

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

October 2007

FACILITIES REPORT

The new school year got off to a rocky start when mould was discovered in a number of schools throughout the district. Added to this situation were two school fires which occurred on the weekend of September 14/15.

Certainly, September was not a normal month for our district staff, teachers, students or parents. However, I have witnessed a great team effort by all involved in responding to these emergencies. A special thanks is extended to all staff who have worked tirelessly and diligently to relocate students, prepare alternate sites as temporary school facilities, and provide assistance with staffing and other administrative matters.

I would also like to acknowledge the excellent support and cooperation we have received from school councils and parents in working through these difficult situations. Our ultimate goal is to get students and teachers back to their respective schools as soon as possible.

A brief status report on each school follows.

CABOT ACADEMY

Air quality testing is ongoing in the classroom area and the gymnasium. Initial findings are encouraging and test results are expected later this week. We are preparing to mobilize staff to clean the building and conduct some extra maintenance and painting on the school for occupancy within a week thereafter.

Due to structural issues, the gym is sealed off from the rest of the building. Students can return to school while repairs there are ongoing. It is anticipated that work on the gym will be finalized in January 2008.

SWIFT CURRENT ACADEMY

All internal renovations have been completed. Indoor air quality test results should be available within the next week. If the air quality reports are as

good as anticipated, the classroom portion of the school can be reopened by the end of October.

A structural review of the gymnasium by the consultant has revealed that the exterior walls will require considerable work. A public tender was called for the gym wall repair and roof tie in on September 29th. The tender closes on October 10th and it is anticipated that the gym would be available for students approximately three weeks after the tender is awarded.

With respect to the roof, the Department of Education is recommending a new modified roofing system. They are recommending that this work proceed in June 2008 and in the meantime, the existing flat roof will be sealed as required.

ST. PETER'S ELEMENTARY, UPPER ISLAND COVE

Remediation on St. Peter's Elementary is progressing well. The perimeter walls and ceiling are completed. Due to the increased scope of work, the target date for occupancy may be extended to November.

ST. JOSEPH'S ACADEMY, TERRENCEVILLE

Last month, the Fire Commissioner conducted a complete inspection of the school. No major issues were identified.

An environmental consulting company was contracted to perform a moisture assessment, mould assessment, and an indoor air quality (IAQ) assessment of the school. Reports have not yet been received.

During the assessment, mould growth was noticed on the roof sheeting of the gymnasium. Mould samples were collected and sent to the lab for analysis. Data regarding indoor air quality parameters is still being processed.

We are currently seeking prices for the completion of repairs to the school roof. The work is estimated to take three to four weeks for completion.

MOUNT PEARL INTERMEDIATE

An electrical fire at Mount Pearl Intermediate on Saturday, September 15th resulted in the closure of the school and the temporary relocation of approximately 900 students.

Elementary students have been relocated to Morris Academy, Newtown Elementary and the School for the Deaf. Junior high students are sharing a shift system with Mount Pearl Senior High.

The restoration work is proceeding as planned. An environmental consultant is cleaning the fire-damaged area, including the heating/ventilation system. The entire school also requires new network cabling. As each classroom is cabled, ceiling tiles will be replaced and rooms cleaned.

The target date for student re-occupancy is October 29, 2007.

HOLY CROSS JUNIOR HIGH

The RNC determined that arson was the cause of a fire that was contained to the teachers' lounge of Holy Cross Junior High on September 14th. As a result of the fire, students lost two days of school. However, the quick response of the fire department and the diligence of staff kept school closure to a minimum.

STAFFING UPDATE

In preparation for the 2007-08 school year, the Human Resources Department advertised and filled 1,143 job competitions. This compares to 996 for the entire 2006-07 school year. With the school year just beginning, it is highly likely that we will double the number of job competitions to be filled this year.

