

MAKING PLRD CONNECTIONS



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Superintendent's Message

By Bill Lee

This has been a very busy year for all trustees and staff employed within Prairie Land Regional Division. I had a lot to learn as a new superintendent and met many people with whom I had to communicate and consult.

One of the things I attempted to do at the onset of my tenure was to visit the schools as often as possible. This year I was able to visit each public school between 5 – 7 instances; and with the exception of one Hutterite School I visited each colony school on at least 3 – 4 occasions. While I was in each school, I attempted to meet with as many of the staff as possible. Obviously I did not, nor could I meet, all staff on each visit.

The deputy superintendent, secretary treasurer and I began a process of meeting each school staff. The purpose of these meetings was to meet all staff in each school, allow them to meet us, and provide them with an opportunity to question us on the overall operation of the division. While all of these staff meetings are not completed at this time, they will be by the end of this school year. Next year we will continue with these staff meetings. It is our plan to hold another staff meeting at each school by the end of February 2006. It is through these individual school staff meetings, and through our monthly meetings with the principals, that we expect to receive direct input from each school staff.

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Planning at PLRD

By Vonda Chatterton

Over the past few years the planning process at PLRD has been streamlined. Much of that work has been in aligning the schools' reporting process to meeting the needs of the jurisdiction in their submissions to Alberta Education.

There has been a stronger emphasis to establish performance measures that indeed show evidence in achieving the schools and division's goals. Many of those performance measures are a result of the satisfaction surveys that are sent out to students, parents and staff. So, if you are wondering what those surveys are used for, ask to see the results from the neighborhood school, and how that school is using the information to help meet the needs of the students.

This year the board has set four major goals, as part of their Three Year Education Plan. These goals were established after consultation with their stakeholders – students, staff, parents, and community at large. The goals are as follows:

1. Students will be provided opportunities to successfully experience a wide range of appropriate educational programs.
2. Facilities and transportation will be safe and cost effective.
3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in the acquisition of basic and social skills.
4. All personnel will be exemplary in the performance of their duties.

Trustee Tribute

By Vonda Chatterton

This month the trustee that is being spotlighted is Duane Roy. Although Mr. Roy was born in the Hanna Hospital, he was raised on a farm south of Youngstown. He received his formal schooling at Youngstown School, before pursuing post-secondary studies at Mount Royal College.

Upon receiving a diploma in business administration Duane entered the work force in the Financial Services Business joining CIBC in 1980. After several appointments in Calgary and a couple in rural Alberta, Duane transferred to Delia in management in 1988. Duane relocated back to the family farm in 1990 whereby for the next 10 years commuted to work, balancing his banking responsibilities with his farm commitments. Due to corporate downsizing Duane accepted an early retirement package in the fall of 2000.

Being a father of two young children, Duane Roy felt that the children within rural areas needed to be represented. So when he was asked to run for office in 1995 he did just that, and became the voice for the rural students. He has been able to use his previous banking experience to help guide the division and to ensure that the division is accountable at all levels.

Presently Duane Roy is serving his third term as the trustee of Ward 2 – Youngstown and Hanna Rural. He has sat on the transportation committee, all negotiating committees, and numerous subcommittees. At this time he is serving on the ATA negotiation committee.

When asked, “What are the highlights of his tenure?” Mr. Roy gave three. He is pleased that the board has been able to keep most of the small schools open and viable, providing learning opportunities for the students within those schools. Reasonable and acceptable solutions have been made between the board and the various negotiating committees. Mr. Roy has enjoyed being in the position to make positive changes in the division (i.e. technology).

Making a positive difference in the lives of the children is paramount to Mr. Duane Roy. Feel free to contact Mr. Roy, or any of the other trustees with your comments and/or concerns.

Teaching Sexual Health

By Julie Campbell-Hansen

Sexual Health Educator

David Thompson Health Region

Teachers, do you want 24-hour access to information and resources for teaching sexual health?

Teachingsexualhealth.ca is a comprehensive, accessible, and innovative website developed by Alberta educators and health professionals to help achieve excellence in teaching sexual health.

