

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

September 2009

Summer Maintenance

While schools were closed for the summer, there were at least 85 maintenance projects ongoing in schools throughout the District. This work included everything from painting and general cleaning to classroom renovations, plumbing and electrical upgrades, window and roof repairs as well as major capital projects such as extensions and window and roof replacements.

Most schools opened on schedule. St. Matthew's Elementary was delayed opening by a couple of weeks while Beachy Cove Elementary, Booth Memorial and Villanova Junior High experienced some delays due to maintenance work at these schools.

During the extension renovation project at St. Bernard's Elementary, some air quality concerns were brought to our attention. Following two meetings with the school council, members of the senior management team also met with the parent community on August 31, 2009 to relay information and answer questions. The District reported that air quality test reports that were conducted prior to school opening were fine, and despite reports to the contrary, there was no asbestos found at the school. We committed to follow up with further air quality testing around air flow and ventilation once students are settled in school.

Capital Projects Update

The new school construction projects at Torbay, Paradise 1, and Placentia are in progress with completion scheduled for September 2010. Construction for Paradise 2 is underway with completion scheduled for January 2011.

Extension projects are underway at Beachy Cove Elementary, St. Bernard's Elementary, Upper Gullies Elementary and Roncalli Elementary. Construction on an extension to St. Peter's Junior High in Mt. Pearl will soon be underway.

Update on St. Matthew's Elementary

St. Matthew's Elementary was one school on our summer maintenance list for a classroom renovation. As

soon as a potential moisture problem was identified by our workers, we investigated further. This investigation led to a school opening delay of approximately two weeks while repairs were made to the building envelope. All work was carried out under the direction and supervision of an independent environmental consultant.

Once the repairs were completed, air quality testing was carried out. Final test results cleared the school for re-occupancy and St. Matthew's Elementary reopened its doors on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 - one week ahead of schedule.

Special thanks are extended to the contractor and our team of employees for their cooperation and support in making this project a top priority.

H1N1 Planning

The Eastern School District, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Community Services are working together to monitor the potential impact of the H1N1 virus on our schools. A District committee is in place to coordinate the District's response and to ensure that we are doing everything possible to help prevent the spread of the virus and lessen the impact on students and schools.

The primary focus is on reinforcing the three Cs: Clean, Cover and Contain. In addition, both the Department and the District have purchased hand sanitizers and dispensers for all schools. Custodial staff will be increasing their inspection of washroom facilities in addition to the daily cleaning of doorknobs and handrails and other high traffic surfaces.

We are also closely monitoring student and staff attendance in all of our schools. Our District website has a dedicated page on H1N1 and new information will be posted and communicated to school administrators as it becomes available.

CSBA Congress 2010

The Canadian School Board Association's annual conference will be held in St. John's from July 6-9, 2010 at the Delta Hotel. A District team is working on securing speakers for the conference.

Staffing and Recruitment

Over the summer we posted 75 competitions for school administrators. This has resulted in a fair degree of movement throughout 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.

Teacher staffing has continued to be a major focus during the month of September. Since May 1, 2009 we have filled 947 educational positions:

- 634 positions in Eastern Region
- 145 positions in Western Region
- 91 positions in Vista Region
- 77 position in Burin Region

The District has almost completed the substitute hiring process. We currently have an active substitute list in all regions and have received departmental approval to hire 11 retired teachers for substitutes. We are also in the process of establishing a 'French Competency Review' for all candidates wishing to be considered for the French substitute list.

New Curriculum

During the 2009-2010 school year, the following new curriculums will be implemented:

- **Grade 4 Art, Grade 9 Science, Intermediate Music, Drama 2206, and World Literature 3207.**
- **Grades 2, 5 & 8 Mathematics** (Grades K, 1, 4 and 7 were implemented last year as part of Government's three-year program implementation plan for mathematics.)
- **Newfoundland & Labrador Studies 2205.** This is an innovative, new course that focuses on Newfoundland and Labrador and its connections to global issues.
- **Design & Fabrication 2202.** This course falls under the Engineering and Engineering Technology concentration of courses within the Futures in Skilled Trades and Technology courses.

- **Residential Construction Technology 2201.** This hands-on course allows students to explore the trades experientially. Focusing on residential construction, students will be involved in the finishing aspects of carpentry, electrical and metal work both inside and outside the house.

Applause

- Congratulations to Barry Jenkins, Principal, Villanova Junior High. *Today's Parent* magazine recently announced that Villanova Junior High made it to their "Top 20 Schools in Canada" list in the Passionate Principals category.
- Congratulations to Gerald Mercer, Principal, Vanier Elementary, on the launch of his second children's book, Emma's New Game.
- Congratulations to students, staff and alumni of Bishop Feild Elementary on their 165th anniversary which was celebrated on September 18, 2009.



Education Minister, Darin King, and Director of Education, Ford Rice, participate in the ribbon pulling ceremony to celebrate Bishop Feild School's 165th Anniversary.