



School District 59 (Peace River South)

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Board Meeting Highlights for January 20, 2010

Dawson Creek

- **Parkhill Elementary School Closure** – After careful consideration of all issues, the Board approved the closure of the Parkhill School at the end of this school year. Work now begins on a plan to ensure that all students make a good transition to new schools for next September.
- **South Peace Secondary and Central Middle School Review-Update** – A working group consisting of teachers, a parent, support staff, and administrative staff recently travelled to Kamloops-Salmon Arm to review a 2 school-1 campus middle/senior school. The working group will report their findings to the larger study group. The job of the study group is to develop recommendations for the Board of Education to consider at February's regular Board meeting. Parents, students, teachers and school/district administrators are all participating in the development of these final recommendations. Considerable research is now underway to look at the possibilities, including talking within the 2 schools about what parents, students and staff think should occur with reconfiguration.
- **Full Day Kindergarten**- The Ministry of Education has approved funding for 194 full day kindergarten students. This funding is not “in addition” to the students we had registered in September, 2009. Rather, it is the total number of kindergarten students that will be funded beginning September 2010. Discussions are currently underway to determine how to best allocate the 194 seats between the communities, and rural schools. The Board expects that full day kindergarten for all eligible students in the District will be in place for September, 2011.
- **Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Season** - It seems that each year when the FSA is to be written by students, the entire topic turns into a media debate riddled with conflicting messages to parents. This year the BCTF are encouraging parents to send letters to the school principal, withdrawing their child from writing the FSA. This further confuses the situation principals are only able to excuse students from writing the FSA under very limited circumstances. As with all provincial assessments, the FSA is a matter of provincial policy and all students will be expected to write the tests unless some exceptional reasons exist for them not to participate. The District regrets any confusion that the BCTF public relations campaign is causing parents.
- **New StrongStart Programs** – The last three StrongStart programs scheduled to open in the 2009-10 school year, did just that! Early Childhood Educator, Lorna Barrett had her credentials for B. C. approved in early December and began preparing her outreach programs for children and their parents to attend the first week in January.

First days at Devereaux, Tate Creek and Parkland were a success with 6 to 8 children and their parents showing up at each school to take advantage of the long awaited program. Invitations are out to Minister Lekstrom, hoping he may find time to join the StrongStart parents and kids in the next few weeks for opening celebrations at each school

- **Northern Opportunities Continues!** - The Northern Development Initiatives Trust Fund (a provincial initiative fund developed to stimulate economic development in central and northern BC) will be providing operating capital for Northern Opportunities to continue their work another 3 years. This agreement will continue to see the partnership between three school districts in the northeast, Northern Lights College, first nations and industry working together to develop and promote Dual Credit programs for youth in the north.

Northern Opportunities is recognized provincially as an extremely effective organisational structure for engaging industry and educational partners toward building an educated, trades workforce. Building on their success with trades-dual-credit programs, the next 3 years will see Northern Opportunities partners expanding their work to increase academic-dual-credit options.

- **2009/10 Amended Budget** – The Board approved an Amended Operating Budget of \$48,055,430 for the 2009/10 fiscal year. It includes a \$1.3 million transfer from reserves to compensate for the loss of the Annual Facility Grant funding.
- **Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)** – The Board was pleased to hear that HST rebates announced this week for School Boards will offset costs associated with the HST that will be implemented on July 1, 2020.
- **Torch Relay Showcases Hometown Heroes** – As the Olympic torch is carried through Dawson Creek, there are 2 prominent athletes with relationships to the school district participating in the event. Trevor Kolkea (Central Middle School Vice Principal) will carry the torch for the Dawson Creek leg of the journey. This honour is in large part due to his participation in local, national and international competitions as a tri-athlete, together with his commitment to athletics in the community.

Travis Jones (SPSS grad 2008/09) has been accompanying the torch since December 27th as a supporting athlete and member of the Torch Relay Team. Of the 250 members on the relay team, Travis is one of 11 selected to be a “torch attendant”, ensuring the torch never goes out. Travis earned his place on the Torch Relay Team as the result of appearing on a series of inspirational posters promoting both the Olympics and participation in sports at all levels. One hundred thousand posters were sent to every school in Canada featuring Travis representing the sport of curling. He

will continue his involvement, working at the Curling venue during the Olympics and Para-Olympics.

- **Important Dates –**

Jan.22nd - Deadline for nominations for vacant Dawson Creek School Trustee position

Jan.25-29th - Provincial Exams at the high schools

Feb.1st - The beginning of second semester

Mar.5th - Last day of classes prior to Spring Break

Mar.22nd - Classes will resume

Apr.2nd - Good Friday - classes resume on April 6th.

**Next Regular Meeting – February 24, 2010 at 1:00pm
Dawson Creek Board Office**