

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23 – BOARD COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Education and Student Services DATE: February 7, 2007

CHAIRPERSON: Trustee Cheryl Wiebe STAFF CONTACT: Hugh Gloster, Assistant Superintendent

Attendees:

Trustee C. Wiebe - Chairperson
Trustee G. Scanlan - Committee Member
Trustee M. Baxter (for Trustee A. Hunt-Binkley)

Staff:

M. Roberts, Superintendent of Schools
H. Gloster, Assistant Superintendent
C. Sulz, Director of Instruction K – 12
B. Bertram, Executive Asst., (recorder)

Partner Group Representation:

COPAC Marliiss Magas, Executive Member
COTA Cliff Schwartz, Member-at-Large
CUPE 3523 Margaret Varga, CUPE Trustee

Absent: Trustee A. Hunt-Binkley, Committee Member
Representation from COPVPA
Representation from the District Student Council

Agenda

Addition: “Partner Group Representation at Committee Meetings” to be added as Item #6.

1. Preschool Mentorship Program

A brief background of the origin of the Preschool Partnerships Program was provided by the Assistant Superintendent. The Director of Instruction K – 12 presented a brief synopsis of the “Building Early School Success Preschool Mentorship Program” and introduced Patricia Smith, S.D. No. 23 Speech Language Pathologist, and Donna Kozak, S.D. No. 23 Literacy Teacher. A Power Point presentation outlined the inception of the Preschool Partnerships Program and the formation of the Preschool Mentorship Program. Four preschool operators are involved in the program and it is hoped that the current model of preschool mentorship will be extended to include all preschool teachers currently within school district buildings (there are a total of 13 preschools housed in School District No. 23 facilities). It is expected that, in the future, the program will become self-run. It was also noted that the Ministry of Education, in a January 26, 2007 News Release, has launched a \$27-million plan to improve reading which includes early learning initiatives such as ReadNow BC, the StrongStart Program for preschoolers and Ready, Set, Learn which is a program that helps three-year-olds prepare for kindergarten.

Outcomes

- 1. The Committee agreed that a recommendation be sent to the Board for a letter to be written to the Ministry of Education congratulating them on their Early Learning Initiatives and advising them of our Building Early School Success Preschool Mentorship Program which, with minimal provincial funding, could save significant money in the future.**
- 2. The Committee also agreed that a similar letter be sent to appropriate Ministries involved in early learning and childcare initiatives.**

2. Accountability Contract – Partner Group Consultation

The Superintendent distributed a one-page Accountability Contract – Yearly Cycle handout which is an outline of the District’s promise to the Ministry showing what is planned for the coming year. The Accountability Contract process involves looking at results from the previous school year, establishing goals during the current school year and putting the goals into place for the next school year.

The Superintendent also circulated a binder of information containing an overview of Ministry information gathered for all districts in the province which includes demographics, the six-year dogwood completion rate, provincial exam results, grade to grade transition as well as a break down into high needs areas and special education. It was noted that consolidated student achievement data has yet to be provided by the Ministry and is expected within the next few weeks. Rough District goals are expected to be established in March/April as budget allocations will be based on District goals and school/partner group input. Partner groups were encouraged to advise their members of the gathering of partner input at the March meeting.

Outcome

- 1. The Accountability Contract will be added to the March 7th Education and Student Services Committee agenda.**

3. Achieving a Necessary Future

The Assistant Superintendent provided the information that the program began in 2001 with a commitment made to present a five year report to the Board. The Director of Instruction K – 12 confirmed that in-service, training and resources are provided to staff on an ongoing basis.

ANF does not cost the District money. In fact, the Superintendent advised that cancellation of the program would result in increased funds required to ensure that the District remains within the maximum class size ratio. As the number of teaching staff would be reallocated and not reduced, in order to meet class size ratios it would be necessary to add portables to those schools that have no extra classroom space available.

There was general discussion on the possibility of tracking ANF students' progress in later grades.

