

Board Highlights

May 10, 2011

Prairie Rose School Division No 8



1. Redcliff Transportation Fees

Secretary-Treasurer Pat Cocks explained that a review had been done in the community of Redcliff to discuss the transportation of unfunded students. As a result of the review, Administration has recommended that a fee structure be set for the transportation of students who live closer than 2.4 km from their designated school. Redcliff trustees Bob Wickens and Arnold Frank expressed concern that a decision to implement fees could greatly impact some families financially. The proposed fees would be \$200 per child up to a maximum of \$450 per family with three or more children. By charging fees the Board would be able to recover approximately half the cost of transporting unfunded students in Redcliff. The Board moved to approve charging fees starting in the September of 2011.

2. Revised 2011-12 School Year Calendar

Superintendent Doug Nicholls explained that as a way to reduce costs and meet budget targets set by Alberta Education for next year, Administration is proposing changes to the 2011-2012 School Calendar. The changes will include the removal of six Instructional days. Secretary Pat Cocks explained that while the proposed changes will reduce the overall number of "school days" for students down to 183, there will be no reduction in class time and teachers will still be expected to work the full 199 days. To make this possible, early Friday's will be changed out for a Monday off approximately once a month. The cost savings to the Board will be around \$162,000 in transportation costs. The Board moved to pass the 2011-2012 School Calendar as presented and amended.

3. Budget Update

Superintendent Doug Nicholls provided an update on the current budget situation Prairie Rose is facing for the 2011-2012 school year. It was explained that seven weeks had passed since Administration and the Board met with the Minister of Education and local MLA's to express concerns over the loss of approximately \$5 million dollars over the next two years. A letter was recently sent to the MLA's reminding them that the Board was still awaiting a decision from the meeting. Some actions the Board has already made to reduce spending includes a reduction in Administration costs by reducing Superintendent Services, reviewing the school calendar and eliminating six Instructional Days, implementing transportation fees in Redcliff and eliminating full-day kindergarten. Superintendent Nicholls reiterated that the current grant cuts from Alberta Education remain unreasonable and too harsh. Administration remains optimistic that an adjustment will occur before the Budget submission deadline in June.

4. Community Resource Officer

Jeffrey Waites, the current RCMP Community Resource Officer for Prairie Rose, explained that he would be going back to his regular duties at the end of the school year and introduced Allan Caldwell who would be taking over as his replacement. Officer Waites provided an overview of his experience in the Community Resource Officer role which included working with students and staff at Margaret Wooding, Parkside, IF Cox, Eagle Butte, Seven Persons, Irvine, and Schuler schools. Some of his duties included supporting the Family School Liaison Workers, helping with Risk Threat Assessments, assisting with the Redcliff DREAMS initiative, training on Hour Zero, teaching the DARE program, providing education on the law and dealing with some school behavior issues. Assistant Superintendent Brian Andjelic thanked Officer Waites for his work with the division.

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Trustee Reports

M. Peers reported that South Central High's graduation is set for May 20th and that planning for the event is going well. She also shared that the two recent extra-curricular trips to Mexico and Europe were both successful.

B. Wickens explained that Redcliff parents are concerned with budget and staffing implications for next year. He also shared that Ralston School Council had developed a three-year plan to work in conjunction with the school's three-year plan and are very excited about implementing the goals over the next three years.

S. Angle explained that school council's were hoping to be provided with some additional information about the recent budget situation. Senator Gershaw's School Council Chair was writing a letter to parents encouraging them to get involved in writing their local MLA about the issue. S. Angle also reported that Senator Gershaw's graduation is May 12th and that Burdett had a successful Marvelous Me PD fair for the students on April 21st.

G. Westgard shared that Oyen Public School had invited author Donna McNaughton to visit the students to discuss writing. The event was funded through the AISI program. G. Westgard also reported that she and Assistant Superintendent B. Volkman had attended an emergency budget meeting organized by school councils to discuss the budget situation. A New Bridgen School parent wrote an article for the Oyen Echo highlighting some of the parent's concerns.

G. Dennis announced that some Seven Persons Grade 6 students' artwork had made it to the Provincial level. Two Cowboy readers; Anne Slade & Doris Bircham visited the school as well. Seven Persons is helping to money for the Kaleidoscope of the Arts showcase by putting on a 3, 5, and 10km Fun Run on June 11th in Redcliff.

P. Heller reported that Schuler School's Track & Field Day is scheduled for May 13th and their community clean up will take place on May 20th. Irvine held their annual Western Week from April 16-20th with a pancake breakfast to kick it off. Eagle Butte's graduation ceremonies are scheduled for May 13th & 14th.

K. Cooper shared that Foremost School has started a high school baseball team. The Medicine Hat Mavericks have provided substantial support by providing equipment and assisting with some coaching duties. Foremost School graduation ceremonies are scheduled for May 27th.

A. Frank reported that a British representative will be visiting Ralston School on May 23rd.

The next Regular Board Meeting will take place June 14, 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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