

Prairie South School Division No. 210

Annual Report to Electors
September 1, 2006 - August 31, 2007

About the division

Our Mission

Nurturing Communities of Learners

Our Vision

Learning Excellence

Our Guiding Principles and Shared Values

Learning: We value learning in all we do.

Accountability: We value the effective and efficient use of resources.



Gord Stewart
Chair, Board of Education

Message from the Chair

Report of the Prairie South Board of Education, with respect to educational developments for the period September 1, 2006, to August 31, 2007

August 30, 2006, marked the first day of the first full school year for Prairie South School Division, and signaled the beginning of a rewarding, yet challenging period of coming to terms with the realities of the new division.

Since the division's inception in January 2006, the Board of Education along with its administration had worked hard to bring seven legacy divisions together to create a single, unified organization. The inaugural eight-month period prior to the start of this fiscal year provided us with an opportunity to begin to develop a common understanding and culture, examine existing programs and resources and establish a foundation from which to move forward.

Our first full school year, 2006-2007, coincided with a provincial change that aligned school divisions' fiscal years with school years rather than calendar years. The change should allow for better linkages between educational activities and the financial resources used to deliver those activities.

Policy governance

In September, the Board adopted a set of policies and procedures to guide the activities of the school division. The policies covered Board, central office and school operations; outlined the roles and responsibilities of school community councils and the process for their establishment; set out division expectations regarding transportation, facilities, staffing and business administration; and outlined the instructional program, along with school and student supports.

The policies and procedures reinforced and supported the Board's adoption of a policy governance model. In this model, the Board sets policy based on its values and priorities, approves the budget and plan for the year and then delegates the implementation of policy, budget and plan, along with the day-to-day management of the division, to the Director of Education. Essentially, the Board sets the vision and provides the resources and the Director and her team are charged with making it happen.

Learning environments

In October, the Board received the results of a review of all facilities in the division (except the Hutterite Colonies and Associate schools). We commissioned the review earlier in the year to gain a better understanding of the condition of our schools and ensure staff and students are working and learning in safe, effective environments, conducive to today's education programs.

Declining enrolment:
School review

I believe our fundamental task in this area will be to maintain our focus on a proactive approach to facilities planning and management that ensures schools reflect the needs of students.

In January, our Board addressed its most serious challenge – a steady decline in enrolment – with its decision to review schools in seven communities. The decline was evident at schools across the division. Its effects were far more pronounced in some of our smallest schools in the rural areas, where it was becoming challenging to deliver an effective learning program in a fiscally responsible manner. Significant excess capacity at schools in Moose Jaw provided an opportunity to review the delivery of education programs in the city with an eye to efficient and equitable use of resources.

The Board worked with administration to establish a set of objective criteria to compare schools and identify those to be reviewed. The criteria related to things like grade clusters and multi-grading, high school credit options, pupil-teacher ratio, enrolment trends and facility utilization and costs. Our goals through the process were three-fold; we wanted to ensure:

- quality learning experiences,
- effective and efficient use of resources, and
- a viable and sustainable school division.

The review process wasn't easy for anyone involved – trustees, communities or division staff. Still, we had the best interests of students to motivate us, and plenty of opportunity for information sharing and listening. Ultimately, the Board decided in May to close Briercrest, Crane Valley, Limerick, Willow Bunch and École Ross schools at the end of the school year, and Chaplin School at the end of the 2008-09 school year.

These weren't easy decisions, nor do we think that they somehow magically 'fixed' the challenge of declining enrolment. We will continue to see enrolment declines for the next several years at least. When the decline levels off, projections indicate that our enrolment will be closer to the 5,000 mark, than the current 7,200 students.

