



Board Meeting Highlights January 16, 2013

Trustees:

Mike Murray (Chair), Eleanor Palis (Vice-Chair), Susan Carr, Ken Clarkson, Kathy Marshall, Sarah Nelson, Dave Rempel

Executive:

Laurie Meston (Deputy Superintendent), Flavia Coughlan (Secretary Treasurer)

Presentation: Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues

Recreation Access Coordinator Petra Frederick introduced Mr. Kevin Prieb, who is the Chair of the Municipal Advisory & Accessibility Committee. In his presentation to the Board, Mr. Prieb highlighted some of the Committee's past successes, which included the Committee's reception of several federal and provincial grants, its reception of the 2009 UBCM Community Excellence Award for Best Practices, and its organization of last year's Rick Hansen Anniversary event. Mr. Prieb concluded his presentation by outlining the Committee's plans for 2013, which included an active pursuit of opportunities to liaise with individuals and organizations with the goal of developing barrier-free services.

Presentation: International Education

Manager of International Education, Mr. Michael Polan, spoke to the Board about the successful International Education Program in the Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows School District. As a part of his presentation, Mr. Polan brought in a homestay mom to speak to her experiences in hosting international students, and an international student from Norway, who spoke to the benefits of this program from the student perspective. While current marketing efforts are focused on parts of Europe, Asia, Mexico and South America, developing markets include Colombia, Russia and Turkey, Mr. Polan explained.

Increased competition from the US, the strong Canadian dollar, and more affordable options in other jurisdictions were cited among the current challenges. The program

meets these challenges by offering more services, establishing partnerships with schools and provides, and by providing alternative programs and offshore delivery options. The success of the program, Mr. Polan concluded, is largely due to the Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows community, the school environment and the great teachers in the schools.

IT Plan: Learning for Tomorrow

David Vandergugten (Director of Instruction) and Richard Eskandar (Manager, Information Technology Services) presented to the Board on the District Technology Plan. Mr. Vandergugten and Mr. Eskandar explained that student learning is at the heart of the plan but that teachers must be properly trained in order to ensure that they recognize technology as an invaluable tool with which they can change the nature of learning in their classroom. Noting that the District's existing technology infrastructure serves as a model for other school districts in the lower mainland, Mr. Vandergugten nevertheless stressed the importance of regularly reviewing existing policies and processes. In this vein, social media policies are currently being developed and an alternate site for the District Disaster Recovery systems is being looked into so as to ensure data recovery following a seismic event.

Good news

In the Good News portion of the evening, Vice-Chair Eleanor Palis noted that Rich Goulet, a longtime teacher at Pitt Meadows Secondary School, had been honoured at a PMSS pep rally. Mr. Goulet's accomplishments had also been acknowledged in Ottawa by Prime Minister Harper and locally by Mayor Walters and Randy Kamp, MP.

The next Board of Education meeting will be at 6 pm on January 30, 2013 in the District Education Office.