

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

April 2009

Changes to Senior Management Team

As the interim CEO/Director of Education, I am pleased to present this month's Director's Report. I would also like to acknowledge Ms. Janet Vivian-Walsh in her new role as acting Assistant Director of Education (Programs).

Passing of Trustee, Melvin Lambe

Our condolences are extended to the family of trustee, Melvin Lambe, on his recent passing. Melvin worked tirelessly on behalf of the students in zone two, and throughout the District. His untimely death is a great loss to the Board, to the community of Marystown, and indeed to his family. Melvin's smile and quick wit will be greatly missed at the Board table.

Facilities Update

Following the provincial government's March 2009 announcement of funding for major school projects, there is extensive planning underway to get these projects started during this year's construction season.

With respect to new school construction, tenders have been awarded for Paradise 1 and Torbay schools with a target occupancy of September 2010 for both schools. The tender for Paradise 2 school closed on May 1 and the tender for the new high school in Placentia closes on May 6, 2009. Consultants have also been appointed by the provincial government for a number of building envelope assessments, window replacements and roofing projects throughout the District.

Fire closes Brother Rice Junior High

Immediately following the Easter break, on Tuesday, April 21, a fire that appears to have been deliberately set closed Brother Rice Junior High school for approximately one month. A section on the main floor was badly damaged by the fire and the entire school received extensive smoke damage.

In order to accommodate Brother Rice students while repairs and cleaning are carried, a shift system has been in place with Macdonald Drive Junior High since Tuesday, April 28. Macdonald Drive Junior High students start at 8:00 a.m. and are dismissed at 1:00 p.m. Brother Rice students move in at 1:30 p.m. and are dismissed at 5:45 p.m.

The District appreciates the tremendous support and cooperation it has received from the teachers, students, school councils and parents of both schools during this emergency situation. We expect to reopen Brother Rice towards the end of May.

Changes to School Board Elections

The Department of Education has announced a number of changes to the provincial school board elections. In an effort to improve voter turnout, school board elections will be held separately from municipal elections. School board elections will be held on the first Tuesday of November every four years beginning on November 3, 2009. School board polling stations will be placed in all schools and in community buildings. Government also announced increased funding to support a promotional campaign to raise public awareness and encourage women to seek board positions.

Teacher Allocation

Schools throughout the District have received their staffing allocation for the 2009-10 school year. District staff are working to reassign teachers before the May 7th deadline. There will be a number of teachers deemed redundant in their current positions and they will be reassigned to other schools in keeping with the NLTA agreement. There will be no teacher layoffs.

Collective Bargaining: NAPE

A new student assistant collective agreement has been negotiated. Of note, changes to the agreement include:

- Job postings must include if a position involves a bus or taxi run
- Fourteen days required for lay-off notice
- Student assistants that work 4.5 hrs or more will receive a 20 minute break.
- Orientation will be provided to student assistants
- When needed there shall be two student assistants or adults available for bathroom duties

In addition, hearings continued during the months of March and April at the Labour Relations Board, dealing with the applications from all school boards in the province seeking to have a number of student assistants declared essential in the event of a labour strike. Meetings will continue in June.

District Partners with Telegram to Spread Good News stories

We are pleased to report that we have a new partnership with The Telegram to promote good news in the District. Every Tuesday, since March 31, the Telegram has devoted one full page towards a pilot project called District Dispatch. Each District Dispatch page will feature approximately five schools with articles and photos submitted by the schools. This is great exposure for our schools and helps us promote education in a positive, proactive manner. We appreciate The Telegram's support of our schools and hope that District Dispatch will continue well into the future.

Career Development PD Day

Career Development 2201 is a provincial high school course developed to assist students with understanding the value and transferability of their learning, knowledge and skills in relation to personal and career development. Currently, it is the only mandatory course in the High School Curriculum. The course consists of two parts – an in-class course component and a 30 hour component of community service. Students are required to complete both parts to obtain credit for the course.

Given that this course has only been offered for a few years, there is a wide range of teacher preparedness. In an effort to support new teachers and to provide an opportunity for teachers of the course to collaborate on curriculum initiatives, the Programs Division hosted a professional development day for the District to share best practices. The day was very successful with 25 teachers participating and resulted in multiple resources being posted to the Career Development Conference on First Class.

French for the Future

The provincial French for the Future Forum was held in St John's on April 24, 2009. This Forum was organized through the Department of Education and 96 high school students representing six schools within our district were fortunate to attend.

French for the Future is a not-for-profit organization that encourages and promotes linguistic duality in Canada. Organized in many cities across Canada, the local annual forums are one-day events held every April. During a day spent entirely in French, high school students have a chance to participate in workshops and activities focused on the benefits of bilingualism. Students attending this year, also had the opportunity to attend a play that was presented at the French First Language School in St. John's. This was an exceptional learning opportunity and cultural experience for all.

National Day of Mourning

As part of our District's commitment to raising awareness about occupational health and safety issues, all schools were sent information and promotional materials to help them recognize national Day of Mourning for injured workers.

We also laid a wreath on behalf of the District at the wreath-laying ceremony at Confederation Building.

Applause

- Congratulations to **Mr. Ellis Coles**, physical education teacher, Paradise Elementary, on being named one of three national recipients of Canada's Physical Education Teaching Excellence Award (PETE). This is a prestigious award acknowledging Ellis' outstanding contribution to physical education. Ellis is described as an extraordinary physical education teacher who continually demonstrates a passion for healthy living, sportspersonship and inclusive teaching.
- The Canadian Parents for French (CPF) recently announced their annual teacher and student awards. Congratulations to CPF French Teacher of the Year, **Ms. Susan Button**. Susan is currently teaching Core French at Roncalli Central High in Avondale. **Beth Peddle** received the award for French Student of the year. Beth is a Level III student at Bishops College in St. John's.

(CPF) Concours d'art oratoire

Nineteen students from the Eastern School District placed in the top three in the annual Concours d'art oratoire (French public speaking contest) hosted on Saturday, April 25, by the Newfoundland and Labrador branch of Canadian Parents for French. There were several categories of competition including French Immersion and Core French at various levels.

The following first place winners received a bursary valued at \$700 to attend a one week summer camp at the Francoforum in Saint-Pierre as well as a plaque and a cash prize of \$150: Conor Flanagan (Gonzaga High School), Leanna Lewis (Roncalli Central High School), Hayam Hamodat (MacDonald Drive Junior High School), Beth Peddle (Bishops College), Eva Davenport (Holy Heart High School) and Christine Fontaine (Prince of Wales Collegiate).

Level III students, Beth Peddle and Christine Fontaine will also represent the province at the National Concours d'art oratoire to be held in Ottawa on May 30, 2009. Bonne chance à nos participants!

Olympic Mascots Visit Schools

The 2010 Olympic Mascots along with Olympian, Mark Nichols, paid a visit to Cape St. Francis Elementary School on April 30. Students were shown an inspirational video and given a presentation by Mark on what it takes to be an Olympian and the importance of the 2010 Winter Olympics taking place next year in British Columbia. Then Mark introduced Miga, Quatchi and Sumi, the Olympic mascots. The mascots also made visits to three other schools during their tour: Holy Cross Elementary, St. George's Elementary and Newtown Elementary. On May 1, Dr. Darin King, the newly appointed Minister of Education, participated in the kick-off event at Holy Cross Elementary.

