

# Western School District Director's Report to Board

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The Western School District continues to maintain its focus on the strategic goal of student learning, using assessment and evaluation to strategically guide instructional practice. In January, many of our students wrote mid-term assessments. The preparation for these exams helped students solidify their learning, and the results help provide a focus for the remainder of the year.

I thank all teachers for the continuous guidance and support you give all your students. The multitude of teaching methods you utilize in your classrooms optimizes each student's learning experience. Your commitment to the learning process, and to helping students achieve, is reflected in each and every student.

## ~ FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING ~

### ■ Elementary English Language Arts and Mathematics Common Assessments

The elementary common assessment was administered in January. Scoring teams, consisting of 60 Grades 4, 5, and 6 teachers have been chosen. They will meet over the next two weeks for training on the provincial rubrics and score a large percentage of student work. Assessment scores and descriptive feedback will then be provided for both the classroom teacher and the students. It is the intention that all assessments and feedback will be returned to the schools by the end of February so teachers and students can reap the benefits for the remainder of the school year.

### ■ Intermediate and Senior High Mid-year Assessments

#### ● Mid-Year Examinations

During the week of January 24-27, senior high school students throughout the district wrote mid-year examinations in a variety of courses, including English, Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Systems), Social Studies, and French. Intermediate students completed mid-year examinations in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and French.

#### ● Common Assessment

Common mid-year assessments constructed by teacher panels were administered in Grade 9 English Language Arts, Mathematics 3204, English 3201, World History 3201, and World Geography 3202. This was the first year for the administration of the World History and World Geography assessments. In February, parents will be informed of all assessment results.

A detailed analysis of each common assessment will be compiled by personnel at District Office. Once completed and returned to schools, it will help to inform student learning for the remainder of this year.

### ■ Mathematics Promotion

The Department of Education has once again allocated a significant amount of money for schools in this province for the promotion of mathematics. Applications from individual schools were submitted to the Department of Education in early December. Department personnel have reviewed these proposals, and decisions regarding allocation of funds will be communicated in the near future.

### ■ Safe and Caring School Awards

Safe and Caring School Special Project Awards are funded by the Department of Education and awarded annually. This year, 20 applications were received from across the district and all were submitted to the Provincial Safe and Caring Schools Committee for selection. The following nine school projects were approved for \$500 awards:

St. Thomas Aquinas, Port-au-Port: Bully Buster Days  
St. James' Elementary: Port aux Basques: Rainy Day Activities  
St. Michael's Elem., Stephenville Crossing: Pay It Backward  
St. Anthony Elementary: Spirit-Attitude-Excellence - Phase 2  
St. Peter's Academy, Benoit's Cove: Positive Behaviour Supports  
Labrador Straits Academy, L'Anse au Loup: Stand Up to Bullying  
Stephenville Elementary: Catch Me Good Program  
CC Loughlin, Corner Brook: CC Spirit Day  
St. Gerard's, Corner Brook: Respect Day / Pink Shirt Day

Thank you to all staff for your commitment to safe and caring school environments. We encourage all schools to continue to be creative in their approaches to fostering respect and pro-social behaviour in schools, and to apply for funding again next year.

### ■ National Non-Smoking Week (January 17-22)

For the past three years, students in the Western School District have participated in a contest to create radio ads to promote a smoke-free lifestyle. This contest is sponsored by the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco and the Tobacco-Free Network. Thirteen schools entered the contest this year and from those entries, five radio ads were chosen to represent the district. The winning schools were as follows:

St. Anthony Elementary	Gr. 7
French Shore Academy, Port Saunders	Gr. 11
St. Peter's Academy, Benoit's Cove	Gr. 6
St. James Regional High, Port aux Basques	Gr. 7

The five winning entries can be found at [http://web.wnlsd.ca/student\\_health/Tobacco/tobacco\\_free.htm](http://web.wnlsd.ca/student_health/Tobacco/tobacco_free.htm).

Thank you to all students who participated, and congratulations to all the successful entrants and their sponsoring teachers.

#### ■ Healthy Schools Grants

The Regional Wellness Coalitions are currently accepting applications for Healthy Schools Grants. These grants support school-based initiatives that promote health and wellness such as school playgrounds, wellness days, and improved nutrition. Schools (south of Bartlett's Harbour) are eligible for \$500 per school, with applications to be submitted to the Western Regional Wellness Coalition by February 15 ([Western Application Form](#)). Schools north of Bartlett's Harbour are eligible for up to \$1000 per school, with applications to be submitted to the Northern Regional Wellness Coalition by February 28 ([Northern Application Form](#)).

### ~ FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING ~

#### ■ Western School District Internal Assessment Program

Common examination committees for English Language Arts 7, 8, 1201, and 2201 will be selected in the near future. The committees will construct district common examinations for administration in June 2011.

Common examination construction committees for Mathematics 7, 8, 1204, 2204, and 2205 will be selected in the near future to construct the district common examinations for June 2011.

#### ■ Department of Education Professional Learning Sessions

During Day 2 of our fall conference, "Learning for ALL: Assessment and Instructional Practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", many of our primary and elementary teachers received Day 1 of a two day professional learning session for new curriculum implementation in the following areas: Kindergarten, Grade 1 Health and Religious Education, Grade 4 Social Studies, and Grade 5 Art. Day 2 has now been completed in the northern region of the district, with dates set in the early and mid-February for both the central and southern regions.

#### ■ English Language Arts – Curriculum Update

Implementation of the new English Language Arts 7 program is near completion. Based on the Department of Education's Professional Learning Model, all teachers with responsibilities in

English Language Arts 7 will receive another half day of inservicing. This is scheduled to take place January 31 through to February 16 and is being delivered by the program specialist with responsibilities in the area of English, Grades 7-12. A curriculum working group is currently revising the English Language Arts Grade 8 program, with implementation scheduled for September 2011.

#### ■ School Development and Assessment

The first half of the 2010-11 school year has certainly been a busy one with respect to the school development process. This past fall, twelve schools moved through the internal review and plan writing processes for the second time, and are now scheduled for external review and plan validation throughout the winter and spring. Once validated, these schools will focus on implementation and monitoring of their strategic educational plans for the next three years.

Also this fall, two other schools finished writing their first school development plan under the new model and are eagerly awaiting validation. We are pleased to report that all schools within the Western School District are now fully engaged in the new school development process.

#### ■ Leadership at Work

Leadership at Work, a professional development program for administrators, is alive and well throughout the Western School District. We currently have cohorts in all zones, each at different stages of the program.

The southern zone finished a three-year program last year, and is now planning a retreat to form a new cohort and develop a learning plan for the next three years.

The central zone is in year two of a three-year learning program, with one session completed this year and two others scheduled.

The northern zone is currently planning a session for February and another for May. This cohort is in year one of the three-year program.

#### ■ School Council Training

School council training has also been a focus this year, with thirty-nine schools either trained or scheduled for training within the new few weeks. Consultants from the Department of Education are currently visiting schools in all three zones of our district conducting these training sessions.

A key component of the training is the role of school councils in the school development process. School councils have the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of school development plans, once they have been validated for implementation. This training enables school councils to effectively carry out their mandate as an advisory body to schools.