

WESTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

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I take this opportunity to welcome all teachers and support staff to the start of a new school year, and to thank you for your continued commitment to excellence in student learning.

~ FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING ~

The Western School District continues to strive towards a vision of a learning organization in which all students achieve their maximum potential. Student learning for all is enhanced by new programs, new resources in technology and other program areas, and a focus on the inclusion of all students in our instructional approaches.

■ NEW COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Listed below are new course offerings for this school year. Each of these new courses includes a new curriculum guide and new curriculum resources. For each new program, teachers will have one or two days of professional learning where they will become familiar with the philosophy and overall thrust of the program, as well as the wealth of new resources available to support them and their students in the teaching and learning process. The Western School District plans to provide some of this professional learning time during fall close out sessions in October, which are scheduled in a number of locations throughout the district.

Kindergarten English Language Arts
Grade 2 Religious Education (including French Immersion and French First Language)
Grade 2 Health
Grade 3 Social Studies (including FI and FFL)
Grade 6 Visual Arts (including FI and FFL)
Grade 8 English Language Arts
Grade 8 Français: French Language Arts (Early and Late French Immersion)
Grade 9 Social Studies (Including FI and FFL)
Math 1201 (level I Academic) – (Including FFL)
Math 1202 (Level I General) – (Including FFL)
Core French 2200
Entrepreneurship 3209

■ REVISED CURRICULUM GUIDES

The Department of Education has updated course outcomes for the following course offerings: Intermediate Physical Education, Physical Education 2100/2101 – Active for Life Teacher

Resource, Canadian History 1201 (Including FI and FFL), and Earth Systems 3209. The primary teaching resource remains the same for these courses.

■ CONTINUED FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIONARY EDUCATION PRACTICES

Over the last three years, the Department of Education has done a significant amount of work refocusing its systems and approaches to ensure a more inclusionary education system that provides the supports necessary to help all students to achieve to their maximum potential. This thrust is very much aligned with the Western School District's vision of ensuring all students learn to their fullest potential, and with the many priority learning initiatives that it has embarked upon over the last seven years.

The Western School District has had 16 schools intensely involved in pilots in inclusionary practices, and another 12 schools throughout the district are scheduled to engage in this initiative for the 2011-12 school year. These special initiatives are in addition to the caring environments and inclusionary efforts that are so important in all schools.

■ 21ST CENTURY LEARNING INITIATIVES

Technology Resources

Through funding announced in last spring's budget (\$10.8 Million), the Department of Education is providing a substantial amount of funding to school districts to acquire interactive white boards and new high-end desktop computers for all schools in the province. Through this important initiative, the WSD will be able to ensure all schools have high performance computer labs and will also be able to significantly increase the number of interactive white boards throughout the district.

21st Century Technology Integration Initiative

The Western School District is committed to creating leading edge schools that will "Light" the way in innovative teaching that fosters the development of 21st century learning skills through the regular, strategic, systemic and systematic use of technology across disciplines and grade levels. This will be achieved through sustaining and expanding the HP LITE Project across disciplines and grade levels in the three schools currently involved in the project.

This initiative involves students and staff routinely using multiple technological tools to enhance the teaching-learning

process, both from instructional and assessment perspectives. Teachers will foster the development of 21st century learning skills as essential components in their delivery of mandated curriculum outcomes. This will be accomplished through teachers using a broad range of technology in their daily teaching and allowing students to have opportunities to use their own technology to facilitate their learning.

~ FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING ~

Enhanced student learning is the most important goal of the Western School District. The Western School District remains focused on the recruitment of the most qualified teachers to support this goal, and in supporting professional development for teachers. The District is also committed to improving school organization and school infrastructure for enhanced student learning environments.

■ NEW PLACEMENTS, NEW TEACHERS

While staffing schools is an ongoing process for the Western School District, the main staffing period begins in April and concludes in early September with the opening of schools. The Human Resources Division filled approximately two hundred positions for this year's staffing period, with approximately 20 new teachers hired. This number includes reassignments, recruitment of teachers and administrators, and the recruitment of support staff.

We wish to thank all district staff and school administrators who assisted with the staffing process this summer. We also welcome all new staff to our District.

■ NEW ADMINISTRATORS ORIENTATION SESSION

The Western School District facilitated an orientation session for new administrators August 30 and 31. The session was designed to welcome new administrators to the district team and to provide professional development opportunities for their new roles as instructional leaders.

The new administrators took part in sessions on Programming, Human Resources, Finance and Operations, and Student Support Services. In addition, they participated in sessions on School Development Plans and Professional Learning Plans, facilitated by an experienced school administrative team.

The district welcomes the new administrators to the District Leadership Team for the 2011- 2012 school year.

■ NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION

In partnership with the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and Johnson's Insurance, the District again engaged beginning teachers in orientation sessions this year. On August 31 and

September 1, twenty-one new teachers participated in a series of sessions facilitated by district and school personnel.

Session topics included the following: Facilitating Learning for ALL Students, Organizational Learning, Professional Growth and Development and Professional Learning Plans, Classroom Management and Positive Behaviour Supports, and Sharing of Experiences - A Teacher Induction Team, and Supporting New Teachers. The two-day orientation sessions afforded new teachers an opportunity to become familiar with the district focus, and to make connections with colleagues and district staff. In addition, the NLTA and Johnson Insurance provided sessions related to teacher benefits and financial planning.

■ OFFICIAL SCHOOL OPENING

Labrador Straits Academy, L'Anse au Loup was officially opened September 8 by The Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education. The Western School District thanks the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for their commitment to education, and especially for this new school. Thank you to students who performed at the opening, to the staff who coordinated the event, to volunteers who gave of their time, and to the community at large for their ongoing support of the educational community.

The Western School District is committed to excellence in student learning and this facility broadens learning opportunities for all students. Congratulations to students and staff on the opening of your new school.

■ NEW SCHOOL OPENING

Bayside Academy, the new K-12 school in Port Hope Simpson, which has replaced the former D.C Young School, opened on September 6. The new school is equipped with significant instructional improvements for the students of Port Hope Simpson, including a new gymnasium complete with a stage, a music room, skilled trades suite, home economics room and challenging needs suite.

This new facility will provide an enriching educational environment for the students of Port Hope Simpson for years to come. The official opening of Bayside Academy will be scheduled for later in the school year. We wish students and staff all the best in the new facility.

A special thanks to the school administrators, teachers, and support staff at Bayside Academy for your commitment, cooperation, hard work, and excellent organization in making the move to your new school.