The website offers background information and guidelines on teaching sexual health, lesson plans that match the learning outcomes identified in the Alberta Learning Program of Studies for *Health and Life Skills* and *CALM*, access to resources, and on-line consultation with a sexual health professional.

Teachingsexualhealth.ca is based on a framework developed from the Resilience, Comprehensive School Health and Social Learning models. Visit the “How and Why” framework to learn more about integrating these theories into class.

Parents and students are provided with resources, information and links that supplement their understanding and knowledge of healthy sexuality.

Teachingsexualhealth.ca website has received annualized, provincial funding from Alberta Health and Wellness. The Calgary Health Region will continue to match this funding, and will provide ongoing support and management of the website.

The brain likes to use patterns to organize information. Students will more easily remember terms and lists if they use memory tricks, such as HOMES (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior) for the Great Lakes.

Connections Newsletter

By Alberta Education

The latest edition of Alberta Education's *Connection: Information for Teachers* can be found by logging on to this link

<http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/connection>. This online newsletter includes a wide range of information that will support Kindergarten to Grade 12 teachers in the classroom. The May edition features are as follows:

- Daily Physical Activity (DPA)
- Languages initiatives
- articles on achievement tests and diploma examinations
- New Aboriginal Studies textbooks
- videoconferencing
- career education
- Alberta Education's Centennial Projects
- Canadian high school essay contest for students



The 2004-2005 School Year will forever be a banner flying year for the Youngstown School. This season their 1A Basketball Team was the Provincial Bronze Medalists. They earned this title after taking the South Central Zone Championship in Duchess, before going to provincials in Ridge Valley (near Grande Prairie).

Check These Links Out

By Jennifer Laux

The following links are primarily for teachers, but parents and students may find them interesting as well.

- If you are looking for some great lesson plans with curricular connections check out: <http://www.richlandone.org/teachers/connections/>
- *Facing History and Ourselves* is devoted to teaching about the dangers of indifference and the values of civility by helping schools confront the complexities of history in ways that promote critical and creative thinking about the challenges we face and the opportunities we have for positive change. There are a number of thought provoking articles that teachers and students in Division III and IV may find this link interesting: <http://www.facinghistory.org/facing/fhao2.nsf/all/september+lessons?>
- National Geographic Xpeditions – If you want some ideas on how to create exciting performance assessment check these out:
 - <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/10/q35/tapestry.html>
 - <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/>
- Ocean Planet – Sea Connections is a link for students interested in learning more about the ocean: <http://educate.si.edu/resources/lessons/curriculums/ocean/connect/essay.html>

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.plrd.ab.ca

Online Safety

Toshiba of Canada & AOL Canada Inc.

Toshiba and AOL have joined forces to help both teachers and parents better understand **how children use the Internet**, how **they can use it better** as a resource for education and entertainment and how to **stay safe** from predators, cyber-bullies and other online dangers.

By linking onto www.aol.ca/onlinesafetyweek/parents.html you can read more about online safety from AOL Canada's published "Net Mom".

Remember to teach your children the online Safety Code.

Ⓢ - Strangers shouldn't need to know your name or any of your personal information.

Ⓜ - Always tell an adult if someone says something online that makes you feel uncomfortable.

ⓕ - Friends online should stay online - never agree to meet an online friend in person without your parents.

ⓔ - Emailing pictures of you to strangers is not safe.

Ⓣ - Talk to your parents before opening any email, pictures, or Web links from strangers.

Ⓨ - Your password is like your door key, never give it to anyone other than your parents.



Youngstown Falcons Provincial Bronze Medalist Team

Visiting Staffs

Superintendent's Message continued from Page 1

During this past year we have also been reviewing the various collective agreements and attempting to determine the extent to which they are similar and dissimilar. The purpose obviously is to try to streamline the process so that it is not so time consuming for central office staff and trustees, but at the same time recognize the uniqueness of each group of employees. Along with this, we are also attempting to streamline the budgetary development process and the assignment of tasks to those at central office. In fact, we have spent some time attempting to reorganize the duties and responsibilities of those at central office, so that next year our operation will be more effective and efficient. Job descriptions for all those working at central office will be developed over the next six months and hopefully that will assist us in our endeavor to implement a more efficient and effective workplace. The purpose of this initiative is to allow the services of central office to be more responsive to the operation of the schools. Both the deputy superintendent and I are anticipating that we will be able to spend more time during the next school year in the schools rather than at board office. As well, it is our intention to have the coordinator of student support services and the career counselor involved more directly next year with each school.

