

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

September 2008

Update on Frank Roberts Junior High and St. George's Elementary

Two schools in the District have students and teachers temporarily deployed to other facilities while work is carried out to address mould and air quality issues.

Students and staff at St. George's Elementary will be temporarily relocated to three other locations while renovations are carried out. It was a challenge to find space in CBS for all students. Grades K-2 will attend school at All Saints Parish Hall, grade 3 will attend Topsail Elementary and grades 4-6 will attend St. Matthew's in St. John's. We realize this is not desirable but feel it is the best solution in a bad situation. This school is expected to be closed for at least three months.

Students at Frank Roberts Junior High will share a split shift with Queen Elizabeth students beginning on Friday, September 19. We anticipate that students will be back at Frank Roberts in 8-10 weeks.

All Tech Environment Services has been contracted to manage both remediation projects.

NISEP Update

On September 16, Education Minister Joan Burke announced that, following a review of the International Student Education program, the Eastern and Western school boards were to phase out recruitment efforts of international students and cancel the Home Stay program at the end of this school year.

The Department reported in its news release of September 16, 2008: "While we welcome international students to our province and all that our education system has to offer, the care and responsibility of these students, who are minors and living far from their parents and guardians, takes the role of the department and the school districts well beyond the delivery of education, as outlined in our mission and goals," said Minister Burke.

The Jane Helleur Home Stay review, which the Department referred to in its release, was very complimentary of NISEP's work regarding the Home Stay program and its implementation of recommendations from the 2007 file review. The District currently has 43 international students enrolled in the NISEP program.

Summer Maintenance

District maintenance staff were busy throughout July and August. Seventy-five major projects were carried out in schools throughout the District. Unfortunately, the projects at Frank Roberts Junior High and St. George's Elementary didn't get underway until late August and when these projects uncovered other problems, school was already in session.

Despite this unfortunate situation, a number of schools received electrical upgrades, roof repairs and replacements, as well as interior renovations to accommodate programming requirements. An extensive renovation was also carried out at the School for the Deaf to accommodate all students of Paradise Elementary.

Construction is underway on extensions to Amalgamated Academy, Ronacalli Elementary and Holy Family in Paradise. Purchase sale agreements have also been finalized for the new elementary school in Torbay and the replacement for Paradise Elementary.

Privacy Commissioner's Report

The Privacy Commissioner released a report on the security breach involving the theft of four laptops at Atlantic Place. Overall the report was very positive about how the District responded to the breach.

The one recommendation to which we were required to respond was related to the use of MCP numbers. Our response indicated our willingness to cooperate on this recommendation but indicated to the Commissioner that this is a provincial issue that

could not be implemented without changes at the Departmental level.

Administrator/Teacher Staffing

This summer we posted 100 competitions for school administrators. This resulted in a fair degree of movement throughout the schools in the District.

Our Leadership Development program was instrumental in developing a number of candidates for these positions. It is anticipated that the demand for school administrators will continue at this pace for the foreseeable future.

As of September 1, the District had advertised for approximately 1400 competitions for teachers. This represents an approximately 30 per cent increase in staffing competitions from last year.

We have received and processed almost 1200 substitute teaching applications. We have also initiated a Vulnerable Sector Check as part of the certificate of conduct that must be submitted as part of the employment process. The Vulnerable Sector Check will also be a mandatory component of all new teacher applications.

Staffing Highlights

Over 20 positions were posted as a result of the increased funding received for secretarial allocations. Schools with one secretarial position working 25 hours or less were increased to 30 hour positions. We also filled 363 student assistant positions during the annual recall process.

Kindergarten Busing

In early September the District experienced some concerns around busing of our Kindergarten children. As a result, efforts are continuing to improve our practices to ensure student safety.

Meetings were held with bus contractors to review the District's policy and communicate new guidelines for transporting Kindergarten children. Letters will also be sent to all daycares connected to busing to clarify expectations for student safety. In addition, a committee has been struck, with representation from Federation of School Councils, to identify best practices that will be shared with our schools.

NAPE/CUPE

Negotiations are continuing with NAPE for the Student Assistants' collective agreement and NAPE support staff. Meetings are scheduled in early September for Support staff and mid-September for Student Assistants.

In August, the new collective agreements with CUPE Locals 1560 and 2033 were signed by the Minister and the respective school board representatives. Employees have received their retroactive pay, and we all look forward to a continued harmonious working relationship with our employees during the life of these collective agreements, and well into the future.

K-12 Mathematics Curriculum

Year one of a three year implementation plan for the K-12 Mathematics Curriculum commenced in September 2008 with Grades K, 1, 4 and 7. This new implementation plan includes new texts and resources as well as an extensive plan for professional development. To date, the announcement of the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) Mathematics Common Curriculum Frameworks and teacher planning sessions have been well received.

French Programming

French Summer Camps were available for students in the Burin, Avalon East and Western regions. Core French and French Immersion students from grades Pre K to 7 attended the Burin French Camp for a five week period. In the Avalon East region, the French Camp provided orientation 111, Grade 6 students who are planning on entering Late French Immersion in the current school year. In addition, a two week French Camp in Avalon West region was designed to assist Grade 6 students transitioning to the Late French Immersion Program.

In addition to providing French programming for students this past summer, the District hosted three French Institutes for teachers across the province in the areas of Intermediate Science, Primary/Elementary programming and Intensive Core French.

Applause

- Congratulations to our Burin Bus Depot staff. On a recent official inspection by Motor Vehicle Registration, 47 of the buses inspected had zero defects. This 100 per cent rating was accomplished mainly because of our dedicated employees who have the proper training and equipment to complete all work and repairs in-house.
- Congratulations to Julia Penney, student, and Karen Channing, Art Teacher, both of Holy Trinity High School in Torbay, on being selected to represent the school and the province on the 2008 Cape Farewell Arctic Youth Expedition. This expedition travelled to Iceland, Greenland and Baffin Island from September 7-20. It was a great opportunity for students and teachers from all over the world to gain a better awareness of climate change.
- Congratulations to Gerald Mercer, Principal, Vanier Elementary, on launching his first children's book, "Emma's Treasure."