



Renfrew County District School Board

Director's Report - September 29, 2008

Parents Reaching Out to Support School Councils in RCDSB

Research confirms what common sense tells us - when parents are involved in their child's education and are connected with the school, the child is more likely to meet with success. On Saturday, September 27th, over 100 parents and administrators representing nearly every school in the Renfrew County District School Board came together at the second annual Parent Symposium, "Achieving as One".

Participants spent the morning with Dr. Maggie Mamen, a child and family psychologist and author of several books on parenting. Dr. Mamen described the societal context and pressures that make parenting a challenge, and provided specific strategies that parents and educators could employ to ensure that children understand responsibility and respect authority. Her presentation style and the content of her message provided food for thought, moments of laughter, and many positive comments. Dr. Mamen provided time for parents to pose questions and each parent in attendance received a copy of one of Dr. Mamen's books, "Who's in Charge?"

Participants also had opportunity to attend workshops. Dr. Henri Venema, our school board psychologist, spoke about transitions, routines, and peer relationships pertaining to primary aged children. Julie Thur, the coordinator of our school nutrition programs, focussed on developing healthy habits in students of grades 4 to 8. Constable Beth Ethier provided information about drug and alcohol use and abuse to parents of adolescents.

Lunch provided opportunity for the children, who had been engaged in supervised activities, to join their moms and dads, and there was lively conversation about the morning sessions. In the afternoon, parents and Board staff met in small groups to review information and resources, and to share ideas for effective school councils.

The conference was organized by the Board's Parent Involvement Committee and funded by a Parents Reaching Out grant received from application made by the parent group to the Ministry of Education. The committee, encouraged that participation in 2008 was double that of 2007, plans to immediately turn its attention to submitting an application for funding for next year. That application is due in October.

RCDSB Students Develop Leadership Skills

The Renfrew County District School Board is proud of the academic achievement, character development and civic engagement of its students. Recognizing that student leadership is a critical factor in creating a positive school culture, the Board recently sponsored a leadership day at Wilderness Tours in Foresters Falls. Secondary school student leaders from Arnprior, Opeongo, Renfrew, Mackenzie, Madawaska, Fellowes and General Panet came together to develop and share strategies for engaging the greater student body in school activities and in projects that contribute to communities locally and globally. Student trustee, Renée Lance, had opportunity to address the group and to describe her role. She acknowledged the importance of involving all students in school activities and encouraged those present to stay in touch with her. Special thanks go to Gayle Bishop, Alex Harris, and the teachers who serve as advisors to student councils in each school for their coordination of the day.

RCDSB Staff Share Expertise with DND Schools

Canadian military families posted to NATO sites in Europe can be assured that the Renfrew County District School Board is helping their children succeed in school. NATO schools in Belgium and the Netherlands use the Ontario curriculum and our Board is contracted to provide pedagogical and technological support to the staff. In the summer, staff from our IT Department assisted the schools with updating their student data and report cards to Trillium so that student records are consistent with Ontario's OnSIS standards. Program staff recently travelled to the schools to provide training for teachers on new Ontario curriculum documents and strategies for literacy, numeracy and differentiated instruction.

Security is Everyone's Business - Privacy and Information Management

Key staff from the Renfrew County District School Board has been engaged in the work of the Privacy and Information Management Taskforce, a grassroots group of professionals who over the past year have assembled a toolkit to help school boards meet the challenges of managing data warehouses, making information available through electronic means, and ensuring security of networks and privacy of personal information.

At the launch of the toolkit last week, Dr. Michael Geist, law professor at the University of Ottawa, commended the group for taking action and providing templates for board policies and procedures on privacy, security, access, and oversight of information. Stating, "The Internet never forgets", Dr. Geist reminded us of how important it is to be vigilant about personal information and to be prepared to deal with breaches of security.

Staff will be reviewing the PIM materials and will use the templates to assess current procedures and as a basis for implementing practices.

Reporting to the Ministry

In August/September, there were the following points of accountability:

- Primary Class Size Report; Elementary Average Class Size Report
- CODE Special Education Project Report
- Application for Projects on Aboriginal Education
- Initial Submissions on New Teacher Induction, Mentoring for New Administrators, Teacher Performance Appraisal, Principal/VP Performance Appraisal
- Board Accessibility Plan
- Safe Schools Report

Upcoming Events

Petawawa Accommodation Review Committee Meeting - October 2, 2008 at Pinecrest Public School to share information and introduce the School Valuation Framework.

RCDSB System-Wide Professional Development Day, "Energizing for the Future" - November 7, 2008 at Fellowes High School and Champlain Discovery Public School.