



## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

May 11, 2016 Board Meeting

**Trustees:** (back row) Sherry Cooper, Ron Fisher (Vice Chair), Colleen Butler (Chair), Superintendent Kurt Sacher, Connie Huelsman  
(front row) Sheldon Ball, Trudy James, Jackie Swainson, Holly Bilton, Gordon Kerr

### **Benalto School Closure Plan**

Members of the Superintendent's Team presented updates from their specific departments regarding the closure process, and indicated there have been ongoing discussions with Benalto staff and families, and the Benalto Review Committee, regarding next steps. Students and staff are preparing for students to begin next school year at C.P. Blakely Elementary School and École Fox Run School, and these schools are planning welcoming events to ease the transition.

Detailed inventories of supplies, furniture and other materials from the school are being itemized, with the current Benalto staff invited to determine if they would like to utilize them at their new location. Central Office staff are determining next steps for the facility following June 30, including plans for securing the building. Formal assessments are being completed, as the property is being prepared to go to tender for sale or lease.

**Motion:** The Board of Education declared Benalto School and Grounds as surplus and directed the Superintendent to start the process of disposing of the property as per regulation.

### **School response to Fort McMurray wildfire**

The Superintendent provided an update on the number of formal registrations being received in Chinook's Edge schools from students whose families are part of the evacuation region around Fort McMurray. There are 18 students currently registered from the evacuation zone, and schools have received several more enquiries as families work to determine the length of time they will be displaced. It is a fluctuating situation and Superintendent Kurt Sacher voiced his confidence in the division's schools to handle any additional students with ease: "Our schools are naturally compassionate and they are accommodating these students with great care." He also indicated his pride for all the efforts being undertaken in Chinook's Edge schools to raise funds in support of those impacted by the crisis.

### **Red Deer County bursary winners**

Trustee Connie Huelsman congratulated the Grade 12 students who participated in the annual Agri-Trade event through Red Deer County, including the Chinook's Edge students who earned the top bursary awards.

### **Cremona School teacher nominated for Edwin Parr Award**

Grade 2 teacher, Julie Nickel, was introduced to the Board as the Chinook's Edge nomination for this year's Alberta School Boards' Association 'Edwin Parr Award'. A separate media release is being issued with these Board Highlights.

**Carbon Tax**

Several staff in the Finance Department have been researching the anticipated impact of the provincial government Carbon Tax, which is expected to take effect on January 1, 2017. There would be fuel and natural gas impacts not only to school buses, but also to vehicles in the maintenance department and other incidentals. Staff are working to factor those extra costs into next year's budget, and they are anticipating the total costs to be approximately \$70,000 for those six months in which the tax will be in effect during the 2016-2017 school year. The Board passed a motion directing the Chair to write a letter appealing to the Government of Alberta to consider school divisions exempt from this new tax.

**Basic Transportation Fee**

As work is underway to prepare a budget for the 2016-2017 school year, the Board agreed to keep the basic student transportation fee unchanged for next year. Although the Board continues to anticipate a deficit in the Transportation Department budget, they were mindful of the financial struggles that many families in our division are facing because of the financial downturn and did not want to burden Chinook's Edge families with an additional fee in an effort to offset those deficits.

**Olds Institute presentation**

The Executive Director of the Olds Institute for Community and Regional Development presented information about their extensive program throughout the Olds area, much of which impacts Chinook's Edge students and schools.

**Pre-Kindergarten programming**

Superintendent Kurt Sacher provided an update on the division's successful Pre-Kindergarten programming, which now sees three classes of students at École Steffie Woima Elementary in Sylvan Lake, two classes at: Jessie Duncan School in Penhold, Ross Ford Elementary in Didsbury and École Olds Elementary School. There is interest from other communities to provide this highly effective program for the division's youngest students, and the Central Office team is monitoring these requests.

**Acorn online payment system**

There has been over \$2 million in online transactions in Chinook's Edge since the Acorn program was adopted, involving everything from school fees to hot lunch programs. This is an effort to reduce impact on the workload of teachers and other staff who used to spend hours counting money, and to make these transactions convenient for parents.

**The next meeting of the Board of Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, June 22, 2016.**

*For more information please contact:*

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