

DECEMBER 2014

# superintendent's news

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE SAANICH SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Trustee Elections

On November 15, 2014 our school district experienced a very welcome first, in that in all four of our electoral zones we had candidates competing for seats on our Board of Education. Having no candidates acclaimed into positions is a sign of voter and community interest in public education, and for that we are all grateful.

We are excited to welcome four new trustees to our board, and to have them joining three incumbents who return with experience and continued commitment to serving children and families in our school district. We are proud of our culture, our many and varied successes, and our ongoing commitment to improvement in School District 63, and pleased that once again we have a Board of Education that will provide strong governance and advocacy in support of all successes for all children.

Our incoming four-year Board of Education, to be sworn in on December 8, will consist of:

- Nancy Borden (Central Saanich)
- Tim Dunford (Central Saanich)
- Wayne Hunter (Saanich)
- Victoria Martin (Saanich)
- Elsie McMurphy (North Saanich)
- Barb Menzies (North Saanich)
- Jason Price (Sidney)

I also want, on behalf of the families, staff and communities that make up the Saanich School District, to thank our outgoing trustees for their years of service and dedication. We are all better for having worked with you over your terms as trustees, and we wish you every success and happiness as you move on to other adventures:

- Helen Parker (1999-2014)
- Jim Standen (2005-2014)
- Jane Husband (2005-2014)
- Nick Claxton (2011-2014)

### Transforming Curriculum: Feedback to Ministry

Saanich School District has been working with a committee of teachers to provide feedback to the Ministry of Education on the new curriculum initiatives. Specifically, the team of three middle school and three elementary teachers are looking at the new curriculum options through an interdisciplinary and must-age perspective. The team has now met on two separate occasions with a final meeting set for early December. This process provides invaluable feedback to the Ministry in their revision work and allows our teachers to delve deeply into the new material to determine possible future directions and implementation options within the District.

### National Youth Anti-Stigma Event

The Mental Health Commission of Canada hosted a National Youth Symposium in Ottawa from November 16 to 22. This fully funded opportunity was available to ten successful applicants from each province across Canada. Thanks to the work of Parkland Secondary staff and in particular vice-principal Aaron Buckham, four students applied and were selected for this event. The goal of the event was to ignite a national dialogue about mental health among students aged 14-17.

Participants had the opportunity to learn about mental health and how to reduce, in your schools, communities, and homes, the stigma often associated with mental health problems and mental illness. Students met with Assistant Superintendent Stinson prior to their departure and will again upon their return. These students will participate in a presentation to the Superintendent's Student Leadership Group (SSLG) and provide support to the District's on-going work building understanding of mental health literacy.

### **Parkland Marine Institute**

Parkland Secondary School not only continues to serve as an outstanding neighbourhood school and host to our thriving international program, but it is establishing its presence as a Marine Institute. Students who attend Parkland are able to access a cluster of programs that are provided in partnership with community and which take advantage of the plethora of marine opportunities that are in the immediate neighbourhood. With access to everything from sailing clubs to marinas to marine construction and maintenance to entities such as BC Ferries, the Coast Guard, the Ocean Sciences Centre and so much more, the school is now a hub of activity and coursework around the theme of "all things marine."

The Sailing Academy is growing, marine sciences are alive, and now, Parkland, in partnership with post-secondary institute Quadrant Marine is offering the Marine Service Technician program starting in February 2015. This is a one semester trades/apprenticeship program for students that meet entrance requirements and whose career aspirations are to work in the marine industry. Quadrant Marine was recently named as an Industry Training Authority training centre, allowing students to gain credits for their secondary transcripts as well as gaining credits for post-secondary and apprenticeship programs.

### **The Board's Strategic Plan**

The Board of Education is committed to ongoing growth and improvement, and has captured its priorities in its Strategic Plan 2012-2016. The plan provides clarity around the vision and goals that the Board has developed with the leadership of staff, students and parents throughout the district, and shares with our community partners. Within four priority areas, the plan includes strategic objectives, a snapshot from the starting point of 2012, a vision for 2016, commitments to action, and indicators of success. Those four areas are:

- program excellence and personalized learning;
- parent and community connections;
- leadership and organizational effectiveness; and,
- technology, facilities and environmental sustainability.

The school district website [www.sd63.bc.ca](http://www.sd63.bc.ca) provides access to the strategic plan itself, and to the year one report from 2013 as well as the year 2 report from 2014.

### **A Very Special Project**

The "We All Pull Together: Bayside Canoe Project" is a partnership between Bayside Middle School and Pauquachin First Nation. Students, staff and community members are engaged in a year-long project to carve a traditional canoe. First Nation students used their SENCOTEN language skills in a traditional WSA NEC ceremony as the cedar tree was felled, stripped and wrapped in preparation for carving. This is a tremendous example of one of our schools building connections with our local First Nations in support of the Enhancement Agreement and learning for all students.

Warm Regards,



Keven Elder  
Superintendent of Schools

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