



InTouch

Update on Indigenous Education

At the Monday, June 12th Board meeting, Trustees were informed of the many and diverse Indigenous programs and outreach initiatives held this year.

Tesa Fiddler, Indigenous Education Resource Teacher, Janine Landry, Indigenous Liaison Coordinator and Omer Belisle, Superintendent of Education, provided an update to trustees on the Indigenous education initiatives including plans for next year. As in past years, the focus of this school year was meeting the goals as outlined by the Ministry of Education. The Board was also compelled to acknowledge the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (June 2015) and demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation.

This past year has seen many great projects unfold through the Indigenous Education Focused Collaborative Inquiries. St. Jude School has created a mural and outdoor learning space that is based on traditional Indigenous knowledge. St. Elizabeth School has focussed on Indigenous identity through the arts. Class 7-2 at Pope John Paul II with their teacher Lauren Provenzano and Indigenous Artist Elliot Doxtator-Wynn, learned about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the legacy of Residential Schools. The culminating project was the creation of a mural. The residential school experience is important for all to learn about and the board has committed to working with Facing Our History and Ourselves to offer the Indian Residential School Stolen Lives Teacher Professional Development.

Other areas that the Board continues to see growth and success in programs and services for Indigenous students include the new Indigenous Cultural Space at St. Patrick High School that is open to all students. There will be an increase in Native Language and Aboriginal Student Counsellor positions next year as well as two exciting new courses in the high schools - Grade 9 Art: Expressing Aboriginal Cultures and a Grade 11 English option: Contemporary Aboriginal Voices. We also continue to focus on relationship building through outreach with our community partners, both within the city of Thunder Bay and regionally.

Mental Health and Well-Being Strategic Plan Approved

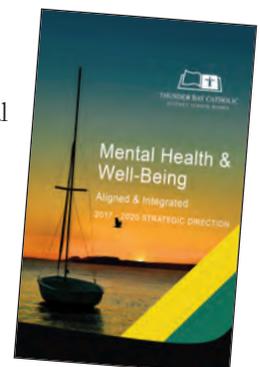
The 2017-2020 strategic plan for student mental health and well-being, *"Aligned & Integrated"* was presented to the Board for review and approval at Monday night's meeting.

Following thoughtful planning and consideration, the Mental Health Steering Committee chose to align and integrate mental health and well-being within the Board's own strategic plan *"Our Values, Our Vision"*.

"I personally want to thank Mirella Fata, our Mental Health Leader for her hard work and commitment to student mental health," said Omer Belisle, Superintendent of Education.



Indigenous artist Elliott Doxtator-Wynn and Indigenous Education Resource Teacher, Tesa Fiddler worked with teacher Lauren Provenzano and her grade 7 homeroom class on an art project that explored Indigenous worldview, spirituality, and the impact of Residential Schools.



Board Thanks Departing Student Trustees



A fond farewell to our two Student Trustees: from left, Shea Niemi, Board chair Bob Hupka and Riley Yesno.

The Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board said goodbye Monday night to its two departing Student Trustees after a year of dutiful service.

“Tonight is the last Board meeting for our two student Trustees and we wish to thank them for their outstanding work, not only here at our board meetings, but also for all the good deeds you perform in your respective schools and as a way of demonstrating our gratitude Board Chair, Bob Hupka, will present Shea and Riley with a Certificate of Appreciation and an honorarium,” said Pino Tassone, Director of Education.

Student Trustee Presentation

Student Trustee Yesno prepared a report following her recent trip to the Ontario Student Trustee Association (OSTA-AECO) Spring General Meeting. The conference took place May 25-28 at the Renaissance Toronto Downtown Hotel.

“I want to thank the Board for providing me with all of these wonderful experiences and learning opportunities,” she said.

Trustee Provides Update on Two External Committees

Trustee Eleanor Ashe is one busy lady. In addition to her school board duties, she is also our representative on two external committees; namely the Thunder Bay Public Library and Age-Friendly Thunder Bay.

“The members of the Age-Friendly Thunder Bay executive and the steering committee continue their efforts to improve the quality of life for seniors by working with them to develop services and strategies that respond to their circumstances, aspirations and varying needs,” she said.

“The status of this group is prepared to move to the next level. A new strategic plan is to evolve as the needs of the aging population continue to escalate. The good news is that the (29) community partners are moving ahead collectively in a direction of service.”

As for the library board, Trustee Ashe is equally optimistic.

“A new, innovative administrative organizational structure was implemented in September, requiring hours of consultation with new job descriptions, financial compensation and benefits for its 60-plus employees.”



Trustee Eleanor Ashe



Dealing With Aggressive Parents

Teachers are facing more and more responsibility as the Ministry of Education becomes increasingly prescriptive in its curriculum expectations.

In addition, parents are becoming more involved and are not afraid to ask difficult questions. As a result, and in consultation with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, the Board hosted workshops for Designated Teachers and Principals and Vice-Principals on how to “Deal with Aggressive Parents”.

Randi Chapnik Myers, content creator at RCM Content & Co-founder/Editor at Brazen Woman was the presenter.

A former idealistic lawyer by her mid-20’s, Randi felt a disconnect between her personality and career choice.

More drawn to the “helping” side of law, she went on to earn her Certificate in Family Mediation followed by a Masters Degree in Alternative Dispute Resolution. As a qualified mediator, she became an expert at resolving disputes by identifying the source of conflict in relationships and coaching people to find common ground.

The workshops were a combination of information sharing and hands-on activities, which address strategies to deal with parents.



Dealing with Parents: In consultation with the teaching federation, OECTA, the Board provided 2 workshops on dealing with parents. From left, Jocelyne Sheriff, Executive Assistant, Randi Chapnik Myers, presenter, and Superintendent of Education, Omer Belisle.

“I Want to Be” Video Unveiled

In our on-going recruitment efforts, Trustees viewed the latest promotional video at Monday night’s Board meeting.

“To further promote Thunder Bay Catholic DSB’s media presence in the community, a new video has been created to showcase the aspirations of various students K-12,” explained Superintendent of Education, Jean-Paul Tennier.



Segments of the video were shot at St. Patrick’s, St. Jude and Pope John Paul II.

The video was first featured on Facebook. “It is clear that Facebook and Twitter are an excellent environment to market the schools. Westfort Productions’ previous video for international students received over 40,000 views in the first week of its release,” he said.