Outcomes

- 1. It was agreed that the Committee recommend that the Board approve continuation of the Achieving a Necessary Future project through to at least the conclusion of the 2007/08 school term, and District staff and principals would continue to collect and evaluate benchmark CAT-3, FSA and service-level data on all schools in both the control and experimental groups.**
- 2. The Committee also agreed to recommend that the Board request the Superintendent to conduct a review of the strategies designed to support students who do not yet meet expectations.**

4. BCSTA Okanagan Branch – Education Committee: Items for Discussion

The Assistant Superintendent advised that items presented at the October BCSTA Okanagan Branch Education Committee Meeting included the iLearn Project, Assessment for Learning, Board Authority/Authorized Courses, Schools of Choice, Trades and Apprenticeship Programs and the development of The Learning Centre as the “hub” of the School District.

The group discussed possible areas of mention for the February meeting including signing of the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement, the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence received by Lorraine Baron, the Preschool Mentorship Program and the recognition of principals Janet Slaney, Scott McLean and Sandra Sellick who received national recognition and were placed on this year's “Canada Outstanding Principals” awards list.

The Committee also formulated a list of issues that could be discussed at the BCSTA Okanagan Branch Meeting in terms of seeing what other districts are doing. These issues included International Education, grad rates and whether there have been any problems launching the StrongStart initiative.

Outcomes

1. **The Assistant Superintendent will work with the Chairperson on a list of items to mention at the Branch Meeting.**
2. **The Chairperson will take committee questions raised to the Branch Meeting for discussion and feedback.**

5. Policy 525 “Family Life Education Program”

The group discussed revisions to the policy and it was agreed that information for parents who wish to have their child “opt out” of the program be included in the policy.

Outcomes

1. **Section #8 of the policy will be amended to reflect the Ministry guidelines for providing alternative materials to parents who wish to “opt out” of the program and the Ministry guidelines will be added as “related documents” on the policy.**
2. **The Committee agreed that the revised policy, with amendments, be sent to the Board for approval.**

6. Partner Group Representation at Committee Meetings

PAC Presidents in the district have now been given their own FirstClass E-Mail address and will receive training in the use of FirstClass. Board and Committee agendas will now be sent directly to all PAC Presidents. The Chairperson commented that partner groups are a valued part of the committee and are encouraged to provide feedback at any time. In the Chairperson’s opinion, partner group representatives are “gatekeepers” for their respective groups and are requested to disseminate committee information to their groups or provide advice to the Committee to delay decision making until partner groups can be more thoroughly consulted.

The COPAC representative discussed the sometimes onerous task of circulating information to partner group members. Although School Planning Councils and school PACs are working well in terms of distributing information, there are many parents (especially parents new to the district) who are not aware of various District programs.

All partner group representatives at the table agreed that it was very beneficial to be able to voice concerns and provide input on committee topics discussed.

Outcome

1. **The Chairperson encouraged representatives to feel comfortable in providing feedback/discussion and also to advise if more time was needed in disseminating information on a certain topic back out to the field.**

7. Newspapers in Education Committee

The Assistant Superintendent provided information on the Newspapers in Education Committee. Response from schools has been overwhelming in supplying stories related to each month’s theme. The District has also received tremendous support from other area and community papers as well, i.e. Education Week features. The Committee discussed the possibility of having recognition of partner groups as April’s theme. April as well is volunteer recognition month. Other suggestions included an article on school boards and the process involved in becoming a School Trustee.

Outcomes

1. The Committee agreed that recognition of newspaper coverage by all papers be sent to the Coordinating Committee for consideration as a topic for a future Board meeting taking place after Education Week.
2. The Assistant Superintendent will advise the Newspapers in Education Committee of theme topics suggested at today's meeting.

Information Items

1. Items for Future Education and Student Services Committee Meetings

- Accountability Contract (*March*)
- Policy 425 and 425R - "Student Fees" (*Pending potential changes to the Act*)
- Program Review Template (*April*)
- BCSTA Okanagan Branch - Education Committee – Items for Discussion (*for February and October Meetings*)
- Changes to the Grad Portfolio Program (*March*)

2. Meeting Schedule

March 7, 2007 *PLEASE NOTE: This meeting only will take place at Hollywood Rd. Education Services Room #3*

April 4, 2007 May 2, 2007 June 6, 2007 (*all to be held in the School Board Office Board Room*)

3. Documents circulated at this meeting are available upon request:

- Building Early School Success Handout
- Accountability Contract – Yearly Cycle

Questions – Please Contact:

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