



Director's Bulletin – 2007 09 26

**To: Principals, Managers,
Union and Federation Presidents**

At the Committee of the Whole Board Meeting held on **September 25, 2007**, the Algoma District School Board (ADSB) trustees heard from Superintendents and System Administrators on various items.

1. SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

As a result of new funding provided by the Ministry of Education, directed at the Senior Administration level, intended to support all Boards to continue to build internal capacity for student achievement and to equip those who work in schools with skills they need to bring about improvement in student learning, the Board has approved the restructuring of the senior administrative team to provide more support toward student achievement.

As a result, we are pleased to announce that Superintendent, Lucia Reece's and Superintendent, Bob Cole's duties will be reorganized to allow them more time to work more directly with schools on student achievement. We are also pleased that this means the Board will be advertising for a new Superintendent of Education, whose focus will be directed toward Elementary and Secondary operations.

We are all pleased with this new level of support and look forward to advancing on our success.

2. EQAO RESULTS SHARED AT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Superintendents of Education Bob Cole and Lucia Reece shared the results of Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) testing with trustees at the Committee of the Whole meeting held on September 25, 2007.

Elementary Reading, Writing and Mathematics Results Consistent with Province

In 2005 the ADSB was recognized as having made the greatest improvement in student achievement. Last year, the board sustained the growth made in Grade 3 and Grade 6. This year we were thrilled to see that we have sustained and in some cases with cohort data, have exceeded provincial growth trends. In comparison to 5-Year Trends with the Province, in **Grade 3** writing ADSB is at 17% while the province is at

2. EQAO RESULTS SHARED AT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING – cont'd

9%. Again in the 5-Year Trend, **Grade 6** students provincially are at 7% while ADSB is at 10%. Superintendent of Education Lucia Reece summarized that over the last three years, we have been consistent with the provincial trends and like the province, our focus will continue to be on writing and junior mathematics.

Algoma District Students Sustain Improvements in Mathematics

Results released September 19 by EQAO, for testing administered during the 2006-2007 school year, show that Algoma District students continue to deliver strong outcomes.

Significant improvement was demonstrated by students in both academic and applied courses. Over the past seven years, in **Grade 9**, the percentage of students at or above the provincial standard:

- among students in academic mathematics courses increased from 49% to 69% and
- among students in applied mathematics course increased from 12% to 35%.

The ADSB mathematics results are close to and consistent with the provincial results which showed that 71% of students in academic courses and 35% of students in applied courses achieved the provincial standard.

EQAO tests provide a snapshot of student achievement. The results have become a source of information that assists school and board improvement planning efforts. They provide a reference to achievement in relation to a provincial standard.

3. LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS

Superintendent of Education Bob Cole outlined Light House projects that will be implemented at the Secondary level thanks to additional funding that was announced through the summer by the Ministry of Education.

ADSB has received \$196,050 in new funding for Lighthouse projects and the Board will match the Ministry funds. Lighthouse projects are designed to support student success through innovative programs and ADSB will undertake two such projects this year:

1. Walking in Harmony: Transitions for First Nations Students

This initiative will provide support for First Nations students by placing an additional Educational Assistant (EA) and a First Nation mentor worker at both White Pines Collegiate and East View Public School in Sault Ste. Marie (SSM). Also, a transitional grade 7 and 8 technical education class will be implemented at White Pines Collegiate. Ministry funding will provide \$124,750 for this "Walking In Harmony" project.

2. Saving Our Students (SOS)

This initiative will be implemented at Alexander Henry High School in SSM. It will focus on providing an environment that is conducive to assisting targeted students with barriers to education. Ministry will provide \$71,300 of the funding which will support an additional teacher, an EA, and support resources.

Past Lighthouse projects that the ADSB will continue to sustain include the Late Schools, Motive Power, and the House Construction Project.

