

# Western School District Director's Report to Board

Volume 9, No. 5

March 2013

Nothing succeeds like success, and there is nothing that will position us better, in our collective commitment, than the success of our students this year. The next few months afford us significant time to intervene with student. Thank you for your continued efforts in support of student achievement for the remainder of the year.

## ~ FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING ~

### ■ Arts and Cultural Infused Curriculum

Arts and Cultural Infused Curriculum (ACIC) projects bring community artists/tradition bearers into classrooms and are designed to enhance the delivery of curriculum outcomes in the arts or cultural education. Focused Professional Learning for the teacher is also built into this process. The Western School District has approved, in partnership with the Department of Education, ACIC projects at Elwood High, Deer Lake and St. James Regional High, Port aux Basques.

### ■ Learning, Educating, and Growing Arts and Culture for Youth (LEGACY)

These projects are designed to support student projects in the culture and the Arts. An artist, tradition bearer, or heritage professional works with students to examine a Newfoundland and Labrador tradition in the context of present time. Projects aim to enhance student critical awareness of the role and value of arts and culture. Western School District has approved one project of this type at Appalachia High in St. George's: *Rhythm of Mother Earth* (traditional Mi'kmaq drum making).

### ■ Social Studies - Human Dynamics 2201

The Western School District offered a cost-share program to upgrade the Real Baby units (life-like infant simulator) in various schools throughout the district. Schools that availed of this initiative took part in an online professional learning session with a representative from Studica Inc. via Webinar on February 14.

### ■ Senior High Mathematics Implementation

In September 2013, the new high school Mathematics curriculum is scheduled to continue with the implementation of the following courses at Level III: Mathematics 3200 (advanced), Mathematics 3201 (academic), Mathematics 3202 (general), and Mathematics 3208 (calculus readiness). Mathematics 3204/05/06, Mathematics 3103, and Mathematics 3207 will be de-listed.

### ■ Mathematics Promotion Grants Awarded

The Provincial Mathematics Strategy, originally announced in the 2007 Provincial Budget, has a promotional campaign as one of its components. The intent of this campaign is to build a culture of positive attitude toward mathematics among students and parents. Applications from individual schools in the

Western School District were submitted to the Department of Education in mid-November. After reviewing the proposals, the Department informed the District that it will receive a total of \$21,400 for this initiative in 32 schools throughout the Western School District. Information on individual school allocations and the procedures to be followed to attain this funding has been sent to school administrators.

### ■ Roots of Empathy; Program Training

The Roots of Empathy Program has received \$75,000.00 from the Department of Education to support further training in the province. Roots of Empathy is a classroom-based program which has been shown to reduce levels of aggression and violence among school children, while raising social and emotional competence, and increasing empathy. Roots of Empathy's mission is to build caring, peaceful and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults. Children learn to regulate their own emotions, a key to good mental health. To date we have 17 programs occurring in the district.

Typically guidance counselors or community individuals take the training to offer the program within local schools. Please contact Betty Tilley at District Office if you are interested in further information on the program, or if you wish to apply to participate in the next training session.

## ~ FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING ~

### ■ Resources – Curriculum Bridging Supports

The Department of Education has curriculum resources on their government website that may be helpful for planning curriculum bridging supports, Alternate Curricular Programs or Alternate Curricular Courses for students. These resources were originally designed for students who had gaps in their learning (example: students who entered our school system from other countries and therefore had gaps in their education which prevented them from succeeding in an age appropriate grade level program, etc.). Many English Second Language (ESL) teachers have accessed these resources for their students.

However, these resources may be beneficial for students who also have gaps in their learning for various other reasons and therefore require literacy enrichment and academic readiness (Math, Language, Social Studies, Science). Resources reflect various levels of student readiness.

For example, LEARN- 2 Mathematics is provided as a resource that may be beneficial at the intermediate or senior high level to prepare students with gaps in learning with the skills and strategies necessary for success in high school Math. Although it is written as a course (110 hours), components can be utilized based on student need.

