

# BOARD REPORT

*A brief summary of items discussed at Trustees' Regular Meetings*

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September 28, 2011

## Student Achievement

**September Start-Up:** Despite the challenges of starting the school year in job action, schools are reporting a smooth and positive start-up for students. Many extra-curricular activities continue to be offered in the best interest of students.

**Prime Minister's Awards:** We are thrilled to share that Will Eaton, Vice Principal of YouLearn.ca and former intermediate teacher at Similkameen Elementary Secondary School, is a finalist for the Prime Minister's Award. The winner is expected to be announced on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Will is very deserving of this recognition and we wish him good luck as one of the candidates.

**Aboriginal Education:** The signing of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement went very well. Thank you to all who took part in the ceremony, with a special thank you to Helen Gallagher, David Foster, Barton Tumlinson, Shannon Miller, Colleen Baptiste and Taylor Baptiste for their planning and carrying off the event. A very special thank you also goes out to Jim Insley who provided ongoing leadership in the signing of the agreement and with this event.

Aboriginal ancestry numbers are up again, 30 over projections. As a result, we are working with schools to restructure programs to enhance student programs. This includes developing plans for teaching Okanagan language in the Similkameen.

**Career Education Society Grant:** Career teachers are continuing to focus on our commitments for this grant of \$20,000. Thank you to Sherry Philpott-Adhikary, Rod Kitt and Steve Pozzobon. Our main thrust will be to improve awareness of the various programs (SSA, ACE-IT, Dual Credit and Work Experience). As part of this thrust, we will develop a grade 6/7 awareness program.

We are also working on bringing a dual-credit welding course in with Okanagan College. At this time, the college is working with us to find a site. Rod Kitt is taking a lead in this project.

**Visit from Minister Abbott:** Education Minister George Abbott will be visiting the district on Friday, October 14, 2011. A schedule is being created for Minister Abbott to visit three schools including SOSS. Minister Abbott will also be meeting with the Board of Education for School District No. 53.

## Innovation / Initiatives

### DISTRICT-BASED INITIATIVES

**Enrolment and Staffing:** Enrolment at Okanagan Falls Elementary School came in at 19 above projections. As a result, an extra division was added. As well, a primary division was added at Osoyoos Elementary School due to increased enrolment and at Oliver Elementary School to lower the district class size average. While class size for grades one to three can be as high as 24, class size averages, according to legislation for grades one to three must be below 21 across the district.

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**Roots of Empathy:** The Ministry of Education has announced funding to support the Roots of Empathy program in schools to bring awareness and reduce bullying in schools. Trustee Tarr attended a meeting in Vancouver this summer. School District No. 53 was specifically recognized for having continued to support the program despite the cancellation of funding last year. Marieze Tarr and Lisa McCall were thanked for their leadership in maintaining and expanding this program to seventeen elementary classrooms across the district this year.

## SCHOOL-BASED INITIATIVES

**Student teachers:** At this time, we have 9 student teachers coming to the district. Administrators and teachers are to be commended for their flexibility and commitment to provide placements for these new teacher candidates. The breakdown is 3 from TRU, 3 from U of Vic, 1 from UBC(O), and 2 from UBC's West Kootenay program. Five are elementary and 4 are secondary.

## Operations

**September 2011 Enrolment Report:** Preliminary enrolment indicates the district is up 80 students from staffing projections. If these numbers are confirmed on September 30, enrolment based funding increases by \$542,720 and funding protection decreases from \$1,489,545 to \$946,825. The district's overall funding remains the same and just flows through a different category of funding.

The increase in students is a positive indicator; however, any additional staffing required is funded through existing revenue.

**Southern Okanagan Secondary School (SOSS) Update:** The district received confirmation on September 19 of the following:

*"The Insurer has agreed to repair the new portion of the school that encompasses the two gyms, the laboratory and classroom attached and the cafeteria/atrium. They have also agreed to clear the debris from the fire. They have reserved their decision on work beyond this until such times as all facts are known relating to this incident."*

On September 19, the Director of Facilities met with cost and other consultants, engineers, architects, etc. regarding various aspects of the SOSS project. Discussions were held regarding placement of the new portables, how to restore permanent power and water to the shop wing, assessment of the science wing and options for the library and administrative offices.

The Secretary-Treasurer and Director of Facilities participated in a conference call with Ministry staff on September 22. An update on this call will be provided at the meeting.

**Summer Projects:** In addition to the work at SOSS this summer, major projects at Oliver Elementary School regarding a major mechanical upgrade and replacement of septic fields to sewer lines at Similkameen Elementary Secondary School were completed. Costs for these projects totaled \$1,771,982.31

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**BCeSIS:** With the improvements made over the past year, BCeSIS seems to be working quite well right now but we'll see how the final week of September goes. As you may know, Pearson Education has bought the rights to AAL (BCeSIS), and is talking about supporting BCeSIS for only one more year. The ministry is talking to Pearson about extending the service for BCeSIS for another 3 years. A migration plan to a new/different product will need to be developed – this migration could take 3 to 5 years. The ministry is not committed to any particular vendor and is willing to work with the school districts. The support for a common concept product is strong. The Gartner Report, an external review on BCeSIS, is available on the Ministry website.

**The next Board meeting is Wednesday, October 26, 2011  
at the School Board Office starting at 7:00pm**