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Superintendent of Schools/CEO

Nicole Bittante
Secretary-Treasurer

Carl Cooper
Director of Instruction, Curric. & Innovation

Dianne Ballance
Director of Instruction, Student Learning

North Okanagan-Shuswap Synopsis

Highlights of the April 17, 2018 School District No. 83 Board Meeting

Early Literacy Intervention Program

The school district's early literacy intervention program has specialized literacy teachers working one-on-one or in small groups with grade one students who are struggling with early literacy.

Detailed data and observations are kept about each student in the program and by the end of the intensive literacy sessions, 70-80 per cent of the children are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations, with the other 20-30 per cent being referred for further services to determine if there is a learning disability.

But does the intervention last?

This was the question answered by Director of Instruction Carl Cooper and Literacy Intervention Teacher Jen Kelly to Official Trustee Mike McKay at the board meeting at Eagle River Secondary on Tuesday evening.

As part of the program each of the 285 students who have taken part in the literacy intervention are re-assessed each year. The group now has seven years of data which shows that the intervention program is working.

They explained that the results varied a little with each cohort (group), but the majority of children who took part in the intervention program are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations as they continue with their education ([check out the complete data by clicking on this link.](#))

Cooper commented that a good indicator of a child's success in school and life is if they are reading at grade level by grade three.

"Through this program 200 additional students now have this opportunity."

He noted an added benefit of the program is that if students are not successful after the intervention then it raises question of why not, and students are referred for other testing and services to help determine how to best help them learn.

Cooper concluded the presentation by noting that no "program" can change the trajectory of a student's life. "This program works because we have gifted, passionate educators working to help students."

McKay thanked Kelly and Cooper for the presentation.

"If we say through budget and resource allocation let's do this program because it will result in success for kids then we should track it and make sure it does. It is evident you have done that, and that you have good data supporting this."

Selling excess property

At the meeting McKay also gave approval to a bylaw to declare 4.7 acres of property surplus to the needs of district and to ask for approval from the Ministry of Education to dispose of the property.

If this is approved by the ministry the district will then list the property for sale at fair market value. The property, which has one permanent structure and three modular buildings and is located at 2960 Okanagan Ave.

Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Bittante noted that at the March board meeting a 30 day consultation period was approved. Over this time notices went out in the newspaper and on the school district website, discussions were held with district partner groups,

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and a public consultation was held at the District Education Support Center on April 10, 2018. "There were no significant issues raised with the proposed disposal of the property," she noted as she recommended that the proposal move forward.

McKay added that at the public consultation meeting last week there was a small group of people and some good discussion. "This property is not suited for expansion of Shuswap Middle School but it could help replenish the local capital reserve coffers so we can do good things for kids."

Capital Plan Bylaw

The 2018-19 Capital Budget bylaw received three readings and approval from McKay at Tuesday's meeting.

The Ministry of Education approved three projects for the school district (Phase 2 HVAC upgrade at Eagle River, Fire System Renewal at Pleasant Valley Secondary, and dust collectors at PVSS and Jackson Campus) as well as 13 school buses (two wheelchair accessible, one new and 10 replacements). Originally the district was to receive seven buses, however just last week an additional six were added to the replacements.

Bittante explained the district had purchased six buses some years ago that were now almost no longer covered by warranty. These buses featured a new engine and emissions system which has had some significant issues. "Trevor has been working with the manufacturer for the last year dealing with the issue." She noted this work led to the Ministry negotiating with the manufacturer to get the problem buses out of the school district's fleet. "We appreciate the ministry stepping in to help out," added McKay. "Thanks to Nicole, Trevor and the transportation team for getting this positively resolved."

Off to Columbia Ice Fields

Len Wood Middle School has received approval for a trip to Banff, Canmore and the Columbia Ice Fields. Teacher Michael O'Brien requested permission to take his Grade 7-8 class on the trip from June 11-13.

He explained on the trip students will have an opportunity to study environmental sustainability, walk on a glacier, tour Banff and Canmore, visit a First Nations museum as well as go swimming and wall climbing.

McKay thanked O'Brien for providing this enriching experience for students. "Sounds like a fabulous authentic learning experience."

Transportation Review

McKay gave an update on a recent public meeting on the district's transportation review, which was attended by about 50 people at Shuswap Middle School on April 11. "There was good conversation and good questions," said McKay, who explained he was connected to the meeting by telephone.

McKay explained the transportation review was necessary as the number of courtesy riders on district buses was reaching a "critical" point on some routes where demand is exceeding capacity. "We can't avoid the problem."

He noted that during declining enrolment accommodations were made for courtesy riders but now, with lower eligible rider limits (it has been reduced to 3.5 km for all students) and the uptick in enrolment changes must be made.

He noted capacity, the length of ride (at the extreme on one route courtesy riders have added 45 minutes to the run), and having predictable space for eligible riders are at the core of the need for change.

