

Board Meeting
Director's Update - Pino Buffone
24 April 2018

Acknowledgement of Students, Staff & School Communities

As is always the case, exciting and inspiring activities, events and initiatives are taking place in schools across our District during this very busy time period. The school improvement planning focus of my regular school visits, in particular, has revealed a number of authentic, engaging learning opportunities for our motivated students...set in meaningful teaching and learning environments by our dedicated staff. I have witnessed first-hand our collective growth in both achievement and well-being, for instance, through the explicit, intentional monitoring of progress in the acquisition of knowledge and skills via the ongoing assessment of students' performance in literacy (PM Benchmarks) and numeracy (PRIME) by staff at Beachburg Public School, with this data informing 'next steps' for instruction, on 20 April 2018. As well, a determined focus on creating a safe and caring environment where all students feel a 'sense of belonging' is evident at McNab Public School through their 'positive messaging' campaign – including capturing these appreciative words on t-shirts worn by students and staff. This focus was a key part of their on-site plan for mental health and well-being on 29 March 2018.

In addition, it was heartwarming to see so many of our school communities across the county participate in the 'Jerseys for Humboldt' initiative on Thursday, April 12th, 2018. A number of our students and staff wore their hockey jerseys that day in support of the individuals and families affected by the tragic bus accident in Saskatchewan on 06 April 2018 involving the Humboldt Broncos Hockey Club of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League.

Tech X 2.0 @ Fellowes High School – 20 April 2018

Our Information Technology Department held its second exposition on Friday, April 20th, 2018 for elementary and secondary students at Fellowes High School. The event was a tremendous success with thirteen schools engaged in challenges and competitions that showcased coding and robotics skills. More specifically, over 100 students from Grades 4 through to 12 collaborated to compete against one another in two challenges – the Design Thinking Challenge or the Water Conservation Challenge.

The Design Thinking Challenge tasked students with developing a robot to battle against other schools' robots in a wrestling-style tournament set up as a bracket. The

Water Conservation Challenge consisted of teams figuring out a way to program their robot to complete several tasks relating to water conservation.

This year's winning team was from Rockwood Public School.

Our District has made a concerted effort to engage our students in robotics and coding skills as a gateway into technology sciences and this event provided an excellent opportunity for students to examine their interest and test their potential with a fun, hands-on approach... while encouraging and supporting digital literacy and coding. The event was live-streamed on YouTube for other students and staff, parents/guardians and community members to view.

Thanks to Superintendent Steve Blok, Manager Doug Fiebig, Oliver Gallery, Jonathan Pratt and the amazing TELT-C staff for coordinating this marvelous event!

Employee Engagement Survey – Guarding Minds @ Work – Spring 2018

As previously mentioned, the District will be conducting an 'Employee Engagement Survey' over the period of 23 April 2018 to 11 May 2018 for all employee groups in order to elicit input and feedback, thoughts and perspectives from our staff related to their well-being and the well-being of their students. As a learning organization, we are very much looking forward to the results of this survey...in order to celebrate strengths and address areas for growth. Thanks to Superintendent Brent McIntyre and the wonderful team in HR for their leadership in this important endeavour!

Administration of Provincial Assessments – Spring 2018

On Tuesday, April 10th, 2018, secondary students across the District participated in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). We are most pleased that weather conditions of late did not impact the administration of the test and/or testing date. Our secondary schools diligently prepared both first-time eligible and previously-eligible students to take part in the testing.

Between 22 May 2018 and 04 June 2018, our elementary students (primary-division students in Grade 3 and junior-division students in Grade 6) will have the opportunity to participate in the Provincial Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Our elementary schools have thoughtfully prepared our students to take part in these assessments through quality teaching and learning opportunities and experiences throughout the course of the school year. These assessments will be conducted through paper-and-pencil medium, with targeted supports and/or interventions (assistive technology, a quiet work space, for instance) provided to students if/as permissible and/or required.

As always, our District holds high expectations for our students and a belief that all students can develop the literacy and numeracy skills for success in school and life.

We congratulate our secondary students on their completion of the OSSLT, and, wish our elementary students the best of success in their upcoming assessments!

Update to Principal and Vice-Principal Assignments

There are no additional changes to principal and vice-principal appointments and/or transfers at this point in the school year.

Opening Doors to Future Opportunities

On May 1, the RCDSB will be partnering with Algonquin College to host a half day information session for parents and Grade 7/8 students. This event will help start the conversation for families about future educational opportunities and steps and supports available for their child's career and goals.