



Director's Bulletin – 2008 05 07

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

At the Algoma District School Board's (ADSB) Committee of the Whole Meeting on Tuesday May 6, 2008 a number of items were reviewed.

1. FUNDING FOR FAMILY LITERACY CENTRES

Director Mario Turco and Superintendent Lucia Reece reviewed with Trustees an announcement that was made at the end of last week. The McGuinty government is investing \$350,000 to open four new parenting and family literacy centres in Sault and Area schools this September.

ADSB is one of only 12, out of 72 Ontario school boards to receive funding for family literacy centres. The announcement in Sault Ste. Marie was part of a \$2 million provincial investment to open 34 new family literacy centres across Ontario helping more young children get a great start on learning.

The centres help children up to six years of age build essential numeracy, literacy and social skills through stories, music and play. Research shows that early childhood education helps to improve student achievement and prepare children for school. Parents or caregivers attend with the children and engage in their learning. The centres are free to attend and families do not have to pre-register.

Located in schools in high-needs areas, the centres also help ease the transition to kindergarten by:

- Familiarizing children and families with school routines;
- Giving children and families the chance to spend time with other families;
- Linking families with appropriate community resources for special needs, health and other related services.

Each centre has a book-lending library in different languages so parents can read to children in their first language.

MPP David Oraziotti was quoted last week, *“(The funding) speaks to the ability of the board to accommodate and enhance learning opportunities for families.”*

2. NORTH EAST REGIONAL ABORIGINAL SYMPOSIUM MAY 8TH AND 9TH

Superintendent Kime Collver reviewed the final details for the upcoming Aboriginal Symposium being held this Thursday and Friday at Shingwauk Hall.

Leaders from School Boards and Aboriginal communities from all over northern Ontario will be joining us. We are pleased to welcome the Honourable Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne for part of our symposium.

The theme is: Educating our Educators, Educating our Students: An Aboriginal Focus. The key note speaker for the symposium will be Eddie Benton-Banai, a respected Ojibway educator who will bring a strong and inspirational message.

ADSB will be sharing and highlighting our practices as part of our commitment to bring Aboriginal culture and traditions into our schools with the help of our Aboriginal partners and mentors. Varied workshops will be held over the two day event.

Please see separate, detailed Media Release titled: ***ADSB Hosts North East Regional Aboriginal Symposium this week at Shingwauk Hall***

3. COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Superintendent Asima Vezina shared with the trustees the recent work that is being done under the Safe Schools Initiative in the area of enhancing collaborative partnerships between school boards, schools and community service providers.

To date, the board has met with a number of community agencies three times in an effort to strategize around ways to improve non-academic support for students in the educational system. Superintendent Vezina indicated that there are currently 13 partners at the table strategizing around maximizing local resources, sharing expertise, enhancing referral mechanisms, increasing access to appropriate services and supports for students and families and improving a student's and family's ability to understand, navigate and use the services and supports available to them.

Our partners include:

Algoma Family Services
Algoma Health Unit
Batchewana First Nation
Children's Aid Society
Community Living Algoma
Donald Doucet Centre

Garden River First Nation
Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board
John Howard Society
Ministry of Children & Youth Services
Sault Area Hospital
Sault Area Police Services

MEDIA RELEASE

ADSB Hosts North East Regional Aboriginal Symposium this week at Shingwauk Hall

2008 05 06 - On Thursday and Friday, May 8th and 9th, the Algoma District School Board (ADSB) is hosting the North East Regional Aboriginal Symposium at Shingwauk Hall, Algoma University College. Leaders from School Boards and Aboriginal communities from all over northern Ontario will be joining us for this two day event. In addition, we are pleased to welcome the Honourable Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne who will address participants of the symposium early in the evening on Thursday at the Water Tower Inn.

The theme of the North East Regional Aboriginal Symposium is: ***Educating our Educators, Educating our Students: An Aboriginal Focus.*** Opening remarks will be provided at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday by ADSB Director of Education Mario Turco, Batchewana First Nation Chief Dean Sayers, Garden River First Nation Chief Lyle Sayers and Brent Hale of Métis Nation of Ontario.

The key note speaker is Eddie Benton-Banai, a respected Ojibway educator, story-teller and spiritual leader, who has also been a college professor in world religions. He is scheduled to speak at 9:30 a.m. Thursday morning.

Eddie is a full-blooded Wisconsin Ojibway of the Fish Clan. He is a pioneer in culture-based curriculum/Indian alternative education, believing that education should be built on one's heritage and cultural identity, and should encourage spirituality, creativity, and cultural pride. He founded the Red School House, an Indian-controlled school for children K-12 located in St. Paul, Minnesota.

He is one of the original founders of the American Indian Movement, an influential movement that has led to self-identity, pride and revival of American Indian culture for the last generation of Anishinabe people. He was the American Indian Movement's spiritual leader and is also the Academic/Spiritual Advisor for Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig/Shingwauk University here in Sault Ste. Marie.

ADSB along with our local Aboriginal partners, elders and mentors will provide a variety of workshops over the two days. Below is just a sampling of the sessions which will be available for participants:

- **Sharing Circles** with Willard Pine: participants will have an opportunity to ask questions, share and reflect on the traditional way of communicating;
- **Cultural Camps** with Bernadette Shawanda: effective relationship building skills with First Nation People identifies learning protocols of First Nation People today;
- **Kinomaage-Aki** with Mark Robinson, Sheila Nyman and Joanne Boyer: participants will hear how students' success has increased due to the initiation of an Aboriginal mentor in school ;
- **Ethical Space** with John Hodson and Catherine Longboat: research based information on the success of students and schools who have initiated an Aboriginal room in their schools.

Thursday evening will include entertainment provided by Sierra Noble at the Water Tower Inn. At 18 years of age, Sierra is a world-class, Métis fiddler. She creates her distinct sound by unifying cultures, Métis and Celtic; and musical genres, world beat and roots jazz.

Sierra dedicates much time and energy into preserving the Métis culture by learning the traditional styles of fiddling and jigging and passing it on to youth all across Canada through schools and community workshops.

In fact, on Wednesday May 7th, Sierra will be performing for hundreds of ADSB students at White Pines Collegiate, at 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Each performance is one hour.

Media is welcome to attend:

Wednesday May 7th

- White Pines Collegiate, 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., one hour performances each
 - Sierra Noble, world-renowned Métis fiddler

Thursday May 8th

- Shingwauk Hall, from 9:00a.m. to 3:15 p.m.
 - Opening of North East Regional Aboriginal Symposium
 - Sessions throughout the day
- Water Tower Inn, evening
 - 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Sierra Noble performance
 - 5:45 - 6:25 p.m. Minister of Education Address to symposium attendees

Friday May 9th

- Shingwauk Hall, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
 - Welcome comments from Dr. Celia Ross, Algoma University President
 - Student Panel, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
 - Ongoing workshops sessions