focus of this program is to provide teachers with an opportunity to learn collaboratively in a professional learning community.

In this program, teachers design and implement their own classroom-based research focusing on improving student learning in Literacy or Numeracy. The program involves teachers in online learning through the Virtual Teacher Centre and face-to-face workshops.

Participating in the program this year are 14 teachers and two program specialists from the Eastern School District, as well as two teachers and one program specialist from the Western School District. Teachers will prepare a report and share their learning once they complete their inquiries. This teacher research program is facilitated by Susan Ryan, Program Specialist for Mathematics K-6 and Debbie Toope, Program Specialist for Literacy K-6.

Teacher Performance Appraisal

As part of ongoing revisions to our Teacher Appraisal Program, we have completed work on Module Two and Three. Module Three, Teachers Under Professional Improvement, was favorably received by the system and is posted to the district website. Module Two, Evaluation of Tenured Teachers, was presented to principals at recent regional meetings. The feedback has been collated and this Module will be posted by the end of March.

Addressing the Gap: Young Women in Skilled Trades

Eastern School District acknowledges there is a major discrepancy in the number of young females that are enrolled in courses offered under the Skilled Trades Program. Provincial statistics from the 2007-08 school year show that only 24 per cent of young women were enrolled in the program as compared to 76 per cent of young males.

To address this situation, we have initiated two projects that will focus attention on this issue. One project will involve focus groups of young women from level 1 to level 3 who are currently enrolled in skilled trades courses. Their feedback will be used to help make the current offering more appealing to our young women.

A second initiative currently in the planning stage is an open house event for female students in Grade 9 and Level one. Students will be invited to attend an all day workshop at their designated senior high school so they can get some hands-on experience in a Skilled Trades Lab.

NAPE Update

Hearings continued during the month of February at the Labour Relations Board to deal with the applications from all school boards in the province seeking to have a number of student assistants declared essential workers in the event of a labour disruption. These meetings will continue in April.

Technology Professional Development

As part of its commitment to integrating technology into the learning of students, Eastern School District is pleased to have offered a number of professional development opportunities in the area of technology integration. Specifically, teachers have been offered the opportunity to learn about Smartboard technology as well as a number of free online web

tools. These tools are applicable across different curriculum areas and in all grades from K-12. The response to these opportunities has been extremely positive with most sessions being filled to capacity.

50 New Lead Teachers Trained in Inclusionary Principles and Practices

Fifty new lead teachers from the four regions of our District have successfully completed a two-day train-the-trainer professional development program for Inclusive Education. The *Achievement for All* program is founded upon the principle that *inclusion benefits all students not only students who avail of special education*.

The training targets for *Achievement for All* is to teach one quarter of the District each year so that by year four, every school in each of our regions will have a Lead Teacher trained. We are on target with this goal as approximately 56 per cent of our schools (65) have a lead teacher trained to support Inclusion and Differentiated Instruction.

Careers in Oil & Gas Week 2009

Energy Day Newfoundland and Labrador-Exploring Careers in Oil and Gas was held on February 26, 2009 at the Johnson Geo Center. This year approximately 400 students from seven local high schools were invited to participate. The career fair, which was funded by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, provided an opportunity for students to meet and talk with representatives from 16 local, national, and international companies which are major stakeholders in the development of the oil and gas industry in this province.

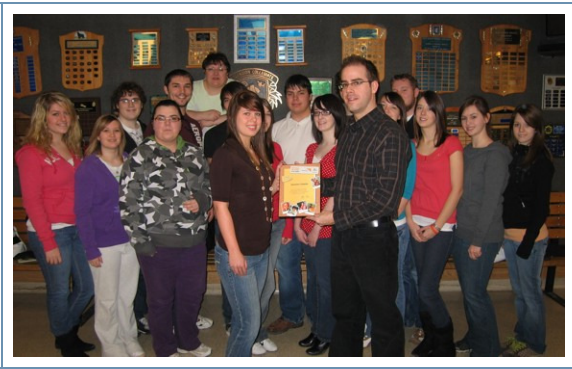
Recognition of Excellence Program Launched

During Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week, February 8-14, we launched our first annual *Recognition of Excellence Program*. This program is designed to celebrate and recognize the accomplishments and achievements of Eastern School District employees at all levels of the organization.

Nominations for these awards may be made by teachers, colleagues, parents and even students. Nomination forms are available on the District website and applications can be submitted in writing or online. The nomination deadline is April 15, 2009.

Applause

- The Eastern School District has been recognized by the Canadian Forces Liaison Council for supporting Reserve Force training and the Canadian Forces. The nomination was made by Brigadier-General Tony Stack, also Principal of St. Peter's Junior High. The award was presented by Lieutenant Governor John Crosbie at Government House on March 4.
- Congratulations to Ascension Collegiate, Bay Roberts, on being honoured by World Vision in recognition of students' fundraising efforts through the 30 Hour Famine. They raised \$9,000 and are the top school in Atlantic Canada.



- Congratulations to all schools in Burin Region. For the first time, all schools participated in International Stand Up to Bullying Day on Friday, February 27. Students worldwide participate in this annual event to raise awareness about the negative impacts of bullying. Students wear pink and sign pledge forms to take a personal stand against bullying.