These resources may be accessed through the following links:  
<http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/curriculum/guides/esl/index.html#learn>

### ■ **Hearing Impaired – Professional Workshops**

The Department of Education is offering Itinerant and School-Based Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing a series of workshops to assist in working with children with hearing loss. These workshops will address the application of knowledge and techniques related to listening and spoken language development, as well as assessing and planning programs which will integrate listening, speech, language, cognition, academics and communication skills. The workshops will take place biannually over the next three years, starting in March 2013 and finishing in October 2015. The workshops will be conducted by Anita Bernstein, LSLS Cert., AVT, Director of Therapy and Training Programs at VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children in Ontario, and Dr. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Associate Professor in Audiology in the School of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Ottawa.

### ■ **Speech Language Pathology**

As of April 2013, speech-language pathologists and audiologists will be registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Newfoundland and Labrador (CASLP-NL). The Western School District is pleased to host the next provincial conference of the Association on September 12 and 13. Details of the conference sessions will be available later this spring.

### ■ **Autism**

As part of ongoing Professional Learning Circles, teachers who are working with students with autism were introduced to the website of Linda Hodgdon, [www.usevisualstrategies.com](http://www.usevisualstrategies.com). This site provides free visuals as well as the opportunity to subscribe to a free newsletter and resources. There are articles such as “12 Essentials Every Classroom Must Have for Autism Success and 8 Myths of Communication and Behaviour in Autism and How They Affect You”. The focus of her work is the implementation of visual supports for students with autism. This is a key factor in successful school programs for children with autism.

**IPad Webinars:** On First Class/Teacher Area/Student Support Services/Autism Group there is a link for four webinars that focus on Apps for Autism. These can be accessed by teachers at any time and are approximately an hour and half in length.

The Division of Student Support Services, Department of Education recently embarked on an iPad Pilot Project. Five schools in the province participated in this project. Selected teachers from each of the pilot schools availed of 4 webinars. The Department of Education contracted Barbara Welsford to lead these webinars. Barbara is the Coordinator of the Assistive Technology Centre and an Assistive Technology Specialist with the South Shore Regional School Board, Nova Scotia. Webinar 1 is an introduction to the IPAD and Pic Collage. Webinar 2 is Apps for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Webinar 3

is Apps Specific to Primary Users with Low Incidence Disabilities and Webinar 4 is Key AAC Apps: GoTalkNow and Proloquo2Go. You will also find a list of recommended apps for students with autism posted on the autism group.

**Boardmaker Share:** Since all of the schools in our district have received a copy of Boardmaker, teachers now have access to a wealth of online curriculum material. All that is needed is a free account and password. Searches can be done by school curriculum/life skills/ cognitive skills and then by grade level. The program will generate all the premade activities that meet those criteria. The Boardmaker disc is needed to download and print these activities. This makes activity generation very easy and quick. Any teacher who would like an orientation to Boardmaker or Boardmaker Share should contact Christine Manuel, the district Itinerant for Autism.

### ■ **Assessment**

The Western School District, in partnership with the Department of Education, recently provided 2 days of in-service aimed at building assessment capacity/competency in schools. Thirty-two select instructional resource teachers and guidance counselors participated in a two day session February 19-20 which focused on assessment practices, especially as it relates to the WIAT-II.

### ■ **Inclusive Education**

Twelve Phase 5 schools for Inclusive Education have been selected with training for administrators starting in March. The training will involve 3 representatives from each school and will include (1) the Principal and (or) Vice-principal, (2) a member of the School Development Team, and (3) one teacher from within the school. The twelve selected schools are: All Saints All-Grade, Grey River; Appalachia High School, St. George's; Burgeo Academy, Belanger Memorial School, Doyles; Douglas Academy, La Poile; E.A. Butler, McKay's; Grandy's River Collegiate, Burnt Islands; LeGallais Memorial, Isle aux Morts; Our Lady of Mercy Elementary, St. George's; St. Boniface All-Grade, Ramea; St. James Regional High, Port aux Basques; and St. Simon and St. Jude, Francois.

Western School District is now in year five of the Pilot/Phase Inclusive Education Initiative. At the end of the 2013-14 school year, 51 schools will have received training in inclusion, differentiated instruction, differentiated assessment and co-teaching.