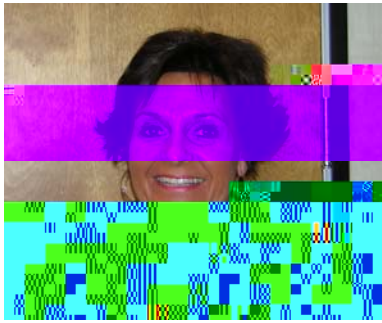
Our task as a division, then, will be to determine how best to deliver education programs effectively and efficiently to a much-smaller group of students, spread out across the same, large geographic area.

Advocating for students

We also need to ensure the provincial government understands the changes occurring within our division and how they can support our vision of *Learning Excellence*. The Board spent time this year meeting with government officials to share our concerns about changes to the Foundation Operating Grant that have reduced funding to rural school divisions, the inequities those reductions have created provincially and the effect on students and taxpayers locally.

We will continue to advocate on behalf of our students and in favour of equitable education opportunities for all.

Looking forward



PLCs – working together

referrals to our Student Support Services team and piloted an electronic program plan. Our work in this area will continue, as we strive to lead the way in achieving *Learning Excellence* for each one of our students.

School Community Councils

Supporting educational needs

Restructuring work continues

Dedicated staff

It's been an amazing year of learning in Prairie South and I want to take this time to recognize and thank all of the staff for their hard work and dedication. Their continued focus on the needs of students, amidst a sea of change and transition, speaks volumes about their professionalism and talent.

The commitment they have shown to living our vision and mission continues to make a difference to students in each of our schools every day.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Edwards
Director of Education
Prairie South School Division



"Pi" Day activities at Gravelbourg Elementary School (right).

A wagon-wheel bench made as a PAA project in Central Butte School (left).

Learning Highlights

Selected highlights of the 2006-07 school year:

In our schools

- **Rouleau School** hosted 250 students at a successful Student Leadership Conference in March.
- **Baildon Colony School** offered Kindergarten to six-year-old students. Previously students at the school started at age 7, entering Grade 1 directly.
- Grade 8 students at **Sunningdale School** in Moose Jaw benefited from their involvement in an online math enrichment program. Grade 1 and 2 students took part in a Guided Reading program through a cooperative effort between the school and community.
- Students in **Bengough School**'s Kindergarten-to-Grade 2 classroom learned the art of blogging and used it similar to more-typical journals. It made editing and revising easier and allowed the students to share their work with family, friends and classrooms on the other side of the world.
- **Eyebrow School** staff and students worked to learn sign language; the K/1/2 class and several students continue to sign "O Canada" each day.
- **Coronach School**'s Law 30 students held a mock trial, using the expertise of local RCMP officers to learn courtroom procedure and analyze the effectiveness of the justice system.
- **Central Collegiate Institute** in Moose Jaw combined Grade 9 Physical Education, Health and Career Guidance classes into a new Wellness course under a theme of 'leadership.' Larger classes (about 50 students) were taught by two teachers and met all afternoon every other day – allowing for more flexibility in the types of activities teachers could plan.
- **Craik School** partnered with the Craik Sustainable Living Project (eco-center) to deliver sustainable environmental curricula to students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart, visited **Mossbank School**, where he gave a speech to the entire school body and later explained provincial government to History 30 students.
- Grades 4 to 8 students from **Westmount School** in Moose Jaw performed the musical, "Clowns" and were justifiably proud of their success!
- **Lindale School** in Moose Jaw implemented a Guided Reading Program in Grade 1 and by Jerfoing
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Craik School

- **Gravelbourg Elementary School** initiated a community/school Buddy Reading and Writing program to promote literacy and peer/community interaction.
- **Lafleche Central School** held monthly “R-E-S-P-E-C-T” sessions. Classrooms could earn popcorn parties by earning special cards.
- **Rockglen School** formed an Art Club to enthusiastic response. An Art Fair during Education Week offered a variety of workshops and activities for students and visitors.
- **Assiniboia 7th Avenue School** initiated a Guided Reading Program in Grades 1 and 2. Students are slotted at their own reading comprehension level.
- **Gravelbourg High School** implemented school nutrition guidelines recommended by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association within the school, and completed a new student canteen.
- Grade 7 students in their second year of **Palliser Heights School’s** Intensive French Program demonstrated the most gains in oral proficiency levels over one year throughout the province’s Grade 7 Enhanced French Program.

