



Renfrew County District School Board

Director's Report - April 28, 2008

Education Week - Energizing Young Minds

This week is Education Week and at each school there are activities and events highlighting the good work of our students and staff. This year's theme, *Energizing Young Minds*, is an acknowledgement of the stimulating learning environments and the careful, focussed instruction provided by teachers in our classrooms. The theme also recognizes the energy that all the adults in the school, the school district, and the larger community bring to the important work of supporting student learning and developing character.

Recently students had opportunity to bring their energy to regional events highlighting their achievements in science and technology.

1. RCDSB Student Success at the Science Fair

Students of the Renfrew County District School Board participated in the Renfrew County Regional Science and Technology Fair with award winners coming from Cobden Public School, Rockwood Public School, General Lake Public School, Beachburg Public School, Central Public School, Pinecrest Public School, Highview Public School, Champlain Discovery Public School, Mackenzie High School and Madawaska Valley District High School. Of particular note are the following:

University of Ottawa Entrance Scholarship

Roopa Suppiah of Mackenzie High School - Breathe Easy: CO₂ is Turning Green

Proceeding to the Canada Wide Science Fair:

Jordan Deloughery of Champlain Discovery Public School - The Incredible Bridge

Alyssa Borutski of Madawaska Valley District High School - The Stroop Effect

Best Grade Six Project:

Natasha Allain and Alyse Duffney of Pinecrest Public School - The Mouldy Truth

The Board thanks all teachers and community members who contributed to this event.

2. RCDSB Student Success at Options Skilled Trades Competition

Students from each secondary school within the Renfrew County District School Board demonstrated their abilities at the Options skilled trades competition held recently. Students from RCDSB swept the awards in the following categories:

Team Carpentry:	1 st - Madawaska	2 nd - Renfrew	3 rd - Opeongo
Cabinet Making:	1 st - Opeongo	2 nd - Fellowes	3 rd - Renfrew
Masonry:	1 st - Renfrew	2 nd - Fellowes	3 rd - Renfrew
Hair Stylist 1:	1 st - Fellowes	2 nd - Opeongo	3 rd - Arnprior
Hair Stylist 2:	1 st - Opeongo	2 nd - Opeongo	3 rd - Fellowes

As well, RCDSB students earned first place awards in tire changing, welding 1, and photography 1 and 2; the second place award in welding 2; and third place awards in small engines, welding 1 and 2, culinary arts, and web page design.

The Board thanks all teachers, employers, government officials, and community members who contributed to this event providing opportunity for 122 secondary students to showcase their talents and 30 busloads of elementary students to visit displays and to learn about opportunities for pursuing education and employment in the skilled trades.

Invigorating the Arts

Within the Ministry of Education funding allocation for specialized programs, the Renfrew County District School Board has provided one-time funding in the amount of \$225,000 so that elementary schools are able to enhance programs in the Arts through the purchase of resources and equipment, and partnerships with artists. Proposals from schools were reviewed and the following were approved: \$50,000 for music and dance resources; \$30,000 for musical instruments; \$40,000 for visual arts resources; \$30,000 for equipment; \$25,000 for dedicated multi-media projectors; \$10,000 for computer hardware; \$15,000 for artist partnerships; and \$25,000 for other items such as library and classroom print materials related to the Arts. To maximize the resources available, items common to several schools were ordered in bulk. This elementary arts infusion follows a similar initiative for secondary schools last school year.

Health and Safety Certification

The Renfrew County District School Board is currently sponsoring occupational health and safety training for a management rep and a worker rep from the Joint Health and Safety Committee of each worksite/school. While the Act requires that there be a JHSC at sites with 20 or more employees, the Board has established committees at each site. The certification training is done in two phases. Part I of the training covers the Occupational Health and Safety Act, duties and responsibilities of parties, workplace inspections, and accident investigation. Part II looks at identifying and dealing with hazards in the workplace. Currently members from twenty-three school JHSCs have finished Part I with members from eight schools finishing Part II. Upon completing the training, participants are well prepared to act as certified members of the JHSC.

Aboriginal Education

The Renfrew County District School Board is moving forward with implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework. Recently, the Board sponsored a workshop for representative teachers from each school with focus on those schools where census data indicates a greater proportion of students of native ancestry. The purposes of the day were to raise awareness, highlight learning materials and resources, and share successful teaching strategies from our pilot schools so that we can address the learning and cultural needs of our aboriginal students. Presenters included Dr. Pamela Toulouse, who was a speaker at one of the regional symposiums; Jodi Alexander, teacher at Eganville and District Public School; Tina Neadow, teacher at Opeongo High School; and Judy Ellis, Native School Support Counsellor at Opeongo High School. Opening ceremonies included the Algonquin Dancers and Bear Nations Drummers and students from the Algonquin language class. As follow-up, each elementary school in the Opeongo and Pembroke families of schools has been provided \$6000 for the purpose of acquiring resources.

Special Project Funding

Student Support Leadership Initiative

To promote collaboration among school boards and community agencies that provide support to students with behavioural and mental health needs, funding in the amount of \$65,119 has been made available to the Renfrew County District School Board. In this first year of the initiative, RCDSB will act as lead board of the Renfrew County cluster group as it reviews current partnerships, protocols and practices, identifies challenges, and develops a plan of action for year two.

Teacher Learning and Leadership Program

Recently, the Ministry of Education invited a limited number of applications for grants to support the professional growth of experienced teachers. Proposals from teachers were first reviewed and approved by the school district, then forwarded to the provincial committee comprised of Ministry and teacher federation officials for consideration. The application submitted by Greg Harkness, teacher at Herman Street Public School on behalf of a small group of elementary and secondary RCDSB teachers, is one of approximately fifty selected by the provincial committee for funding. Funding in the amount of \$14,650 will be used to build capacity and gather resources so that teachers can effectively deliver the career education components within each of the Ontario curriculum documents. The results of the project will be shared across our school district. The province is sponsoring a two-day teacher leadership conference at the end of the month for those who projects were approved.

Reporting to the Ministry

In March/April, there have been the following points of accountability:

- Report on Expenditure of MISA Year Three Funds;
- Enrolment Projections and Class Size Reports;
- Report on Aboriginal Education CODE Project;
- Report on Regional Aboriginal Education Symposium;
- Report on Ontario Psychological Association Funding;
- Capital Project Long-Term Financing Report;
- Transportation Survey.

Upcoming Events

Grand Opening of Addition to Westmeath Public School - Thursday, May 1, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.

Meeting of RCDSB School Council chairs and representatives hosted by the Renfrew County DSB Parent Involvement Committee - Tuesday, May 27, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at Fellowes High School