"We also heard clearly at the parent meeting that the lack of a downtown elementary school in Salmon Arm is an issue."

Bettcher will be taking the information gleaned from the public at the session to fine tune the transportation review, which will be brought forward to the May board meeting for consideration for approval.

"This is not a pain-free situation," commented McKay. "Unfortunately we will not be able to respond positively to all the requests for courtesy riders. We will continue to service courtesy riders on all routes where we have capacity."

The complete report can be found here: <https://sd83.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Transportation-Review.pdf>

Policy initiatives

McKay gave first reading to eight policies, which are to help guide the new board when it is elected in the fall. These include policies on the Role of the Board, Board Delegation of Authority, Monitoring Board Performance, Trustee Code of Conduct, Trustee Conflict of Interest, Trustee Remuneration and Expenses, Trustee Professional Development, and Trustee Attendance.

McKay noted that the need for these types of policies was highlighted in the Watson Report and will help establish clear expectations and guidelines for the incoming board.

Two additional policies, Budget Reporting and Monitoring, and Accumulated Operating Surplus (Reserve), were also given first reading. These two are being required by the Ministry and need to be in place by the end of June., noted Bittante.

Additional policies

McKay also gave second reading to a policy on Student Suspension, Employee Hiring Practices, and Field Trips and Travel. These policies will now go out for partner group feedback.

Third and final readings were given to the District Code of Conduct, Animals on School District Property, and Culturally Diverse Learning Environments. These policies will be added to the policy manual, which can be [found by clicking here](#).

Playground equipment grant

The school district will be prioritizing Hillcrest Elementary, Len Wood Middle and South Canoe Elementary for the new annual capital funding for playgrounds from the Ministry of Education.

Bittante explained that on March 9, 2018, the Ministry of Education announced that new annual capital funding would be available to school districts for the purchase and installation of new or replacement playground equipment. School districts are required to submit their top three playground equipment priorities to the Ministry by April 16, 2018.

Ministry criteria states that for a school to be eligible for a playground equipment project, it must have a majority of elementary school grades. School districts were encouraged to prioritize schools where no equipment currently exists and students do not have easy access to nearby playground equipment, either at another school or community park. The Playground Equipment Program focused on full replacement projects, so partial replacement, upgrades or repairs to existing equipment will not be considered.

Announcements

To start off the meeting Jory reported on activities and events in the school district.

He noted several groups of students took part in international trips over Spring Break including Eagle River Secondary where a group of students travelled to Rome and Greece where they explored historic sites. "Thank you to trip sponsor Eagle River teacher Kyla Hadden and teacher Jessa Clark for organizing this opportunity for students."

He added there was another successful homestay exchange with Inashiki, Japan. "Nineteen of our students were immersed in Japanese culture and had the opportunity to take part in judo and calligraphy, as well as visit significant tourist and historical sites. Thank you to trip sponsor Irene Laboucane, our District Principal of Indigenous Education, her husband Tim, and to staff members Tammie and Stan Koroluk for chaperoning."

He congratulated Eagle River Secondary students Ryan Spelay and Tristan Davies who each won bronze medals at the regional Skills Canada competition in Kamloops in March. Ryan claimed his medal in carpentry and Tristan in joinery.

"Also, congratulations to the Eagle River Secondary School students who placed second, third, fourth and fifth at spaghetti bridge building competitions at OUC in Kelowna and TRU in Kamloops. The school's Grade 7 students also did well in the gravity cars event winning a third and a fourth."

"Thanks to teachers Ryan Meise, Curtis Bellows and James Wagstaff for preparing the students for these events."

Jory announced that a Math Olympics for students in Grades 6-8 will be taking place on May 16 at Shuswap Middle School. Organizers are hoping for 30 teams, with each team comprised of three students. Participants will take compete in five events – two collaborative problem solving, one SkyScraper Challenge game, one Design challenge and one individual written test.

Jory also reported that the Wellness Centre at Sullivan Campus officially opened its doors on April 5 with the doctor in the clinic and seeing patients. The doctor, along with a mental health counsellor or clinician will be at the centre each Thursday from 11:45 to 3:30 p.m.

He noted there were other activities as well including Canadian Mental Health hosting chats with students during lunch hours starting in May. Also on May 3 the Wellness Centre is hosting a "Walk with Your Doc", a province-wide walk sponsored by the Doctors of BC and an opportunity to meet the Wellness Centre team. All participants will receive a free pedometer. The walk will take place outside SAS from 11:45 – 12:15 p.m. There

are also plans for a six week assertiveness training as well as chats on topics such as consent and what a healthy relationship is. Plans are also in the works for special events on National Aboriginal Wellness Day on June 21.

Upcoming meetings

A session to explain the role and responsibilities of a trustee will be held on May 7 at 6 p.m. at the DESC. The next board meeting is slated for May 22 at 6 p.m. at the DESC.