



Algoma District School Board

Director's Bulletin – 2008 11 12

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

Topics discussed at the Algoma District School Board Regular Board Meeting held on
Tuesday November 11th, 2008

1. REMEMBRANCE DAY ACTIVITIES

The November 11th regular Board Meeting for the Algoma District School Board (ADSB) began appropriately with a Remembrance Day presentation. The poignant slideshow was shown earlier in the day for ADSB Education Centre and Plant staff and included a moment of silence at 11am.

Superintendent Lucia Reece also mentioned a number of the activities that took place on this day of remembrance at our elementary and secondary schools. Most schools conducted assemblies on site while some schools attended the service at the Essar Centre. The ADSB Character Attributes of LOYALTY and RESPECT were evident throughout the system today.

2. DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

The Ministry of Education defines Differentiated Instruction (or D.I.) as ***“effective instruction that is responsive to students’ readiness, interests and learning preferences.”*** Superintendent Lucia Reece provided trustees with an update from a Regional Differentiated Instruction session held in Sudbury last week, and noted that since students differ significantly in their interests, learning styles, abilities and prior experiences, it is necessary that teaching strategies, materials and lesson pace vary accordingly.

ADSB schools and classrooms have been incorporating this instructional practice by recognizing 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.

3. PROVINCIAL BUDGET

Superintendent of Business Bob Backstrom provided a brief overview of the Provincial budget as it pertains to the education sector.

The Ministry of Finance provided a release in October, a backgrounder on Managing Expenditures. It stated that ***“the 2008 Budget forecast for Ontario economic growth in 2008 was 1.1 per cent. Due to global economic uncertainty and a significant lowering of private sector forecasts, the government is now projecting 2008 economic growth of 0.1 per cent.”***

The government continues to implement efficiencies across the broader public sector (BPS) through such initiatives as OntarioBuys, a supply-chain management program that is expected to save up to \$100 million across the hospital and education sectors.

In light of lower revenues for 08/09, the government is taking action to further manage spending. It is delaying the implementation of and slowing down some new spending, while at the same time restraining internal government expenditures. Together, these restraint measures will result in \$108 million in savings in the five months remaining in the 08/09 fiscal year. These measures include, among other things, deferring less-urgent education capital improvement projects, for a savings of \$25 million. In 2009/10, ministries (including Education) will be required to focus on the highest-priority programs while ensuring lower-priority programs are reviewed and assessed.

Compensation costs and wage settlements are key cost elements that can have a substantial impact on the finances of both BPS partners and the province. In 2008/09, the government expects its bargaining agent partners to achieve affordable collective agreements in this new fiscal environment.

Transfer payment funding will not be increasing in fiscal 2009/10 according to what was projected in the 2008 Budget last March.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

Friday November 14th is a professional development day for the Algoma District School Board. Superintendents provided trustees with the proposed agendas that will be followed for elementary, secondary and special education teachers and administrators for the day.

At Elementary schools, Primary and Junior teachers will meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in the morning. With one of the Board's focuses being on gathering and analyzing data to establish system profiles at a school level, schools will also spend time working on class data walls, updating tracking boards and developing the teaching-learning critical pathways for students. Intermediate teachers will review ADSB Math Results (EQAO) and will begin establishing next steps in math instruction.

At our secondary schools, there will be a review of Assessment for Learning and School Improvement Planning at the Provincial, Board and school levels. There will be meetings of various team groups including: Cross-Curricular Literacy Teams, Numeracy Teams and Student Success Teams at each secondary school and meetings of our secondary PLCs. Best practices and strategies to support student achievement and at-risk students in all grade levels will be shared throughout the secondary system as well.

5. ABORIGINAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Superintendent of Education Kime Collver provided information about the formation of the Aboriginal Education Committee. Discussions took place last year with Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board, North Shore Tribal Council, and the Métis Nation of Ontario with regards to supporting our Aboriginal students.

In June 2008 Aboriginal parents, elders and students were invited to put their name forward to work with this committee. To date there have been two information meetings held outlining the Aboriginal initiatives the Boards have undertaken to support Aboriginal student achievement. The Ministry of Education document "Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework" was distributed and introduced to the group.

The response from our Aboriginal partners has been supportive and positive and we look forward to meeting in the new year.