

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

February 2010 Board Meeting

ESD Schools Raise over \$100,000 for Haiti

Upon hearing the news of the terrible tragedy in Haiti, many students in Eastern School District were affected deeply by images of what was going on in another part of the world. The vast majority of our schools took on projects to raise money and contribute to the Haiti Relief Fund to provide things like fresh drinking water, bandages, and other necessities to help the people of Haiti through this very difficult time.

We've heard many wonderful stories of students leading the charge to raise money. Schools large and small throughout all areas of the District have rallied together and raised in excess of \$100,000 for Haiti. Hat days, toonie drives, bake sales and recycling blitzes were just a few of the many activities schools planned in aid of Haiti.

Congratulations to all students, staff and school communities for your generosity.

Facilities Update

New school construction in Torbay and Paradise is progressing on schedule. The new high school in Placentia is scheduled to be completed by early July with the exception of the gymnasium. The gym is scheduled to be substantially complete by September 3, 2010. The late completion for the gym is related to the change order from composite type gym flooring to wood.

The school extension at St. Bernard's Elementary is nearing completion with occupancy scheduled for February. All other school extension projects are on schedule.

The enhanced inspection reporting process for schools in the District is continuing. All schools are being surveyed with respect to facilities and programming related needs.

Paradise Catchment Area Changes

In the 2010-2011 school year, there will be three K-6 schools in Paradise: Holy Family Elementary, Paradise School 1 and Paradise School 2. These new schools

require a reorganization of catchment areas to balance the student population.

Information concerning the proposed changes were communicated to parents via a parent brochure, newspaper ad and website notice, in addition to consultations with the local school councils. The District invited feedback from the school communities affected, including the Kenmount Terrace area of the Larkhall Academy catchment area, who are proposed to attend Paradise School 2. The date for receiving feedback from Kenmount Terrace/Larkhall Academy parents has been extended to February 17, 2010.

Turning Points Career Education Pilot

During the 2009-2010 school year, a character education program entitled Turning Points, offered through The Learning Partnership, will be piloted in grade 7 in ten schools in the western region.

Turning Points is a literacy-based program which complements the language arts curriculum. The program is well established in Ontario where students in grades 6-12, through self reflection and discussion with teachers and peers, are encouraged to read, write and think about their core values.

The Eastern School District is pleased to be the first district in Newfoundland and Labrador to offer this program.

ESD Partners with Engineers Without Borders

From January 6-9, 2010 Engineers without Borders (EWB) Canada held its annual conference in St. John's. In partnership with the Eastern School District, organizers of the conference developed a massive outreach event to take their message of global awareness to the students of our District. This aligned extremely well with the social justice focus in our Strategic Plan.

On January 8, 2010 over 300 members of EWB visited nine of our metro high schools where they met with approximately 4000 students to discuss the concept of

international development and the importance of global awareness and responsibility.

On the same day, EWB organized a web cast which saw entire student bodies throughout the district and around the world viewing online speakers who challenged students as to what role they thought Canada should be playing in the world today. The webcast ended with an opportunity for our students to text questions to the speaker. As an indication of the excitement generated, the organizers received 260 questions in a matter of five minutes.

Teacher Mentor Training

Following the direction of our new policy on Teacher Induction, the District formed a Teacher Induction Committee to plan sessions for new teachers and to initiate training for teacher mentors.

The committee is comprised of successful teachers, administrators with varied years of experience representing all areas of the district, along with District personnel. The committee has been involved in the planning and delivery of professional development sessions for new teachers and with mentor training.

Teacher mentors are teachers that take on the responsibility to nurture new teachers. The mentor program provides in-school support both personally and professionally for new teachers. Two sessions of mentor training were recently offered to 45 teacher mentors.

Educational Leave Requests Increase

The Human Resources Division has reviewed the requests for educational leave and our submission has been prepared for the selection committee at the Department of Education. A total of 115 educational staff applied for paid educational leave for the 2010-2011 school year. The large number of applications is an indication of the commitment to professional growth that has become the culture of the Eastern School District.

Leadership Program

On January 22, the HR Division facilitated the first meeting of the Leadership Program for potential administrators. A total of 56 candidates from all regions of our District are participating in the program. The next meeting will be held in March.

Speaking Engagement

I was pleased to be a guest speaker at the Kiwanis Club of Carbonear on January 23 where I provided a general overview of the District. I also participated in a cake-cutting ceremony with members of the Kiwanis Club of Carbonear to recognize the 95th anniversary of Kiwanis International in 'Serving the Children of the World'



Applause

- Congratulations to **Barry Jenkins**, Principal, Villanova Junior High who was recently chosen as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals by the Learning Partnership.
- Congratulations are extended to **Anthony Stack**, Principal, St. Peter's Junior High, Mount Pearl on his recent appointment with the Land Force Atlantic Area (LFAA). The LFAA held its change of command ceremony on January 21, 2010, transferring command of the Army in Atlantic Canada to Brigadier-General Anthony Stack.
- Congratulations to **Kyle Dingle**, a grade 6 student at Hazelwood Elementary, who won a national essay contest sponsored by Genworth Financial. Kyle's efforts will see the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate receive \$60,000 for a Newfoundland family's new home.
- Congratulations to **Cowan Heights Elementary** on winning first place in the national Math Performance Festival for their song, "It's A Math World", performed by the elementary show choir.