In conclusion, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support, continued hard work and patience during this past school year. On behalf of the trustees and everyone at central office, we wish you a safe and enjoyable summer and we are looking forward to seeing all of you again in the new school year.

Thank you!

Tech Zone News

By Tech Dept

SUPERNET UPDATE

SuperNet is a Government of Alberta initiative led by Alberta Innovation and Science. Through SuperNet, Alberta will provide affordable high-speed network connectivity and Internet access to all schools, post-secondary institutions, libraries, hospitals, provincial government buildings and regional health authorities (over 4,700 sites).

Alberta Education is a leader in online learning. Now through SuperNet, learners throughout Alberta will be able to take advantage of greater bandwidth and increased access to realize recent trends in learning technology and online learning. Learners will benefit by gaining the high-tech skills and knowledge required for the future.

How will SuperNet benefit students in PLRD?

- Access to learning resources through SuperNet will provide support to help teachers address the demand for unique programs in remote areas.
- SuperNet will mean that rural students can receive the same educational opportunities available in urban centres through online learning without leaving their own communities.
- SuperNet will allow teacher specialists and remote video resources to be made available directly to students in schools, no matter where they live in the province.
- Online learning resources can also facilitate students working at their own pace or otherwise customizing their learning experience.
- Teachers can facilitate their own professional growth with increased access to teaching and professional development resources.
- SuperNet will provide students and teachers all over the province with opportunities for collaboration.

(taken from AB Education website "Alberta Students and Educators Benefit from SuperNet")

The PLRD completion date for SuperNet is scheduled for July 15th, 2005. This means that for the start of the 2005-2006 school year, SuperNet will be up and ready to go in your schools ☺ You will be seeing more "Bell" employees entering your schools this month to complete the installation of the SuperNet equipment. Please be aware of their presence in your buildings.

VIDEO CONFERENCING UPDATE

"Video-conferencing gives Alberta's schools more reach to teach and offers another way to deliver education and enrich learning experiences for students," said Alberta Education Minister Gene Zwozdesky. [Feb 2005] "We want to help school jurisdictions establish video-conferencing services so that teachers, students and administrators can begin using this new technology."

"For small, rural or remote schools, this technology will increase their ability to expand learning opportunities and program choices, such as second language learning or teacher professional development," added Zwozdesky.

With this in mind, the PLRD Tech Dept has recently hit the road with Mr. Barry Davis (PLRD's District Career Counsellor) for Grade 10 orientation meetings. At these meetings, parents are shown some of the video-conferencing technology and get a chance to use it. Parents are then given the opportunity to comment on how they feel video-conferencing might impact their children. If you would like to "demo" this video-conferencing technology and see for yourself how it may impact your students, please contact the PLRD Tech Dept.

The PLRD Tech Dept is currently looking to test video-conferencing classrooms in our division. This initiative includes at least one video-conferencing classroom, which will be up & running by Sept 2005. Mrs. Laura McKeage (Hanna Primary School) and Mrs. Donna Johnson (Delia School) have currently signed on to have their Grade 1 students share an "expert" through the use of video-conferencing between their two schools. This will be an exciting adventure for all involved, as it will allow the students, teachers and the "expert" the opportunity for collaboration on this project.

PLRD Tech Dept will also be leading several video-conferencing pilot projects for the 2005/2006 school year:

- Math 20 Applied - Consort to Altario
- Science 9 - Veteran to Altario
- Social 9 - Altario to Veteran

As our schools needs and use increase, more video-conferencing classrooms will be added. If you are interested in looking at this cutting edge technology or have any more thoughts on this emerging Alberta Education initiative, please contact the Tech Dept.