



Summary of Board Meeting #17 Tuesday, October 8, 2002

- A. **O Canada** – District Video.
- B. **Roll Call:** (6:00 p.m.) - All trustees were present.
- C. **Communications from the Board Chairman**

- 1. **Education Commission – Public Consultation**

The chairman advised that, throughout October, the Board of Trustees is holding public consultation meetings with its partners in education to gather feedback on a report that will be presented to Alberta's Commission on Learning. The board is committed to reflecting the thoughts and opinions of the entire community in its presentation to the Commission and invites those not able to be involved in the public consultations meetings to fill out an online survey that addresses issues in the report. A copy of the report and survey is available on the district's website at www.epsb.ca. He noted that an article had appeared in the Edmonton Journal expressing the board's concern, because of the complexity of the district, with the time that had been allocated for the board's presentation to the Commission. He was subsequently contacted by Patricia MacKenzie, Commission Chair, who advised that a meeting will be arranged with our board and the Edmonton Catholic Board. A separate meeting has also been arranged for the Calgary Catholic and Public Boards. These will not be meetings of the entire Commission but rather two separate meetings with members of the Commission who reside in those cities.

- 2. **Student Awards Night**

The chairman advised that the district's 43rd Annual Student Awards Night will be held this Thursday evening. The board will be recognizing 94 students for their accomplishments at this event. We are very pleased that 738 students received honours standing this year compared to 644 last year and that over 1,400 students received Alexander Rutherford Scholarships representing a dollar value of \$2.5 million.

3. World Teachers' Day

The chairman noted that on October 5, 2002 the district ran two advertisements in the Edmonton Journal – one to acknowledge the 400 district teachers granted permanent contracts this year and the other to acknowledge the 9 newly appointed district principals. These ads coincided with World Teachers' Day. The board values the contributions teachers make to students every day.

D. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

The superintendent advised that an ad had been placed in the Edmonton Journal to recognize the contribution of the district's custodial staff. This ad coincided with Custodial Appreciation Week.

E. Minutes:

1. Board Meeting #16 – September 24, 2002

Approved as printed. (AS)

F. Focus on Student Achievement

2. Baturyn School's Instructional Focus: Reading for Meaning

Received for information.

G. Reports:

3. Response to Trustee Request for Information
(Carried Forward from September 24, 2002 Board Meeting)

Received for information.

4. Funds for 2003-2004 Professional Improvement Leaves

Approved recommendation.

5. Alexander Rutherford Scholarships
 - a) Received for information.
 - b) Trustee Nicholson requested that information be provided regarding other scholarships district students receive such as university entrance academic awards.
 - c) Trustee Odynski suggested that scholarship requirements be provided to parents and students at the junior high level.
 - d) Trustee Woodrow suggested profiling students who have won scholarships.

6. Education Commission – Discussion Paper

Received for information.

7. Alberta Response Model

Received for information.

8. Provincial Early Childhood Development Initiative: Capital Health Young Family Wellness Plan

Received for information.

9. Identifying Projects to be Funded from the Capital Reserve
 - a) Received for information.
 - b) Trustees expressed support for partnership initiatives and creative use of capital reserve funds.

10. Fourth Quarterly Report: June 1, 2002 to August 31, 2002
 - a) Received for information.
 - b) Trustee Nicholson requested that information be provided regarding district staff absenteeism rates compared to the rates in other organizations and industry.
 - c) Trustee Woodrow requested that the administration “red flag” issues about which trustees should be aware.

- d) Trustee Woodrow referred to the transfer from the transportation block grant to Prince Charles (page 11) and requested information on the number of students who will receive transportation for the Awasis Program.

11. Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

Received for information.

H. Committee and Board Representative Reports

• **Community Relations Activities**

1. a) The following were Trustee Martin's comments with respect to the board's self-evaluation:

I would like to report from the Board Evaluation Committee on the results of this year's board evaluation. The board conducts an annual board self-evaluation in addition to reviewing other district monitoring information from the district attitude surveys and achievement results.

The board conducts a board self-evaluation for a number of reasons:

- *To facilitate communication and teamwork among board members.*
- *To enable the board to model its policy of system-wide evaluation (i.e., to hold itself to a standard as it holds others to a standard).*
- *To assist the board in clarifying its direction to more effectively plan, and provide for, the learning opportunities for children in the system.*

Last year was a difficult one. This past year saw the formation of a new board following the October 2001 municipal election, a new superintendent, the launch of a concerted effort on the part of the district to focus on teaching and learning with the blue prints initiative, the development of new district priorities, and the testing of the district's spirit and commitment with a teacher's strike.

We began this new year knowing without a doubt that we are blessed with committed and resilient staff who are focused on achievement for all students. All district staff should be proud of the work they did to maintain our focus and our sense of team during the past year.

In reviewing the board's self-evaluation, the board can also take pride in staying its course. We started out knowing there would be a lot of unknowns and challenges that we would face but that no matter what happened we wanted to maintain the integrity of our working relationships with all of our staff and stakeholders. And, I think we did that – we may feel a little worse for wear but.... Our district has come out of last year, stronger in knowing that our mutual respect and common sense of purpose will help us get to where we want to be.

The evaluation highlighted for us as a board, the need to be more effective in engaging our entire community as active partners in support of public education. We know in the past we have been most successful where we have shared information and empowered others as advocates for public education – our staff and our parent community. However, the largest segment of our community, those without children in the school or any direct connection to schools is our biggest challenge – our challenge as a board and as a district. Your board will be concentrating its energies in better understanding the unique educational needs and workings of our communities, our community of staff, our community of parents, our community of students and our community of citizens with no children or direct connections in schools.

However, we can all make a difference -- it reminds me of the telephone ad “reach out and touch someone” – we can all make a difference one conversation at a time – with our neighbours, relatives, and friends without children in school.

This year we have the opportunity to renew our collective commitment to supporting “the work” of teaching and learning. We also have the opportunity of a provincial commission on education to try to influence the face of education in the years to come and that is a challenge we look forward to.

- b) The verbal report was received for information.
- c) Trustee Woodrow requested that Ms Beaton, President Edmonton Public Teachers, convey the board's commitment to supporting our teachers.

2. Trustee Odynski advised that a letter from MP Debra Gray advising that the board's nomination of Martin Garber-Conrad, Executive Director Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation, for a Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal was successful. The presentation ceremony will take place Friday, October 25, 2002 at Queen Elizabeth Composite High School from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. She commended Alva Shewchuk and Gloria Chalmers for their work on the submission for this award and read an excerpt from the nomination.

Trustee Fleming commended Trustee Odynski for putting Mr. Garber-Conrad's name forward for nomination.

3. Trustee Woodrow advised that she had brought greetings on behalf of the board at the induction of teachers for the Logos Christian Program. She noted that many of the teachers expressed their pleasure at the opportunity to be a part of Edmonton Public Schools.

I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives – None.

J. Trustee and Board Requests for Information

1. Trustee Odynski noted that there had been an article in the Edmonton Journal regarding contaminated water bottles in Calgary public schools. She requested information on whether schools are providing instructions to students with respect to the cleaning and use of water bottles.
2. Trustee Odynski requested that information be provided with respect to what information is being provided to potential home buyers in new developments with respect to the building of new schools; i.e. signage. Also, how do we communicate that we have schools in established neighbourhoods that potential homebuyers might wish to consider?

K. Notices of Motion – None.

L. Next Meeting Date: October 22, 2002 – 7:30 p.m. – Organizational Board

M. Duration of Meeting: 6:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.