

# Northern Gateway Public Schools

*opening the gateway to a lifetime of learning*

## Board Highlights

From September 14 meeting

For Immediate Release

### Transportation Report

· Rhett Czaban, Director of Transportation provided a transportation report to the Board of Trustees.

*Bus Art:* The student art posters Northern Gateway has been displaying in our buses over the past ten years has been very successful; Transportation will continue to use them, and would ask that the schools ask their students to submit new artwork again this year.

The poster Transportation is displaying in their buses for September is from Amanda Bignell, a grade 6 student at Darwell School. The theme is: “If someone is having a bad day, cheer them up”.

*Health and Safety Program:* The transportation department conducted start-up safety meetings with school bus drivers in August and September 2010.

The Director of Transportation attended the Onoway School’s bus driver meeting on September 7<sup>th</sup>, at Onoway High, where the new assistant Principals were introduced and procedures and protocol was reviewed.

Bud Willard has been contracted to do school bus evacuation drills with all of the K-6 age students throughout the month of September and early October 2010.

All Northern Gateway bus drivers conducted school bus evacuation drills with their students on the afternoon of Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

*Routing:* The transportation department have been reviewing all of the bus routes and making minor changes to try and improve ride times for students.

### School Enrolments and FTE Count

#### *Enrolment:*

· Superintendent Kevin Andrea presented the Board with the preliminary enrolment numbers for the 2010/2011 School Year. Early numbers, as of September 1st, 2010 indicate student enrolment numbers are higher than projected, but down from last year’s overall enrolment. However, these are only preliminary numbers, official student counts are due to Division Office, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

#### *FTE count:*

· Certificated FTEs as of September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 was 294.8 and for September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 was 290.89 – which indicates we are currently down 3.9 certificated FTE positions this year compared to September 2009.

## Student Assessment Presentation

### *Looking Forward...Moving Forward – Making Classroom Assessment Work*

· Presented by: Deputy Superintendent, Michelle Brennick; Assistant Superintendent Bonnie Crane; Director of Learning Services, Roger Lacey

(This information session was given to the NGPS Board of Trustees as part of the NGPS Assessment Plan 2010 to 2011.)

### **A history of the Assessment Vision and Plan: On Our Way**

Beginning in September 2008 and continuing through 2009 a series of presentations and workshops were given to all stakeholders. This included a workshop entitled “Assessment 101” for all teachers delivered by Assessment Specialists Leslee Jodry and Roger Lacey, a workshop for administrators and the Board of Trustees delivered by the Executive Director and Field Services Officer of the Alberta Assessment Consortium, an information session for parents and community presented by Ken O’Connor (author of *15 Fixes for Broken Grades*). In addition all School Councils were visited and presentations given regarding the assessment direction of NGPS.

As a foundation for the NGPS Assessment Vision, the Superintendent adopted Administrative Procedure 359. This Administrative Procedure outlines the five principles upon which the Assessment Plan is based.

### **Research Background: Key Classroom Assessment Research That Points the Way**

Four research findings that form the foundation for Assessment direction for Alberta Education, Alberta Assessment Consortium, and a number of Alberta school jurisdictions:

- Decrease summarized, evaluative feedback such as marks and grades
- The way student work is assessed and graded impacts students’ motivation for learning when grades are used as rewards and punishment
- Active participants in the classroom assessment process appear to enhance teaching and improve learning
- Significant learning is experienced when assessment for learning techniques are employed

Ontario’s new assessment and reporting guidelines, “Growing Success” is used to examine whether other jurisdictions nationally align with the aforementioned Alberta sources. It was found to align with the research based principles. This document identifies seven areas:

1. Fair, transparent and equitable for all students
2. Support all students
3. Relating to curriculum expectations and learning outcomes
4. Communicated clearly to students and parents
5. Provide multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning
6. Provide ongoing descriptive feedback
7. Develop student self-assessment skills

## **In Transition:**

Alberta Education and Alberta Assessment Consortium are currently in a period of transition with regard to assessment. Alberta Education is undergoing a reorganization of reporting services. The Alberta Assessment Consortium is reforming its delivery of assessment workshops and information.

A seminal document informs all the assessment developments noted in Alberta and nationally, "Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada". In Alberta the direction is outlined in the government document "Guide to Education". Both documents support the five principles in NGPS Administrative Procedure 359:

1. Student involvement in assessment for learning is essential.
2. Grades shall reflect only academic achievement. Learner attributes and effort shall be reported separately.
3. All assessment shall be based on curricular outcomes.
4. Assessment shall include clear communication among parents, students, and teachers of standards, criteria, and student achievement of learning outcomes.
5. Assessment for learning shall form the basis for effective instruction.

## **NGRD....Our Assessment Stories**

Assessment success around Northern Gateway is reflected in the strides made by diverse schools. A move towards outcomes based reporting and changes to awards ceremonies reflect changing assessment practice. At the present time, Onoway Elementary, Elmer Elson, Whitecourt Central, Pat Hardy, Percy Baxter and Harry Gray have developed outcomes based report cards. Other schools within the division are now developing outcomes based systems.

## **How Do We Continue to Support....**

Our teachers? September 17, 2010 – Division Day: Morning presentation by Sherry Bennett, Executive Director, Alberta Assessment Consortium

Afternoon meetings of Learning Network Groups included a focus on assessment and the development of assessment tools. This will continue as a focus when the groups meet online and face to face. Developed tools and exemplars will be shared and submitted to AAC.

AISI Cycle 4 project will focus on assessing critical thinking and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Our school-based administrators? September 17, 2010 – in the afternoon the principals met as a group to examine the assessment leadership role in their schools through an activity based workshop.

A regular article for the school newsletters is being written to assist administrators in spreading awareness to their parent community.

Materials for staff meetings focused on assessment are being prepared for administrators by Learning Services.

Our parents? Visits to school councils by Learning Services personnel will focus on the assessment direction in Northern Gateway.

Learning Services Team will develop a parent information brochure to be given to parents with report cards and at parent – teacher interviews.

The next regular Board meeting will take place Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 10 a.m. at the Division Office in Whitecourt. Members of the public are welcome to attend. For more information, please call (780) 778-2800 or toll free at 1-800-262-8674.

Box 840 • Whitecourt, AB • T7S 1N8 • [www.ngrd.ab.ca](http://www.ngrd.ab.ca) • [learn@ngrd.ab.ca](mailto:learn@ngrd.ab.ca)