

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Monthly Report to the Eastern School Board

October 2008

Facilities Update

Frank Roberts Junior High

Work on Frank Roberts Junior High is progressing. All investigative and remediation work, with the exception of the gym, should be completed by the end of October. Reinstatement of the classroom areas has commenced and this work is expected to be completed by the end of November. All work on the gymnasium should be completed by mid-December. Once all interior work is completed, clearance testing can then be carried out.

The roof replacement should be completed by the end of November and new lockers and a complete washroom retrofit will be completed before students return to school. Depending upon the arrival date of the new windows, window replacement may have to be scheduled once all students return to school. Based on the expected time frames for all work to be completed, we are hopeful that all work, including final air quality test results, will allow us to reopen following the Christmas break.

St. George's Elementary

Investigative and remediation work is ongoing at St. George's Elementary. It is anticipated that this phase of the project will be completed by mid November. A tender will be awarded on October 31, 2008 for the reinstatement of walls and window replacement with the tender stipulating a two month completion date. Clearance testing can then be conducted. We are hopeful that all work will be completed on schedule so that St. George's Elementary can reopen shortly after the Christmas break.

While we are striving to have work in both schools completed on schedule, our primary focus is on making sure that a thorough job is done in each building. We want to ensure that when these schools reopen, students, staff and parents can be confident they are returning to a safe and healthy environment.

Strategic Planning Update

We are pleased to report that the Board's *Strategic Plan 2008-2011* has been approved by the Minister of Education. The next step is to ensure that the Plan is a living document, not one that sits on a shelf collecting dust.

To this end, each division has developed a work plan around the identified strategic issues and each Assistant Director will continuously monitor and report on their Division's progress in achieving the stated objectives. Before Christmas break, we plan to host information meetings in our four regions to share the new plan with our internal and external stakeholders.

We will also be producing a large poster displaying our vision, mission and core values for every school and district-owned building so that the Plan is front and center every day.

Class Size and Teacher Allocation

The Human Resources Division has been monitoring class sizes in the District. We normally experience some student movement during the month of September and monitor class size issues as they occur. The schools are presently completing the Annual General return. The results of this return will give a clearer picture of class sizes in the District. This report is expected within the month.

We recognize that some of our schools have considerable space constraints and we look for creative solutions to support students in these schools.

Differentiated Instruction/PD Closeouts

To accommodate varied learning styles, abilities, interests, and needs, the Programs Division has set Differentiated Instruction as a focus this year. In early September, a session was held for Program Specialists and Senior Education Officers to assist with planning for the Fall closeouts.

The theme for all closeouts this year is: *Differentiated Instruction...Learning for All.*

During the District's regional close-out days in September and October, support staff and student assistants in each region were also provided the opportunity for professional development training in areas such as First Aid and various computer software programs.

Leadership Development Program

Our District will be offering the Leadership Development Program again this year. An invitation to this program is forwarded to all teaching personnel who have a minimum of five years teaching experience and have completed or are completing a Master's Program. Candidates chosen will attend a combination of evening and full day sessions, complete assigned reading, as well as take part in the apprenticeship leadership component at the school level. We expect that approximately 55 teachers from throughout the District will be involved in this program.

Staffing and Recruitment

September is extremely busy for student assistants. Allocations of student assistant hours are based on figures from June. Some children move in and out of the District over the summer as well as within the District and while it is unavoidable, there are major impacts on staffing. Hours must be increased and decreased at schools, which in turn leads to layoffs, bumping, and advertising of positions.

Internal recruitment has also been extremely busy. Approximately 50 internal positions have been posted and filled by internal applicants, creating much movement within the system. Moreover, a new internal application form was developed for Support Staff. This form has been sent to each school and is also posted on the ESD website. Applicants applying for positions via email receive an automatic response notifying them that their applications have been received. This has cut down on a considerable amount of calls to the office.

Year End Audit for 2007/08

The annual audit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008 began on August 4 and the audit work was completed on October 14, 2008. There are a few outstanding items but draft financial statements will

be ready by the Department of Education's deadline of October 31, 2008.

Collective Bargaining Update

Negotiations at the local level have concluded with NAPE for the Student Assistants' collective agreement. The next step in these negotiations will be the Conciliation process, which has not yet been scheduled. With respect to NAPE support staff negotiations, we are awaiting contact with the union officials to schedule dates for further discussions.

Negotiations are underway with the NLTA for the teachers' collective agreement. Allister Dyke is representing the District on the negotiating team.

New Pilots

A number of new pilot curriculums will take place in our District during the 2008-09 school year. Programs Division will work with both district and regional program specialists to monitor progress for the following new pilot curriculums: Social Studies 3-5; Technology (Grade 9); Newfoundland Studies; Residential Construction Tech. 2211; Design & Fabrication 2212; Energy & Power 3211; Robotics Man. Technology 3212; Electronic Systems 3215; Intermediate Music; and Traditional Music Initiative. We'll also continue to monitor new curriculum implementations in a variety of subject areas such as Mathematics and Skilled Trades.

Professional Performance Appraisals

The teacher and administrator performance appraisal program for this year has begun. All teachers and administrators being evaluated have been contacted.

All principals in the district were updated on the new Module One component of the Professional Evaluation Policy. Major highlights of this update include: expectations for full year replacement teachers; redesigned forms for submission of reports to the office; clearer expectations on the contents of reports; and an explanation of the role of the HR Division in difficult cases.

The HR Division has also committed to a full review of the performance appraisal system this school year.

Improvements Made to Online Application Process

The HR Division unveiled its on-line teacher recommendation and online teacher reference form to all principals this month. This added feature to the job procurement system will streamline hiring and make the recommendation and reference check process more efficient and less time consuming for principals. Further updates to this system are currently under development.

District Partners with MUN on Research Project

We have granted approval to a research request from Memorial University's Faculty of Education to survey all students in grades 6, 9 and 12 on the issue of bullying. We feel this is a great opportunity to tie in to our Strategic Plan's goals around Safe and Caring Schools.

Applause

- Congratulations to St. Bernard's Elementary on being chosen to participate in the Green Streets Environment Education program. They also helped launch CBC's *The Hour's* national program *One Million Acts of Green* during a school assembly on October 21.

Schools Celebrate Living Healthy Commotions Day



Davis Elementary students joined with thousands of students throughout the Eastern School District on Friday, September 19 to celebrate Living Healthy Commotions Day, an annual event that promotes active and healthy living!