

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board*

*May 2006*

## **MULTI-YEAR PLANNING**

In early April, prior to our board meeting of April 10<sup>th</sup>, a number of public meetings were held with school communities in the Burin and Vista regions, as well as in the Northeast Avalon, to receive feedback on our draft multi-year plan.

Following our public meeting, your chair and I did a number of media interviews regarding our decisions on school closures and reconfigurations.

We also continued our commitment of meeting directly with those schools impacted by our draft multi-year plan. Since our last board meeting, your chair and I met with the school councils of IJ Samson and Booth Memorial in an effort to provide them with an opportunity to share their concerns and issues. These kinds of meetings are very productive and set a positive tone for discussions and decision-making.

## **RECRUITMENT – AD (PERSONNEL)**

With the impending resignation of our current Assistant Director of Personnel, Richard Harvey, we began the recruitment process for his replacement earlier this month.

The Selection Committee met recently and conducted interviews with a number of potential candidates. A recommendation has been prepared for the Board's approval

and we anticipate announcing the successful candidate in the very near future.

## **STAFFING**

We continue to work with our schools on the allocation and deployment of teaching units. While the retention of all current teaching units is good news, the expectations by government have created some major challenges for our district.

Specifically, we have to move many units around to address two major areas of concern in our district: class sizes in primary grades, and school population growth, primarily in the Eastern region of our district.

Of the 151 units that have been retained in the system provincially, our district's share is 64. I have raised a number of concerns with the Minister of Education and departmental staff. I feel our district faces challenges greater than other areas of the province – yet we receive proportionately fewer resources than the other districts to address these challenges.

We will continue to do our best in working with schools to apply the current allocation of resources.

### **TEACHER FOCUS GROUPS**

I am extremely pleased that we were able to conduct focus groups with teachers this past winter. It was a big undertaking but a very worthwhile exercise.

Right after the Easter break, Ed Hancock (NLTA) and I sent a joint thank you letter to all the teachers who participated in the meetings. I recognize the commitment teachers made to accommodate our meeting schedule and rearranged their work in order to attend. We will now prepare an internal communication plan that will help us improve and build on some of the communication vehicles we already have in place as well as explore new avenues to enhance our relationships with teachers.

### **VOLUNTEER WEEK**

In recognition of the tremendous support our schools, and the district receives from our network of volunteers, as well as for those employees who volunteer, a thank-you campaign was launched during Volunteer Week - April 23-29.

A small recognition ad was placed in the local papers throughout the district, a web site message was posted on the front page of the district web site, a letter was emailed to all administrators to circulate to staff, and a personal note of thanks was sent to every trustee. Without our volunteer support, we simply could not operate.

### **PILOT COURSE**

Twelve schools in our district will be involved in the pilot implementation of the new Skilled Trades and Technology Program being developed by the Department of Education for September 2006.

### **PD DAY FOR DISTRICT STAFF**

A very successful professional development day was held on Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup> for all district and regional office staff. This was the first time that our office support personnel met as a group since the reorganization of the district almost two years ago.

The theme of the day was "Helping Every Student Achieve." Our presenters tied this theme to their presentations which covered topics such as communications, customer service, dealing with change, team building, and effective listening. The response from staff was overwhelmingly positive and we plan to use the feedback from this event in our strategic planning and internal communications strategy.



### **SCHOOL VISITS**

Congratulations to the students and staff of Mt. Pearl Senior High on their annual Enterprise Showcase. I had the opportunity to attend this event earlier this month to view the many student displays. We certainly have a lot of talent and budding entrepreneurs in our midst.

I also had the pleasure of attending the opening assembly for a week-long celebration of reading at Cowan Heights Elementary. The “Cool is Reading cuz Reading is Cool” theme promotes reading in various ways, such as an “Exercise your Mind” day whereby students can wear gym clothes to school. The Town Crier and a number of special guests also helped to launch the cool reading theme. A great effort by the school to promote reading in our young children!

I was also pleased to attend the regional Enterprise Education Showcase at Prince of Wales Collegiate on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Education Minister Joan Burke and trustees Chris Hammond and Derek Winsor were also in attendance. The showcase is the result of the work completed in Enterprise Education 3205 as students display their small business ideas and business plans.

Special thanks to Rotary Club and the Y-Enterprise Centre without whose support this annual event would not be possible.



### TEACHER RECOGNITION

Congratulations to the following teachers on their recent awards and recognition:

- ❖ **Ms. Mary Dinn** was awarded the *Barnes Award* by the NLTA for her commitment to professional development;
- ❖ **Mr. Fred Wood** was awarded the *Bancroft Award* by the NLTA for his dedication and commitment to the teaching profession.
- ❖ **Mr. Philip Wood** was awarded the *Barnes Special Recognition Award* by the NLTA for his commitment to the community and youth.
- ❖ **Ms. Donna Howse-Winsor** was awarded the *Arts Educator Award* by the National Arts Centre for her leadership in arts education.
- ❖ **Ms. Cathy Best, Ms. Mary Dinn, Ms. Donna Howse-Winsor and Ms. Jill Moores** were awarded *Arts Educator 2006* awards by the Department of Education for their leadership in teaching and learning in and through the arts.

### DISTRICT AND REGIONAL EVENTS

Spring is a busy time in our schools. While there are too many school events to mention, I'd like to congratulate students, teachers and community volunteers who make the following annual events a success:

- ❖ Burin Peninsula Regional Drama Festival
- ❖ Avalon West Regional Senior High Drama Festival
- ❖ Rotary Music Festival
- ❖ Intermediate Public Speaking Competition
- ❖ Kiwanis Music Festival
- ❖ French Public Speaking