

*Highlights from the October 21, 2009 meeting of the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division Board of Trustees*

## **Organizational Meeting**

Grande Yellowhead's Board of Trustees conducted their annual Organizational Meeting at the start of the October 21<sup>st</sup> Public Board meeting. Trustee John Stitzenberger, one of the Trustees representing Edson and area, was re-elected as Board Chair for a one year term, and Shirley Caputo, one of the Trustees representing Hinton, was re-elected to the Vice Chair position. During the meeting, Trustees also re-established their committee assignments. Both Trustee Stitzenberger and Trustee Caputo thanked the rest of the Board for their continued support, and look forward to working with them on another successful year at Grande Yellowhead.

## **Grande Yellowhead Re-branding Project**

Over the last school year, a new name and visual identity for the division was developed and approved by the Board of Trustees subject to Ministerial approval. On September 30<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Minister of Education approved the new legal name of the Division to be the *Grande Yellowhead Public School Division No. 77*. Administration will now move forward with the necessary changes to the various documentation, signage and background materials to reflect the Division's new name. All materials currently branded with GYRD are still applicable during the transition period although the intent is to make a complete changeover as soon as is reasonably practicable. The implementation period of the new visual identity make take a few months and during this time, some materials with the old logo may be seen while the division uses up existing materials to remain economical and environmentally friendly.

## **Pandemic Planning**

GYRD has developed many communication, educational and awareness strategies over the last couple of years to protect the health and safety of staff and students, as well as support the continuation of educational services in the event of an influenza pandemic. These include the establishment of a Pandemic Planning Committee, preventative programs such as videos and promotional materials such as "cover your cough", "washing hands protocols" and "when ill, stay home" awareness campaigns have been done, and additional cleaning procedures for custodians and bus drivers have been implemented upon a larger than normal absenteeism reported of staff/ students. Other steps include a fact sheet entitled *Action Steps for Teachers to Prevent the Spread of Flu* was developed and shared at the beginning of September with all staff, and visitor alert signs were given to all school sites for posting in entrances along with alcohol-based hand sanitizers mounted in large gathering areas. Isolation rooms have also been identified at each site to provide for the care of infected students until they can be picked up to help minimize the spread of infection, and pandemic flu kits have been ordered for each isolation room. GYRD is also part of a provincial health communications network that ensures up-to-date monitoring of any situation so that they are able to efficiently respond to any changes and keep their staff and families with periodic updates when necessary.

## **Student Enrolment Numbers**

As of September 30<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Trustees received a report that the jurisdiction as a whole saw a minor 2% decrease in student enrolment with the most significant decrease in the Lobstick zone schools. GYRD's overall decrease reflects the current trend in the last few years in declining student enrolments for rural school boards. Some schools, such as those in Grande Cache, showed a slight overall increase of 2% in enrolment over their numbers anticipated last spring. Ed Latka, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, noted that although schools are required to do projected enrolments in the spring for planning purposes, actual enrolment figures reported to Alberta Education by the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline are critical for budget purposes as schools and departments will need to re-evaluate the resources required and available to them, as the majority of provincial funding for education is determined on a per student basis.

## **Stop the Cuts ASBA Campaign**

In response to a request from the Alberta School Boards' Association (ASBA), the Board of Trustees approved a motion to support their *Stop the Cuts* provincial campaign by placing the information on the Division's web page and forwarding information to School Councils. This joint call to action is in response to potential cutbacks to educational grants for the 2010-11 school year, and from actual reserve and grant adjustments in the current school year.

-30-

*For more information please contact:*

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