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Mike McKay

Senior Leadership Team

Peter Jory
Superintendent of Schools/CEO

Nicole Bittante
Secretary-Treasurer

Carl Cooper
Director of Instruction,
Curric. & Innovation

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Director of Instruction,
Student Learning

North Okanagan-Shuswap Synopsis

Highlights of the February 20, 2018 School District No. 83 Board Meeting

Communicating Student Learning initiative update

Change is never easy but apparently it is being well accepted by both parents and teachers when it comes to the new communicating student learning initiative (report cards and student-parent-teacher conference) that is being piloted by 12 schools in School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap).

Director of Instruction Carl Cooper reported at the board meeting on Tuesday evening at A.L. Fortune Secondary in Enderby that feedback from staff and students taking part in the Kindergarten to Grade 8 Communicating Student Learning initiative has been overwhelmingly positive.

This school year the district initiated a new report card template and also a student-parent-teacher conference formal report. "We have had staff at 12 schools use the new report card template and also the conference format. We surveyed both parents and staff to get their feedback on the report card template, conference format and early dismissal."

"The feedback for both the new report card and conference from both parents and teachers was very positive."

Cooper showed a number of graphs at the meeting from responses to the survey. For example 78 per cent of parents (of the over 300 who responded) felt the new report card format clearly indicated how their child was doing in school and 85 per cent felt it was specific and individualized to their child.

Cooper commented he knows that early dismissal can cause additional challenges for families so one of the questions in the survey asked parents if they liked the parent-student-teacher conference to continue even if it meant early dismissal. "Some 77 per cent of the parents were in favour."

Cooper added the survey also yielded some excellent comments and suggestions from both parents and teachers which will assist the Assessment and Reporting Committee, which will improve and tweak the report card and conference process.

After this is completed, Cooper added it would be brought back to the board for discussion and consideration for approval.

McKay commented that he appreciated the survey and the clarity of information. He said the committee was obviously on the right track as the positive response was very strong.

Garnering attention

Official Trustee Mike McKay also congratulated the District Numeracy Committee as the work it has been doing has attracted the attention of Pearson Education Publishing. "Kudos to the team as their work on grade level critical concepts is being recognized as some of the best work in the province. It is gaining some provincial and national attention."

Draft Calendar

A draft calendar for the upcoming school year was presented for consideration to McKay by Superintendent of Schools/CEO Peter Jory. This calendar will now be

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circulated for feedback from stakeholder groups for the next month and then will be brought to the following board meeting for consideration for approval.

In the draft calendar the first day of schools will be September 4, 2018. Winter break is proposed for December 24 to January 4 with students back in session on Monday, January 7, 2019. Spring Break is proposed for March 18 to March 29 with students back in session on April 1. The draft shows the final day of school for students as Thursday, June 27.

Jory noted that, as announced by the government, Family Day will move to the third Monday in February and an additional non-instructional day was added for renewed curriculum implementation. He said the district tried to balance non-instructional days between Mondays and Fridays and to tie them in, when possible, to a long weekend as that was the feedback heard from parents in the past.

Jory added school-level feedback can be provided through an e-survey or directly through a school principal. District stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback through an e-survey or via email to the executive assistant to the Superintendent of Schools/CEO at cpratt@sd83.bc.ca.

The email survey can be found on the [district website](#) or by clicking <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JR8GJHY>.

South Canoe Outdoor Learning update

The kindergarten to grade six outdoor learning program slated to open in September at South Canoe is now full and has students on the waiting list, reported Cooper in his update at the board meeting.

He added a key piece is the district is awaiting word from the Agriculture Land Commission (ALC) for approval to re-open the school as it is located on agricultural land. He explained that once a school is dormant for more than two years the district must reapply to the ALC to open it.

"We are anticipating this could be a two to three month process but are hopeful."

He said the school district has received approval and a strong recommendation to the ALC from the Salmon Arm City Council as well as from several community groups.

"We have communicated this to parents who have registered their children and we will continue to update them as we receive information," added Cooper.

"It's good to hear that we are full and there is a waitlist," noted McKay. "It is obviously being well received."

Later in the meeting it was discussed that \$455,000 will be going towards renovations of the school. McKay noted that this is a lot of money, however, he noted, this is actually good news. "This is actually less than what it would cost us to accommodate this increase of students at their home schools so we have found some significant savings there."

2017-18 Budget Report & Bylaw

The annual amended budget report and the budget bylaw received approval by McKay.

Secretary-treasurer Nicole Bittante noted the Ministry of Education requires that the amended annual budget (which includes operating, special purpose and capital funds) is prepared, adopted and submitted to the Ministry by the end of February each year.

The report includes revenue and expenditure changes from the preliminary budget completed in May, resulting from changes to enrolment, revenue changes announced by the Minister of Education in December 2017, additional one-time and on-going budget allocations approval by the Official Trustee, and other known revenue and expenditure changes.

Bittante explained there was a net additional operating grant of \$1,294,473 from the preliminary operating grant estimate, mainly due to enrolment changes. However, she added, that with additional students there is a corresponding increase in expenditures.

Of note in the special purpose fund was that in the preliminary budget the district received \$3,075,746 in Classroom Enhancement Funds to address the BCTF restored language requirements. The district received an additional funding of \$3,434,363 in the final budget. These funds have used to hire an additional 52.7 FTE teachers.

