

Board Meeting

Director's Update - Pino Buffone

26 September 2017

1. **Acknowledgement of Students, Staff & School Communities:** I would like to take this opportunity to share a number of highlights from the exciting start to the new school year...
 - Shared Space Project at Whitney Public School... representatives of both the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board and the Renfrew County District School Board visited the renovated site of St. Martin of Tours Catholic School & Whitney Public School on 07 September 2017 to thank all students, staff and central staff for their dedication in managing this collaborative project. Although there are a few areas that are still in the final stages of the renovation – including the front entrance, gymnasium and multi-purpose room – it was an engaging, informative visit...and so wonderful to see the students, staff and school community enjoying their new teaching and learning environments!
 - New Athletic Facility at Fellowes High School... Superintendent Schimmens, Superintendent Poirier and I conducted a site visit on 18 September 2017 to discuss a number of facility-related matters and had the chance to view the new outdoor basketball and tennis court installed beside the school. The \$40 000 project was completed shortly before the start of the current school year... and received \$12 500 from the Pembroke Ski and Snowboard Club, an organization promoting fitness and outdoor activities for the community. The facility has outdoor lighting and will be monitored by security cameras. It will be open for use to the students during the day, and, to the general public on evenings and weekends.

Note: Special thanks to the staff at Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium (RCJTC) for their time, effort, flexibility and professionalism in coordinating our busing routes/schedules for the school year. Your effectiveness and efficiency, as well as your proactivity and responsiveness, led to a very smooth start-up to the school year!

2. **Additional Changes to Principal and Vice-Principal Assignments:** There are a few additional changes to principal and vice-principal appointments and/or transfers to start the new school year...Debbie Legault has been appointed as Principal of Admaston Public School (effective 02 October 2017) and Catherine McGregor as Vice-Principal at Valour JK-12 School (also effective 02 October 2017). Further, Tracey Stevens will be retiring at the end of the month (30 September 2017). Tracey was Principal of McNab Public School until the end of the 2016-2017 school year. She has supported the district in school- and system-level capacities this past month.
3. **Roll-out of RCDSB 2017-2020 Strategic Plan:** As noted at the Board Meeting of 29 August 2017, I am very excited and inspired by the collaborative work done with stakeholders this past school year – students, staff (academic and non-academic), federation partners, and members of the broader community in the county – with respect to the renewal of our strategic plan. It is a pleasure and a privilege, as Director of Education, to share the public document with the Board of Trustees and the public today. The strategic plan represents the Board's commitment to quality public education in the county, and, the actions described therein will 'bring the plan to life' over the next three years. I am very confident that our strategic plan will continue to move us forward as a district with respect to the achievement and well-being of students, staff and school communities.

4. **Orange Shirt Day – 29 September 2017:** On Friday, September 29th, 2017, our schools will commemorate the victims and survivors of residential schools through Orange Shirt Day...a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) residential school commemoration event held at Williams Lake, British Columbia, in the spring of 2013. The initiative has grown from the memory of a young girl named Phyllis who wore an orange shirt to her residential school and was stripped of the shirt once she arrived at her residential school. The early fall date was chosen as it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes and sent to residential schools. The initiative provides our students, staff and school communities an opportunity to discuss and reflect upon the impact of residential schools on our Aboriginal communities, and, to grow in our awareness, appreciation and understanding of our inclusivity practices as well as our diversity as a strength of our society...so that the lessons learned from the past can be shared with future generations.

5. **Provincial Assessments of Reading, Writing & Mathematics for 2016-2017 School Year:** The district recently received the results of the provincial assessments for primary and junior divisions, as well as Grade 9 Mathematics (applied and academic). The results of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) were received in the spring of 2017. As is always the case, the assessments reveal areas of strength as well as areas for growth for the district. The Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-being (BIP) developed this fall for the 2017-2018 school year will reflect the trends of the assessment data, including a continued focus on mathematics at the elementary and secondary levels through the Ministry of Education's Renewed Mathematics Strategy (RMS).

6. **Canada 150 Celebrations...continued:** As part of the continued recognition of Canada 150 this fall, the district will be participating in a creative writing challenge coordinated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). The contest is open to all Canadian residents who are full-time students enrolled in Grades 7-12. Entries will be judged in two age categories: Grades 7 to 9 and Grades 10 to 12. The entries are expected to be 300-400 words in length...as the first page of a book set 150 years into the future, with the main character facing a current issue and setting the scene for how it plays out a century-and-a-half from now. The challenge is open for submissions from 09-30 November 2017.