



Renfrew County District School Board

Director's Report - October 26, 2009

Safe Schools and Inclusive Education Training

On October 20th, the Ministry of Education held a training session in Toronto to give an overview of new Safe Schools legislative requirements arising from Bill 157 (*Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act*), new requirements from the revised PPM 144 (*Bullying Prevention and Intervention*) and PPM 145 (*Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour*), and requirements from the new PPM 119 (*Developing and Implementing Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools 2009*). Some of the changes involve additional reporting requirements for staff and additional language related to homophobia, gender-based violence, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviour. Board teams were also given a presentation on Religious Accommodations and two presentations from the Ontario Human Rights Commission about racism and discrimination. The RCDSB team consisted of Amy Johnson, Tracey Stevens and Dennis Jenkins. They will now be responsible for training school teams on November 30th. Principals will be responsible to ensure that school staffs have training on the changes by February 1st.

While our Board has made significant investments in promoting character development and has been diligent in having detailed procedures to ensure safe, caring and respectful school climates, some of our procedures will again have to be revised to reflect various legislated and regulatory changes that will be in effect as of February 1st, 2009. Further, our Character Development Committee is in the process of gathering input from various stakeholders as part of the process of developing a comprehensive Equity and Inclusive Education Procedure and also a set of Religious Accommodation Guidelines. PPM 119 requires these two items to be in place for September 2010.

November 2nd Professional Activity Day

On Monday, November 2nd at Fellowes High School our Curriculum Department will be hosting our central professional activity day entitled, "Learning for the 21st Century". Our keynote speaker is Dr. Karyn Gordon, an expert in the field of communicating with the new-age youth, particularly Generation Y. Her mission is to truly understand what makes Generation Y tick so that she can help those who work with them understand them and motivate them to meet their greatest potential.

In addition to the keynote speaker, teachers and support staff will be able to select workshops from a wide range of topics that support the development of the skills of the 21st Century - innovation, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration.

A portion of the day will also be devoted to job-embedded professional development as teachers and support staff will be working with their peers in job-alike groupings, elementary division groups or secondary subject councils.

Ministry Visits New Schools

On Tuesday, October 20th, Michael Laurie, Education Officer with the Ottawa Regional Office of the Ministry of Education visited our two new schools in Whitney and Madawaska. Both schools were previously attached to school authorities that were amalgamated with the Renfrew County District School Board effective September 1, 2009. Mr. Laurie and I toured both schools with Steve Sliwa, Superintendent of Education and Russ Holmberg, Transition Support Leader.

Mr. Laurie was very impressed with both schools and the efforts of Renfrew County District School Board staff in ensuring a smooth transition during the amalgamation process. He stated, "Both schools are in great shape and the school authorities, and currently the RCDSB, must take credit for working so hard to ensure a quality learning environment for the young people attending the two schools. Furthermore, I was impressed with the dedication of the staff and the level of engagement of the students. It was ever so clear that significant learning was going on in the classrooms that I visited."

Public Consultation Sessions Conclude in Deep River

On Thursday, October 8th, the third and final consultation session was held in the community of Deep River. Students, staff, parents, municipal representatives, community users, and the general public gave valuable input into how the Renfrew County District School Board should spend the 4.8 million dollar Energy Efficiency Funding that was announced by the Ministry of Education last June.

I would like to thank the chairs of the Morison, Keys, and Mackenzie school councils for their assistance in transmitting information and asking questions throughout the consultation process. It is very clear that the community of Deep River values its schools and is active in ensuring there is excellence in teaching and learning through the provision of safe, caring and respectful learning environments while using our resources wisely.