



Renfrew County District School Board

Director's Report - August 27, 2007

Getting Ready for School

While students enjoy a summer break, much work goes on to ensure that our schools are ready for September start-up:

School Staff: Teachers review their class list, plan curriculum units, prepare lessons, and organize resources and space. All staff review procedures, processes and schedules, welcome new registrants, plan for student learning and safety, organize special events, and create a welcoming environment.

Business: Following the adoption of the Board budget, the Business Department prepared school budget information, and reconciled and set up accounts for special projects. Purchasing has processed orders for supplies and set up standing orders.

Health and Safety: Over the summer, staff implemented the new regulations for flushing water systems, conducted inspections of playground equipment, and assisted with safety training.

Human Resources: The HR Department ensures that newly hired and returning school staff has the information needed regarding employment and are included in payroll data. Human Resources also updates employment records for all staff and ensures compliance with regulations.

Information Technology: IT staff serviced all servers and computers at each elementary and secondary school, completing repairs and replacing equipment as needed. Additionally, upgrades to central networks and servers were completed.

Plant: Summer is a busy time for the Plant Department with major projects related to energy management and property improvements, cleaning of schools and ongoing maintenance so that classrooms and hallways are safe and accessible for students and staff as the school year begins.

Transportation: A great percentage of our students ride to school on a bus, and staff responds to parent calls and works with bus operators to adjust bus routes to accommodate new students and those who move.

Summer Learning

During the summer, the RCDSB once again sponsored opportunity for students to develop skills and make gains in their learning. The Booster Program for primary students ran at eight sites; grades 7 and 8 summer programming ran at four sites and grades 9-10 credit recovery was offered at two sites.

Teachers also go to school in the summer. While additional qualification courses are offered at universities and through on-line learning, through a partnership with Nipissing University, courses in special education and reading were provided within our County with twenty-five teachers choosing to enrol. There are plans to continue this arrangement in the fall.

The Board's Special Education and Curriculum Departments also sponsored professional development for teachers on topics such as Positive Behaviour Intervention, Crisis Prevention Intervention, Differentiated Instruction and Assessment and Evaluation.

In accordance with Ministry of Education policies about New Teacher Induction, the Renfrew County District School Board provides the START Program for its new teachers. The first session is scheduled for Thursday this week. We welcome the opportunity to connect with those who are joining us and to provide them with information, resources and support.

Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA)

IT staff has continued to work long hours through the summer on OnSIS, the electronic database established by the Ministry of Education, and RCDSB is one of a few boards to meet the firm deadlines for submission of 2006-2007 elemental data to the Ministry. As a result, the RCDSB will receive its full MISA funding allocation for 2007-2008. The funding assists the Board in offering training for staff on using the Trillium Student Information System - both to collect data and to use data to inform decision-making. Training for school office staff continued in August.

In response to a letter from the Director, Assistant Deputy Minister Barry Pervin and Project Director Don Young from the Ministry of Education met with our MISA team on Tuesday, August 21st. They were impressed by our progress and listened to our suggestions for continued Ministry support for educators as we learn how to make use of the data to inform classroom instruction. They also took note of our concerns regarding the costs of providing sufficient bandwidth in rural and remote areas so that our students have equitable access to e-learning and our staff can make use of web-enabled applications. The Ministry acknowledged Etienne Lantos and Sheila Rennick for their leadership, and complimented the RCDSB MISA team for its exceptional work on data management and evidence informed decision-making.

Leadership

In July, Eleanor Newman, Roger Clarke and Steve Sliwa completed the Executive Leadership and Strategic Impact Program offered by the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. The program was sponsored by The Learning Partnership and the Ministry of Education with input from the Council of Ontario Directors of Education.

In August, our Principal Purpose team attended a training session in preparation for continuing the work of developing and sustaining principals' instructional leadership skills in order to maximize elementary student achievement in literacy and numeracy. The training focuses on knowledge, skills and behaviours related to assessment for learning of literacy and numeracy, the social and emotional competencies required in leading professional learning communities, and evidence informed decision-making.

Alice Paige, President of the ETFO Teachers' Local, was recipient of a provincial ETFO award in recognition of her work, with particular mention of her support for staff, who are in turn supporting students whose parents are deployed to Afghanistan.