Job Category	# of Postings
Primary/Elementary	11
Intermediate	4
Senior High	4
District	1

In addition to regular staffing, additional teaching units were allocated to Cabot Academy, Mount Pearl Intermediate, and Paradise Elementary to help with relocation of students. These additional units will remain in place until students return to their respective schools.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

September was certainly a busy month for professional development. Regional meetings were held with administrators to provide updates on programs and policies. One of the topical issues was violence in schools and bullying. Administrators at the intermediate level are reporting that parents want a stronger response.

PD days were also held for all teachers in Burin and Vista during the month of September as schools shut down for two full days. Teachers participated in PD sessions on a wide range of subject areas. A PD close-out was also held in Western Region in early October and a number of PD days are planned for Eastern Region in November.

RECRUITMENT OF SUPPORT STAFF

Since the start of the school year, approximately 40 support staff positions have been awarded. Due to the shortage of support staff in all our regions, ads were posted in local newspapers to recruit qualified replacement staff in the areas of casual secretaries, maintenance workers and student assistants. The maintenance and secretarial competitions alone generated more than 150 applicants. A total of 11 new maintenance staff and eight new school secretaries have been hired.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

School administrators have been advised as to the OHS reporting requirements for this upcoming school year. Schools are required to hold four meetings and inspections throughout the year. There is a financial impact on the district if schools are not compliant with the legislative requirements.

NISEP UPDATE

International students arrived from Brazil, Mexico and Thailand to attend school in our district. An orientation session for these new students was held on September 19th. During the month of September, we hosted agents from Mexico and Korea and attended Ad Astra agent meetings in New Brunswick as part of our recruitment efforts.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

It's a very exciting time for Physical Education (PE) in our province. With the implementation of PE 3100/01 we currently have the most up-to-date PE curriculum of any province in Canada. This is complemented with professional development support for PE teachers and the hiring of a PE Itinerant to further support the PE program.

NEW AP PILOT PROGRAM OFFERED

Our district will be offering a pilot distance learning program in Advanced Placement Psychology 4220. This program, which will be taken after school hours, has a maximum registration of 20 students. The course will commence mid October and conclude in May 2008. Depending on their final grades, students can receive two high school credits and an exemption for Psychology 1000 and credit for Psychology 1001 at Memorial University.

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS

As part of our Safe and Caring School initiatives, the district will be inviting community partners to dialogue with us on youth aggression and related ESDNL practices, programming and intervention strategies.

We are currently inviting partners such as RNC; RCMP; Corrections and Community Services; Child, Youth and Family Service; and other community agencies to a series of round table discussions to assist us in our internal evaluation process.

In addition, we have met with Mrs. Sarah Sexton, the organizer of the recent Majority Rules Anti-Violence Rally and other government officials, and have committed to doing our part to deal with the issue of youth violence. We are currently reviewing our policies and protocols with respect to suspensions and repeat offenders and have agreed to meet with the group again in early November.

LIVING HEALTHY COMMOTION DAY

Schools and offices throughout the district promoted healthy lifestyles when they celebrated Living Healthy Commotions Day on Friday, September 28th. The second annual event celebrated wellness programs in our schools and promoted the benefits of healthy eating, physical activity and staying smoke free.



Darrin started off Living Healthy Commotions Day by walking around Neil's Pond with Paradise Elementary students.

SCHOOL VISITS

- On September 7th, I was pleased to join with Education Minister, Joan Burke, and students, teachers, community groups, and local police to kick off the Department's youth violence awareness campaign at Bishop's College.
- On September 12th, I participated in a flag raising ceremony at Beachy Cove Elementary in celebration of the partnership between the school, the Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's and the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.



SEO RETIREMENT

Glenda Riteff, Senior Education Officer, Student Support Services, retired in August following a lengthy career in education. We would like to thank Glenda for her valuable contributions to education and wish her well in her retirement.

APPLAUSE

- Congratulations to Holy Heart of Mary Vice Principal, Sharon Brennan, on being awarded a *BIOTE Canada-Biogen Idec Teaching Excellence Award* for her efforts in promoting biotechnology in the classroom. Ms. Brennan, who was Science Department Head last year, was one of three national winners who earned cash awards for creativity and innovation of their teaching methods.