In the community

- As part of the Building Ethics in Students Today (B.E.S.T.) program, Grade 8 students from **William Grayson School** in Moose Jaw learned about local and world communities by working in the community and then donating the money they raised to buy chickens in an emerging country.
- **Eyebrow School** partnered with the Tugaske Library to host an Aboriginal Storyteller for all students to attend.
- After noticing a lot of debris along a path near Spring Creek during a school walk in the Fall, students from **John Chisholm Alternate School** in Moose Jaw ‘adopted’ the area, volunteering to clean it up and keep it clean.
- **Glentworth School** has developed a partnership with Grasslands National Park that allows Grade 11 and 12 Biology students to spend a day working on projects within the Park in conjunction with Park representatives.
- **Riverview Collegiate** School Community Council worked with the school to gather support from the University of Regina, SaskWater and Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation for the delivery of a Wildlife Management course.
- Future inventors at **Assiniboia Elementary School** displayed their talents to the community at the Grade 6,7,8 Science Fair.
- Together, our schools have donated tens of thousands of dollars to local, provincial and national charities and fundraisers, including: The Terry Fox Foundation, Jump Rope for Heart, Telemiracle, Relay for Life, Family First Radiothon and more.

On the field and in the gym

- The school division and the colony worked together at **Baldon Colony School** to make Physical Education a requirement for the school’s students. Previously, it had not been taught for several years, at the request of the colony.

- In **A.E. Peacock Collegiate's** "Challenger Run", Grade 9 students are given the opportunity to challenge themselves to run for 30 minutes straight, with no walking in between. The class requirement is 15 minutes – the additional time is strictly optional. Students who've taken the challenge regularly surprise themselves by their own success!
- English Language Learners at **Central Collegiate Institute** in Moose Jaw learned to do the scorekeeping for volleyball and basketball and then provided that service for all of the regular season games and tournaments – an opportunity to use their English skills in an authentic context.
- The **Central Butte** Bulldogs hosted CanAm Bowl XI, an annual football match-up between graduated all-star players from Canada and the U.S.

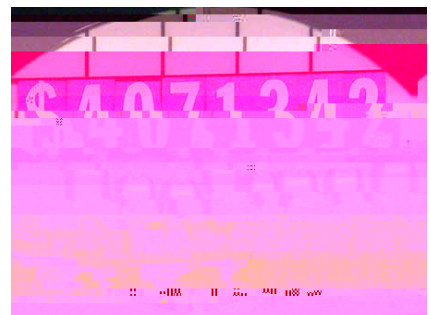
Awards and achievements

- **Rouleau School's** Senior Boys and Senior Girls Volleyball teams took home Provincial 1A Championship medals, earning Silver and Bronze, respectively.
- Students from **Peacock Collegiate** in Moose Jaw picked up five provincial Skills Canada medals (one Gold, two Silver and two Bronze). One of the students went on to win Silver in the IT-Office Applications area at the national competition.
- **Coronach School** athletes brought home four provincial Track and Field medals: one Gold, one Silver and two Bronze.
- A student from **John Chisholm Alternate School** received a SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Award for leadership and community involvement.
- The **Mossbank School** Drama Club placed second at the Regional Drama Festival and also won runner-up for Best Visual Production, acting awards and backstage work awards.

Did you know?

You can find up-to-date information about what's going on at our schools on our school division's web site: www.prairiesouth.ca.

Check it out!



Board Information



Back Row: Joan McMaster, Gord Stewart, Ron Gleim, Lew Young, Marion Piché. Front Row: Neil Buckler, Wilfred Lethbridge, Ray Boughen, Claude Duke, Lance Bean