

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

October 2006

NEW SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER

I am pleased to report the appointment of John Way to the position of Senior Education Officer, Instruction and School Leadership. John, whose appointment is effective November 6, will maintain an office in both the Spaniard's Bay and District offices.

John holds a Masters of Education degree in Teaching and Learning from Memorial University. Over the past 15 years, John has held a number of administrative positions in schools throughout the province. He is currently Principal of Crescent Collegiate in Blaketown.

TEACHER ALLOCATION REVIEW COMMISSION

In mid-October, I participated in the Provincial Stakeholder Forum on the Teacher Allocation Review. This meeting was a gathering of education stakeholders to discuss the purpose and role of the Commission, and to offer advice and establish guiding principles to assist the Commission in carrying out its mandate.

The Human Resources Division is now compiling information for an official District submission to the Commission.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS

The 2006 Public Exam and CRT results were released last month. There were seven different CRT's written last year and the Eastern School District performed at, or above, the provincial level in most areas.

In particular, the District outperformed the provincial levels in all areas of the Language Arts CRTs for Elementary (Grade 6) and Intermediate (Grade 9); all areas of the Intermediate Science CRT; and all but Intermediate Mathematics. The District fell below the provincial average in several areas of the Primary (Grade 3) Mathematics CRT, above on some areas, and below on others in the Elementary Mathematics.

In June 2006 there were 12 different public exams written in our school district. Eastern School District had higher average final marks than the Province in

seven courses and a higher final pass rate than the province in six courses.

The results also identified several challenges for us in that we had lower average final marks than the Province in five courses, and a lower final pass rate than the Province in six courses. We continue to work on areas where our District is not strong, and meetings are taking place to address these concerns.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

A number of District close-outs for teacher professional development were held throughout the entire District during the month of October. The theme of all PD sessions is *Building Professional Learning Communities* with a focus on assessment.

Five close-out days were held in the Avalon East Region for the K-6 level and one day for the intermediate level. All schools in the Burin Region were shut-down for two days as well as all schools in Avalon West for one day.

STAFFING

Recruitment and staffing continues in a number of areas. A review of class size in K-6 resulted in the further allocation of units. We were able to address class size issues in five schools. Student Support Services personnel continue to adjust the allocation in Student Assistant hours to ensure we meet newly identified needs. We were successful in securing an additional 80 hours for 31 schools to address safety and program issues. We also filled several administrative support positions at District Office and hired our new SEO.

The Human Resources Division is also reviewing position descriptions and preparing a performance appraisal system to be used in conjunction with new position descriptions for senior management leaders.

NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

The Department of Education announced approval for a new K-6 school to replace Holy Trinity Elementary. We are currently conducting research for new site location and hope to be in a position to make a recommendation to the Finance and Properties Committee in the near future.

CAPITAL PROJECTS APPROVED

Since my last report, a number of capital projects were approved. These include: roof replacements for Woodland Elementary; Matthew Elementary; and Vanier Elementary, as well as approval for the extension and renovation to Leary' Brook Junior High.

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

Work is progressing on the Leadership Support and Development program. We received approximately 80 applications for the first succession planning session that starts on November 2. We will be accepting approximately 25 of these candidates and we are excited about the potential of this program in helping to grow strong leaders for our district.

In the Personal Development for School Leaders program, we have completed the first of four *Covey Seven Habits* sessions. We have also partnered with the NLTA's School Administrator's Council to offer approximately 80 school administrators, including Programs and Board staff, sessions on Mediation. Two sessions have already taken place with another four scheduled for this school year.

TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM

In October, we offered new teachers in St. John's, Burin, and Vista a one-day session on Co-operative Discipline. In total approximately 100 teachers participated and the feedback indicates this type of training supports their work in the classroom. In addition to training sessions, our new teachers are receiving mentor support in their schools.

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS POLICY

Policy work continues on a number of new and interim policies. In particular, the School Fees and Community Use of Schools policies are currently under revision. A committee was appointed to provide feedback on the Community Use policy and recommendations will be forthcoming to the Finance and Property Committee this fall.

The issue of liability insurance continues to be problematic in many areas of our District. We have represented this issue with Department of Education officials, and intend to follow-up once our committee concludes its work.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS INITIATIVES

Our school district remains very active in the promotion of healthy and active living. I was pleased to bring greetings to a day-long principals' meeting with Eastern and Western K-6 principals. This was one of three *Healthy Students Healthy Schools* seminars that were held in October. I would like to

acknowledge the support of the Department of Health and the Department of Education in helping our District conduct these very informative sessions.