4. PREMIER TECHNOLOGY

ADSB was successful in being awarded a grant from Premier Assistive Technology. This grant will allow all of our computers to be equipped with "Accessibility Suite" software which will allow students and staff the opportunity to access this resource. It's the world's only suite of accessibility tools that support individuals who find reading and writing a challenge, whether they are blind, low vision or learning disabled. Some of the few programs our students will be able to access through this grant are: Universal Reader with Talking Pointer, Talking Calculator, Scan and Read Pro, Ultimate Talking Dictionary, Text to Audio, and Talking Word Processor. Students at Greenwood Public School and W.C. Eaket Secondary School were part of a pilot last May and June and provided the Board with positive feedback. We are excited about this new resource for our Board. Please see Attachment #1 for additional information.



Premier Assistive Technology

Taking a Common Sense Approach to Assistive Technology

Universal Reader With Talking Pointer©

The Universal Reader is a very easy to use utility that reads to you. The best part is that it works with virtually any application. Use it to read your email, your word documents, even PDF files. It is as simple as selecting what you want to read, then click on the floating toolbar and it starts to read. It takes about 2 minutes to install and even less time to learn how to use it.

Talking Calculator©

This full functioning "talking calculator" can be used with or without a screen reader. Every button and edit area talks. It is easy to use with large keys and contrasting colors. It has three display areas, so when the user adds a series of numbers, the total is always displayed, even as you are entering a new number, while always displaying any numbers in memory.

Scan and Read Pro©

Full-powered scanning application with full voice capabilities for reading combined with electronic document creation (including multi-lingual support in the Pro version) with easy-to-use controls that get you up and running quickly. Place a book on a scanner, press a button and Scan and Read will read the page to you. Also includes Predictor Pro, comprehensive word prediction technology.

Ultimate Talking Dictionary©

The Ultimate Talking Dictionary is a comprehensive, unabridged dictionary with an integrated thesaurus. The UTD works with any program and virtually no typing is required. Just highlight the desired word in a body of text, press a key and the UTD reads the definition to you AND presents a list of synonyms & antonyms. The UTD has over 250,000 words, including slang, jargon and historical names and places. Powerful INTERLINK technology even lets you find a word when you don't the exact word. The UTD has special features that will allow it to work with other assistive technologies (e.g. screen readers).

PDF Magic Pro©

PDF Magic is an easy-to-use tool that can convert any PDF file to a variety of standard accessible formats such as MS WORD, TXT, RTF and HTML. It even works with all types of encrypted files and with our "Exact Match" technology retains original document format for tables, columns, color graphics, etc. Handles 155



Premier Assistive Technology

Taking a Common Sense Approach to Assistive Technology

printed languages.

Text To Audio©

A high-end application that can take existing digitized text files and convert them to multiple standard audio formats (e.g. WAVE, MP3). Use Text to Audio to create your own "books on tape" quickly and easily. Other features include our Clear Audio technology, bookmarking, auto-segmentation of audio and writing directly to CD's.

Talking Word Processor©

A fully speaking word processor that saves files in standard word processing formats (e.g. MS WORD). An excellent tool for teaching word processing. Great aid for general literacy, LD - ADHD and even as a convenient proofreading tool. Also includes Predictor Pro, comprehensive talking word prediction technology with vocabulary levels and integrated dictionary for quick definition lookups. Talking Grammar Check is just the latest of many powerful features of Talking Word Processor.

Premier Predictor Pro©

The Premier Predictor Pro is a talking word prediction program that works with every program on your computer. Predictor Pro will display a word list next to your cursor as you are typing, displaying the most probable word at the top of the list. This technology can significantly reduce the number of key strokes an individual needs to make. It also includes a built in talking dictionary, word search and Document Digester™.

E-Text Reader©

A tremendous reading utility application that lets you easily read an electronic text using built-in digital voices. The E-Text Reader can read any document in Standard Text, MS Word, RTF ("Rich Text Format") and HTML. The powerful "extract" feature lets you create a separate document containing only text you've highlighted. Other great features such as "highlighting" and bookmarking combined with the ability to add your own notes directly in an electronic document make this an ideal tool for everyone.