



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Jan. 13, 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

International School Trips

The Board passed a motion allowing for the 2015-2016 school trips, which had previously been approved in principle, to proceed because there has been no change in the Foreign Affairs messaging that cautions travel to any of the locations on the itinerary. However, the Board is transitioning out of their involvement in international school trips, with the exception of the United States, for the 2016-2017 school year. This is due to Foreign Affairs' cautionary messaging associated with France – which is on the itinerary on the three school trips that had been previously approved in principle. The Board has instructed the Superintendent to support schools in shifting these 2016-2017 travel plans to be led by the community, which would assume the responsibility and liability associated with international travel, along with decision-making capacity in response to any changing Foreign Affairs travel cautions. The Board fully appreciates the significant educational value of foreign travel and is willing to support communities as they plan international trips, but is proceeding with legal and insurance advice that holds school Boards to highly formal standards of diligence.

Policy approved: Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments

The Board approved Policy 2-18 which respects student diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for all students, regardless of race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disabilities, mental disabilities, family status, sexual orientation. As well, the Board was provided a presentation from Wanda Christensen, Associate Superintendent of Student Services, who outlined the work underway in a pending Administrative Procedure around Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, which supports the new policy by providing the Superintendent with detailed definitions and processes to support gender minority students and staff in the division. This Admin Procedure, which is expected to be implemented by the end of March, has been developed over nearly two years of work by the Student Services team and a number of other groups. This has involved input from the Safe and Caring Schools Committee, the Superintendent's Advisory Team of Administrators, and all school-based administrators in the division. The work has also been guided by Alberta Education, the National Association of School Psychology, the Calgary Sexual Health Clinic, legal authorities, and Dr. Kris Wells from the University of Alberta who has led extensive research and advocacy in the LGBTQ community across the country. "The Board appreciates the amount of work and input that has gone into our directive to create this overarching new Policy and the upcoming Admin Procedure that supports it. Our division started this work nearly two years ago, because it's the right thing to do. It is important to the children and youth in our care, so it is important to us. Everyone in Chinook's Edge stands behind and appreciates our safe and caring culture, and this work is another example of that priority," said Trustee Sherry Cooper, Chair of the Policy Committee.

COLT Roadshows

The Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) has begun its annual series of visits to eight locations in the division, where school staff in each of the areas in the division gather for updates and dialogue with the Trustees and the Superintendency Team. Staff in schools have been appreciative of this time.

Trip Requests

The Board denied a trip request from Didsbury High School to travel to the Bloomsday Run in Spokane from April 29-May 2, 2016. The Board declined entertaining a request from Bowden Grandview School to travel to Central Europe during Spring Break 2017, due to the Board motion that had been made earlier in the meeting.

The next meeting of the Board of Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, February 10, 2016.

For more information please contact:

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