

November 18, 2014

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## HEADLINES

- Revised Strategic Plan
- Aboriginal Students Results Improving, but still Challenges
- Bradner Outdoor Learning
- Board Shares Premier's Award with Youth Health Centre
- Suspension Report Reveals Positive Trends
- Sutherland Says Farewell

## Revised Strategic Plan

The newly revised Strategic Plan for 2014-2018 was formally approved, and sits as a section of the Board's Foundation Statements (Policy 1). Superintendent Kevin Godden noted that during the last year the Board undertook significant consultation and review of information in relation to the plan, including feedback from: over 2,700 staff, parents and students online in relation to its goals, the Youth Student Council, staff and the public in relation to the budget, plus data from the *Superintendent's Report on Achievement*, numerous staff reports and conclusions from the extensive *Community in Schools* review. The new Strategic Plan goals for the coming four years are:

- Excellence in Teaching
- Excellence in Leadership
- Flexible Access to Programs and Services
- Ethical and Innovative Use of Technology
- Parental and Community Engagement



The Strategic Plan is a living document, and the Board's practice has been to make regular amendments. This will continue to be the case with this revised plan.

## Aboriginal Students Results Improving, but still Challenges

With over 1,930 students in the district claiming aboriginal ancestry, the district's Aboriginal Education department has been busy tracking their progress. District Principal Perry Smith told the Board that there have been some big gains in the four goals of: school completion, reading achievement, sense of belonging and cultural pride. However there is concern about a decline in achievement in primary reading assessments. Responses to this include daily literacy intervention for students in grades K to 5 and a grade one literacy calendar and kit for families. The district continues to score considerably higher than the provincial average for school completion by aboriginal students, with an almost 80% rate – up from about 48% in the early 2000s.

Mr. Smith also noted the district is in the final stages of developing its second Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement (a formal agreement between the Board, Ministry of Education and the local Aboriginal community to improve the achievement of Aboriginal learners) and expects it to be completed and signed in the coming months.

## Bradner Outdoor Learning

Bradner Elementary students, parents and staff were on hand to present about environmental learning opportunities the school has introduced. Principal Paulette Collier explained the school wants to expose students to more experiential, place-based and project-based environmental learning. In providing these opportunities, the school hopes to develop students' leadership skills in environmental awareness and stewardship with more consistent, meaningful, hands-on

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outdoor learning experiences within the natural environment.



Pictured presenting to the Board are Bradner students (l to r) Jasmin, Ashley, Raleigh and parents.

## Board Shares Premier's Award given to Youth Health Centre

Abbotsford Youth Centre was recently nominated for the Premier's Award of Excellence. Leaders from this program, which operates in part out of Bakerview Centre for Learning, were on hand to share their successful story and the award with the district, which is one of the AYC's core partners.



Board Chair Cindy Schafer and Eric Van Egmond, Community Service Manager for the Ministry of Children and Family Development are shown with the award. Also on hand were Brian Gross of Impact Youth Substance Use Services and Dr. Elizabeth Watt of the Division of Family Practice and primary physician with the AYHC.

## Suspension Report Reveals Positive Trends

The Board received its annual report on suspensions issued to students last year. Assistant Superintendent Steve Carlton noted that in the past several years the overall suspension rate in the district has declined; since 2009-10 suspensions (in-school and out-of-school) have dropped about 40%. In this past year alone the suspensions dropped by 21%. He reported that interventions at the school and district levels to both student behavior and learning have played a role in the improvement in student behavior. As another administrator noted in the report: "Schools at the secondary level over the past five years, and middle schools over the past two years, have started to develop in-house alternate programs to support and teach these students, rather than punish them."

## Sutherland Says Farewell



One of Abbotsford School District's longest ever serving Trustees attended his final public Board meeting November 18. John Sutherland has served a total of 27 years since his first election in 1983. In recounting his time on the board, he noted how far both the district and society have come, adding: "I guess it's fair to say that I have had the privilege, along with a host of wonderful, creative educators, administrators and trustees, of building a modern school district from scratch."

"There are plenty of reasons to become discouraged and jaded in this job," said Trustee Sutherland. "It can be

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# Board News

more demanding than rewarding. But one only has to get into the schools and see the children and their teachers in action, and a trustee is truly re-energized and motivated to do the job." He concluded "Today, Abbotsford is once more a shining beacon on a hill, an educational masterwork, a great place to go to school. And that's a good time for me to leave."

Trustee Korky Neufeld is also stepping down after nine years on the Board.

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## **Next regular public meetings of the Board of Education:**

- December 9, 7pm (Inaugural; at Abbotsford Senior Secondary)
- December 16, 7pm (at the Board Office, 2790 Tims St.)

## **Abbotsford Board of Education**

- Cindy Schafer, Chair
- Shirley Wilson, Vice Chair
- Korky Neufeld, Trustee
- Rhonda Pauls, Trustee
- Stan Petersen, Trustee
- Preet Rai, Trustee
- John Sutherland, Trustee

### **Trustee-elects:**

- Phillip Anderson
- Freddy Latham

### **Trustee contacts (messages):**

604.859.4891, ext. 1241 // Emails: [info@sd34.bc.ca](mailto:info@sd34.bc.ca)

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