



Renfrew County District School Board

Director's Report - November 24, 2008

RCDSB Character Champions Meet to Share Ideas

Character development is an integral component of public education in Renfrew County schools and a key means by which the Renfrew County District School Board advances its three key outcomes: Excellence in Teaching and Learning; Safe, Caring and Respectful Learning Environments; and Wise Use of Resources.

On Monday, November 10th, representative staff and students from every school in the Renfrew County District School Board participated in an energizing session on Character Development. The session started with an inspirational message from Jan Olsson about his pioneering experiences with implementing character development at Huntsville High School. Next, student and staff champions shared experiences from their own schools and discussed ways to further advance capacity building with the system's eight virtues.

The Ministry of Education views character development as the deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes upon which communities agree. After consultations with schools, parent groups and other community groups, and over 40 submissions to the Board's Character Development Committee, the Renfrew County DSB decided to focus on eight character virtues. These include respect, caring, responsibility, perseverance, honesty, initiative, courage and optimism. It was very evident from the day's activities and dialogue that staff and students in the Renfrew County District School Board are not just learning about the virtues, but living them!

As noted in the Ministry of Education Policy Document, *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12*, Character Development is not a stand alone development; it has linkages with learning and academic achievement, respect for diversity, citizenship development and parent and community partnerships.

Like the Ministry, our Board recognizes the importance of educating both the heart and mind in preparing students to be productive citizens in an ever increasingly interconnected world of diverse communities. We are very proud of the work and commitment of our staff and students to make our world a better place for all!

RCDSB Recognized as Leader in Aboriginal Education

The Director's Council on Aboriginal Education meets periodically to share best practices related to the implementation of *Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*. At its recent meeting on November 12, 2008, the Renfrew County District School Board had opportunity to share the good work being done in partnership with the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan at Opeongo High School and Eganville and District Public School.

Judy Ellis, Native School Support Counsellor at Opeongo HS, and Steve Sliwa, Superintendent of Education presented information on our "personalized" approach to addressing student needs and shared data showing the progress that students are making. In elementary school, attention is paid to multiple intelligences and learning styles as teachers plan instruction. There is a special Early Literacy Program for First Nation students and, as a result, progress on PM Benchmarks is steady. In secondary school, there has been support for First Nation students for over two decades; students are accumulating credits and are on track to graduating with an OSSD. At both schools, there are activities and programs that promote understanding of aboriginal history and culture and the contributions of aboriginal peoples.

Directors of Education and staff from the Ministry were impressed with the ways in which our partnership focussed on supporting students by creating an environment in which they could achieve academically.

RCDSB Continues to Meet High Standards in Student Success Indicators

The Ministry of Education regularly monitors the performance of secondary students on a number of key indicators of success. The Renfrew County District School Board has a record of meeting or exceeding the province as a whole on these indicators and recent data would confirm that our secondary staff and students continue to excel.

Credit accumulation is one measure of a student's progress towards gaining the thirty credits needed for graduation. In RCDSB, as of June 2008, 84.6% of grade nine students had eight credits and 79.4% of grade ten students had sixteen credits. In grade nine, 89% of girls and 87% of boys earned eight credits with each of our secondary schools being above the provincial average. In grade ten, 73% of boys and 80% of girls had earned sixteen credits (higher than the provincial average of 62% and 70% respectively). Eighty-five percent (85%) of grade ten students successfully completed the OSSLT on the first attempt.

Success at earning grade nine and ten compulsory credits (in Math, English, History, Geography, Science, French, Civics, Careers) is another measure of student progress. In RCDSB secondary schools, the pass rate for every compulsory credit course was higher than that for the province as a whole. Our achievement in applied courses was particularly noteworthy, being from six to ten percentage points higher.

One aspect of student success is that there are pathways for students for school-to-work, apprenticeship, college, and university. In 2007-2008, there were 276 RCDSB students (185 male and 91 female) in cooperative education placements in apprenticeship trades. Of these, 39 males and 13 females were registered as apprentices with the Ministry of Trades, Colleges and Universities. We commend the employers of Renfrew County who provide work placements to these students.

