



Algoma District School Board

Director's Bulletin – 2008 10 15

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

At the Algoma District School Board (ADSB)'s Regular Board Meeting held on Tuesday September 14th in Sault Ste. Marie, a number of updates were provided to Board members on some exciting initiatives.

1. SCHOOL VISIT UPDATE

Superintendent of Education Asima Vezina provided an overview of recent research ADSB has undertaken as they continue the process of planning for the new Elementary and Secondary schools in Sault Ste. Marie and the secondary addition in Hornepayne.

Project teams undertaking this responsibility include: ADSB administrators, trustees, superintendents, program team members, parent school council members, managers and recently acquired architects. The group has researched new schools in Ontario to review school designs, layouts and programs that they may wish to have incorporated into the new schools in the next few years.

Over four days and with a very full itinerary, a group was selected to tour through fifteen recently constructed schools located in Val Caron, Maple, Stouffville, Scarborough, Mississauga, Kitchener, London and Windsor.

Group members were able to view some highly effective layouts at both elementary and secondary schools that could be incorporated here. The next part of the process invites these teams to work with architects to try to incorporate features that would meet with our needs and stay within Ministry funding parameters.

2. OFIP SCHOOL UPDATE

Superintendent Lucia Reece told the Board that the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP) schools were announced last week by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. The OFIP model is designed to support elementary schools with focusing on student achievement and establishing effective Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

Algoma District School Board OFIP schools will have access to eight half days for PLCs to begin data analysis and setting SMART goals to improve student achievement. OFIP schools for ADSB are:

OFIP 1: Aweres PS

OFIP 2: Thessalon PS, William Merrifield PS and Mountain View PS.

OFIP 3: Ben R. McMullin PS, R.M. Moore PS and Sir James Dunn PS (Wawa)

Elementary Program Staff and our Student Achievement Officer, David Grady, have been assigned to work with these schools on their journey.

3. ONTARIO FRUITS AND VEGETABLES INITIATIVE

Superintendent Reece was very pleased to advise that Algoma Public Health is again able to support sixteen ADSB schools with the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Program. Financial assistance is provided to help schools serve safe vegetables and fruit and provide quality, healthy eating education through the Ministry of Health promotion.

The schools involved this year are: Arthur Henderson, Aweres, Ben R. McMullin, East View, Echo Bay, Etienne Brule, Iron Bridge, Isabel Fletcher, Kiwedon, Manitou Park, Parkland, Queen Elizabeth, River View, Spanish/Rockhaven, Thessalon and Esten Park Public Schools.

The Ministry of Health Promotion was established to improve and deliver programs that contribute to healthy living and wellness in this province. Key priorities include Ontario's Smoke-Free Strategy, healthy eating, active living, sport and recreation, injury prevention and mental health promotion.

4. NUTRITION TOOLKIT

Algoma Public Health has also provided our elementary schools with a ***Nutrition Tools for Schools*** Toolkit which provides a variety of lessons, information and factsheets for schools to use as part of the Healthy Schools initiative. Collectively, we have agreed to maintain a focus on ***nutrition*** for this school year in Elementary and Eat Smart Programs in Secondary.

5. CREATE AN OPERA PROJECT

Over the years, the Canadian Opera Company (COC) has offered a program called "Create an Opera" as part of the Algoma Fall Festival. This year, three ADSB classes (and one from the Separate School Board) will participate in a 6-week project in which they and their teachers will work with professional musicians/artists to write a libretto (a play script that is completely sung) for an opera that they will perform. Meanwhile, the COC musicians will write music for the student librettos.

What makes this even more unique is that they are piloting a brand new use of technology to provide long-distance program delivery. Students in Sault Ste. Marie will be working with three artists/musicians of the COC who will guide them in the process and assist them with the production of their opera by way of podcasts and webcams from Toronto.

Students and teachers will not actually meet the COC artists until the final week of the program, when the artists come to S.S.M. from Toronto to assist the classes with refining their performances in order to get them ready for the stage. Up until that time, students and teachers will interact with the artist via webcast. Using an on-line computer and LCD projector, teachers will type in students' questions and comments while the artist/musician is viewed onscreen and heard by everyone through the computer's speakers. Students will learn everything from what a libretto is and how to write one to developing the voice through breathing and articulation.

The participating schools include Pinewood's Grade 8 class, Queen Elizabeth's Grade 5/6 class and a drama class from White Pines Collegiate.

The final operas will be performed on the afternoon of Friday, December 12th at the Kiwanis Community Theatre at White Pines with other schools, parents, administration and trustees invited to attend. To complete the use of technology in this project, the December 12th performances will also be webcast/podcast across the Internet!

6. ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Organizations are obliged under Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) to provide and make available to the public, an accessibility plan for their organization. The purpose of the ODA is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

Superintendent Kime Collver reviewed the plan that has been prepared by the Accessibility committee for the ADSB. The Board has already identified accessibility projects in our capital and facility renewal projects. Superintendent Collver told Board members, ***“The ADSB plays a crucial role in ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to services, programs and opportunities. Identification, removal and prevention of barriers needs to continue in order to improve accessibility to Ontarians with disabilities who are either employees or students.”***

Barriers are identified as physical, architectural, information, attitudinal, technological, policy or practice and communication. In the 2007/2008 school year a number of facilities had upgrading done to ensure a more barrier free access including the installation of handicap operator to main entrance at Michipicoten High School in Wawa and at Echo Bay Public School (plus ramp) and installation of exterior wood ramps at both Johnson Tarbutt and Queen Elizabeth Public Schools. Further upgrades will be completed throughout the school year

7. TRAVEL ITEMS

Sault Ste. Marie students will be travelling to a number of countries and out-of-province locations during this and the next school year.

1. Teachers, chaperones and approximately 40 students from Korah Collegiate & V.S. will be traveling for a cultural tour of Chicago in May of 2009.
2. Teachers, parent volunteers and approximately 24 students enrolled in the senior history curriculum from White Pines C. & V. S. will be traveling to explore the culture and history of Germany, The Czech Republic and Poland during the March Break, 2010.
3. Teachers, parent chaperones and 29 Grade 7 and 8 students from Aweres Public School will be travelling to Cedar Point, Sandusky, Ohio from June 9 to June 11, 2009.
4. Coaching staff and approximately 20 players on the Sir James Dunn Hockey team will be travelling to Montreal to participate in the Canadian Cup Hockey Tournament from December 4 to 7, 2008. The Sir James Dunn Team has won this prestigious tournament over the last seven years as follows: two (Gold), three (Silver) and two (Bronze).