



Board Meeting Highlights June 27, 2012

Trustees:

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

Executive:

Jan Unwin (Superintendent), Laurie Meston (Deputy Superintendent), Wayne Jefferson (Secretary Treasurer)

Presentation: Community Literacy

District Principal Bruce Grady spoke to the Board about the historical background and current work of the Community Literacy Committee (CLC). District Principal Grady explained that a part of the mandate of the CLC is to work with other existing partners, such as the Fraser Valley Library, to fill gaps in community resources. Noting that the work being done by the CLC was important, District Principal Grady concluded by identifying consistency, funding, and the need for insurance as some of the key challenges that the CLC continues to face.

Presentation: Montessori Society

Natalie Baxter of the Montessori Society presented to the Board on the Montessori program. Ms. Baxter explained that the Montessori approach has five areas of focus – practical, language, math, cultural, and sensory – and that teachers structure the environment. The program teaches children to learn rather than memorize facts or figures and also includes a lot of hands-on work in the early years. Addressing the in-classroom details of this approach, Ms. Baxter observed that Montessori allows for both group instruction as well as individualized time, and that it also places an emphasis on learning through movement. Each child is on an individualized path in a Montessori program, which means that each child is also able to advance at his or her own pace. An overarching goal of the program is to instill independence and confidence. At Hammond Elementary, the Montessori program runs to grade 5.

Presentation: Parks & Leisure Services Commission

Mr. Tony Cotroneo, Recreation Manager of Youth and Neighbourhood Services, spoke to the Board about the BC Healthy Healthy Communities initiative, which emphasizes healthy eating, physical activity, healthy environments, and smoking reduction. Some of the highlights of services offered through Parks and Leisure Services include drop-in activities at Planet Ice and Pitt Meadows Arena, the Active Kids Club, a Youth Action Park at Thomas Haney Secondary, and the Grade 5 Active Pass.

Speaking to the Grade 5 Active Pass specifically, Christa Balatti (Manager of Health and Wellness Leisure Centre) explained that the aim of the pass is to keep kids active. Each pass includes free admission to leisure centre, age appropriate fitness programs, and public skating at Planet Ice. A September 2012 kick-off is anticipated.

Final Annual 2012/2013 Budget

Secretary Treasurer Wayne Jefferson informed the Board that the District has a balanced budget and a small surplus that can be used as a contingency the following school year. Highlights of the budget include the provision of additional hours for SEAs, provisions for replacing old equipment, and provisions for the growing Environmental School. Secretary Treasurer Jefferson observed that the guiding principle during the budget development process had been the protection of the classroom.

Changing Results for Young Readers

Deputy Superintendent Laurie Meston presented the Board with a report on Changing Results for Young Readers initiative. The report outlines seven structures that together form a “framework for action.” These structures include an early reading resource team, early reading facilitators, early reading advocates, and early reading learning teams. Deputy Superintendent Meston clarified that the goal of the initiative is not reading per se but ensuring that kids are ready to read.

Good News

The Board expressed thanks to parents and staff for their part in helping ensure that grade 7 leaving ceremonies and other graduation events were safe and successful.

The next Board of Education meeting will be at 6 pm on September 12, 2012 at Thomas Haney Secondary School.