



Board Meeting Highlights December 12, 2012

Trustees:

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

Executive:

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

Annual Report of Chairperson

Board of Education Chair Mike Murray presented the *Board Chair Year End Report*, which highlighted several recent District accomplishments, including improvements in the School District's graduation rates for resident students, Aboriginal students and students with learning disabilities. The Report also referenced the District's innovative spirit, which helped marshal such educational choices as the Environmental School, Cyberschool and the self-directed learning model at Thomas Haney Secondary School.

Speaking on behalf of all Board members, Chair Murray noted that the culture of continuous improvement in the Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows School District is “a credit to everyone involved in the system from our teachers, support staff and SEAs to our school and senior administrators and, of course, our students, parents and PAC groups.”

The full *Board Chair Year End Report* is available on the SD42 website at <http://www.sd42.ca/board-of-education/chair-annual-reports>

Trustee Elections

Chair Murray and Vice-Chair Eleanor Palis were re-elected to their positions by unanimous vote for a one-year period ending in December 2013.

Presentation: Child Poverty

Maple Ridge Teachers' Association (MRTA) President George Serra presented to the Board on Child Poverty, emphasizing the need to keep students who face poverty at the forefront of District decisions. Mr. Serra noted that in 2009, BC recorded the highest after-tax child poverty rate (12%) in Canada for the 8th year in a row, and stressed also that female lone-parent families are at much higher risk than 2-parent families. Government programs exist but they are not sufficient.

Mr. Serra explained that, while the District has hardship policies in place to ensure that all students have access to offered programs and opportunities, many parents will not access those funds because of the perceived stigma attached. Mr. Serra concluded his presentation by providing the Board with a link to additional resources on the issue

<http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/learn-more/resources>

Cooperative Gains Mandate and Savings Plan Correspondence

Secretary Treasurer Flavia Coughlan addressed a formal request from the Ministry of Education that all school districts prepare and submit a Savings Plan to support the K-12 Education Sector's Support Staff Collective Bargaining process. Secretary Treasurer Coughlan noted that the District cannot look at the Minister's request in isolation, but that it must consider it within the context of upcoming budget pressures as a whole. These pressures include an increase in teachers' pension plan contributions, general annual salary increments and enrolment projections. The Board resolved to prepare a letter in response, expressing its concern and indicating its inability to implement the proposed cost-savings plan.

Report on Student Achievement

In her report on Student Achievement, Superintendent Jan Unwin highlighted the consistent increase of grad rates and the rise of grad rates for students with learning disabilities. Success rates for Aboriginal learners and for students diagnosed with behaviour disabilities, in the meantime, were identified as areas of concern. Superintendent Unwin also referred to encouraging data from the iPod Literacy Project.

Kindergarten Registration Update

In her update on Kindergarten registration, Superintendent Unwin explained to the Board that online registration in the District would be postponed until 2014 so as to ensure that the new process is efficient, effective and well advertised.

Good News

In the Good News portion of the evening, Trustees noted the quality and value of the Westview Secondary choir, Chef Randal's MRSS Christmas turkey dinner invitation to Alouette Elementary, and the many upcoming District Christmas plays and concerns.

The next Board of Education meeting will be at 6 pm on January 16, 2012 in the District Education Office.