

**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
CENTRAL OKANAGAN
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

CHAIRPERSON'S ANNUAL REPORT – November 13, 2019

Board policy states that the Chairperson of the Board shall provide an annual report at the Board's annual meeting and I therefore submit this report to the Board and to the community at large.

Throughout the school year, the Superintendent of Schools provides reports and updates on a regular basis, so the Chairperson's Report will just touch on some of the major accomplishments and challenges we have experienced since the Inaugural Meeting a year ago. At the end of this report I have provided a link to the Superintendent's 2019 Report on Student Achievement.

With approximately 23,300 students and over 3,400 staff members associated with our 45 schools and other sites, the Central Okanagan School District is a large and complex organization. We are the largest single employer within the Central Okanagan, with an annual budget of over \$265 million. As the 5th largest School District in the province, we are also one of the districts which continues to grow and we continue to experience space issues in many of our schools.

The Board made some significant decisions regarding grade re-configurations in Okanagan Mission. With the opening of Canyon Falls Middle School in September, Grade 6 and 7 students moved to the new school. Next year, the school will accommodate Grade 6 - 8 students. The completion of the Canyon Falls campus went smoothly, and our Operations Staff, especially Mr. Mitch Van Aller, Director of Operations, are to be commended for their oversight of the entire project.

École Glenrosa Middle saw changes in September 2019, with a late French Immersion program (Grade 6) opening, and Grade 6 and 7s from École George Pringle Elementary transitioning to École Glenrosa Middle rather than traveling to Kelowna to attend École KLO Middle.

With the announcement last year that a new middle school will be built in Lake Country, the Board held several public meetings regarding the building plans, and the naming of the school. The school will be named H.S. Grenda Middle School, after a much loved and respected teacher at George Elliot Secondary School. The former golf-course, next to the George Elliot site has been converted to playing fields, and the ground breaking for the new school will take place soon. The plan is to have H.S. Grenda Middle School open in September 2021.

The replacement of École Glenmore Elementary, and the expansion/renovation of Rutland Middle School along with the building of new Secondary Schools on the Westside and in Glenmore/Kelowna, have been identified as the Board's top priorities in the 5 year Capital Plan. The timing and the order of these projects being approved is out of the Board's hands – the Ministry of Education makes those decisions, but we continue to promote the need for these capital projects.

During the year, the Board meets with the Mayors and Councils of the four municipalities in our School District. Only yesterday we met with the Mayor and Council of Peachland. Today we met with the Members of the Legislative Assembly who serve the communities in the School District and we hope to soon meet with our two Members of Parliament. Although we all have different responsibilities, there are many issues which we can work on together. The escalation of young people using vaping products concerns all of us and the Board continues to lobby for restrictions on the marketing of these products to minors.

Currently, the Board is undertaking a Transportation Review. At the beginning of the school year, changes made to our bus system, while trying to address inefficiencies and the growing cost of the system, ended by causing problems for many families. The Board apologized for the confusion, and we are committed to doing better. All parents were surveyed, with 2,550 responses received, and public consultation meetings will be held throughout the district in the first two weeks of December. Recommendations will come to the Board in February/March so that decisions can be communicated to parents well in advance of bus registration.

Discussions at Budget time will be even more important this coming year. The Government has said that funding for the K-12 system will be changed. The Provincial Funding Model Review Working Groups' recommendations are expected to be sent to school districts before the winter break. We will receive our allocation rates in February, and at that time we will know whether we will have to make budget cuts.

On a more positive note, at Public Board Meetings, trustees have learned about many innovative programs in the School District; heard from students about how they are connected to their communities; and celebrated successes of students and staff members alike. *"Inside 23"* has become an important part of Board Meetings, and reminds trustees to focus on what's important – our students and providing them with the tools they need in the 21st Century.

As always, there is much to celebrate in our School District. While the Board often recognizes outstanding staff members and students at our public meetings, we know that there are countless unsung heroes throughout the district - teachers, support staff and administrators who go the extra mile for the students in their care, and the students themselves who strive to be the best they can be, sometimes against great odds.

None of the things we celebrate could have been accomplished without our teachers, support staff, administrators and senior staff, as well parents and community members. Many of our employees work behind the scenes, keeping our 45 school sites in good working order; keeping our financial books straight; looking after payroll; and driving our school buses. Many of our staff members volunteer as well. Some coach our students, and give extra time to support them in a variety of different activities.

The Board appreciates the input received from our partner groups and school administrators. The participation on committees and attendance at Board Meetings by representatives of the Central Okanagan Teachers' Association, the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3523, the Central Okanagan Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, the District Student Council, and the Central Okanagan Parent Advisory Council is vital in helping the Board hear everyone's point of view before making a decision. Thanks to all our partners for their work in supporting public education and the students we all serve.

We also appreciate the community partnerships that have grown over the years. Community members volunteer their services, provide funds for projects at schools, and generally show a great deal of support to our schools and our students. These are non-profit groups, service clubs and individual volunteers.

From Early Learning Consortiums, to UBCO Programs, to partnerships with Okanagan College and BCIT, the Safe Schools Committee and the Health Promoting Schools Committee, our community partners bring a wealth of knowledge to the table.

The recent Dual Credit Programs Open House held at Kelowna Secondary School, showcased the partnerships we have with so many organizations in our communities. From Aircraft Maintenance to Welding, from Certified Education Assistant to Cybersecurity, these Dual Credit Programs (more than two dozen) offer students the opportunity to earn high school credits and have their tuition paid for while in a post-secondary program. There is another Open House tomorrow evening (Thursday, November 14th) at Rutland Senior Secondary, and I expect that there will be a large turnout of parent and students seeking more information on these programs.

I know that it cannot be easy working for an elected Board of Education made up of seven individuals who come from different backgrounds, and perhaps with different priorities; so I wish to thank our senior staff for the exceptional work they do on behalf of our students each and every day, while balancing the needs of the Trustees. I should particularly mention the three senior staff members I have worked with most closely: the Superintendent of Schools/CEO Kevin Kaardal, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO Ryan Stierman, and Deputy Superintendent Terry Beaudry. (Mr Stierman came to us in August, following the retirement of the former Secretary-Treasurer, Eileen Sadlowski.)

Senior staff members serve as liaisons to our Board Standing Committees and to the Trustees who chair those committees. In the Board Office, three Executive Assistants provide support to Trustees, Board Meetings and Committee Meetings. Mona Essler, Michelle DeRochers, and Yvonne Hildebrandt are always so calm and supportive. Thank you.

Also, thank you to my fellow trustees for your commitment to the governance and oversight of our School District. A year ago, we had three new Board members elected, and together with those us who returned to the Board, we have built a committed, professional team. You should be proud of your efforts on behalf of the students, parents, staff and community members of the Central Okanagan.

Respectfully submitted
Moyra Baxter
Chairperson, Board of Education
Central Okanagan Public Schools

Superintendent of Schools/CEO Report on Student Achievement 2019:
<http://www.sd23.bc.ca/Publications/Superintendent%20of%20Schools-CEO%20Report%20on%20Student%20Achievement%202019.pdf>