



Director's Bulletin – 2007 10 23

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

At the Committee of the Whole Board Meeting held on **October 22, 2007**, the Algoma District School Board (ADSB) trustees heard from Superintendents and System Administrators on various items.

1. ABORIGINAL WORKSHOP

Superintendent Kime Collver updated the Board on the success of the Aboriginal Workshop held on October 12th at the Garden River Recreation Centre. Hosted by the Algoma District School Board (ADSB), this was an occasion for the Board and its Aboriginal partners to gather and focus specifically on how to best meet the needs of our Aboriginal students. The workshop was well-attended with about 150 participants.

Guest speakers included Bryon Brisard of the Aboriginal Education office of the Ministry of Education, Garden River First Nation Elder Shirley Roach and Key Note speaker Dr. Pam Toulouse from Laurentian University.

Dr. Toulouse in an interactive exercise, highlighted just a few of the hundreds of innovations and inventions that Aboriginal people were responsible for creating, designing and inventing hundreds of years ago but which they have never been given credit for (including potatoe chips and a variation of disposable diapers to name just two).

She also got to the point of the day – that Aboriginal students learn, listen and answer differently and she offered tips on how educators could better work with Aboriginal students. In brief, she suggested that most Aboriginal students are more visual than verbal. What works best for them are presentations with lots of visuals, hands-on activities that are culturally relevant and discussions with themes and metaphors. She also reminded the audience that Aboriginal students are reflective and will take time (sometimes even days) to come to understand a question before providing an answer. They are also collaborative learners and often work well in small groups.

Other high lights included ADSB Counsellor Desire Mitchell with her student drummers from Etienne Brule Public School and a presentation by dancers in full regalia from the Indian Friendship Centre. Afternoon break-out sessions were led by John Hodson of Brock University, Marnie Yourchuk of North Shore Tribal Council, Catherine Longboat (a former Traditional Mentor Worker at W.C. Eaket Secondary in Blind River) and Brent McHale, Brenda Powley, Susan Labette and Anne Trudel from the Métis Nation of Ontario.

2. PRINCIPAL AND VICE PRINCIPAL MENTORING

The Ministry of Education is funding a Mentoring and Coaching Pilot for Vice-Principals and Principals in association with the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC). ADSB is one of just six Boards in Ontario chosen to be part of the pilot. The project provides mentors with training, resources and release time to meet with their mentees. The pilot is designed to provide support for new administrators with the focus on improved student achievement.

3. ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

Superintendent of Business Bob Backstrom along with System Administrators Brenda O'Neill and Sergio Iacoe provided the Board with the Pupil/School Accommodation Review Process Update. In particular they looked at Stages 2 (portion of), 3 and 4 (portions of) which deal with the role of the Local Accommodation Review Committee (ARC).

Stage 2 (portion of): "Commencing Pupil Accommodation Review" looks at who should be part of the ARC, which is appointed by the Board. ARC members should include: School Council Chair/Member; Community Member; Municipal Representative or Council Member; Principal; Staff Member; Senior Secondary Student; Superintendent of Education/Senior Board official.

Stage 3: "Community Consultation and Public Meetings" outlines details pertaining to public meetings. The date of the first public meeting/consultation is to be established by the Board a minimum of 60 calendar days (excluding holidays) following the Director of Education informing stakeholders of school being "under review status".

A minimum of four public meetings/consultations must be held. They must be well publicized in advance and relevant information must be provided to support discussions that may occur.

Stage 4 (portion of): "Local Accommodation Review Report, Board Decision(s) and Implementation" outlines what the Local ARC's report will address which should include the valuation results for the school; proposed changes; reactions to proposed changes; and other possible options as solutions to accommodation issues under consideration.