

Board Highlights

March 8, 2011

Prairie Rose School Division No 8



1. 2011-12 Grant Announcement

Secretary Treasurer Pat Cocks provided a brief summary of what the 2011-2012 grant announcement means for the Prairie Rose School Division. Overall a 4.73% decline is projected however with a one-time grant that decrease will be limited to 3.5%. Factoring in enrollment decline the overall decrease will be 5% or 3.8% with the one-time injection. The overall dollar decrease is equivalent to \$2.4 million dollars. These numbers will require the Board to make some very difficult decisions. Induction, PD, Enhanced Kindergarten among other programs and staffing numbers will need to be reviewed. Superintendent Doug Nicholls explained that there are many questions that cannot be answered yet, however it is safe to say that Prairie Rose was impacted greatly by the grant cuts.

2. Full-Day Kindergarten Programming

Superintendent Doug Nicholls provided an overview of Full-Day Kindergarten programming being offered in Prairie Rose. In the past, the Board has offered the program in communities where numbers warranted. Based on demand, the length of program differed from community to community. This year the Division is facing a slight decline in enrollment and reduced funding. Secretary Treasurer Pat Cocks explained that the program cost the Division \$210,000 for the 2010-2011 year with only \$43,330 of that cost being recuperated through fees. The Board moved to return to .5 Kindergarten programming for the 2011-2012 school year.

3. Redcliff Transportation Review

Superintendent Doug Nicholls explained that the Division has been reviewing the transportation budget, due to deficits the past few years. A committee was formed to examine how some of those costs could be recovered in Redcliff where the majority of the students bussed are not eligible for funding. Currently only 30 Redcliff students receive funding out of the 240 students who are being transported in the community. A letter has been sent out to parents explaining the funding shortfall and laying out a number of options for recovering some of those costs. The proposed changes include double bussing and fees. Meetings have been planned at each school in March and April to explain the financial situation and the proposal.

4. S Endorsement Course for Bus Drivers

Transportation Supervisor Val Miller explained that it has been mandated by the government that all school bus drivers must have the S Endorsement course. Currently a number of parents and teachers are driving buses for fieldtrips without the course. A motion was put forward that all drivers be required to have the S Endorsement course before being allowed to transport students in Prairie Rose schools. Kathy Cooper did express some concern about the cost involved to have the drivers take the course. The motion was passed.

5. Beyond Walls School Update

Principal Tim Bloomfield provided a general overview of Beyond Walls Outreach School. Currently the outreach school has 236 students enrolled. Students of any age are eligible to access the school and just about any course or elective is available. The programs are designed to be done without the aid of a teacher. The average cost per subject is \$20 for school aged children however the program is free for Prairie Rose students. Support for students is available at Beyond Walls for most subjects through the two teachers employed by the school. Changes over the past year include the revamping of various forms and documents, the creation of a student handbook, more programs being offered through Alberta Distance Learning, increased tutoring time, and additional video conferencing.

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Trustee Reports

Marian Peers thanked the Board for their thoughts and wishes for her family while they dealt with a recent family medical crisis.

Bob Wickens shared that IF Cox School was hosting a DREAMS event on March 17th called *Hope: Visual Through Art*. The evening portion of the day is open to the public and consists of a presentation as well as an art show and fundraiser auction.

Stuart Angle recently attended school council meetings in his area. Senator Gershaw is busy preparing for the upcoming technology conference on March 17th and 18th. This will also be the 14th year of a mini basketball workshop camp for kids at the school. A fundraiser is taking place at Bow Island Elementary to help a special needs student at the school. It was also asked if a fact sheet outlining possible financial scenarios based on the recent budget announcement could be shared with the school council chairs.

Georgine Westgard and Deputy Superintendent Brian Andjelic recently attended the REAL grand opening in Oyen on March 3rd. The new community centre in Oyen also held their grand opening on the same day. Georgine Westgard explained that she and Superintendent Doug Nicholls had attended a Board Chairs meeting in Edmonton.

Graeme Dennis shared that Seven Persons School recently unveiled a new clay mural. The artwork is beautifully displayed and each student contributed to its production.

Arnold Frank reported that IF Cox School is looking at some possible lighting changes in the classrooms. The school is also hosting the *Big Crunch* event on March 10th that involves participants from four different school divisions.

Paulette Heller explained that a team of Eagle Butte students attended the curling zones and did really well. At Eagle Butte, a special reading project has been introduced to help encourage students to get involved in reading and writing. The book reports are shared on the Eagle Butte website. In addition, the teacher dresses up to serve students refreshments when they get together to discuss the book as a group.

Kathy Cooper shared that various sporting activities at Foremost School, including senior league playoffs are taking place. Students will also be receiving their report cards this month. A number of art projects are on display and the spring talent show is coming up. Kathy Cooper and Arnold Frank were both recently interviewed by a professor at Lethbridge University about promising practices in Prairie Rose.

The next Regular Board Meeting will take place April 12, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. at Division Office in Dunmore, AB.

For more information regarding the Prairie Rose School Division and its Board of Trustees please visit www.prrd.ab.ca.

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