



Director's Bulletin – 2008 03 26

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

Trustees at the Algoma District School Board's Regular Board Meeting held on Tuesday March 25, heard about a number of upcoming events and initiatives being undertaken by ADSB schools, staff and students.

1. DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

At the Algoma District School Board (ADSB) regular board meeting held on Tuesday March 25, Superintendent of Education Bob Cole provided an update on Differentiated Instruction within the board.

Differentiated Learning recognizes that students differ in their learning styles and strives to provide teaching strategies that vary accordingly.

Early this month, (March 19th and 20th), Karen Hume of Durham District School Board, presented a professional development session for ADSB intermediate teachers and administrators on differentiated instruction. Karen is an administrator with the Durham District School Board and the author of several books on differentiated instruction.

Differentiated instruction is defined as an effective instruction tool that is responsive to the needs, interests and learning preferences of the individual. Karen's presentation was the start of a focus on differentiated instruction in the intermediate grades which will be followed by pilot schools participating in differentiated instruction action research projects.

Differentiated instruction is based on the premise that, since students differ significantly in their interests, learning styles, abilities, and prior experiences, then teaching strategies, materials, and pace should vary accordingly, allowing students to still achieve similar learning outcomes.

In the classroom this means supporting diverse learners by instructing in ways that recognize that students:

- learn best when they are actively involved in and physically interactive with their environment;
- develop a deeper understanding when they are encouraged to construct their own knowledge;

- benefit from choice, both as a motivator and as a mechanism to ensure that they are working at an optimal level of understanding and development;
- need time and encouragement to reflect on and communicate their understanding;
- need considerable and varying amounts of time and experience to construct scientific and mathematical knowledge.

Though students may take different paths to get there, successful differentiated instruction helps all types of learners achieve the same essential learning outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to aim at developing a combination of teaching strategies that are responsive to all students' needs.

2. FINAL PUBLIC MEETING DATES ANNOUNCED FOR LOCAL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEES

The Algoma District School Board (ADSB) announced dates for final public meetings for local Accommodation Review Committees (ARCs). The Final Draft ARC Report to be submitted to the Board will be shared at these final public meetings.

The following Final Public Meeting Dates for Under Review Status schools are at:

- Bawating C & VS March 31, 2008
- Francis H. Clergue P.S. April 1, 2008
- Rosedale P.S. April 2, 2008
- Sir James Dunn C & VS April 3, 2008

All meetings begin at 7:00pm.

The Accommodation Review Committees (ARCs) are responsible for completing a School Valuation Report for each school being reviewed, using a School Valuation Framework Template. This School Valuation Report will also be shared with the community at this public meeting so that any necessary revisions to the report based on feedback at the meeting can be made.

ARCs then submit a Final Report to school board administration who review and analyze it. School Board staff, as part of their report to trustees, will include the ARC report, proposals and recommendations. Trustees make the final decision regarding the future of the schools.

The ARC report will include a summary and outcomes from the four public meetings including the results of the School Valuation. Ratings and scores for each of the four sections in the School Valuation Report will be provided as well as an overall rating. The four sections reviewed in the School Valuation Framework are: Value of the school to (1) the Student, (2) the School Board, (3) the Local Economy and (4) the Community. Explanations of why sections were rated as they were will be provided. Observations about the process will also be shared by the ARC describing hi-lites, successes and suggested recommendations for future school reviews.

The ARC report will also provide a response by the ARC to the question: Are you in favour of the closure of your school and the proposed consolidation of two schools into one new facility? Why/why not?

In addition the ARC report, the ARC committee may provide further input on the following:

- If a new school is constructed, do you support the administration's recommendation for the location of the new school site? If not, what is your preferred site? Why?
- Do you believe the programs currently operating in your school should continue under the new proposed facility? Why/why not?
- What school model would you support?
 - Elementary French Immersion: JK-6 or JK-8
 - Secondary: 7-12 or 9-12
- If a grade 7-12 model were adapted for the new secondary school, would you prefer a voluntary format as we are currently operating or a mandatory structure where all grade 7 and 8 students from elementary schools within the new school's catchment area would attend the secondary school?
- Would you like to be involved in the school design/construction process? If so, in what capacity?

The ARCs and Algoma District School Board have followed all timeline requirements. Beginning with the first public meetings, the public consultation period must not be less than 90 days. After submission of the ARC Final Report, there must be no less than 60 days notice prior to the meeting where trustees will vote on the recommendations. School holidays (for instance summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring Break) must not be considered part of the 60 or 90 day periods.

It is anticipated that the actual vote by trustees will take place on June 17, 2008. If required, a Special ADSB Board meeting will be scheduled prior to this date to provide community members with an opportunity to make their views known by delegation to the board before any decision(s) are made by the board.