Reporting to the Ministry

In October/November, there were the following points of accountability:

- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program - Report from 2007-2008 and Plan for 2008-2009;
- Student Success - Report from 2007-2008 and Plan for 2008-2009;
- Daily Physical Education/Healthy School Report on Activities.

Upcoming Events

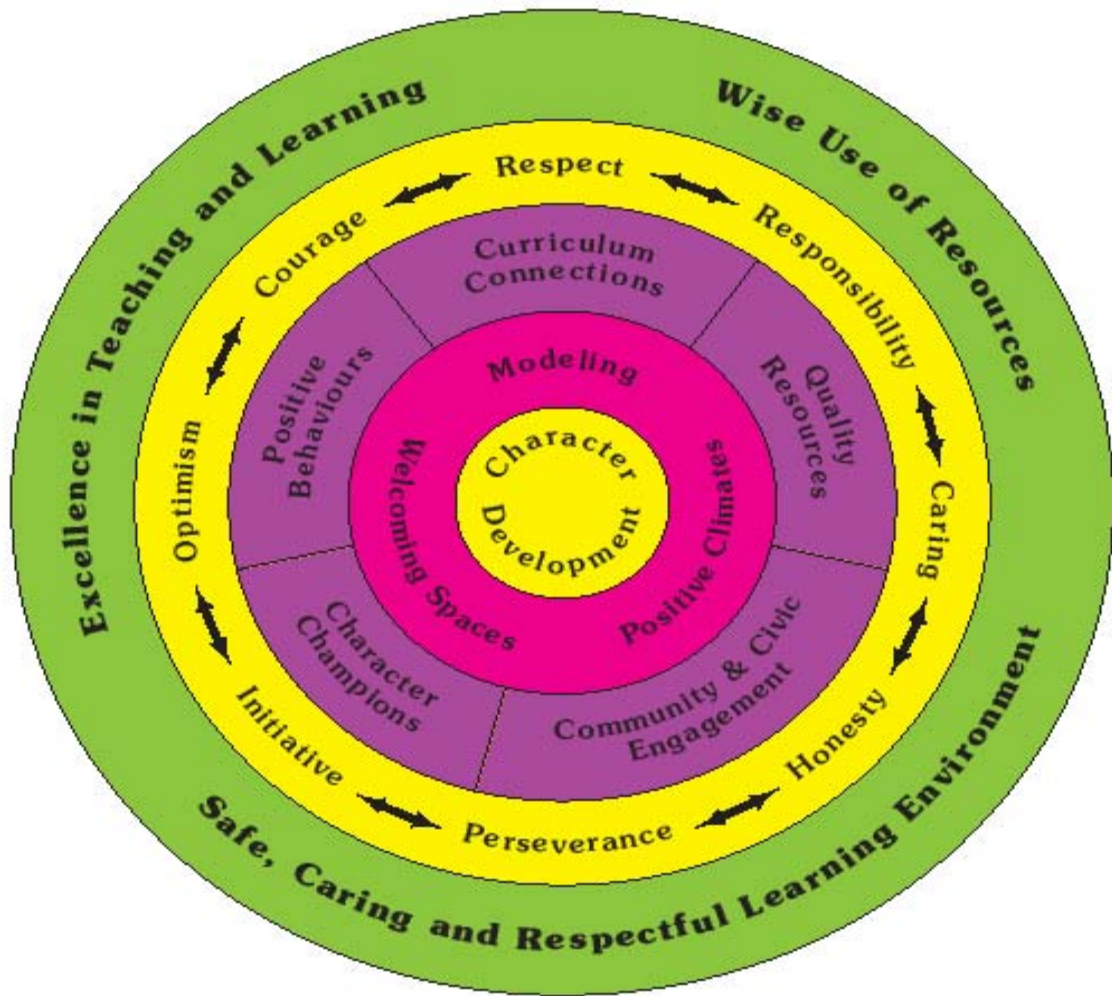
Petawawa Accommodation Review Committee Meetings

- Thursday, November 27, 2008, 7:00 p.m. at General Panet High School for input from General Panet school community and other interested community groups.



CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Renfrew County District School Board



Education for Life, Opportunities for All