Our principals are very keen to make their schools active and healthy places and this message is beginning to spread among the entire school community. Throughout the next two months, a number of seminars are planned throughout the district on *Creating a Living Healthy School Community*.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Human Resources Division continues to support the Occupational Health and Safety program. Work is progressing on a policy and operations manual. In the past month we trained 45 people in Western, Burin and Vista Regions and will train another 30 in Eastern Region in December. We now have trained teams in all of our schools.

NEWFOUNDLAND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (NISEP)

NISEP sponsored a recruitment mission to Eastern Europe from September 29 to October 9. Countries visited include Turkey, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. These new markets have strong potential for expanding the program. Planning has also begun on a provincial mission to Brazil in March. Brazil has been identified as an emerging market with tremendous potential for international students.

SAFE SCHOOLS

Recent events across North America, and in our own school district, have heightened media and public attention on school violence and school security.

A number of violent acts and aggressive activity by students in our province, both on and off school property, prompted an invitation by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary to conduct school visits. We value our partnerships with the RNC and RCMP, and we will continue to work with them on our many Safe School initiatives.

We are also more aware that building security issues need to be addressed in schools throughout the District. Discussions on this issue have been held at the senior management and we are now working towards developing policies and procedures under the Safe Schools umbrella to ensure our schools are as safe as we can make possibly make them.

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

The Eastern School District was involved in organizing two important national conferences in October.

The Education Research & Development Corporation (ERDI) annual conference comprises business leaders and chief executive officers (CEOs, superintendents and directors) of key school districts/boards/divisions across Canada. The conference in St. John's focused on education change, innovation and how corporate partners can help to improve educational opportunities in our schools.

The Canadian Association of Communicators in Education (CACE) held their annual conference for school board communications professionals in St. John's. Our manager of communications and her counterpart at the NLTA hosted approximately 85 delegates from across Canada. I was pleased to bring greetings on behalf of the Eastern School District and pledged our continued support for CACE and the important role good communication plays in promoting excellence in education.

I am also pleased to report that in May 2007, Eastern School District will partner with the Department of Education to host a National Leadership Conference – Exchange on Canadian Studies - which will host approximately 260 senior high school students from across Canada.

TEACHER RECOGNITION

Congratulations to Special Education Teacher, Lori Clarke, Prince of Wales Collegiate, on receiving the National Educator of the Year Award by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada.

SCHOOL VISITS

During the month of October, I had the pleasure of visiting a number of schools. These include Swift Current Academy, Tricentia Academy, Matthew Elementary, Discovery Collegiate, St. Mark's All Grade, Bishop White All Grade and Marystown Central High.

50TH ANNIVERSARY FOR MARY QUEEN OF THE WORLD

Congratulations to the administration, staff, students and school community of Mary Queen of the World on celebrating their 50th year as a school in Mount Pearl. We participated in a school assembly and Open House on October 26th to commemorate the anniversary.

TECHSPLOATION PROGRAM

Techsploration is a program designed to encourage female junior high students to explore career opportunities in the skilled trades. The Eastern School District has been involved with this program since its inception about five years ago.

We recently attended a reception with partners from industry and education. The Minister of Education, Joan Burke, brought greetings and was very strong in her commitment to increase the participation of girls in the skilled trades. It appears that of the 1,000 students enrolled in the new trades and technology programs, only 19 per cent are female. Her commitment is to seek to balance these enrollments over the next number of years.

BEGINNER BAND BONANZA

The second annual Beginner Band Bonanza took place on Saturday, October 28th at the MUN School of Music. Beginner instrumental music students in the Avalon East Region learned about their instruments from local experts and listened to a number of professional guest performances. Special thanks are extended to our itinerant instrumental music teachers for organizing this wonderful learning opportunity.

PROVINCIAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



Laval High School and St. Anne's Academy in Placentia hosted the Provincial Student Leadership Conference October 19-22. I, along with Assistant Director of Education, Ed Walsh, and Trustee, Jack Murphy, as well as a number of other invited guests, took part in the opening ceremonies. In the photo above, Rex Goudie, who was the special "surprise" guest, sings the *Ode to Newfoundland*.

Congratulations to the conference organizers, including teachers, students, staff and community volunteers for your energy, enthusiasm and commitment in hosting this successful event!