In giving the 2017-18 amended \$81,027,192 budget three readings and approval, McKay thanked Bittante and the finance team for the well put together and responsible budget and report and the good work that went into it. However, he added the budget work is far from over as the focus now turns to detailed work on the 2018-19 preliminary budget. The complete budget bylaw and amended annual budget report will soon be available on the district's website (www.sd83.bc.ca) under Financial Reports.

Possibly for Sale

McKay announced at the meeting that the district is contemplating selling a parcel of property near Shuswap Middle School. "We have a very small capital reserve budget at the moment and there is not enough money to do some of the enhancements we would like at some sites. We do have some excess property and there is interest in the property so we are contemplating."

He noted before it would go ahead there would be public consultation. "There could be positive impact for students around this initiative."

PVSS trip to New York

A trip to New York for Spring Break 2019 was given approval in principle at Tuesday's meeting. Teacher Janet Gillis of Pleasant Valley Secondary School is organizing the trip for the fine arts students. She explained students taking part will have an opportunity to experience dance, art, drama and music as well as take part in dance classes and visit museums. McKay approved the trip in principle. He added parents must be aware that if for some reason, such as a travel advisory, it may be deemed necessary to cancel the trip. "Student safety always comes first."

Policy update

McKay gave first reading to three new policy initiations on employee hiring practices, field trips and student suspensions.

Jory explained the policy being initiated around employee hiring practices is required to communicate the Board's values and beliefs regarding hiring practices. The regulations are recommended to establish fair and equitable hiring practices as well as best practice in employee hiring processes.

The initiated policy on field trips is necessary because, although the school district has regulations and practices, a policy statement is required to communicate the Board's values and beliefs regarding field trips. He noted the regulations will also be reviewed to ensure the district is reflecting best practices and provide a transparent and efficient process for field trips for students, parents and staff.

Jory also discussed the initiated policy on student suspension. "We have regulations but don't have an actual policy. We need to have something that expresses our philosophical beliefs and that modernizes and captures our actual practice."

The policy on animals on school property, which has generated a robust discussion, is very basic language with the regulations being more specific, reports Jory. "We are balancing fairness, access and safety."

McKay also gave second reading to a policies around the district code of conduct (outlining the district's responsibility in providing safe, respectful and inclusive learning and working environments for all members of its school communities), student admission, withdrawal and attendance, and on culturally diverse learning environments.

Third and final reading was given to policies on assessment and communication of student learning, which Jory noted modernized the processes and reflects the work of the 83Learns Committee. The final policy to receive third and final reading was on curriculum and instruction, which outlines Jory noted, outlines the different ways learning can be accomplished.

McKay thanked the policy committee, which is comprised of stakeholders, for all of its work. "It is through this work we are meeting some of the requirements of the Watson report," he noted. He also expressed his thanks to executive assistant Carrie Pratt for her extremely capable work. "I much appreciate her support," added Jory.

Capital Projects Update

Bittante also updated McKay on the annual facilities grant (AFG) and capital projects. She noted the AFG budget year is slightly different as it runs March to March. Projects that have been completed this year include data rewires at Grindrod, Jackson & Sullivan campuses, and Armstrong. Heating valves were replaced at Jackson campus, new storm drains at Len Wood and Rancho, washrooms were updated at Sorrento and flooring was replaced at various schools.

She also provided an update on the Carlin Elementary Middle School project stating the backside of the school has been fully restored. There are new sidewalks, laneway and gate. The highway side of the school is now in the process of being renovated to match the front. The anticipated completion date is the end of May.

Over at North Shuswap Elementary the design of the parking lot is completed and sent to the Ministry of

Highways for approval. The goal is to complete this project in the 2018-19 school year using AFG funding.

At North Canoe an electrical upgrade will be taking place and should be completed by the end of March. This project has been awarded to a contractor and permits are in place. Over at Len Wood the Digital D Control System is being upgraded and should be completed by the end of March.

It was also noted the district's lead testing requirements have been completed for the year. Testing will occur annually.

The district also has several capital projects (which are approved by the Ministry as part of the District's five year capital plan) under way.

Phase one of Eagle River Secondary's heating and ventilation upgrade is now complete. The District is anticipating that Phase two will be approved by the Ministry in April 2018. Phase two will include installing the heating plant for the final HVAC upgrade. It is hoped Phase three will be in 2019, which will include the installation of all the mechanical equipment.

The district also replaced roof sections at Hillcrest, Pleasant Valley, Silver Creek and North Shuswap schools.

"That is a lot of projects to complete in a year," noted McKay. "Please express my thanks and appreciation to Steve and the Operations team."

Announcements

To start off the meeting Jory highlighted three events happening in the district.

Over 600 students from various schools learned about the thriving tech sector that exist in the North Okanagan-Shuswap and the province and the education paths that lead to tech jobs at the Tech Meet Up event held at the Sullivan Campus of SAS on Tuesday.

"Thanks to the Salmon Arm Economic Development Society for partnering with the district in this third annual event."

Also, Jory noted Wes Sandy, one of the district's Indigenous Education workers, is helping elementary schools run traditional outdoor games. "Students take part in several stations featuring various traditional sports such as snow snake throwing, snow shoe racing and log wrestling."

He also reminded parents about the opportunity to hear numeracy expert Carole Fullerton who, in her fun and engaging way, will help everyone understand the "why" and "how" behind the new math curriculum.

The presentation, which is at the District Education Support Centre (DESC) in Salmon Arm at 6 p.m. on Feb. 22, is organized by DPAC.

Next meeting

The next regular meeting of the board will be on March 13 at 6 p.m. at the DESC.

The final day of school before Spring Break is March 16. Students head back to school on Tuesday, April 3.