

## Good News Items

- Vice-Chair Arlene Hrynyk commended the System Day organizing committee on an excellent event. Trustee Nestor Kunec said the presentation of a Friends of Education Award to Laurent Marcil was one of the highlights of the event for him.
- Vice-Chair Hrynyk also commented on the progress made to bring mental health supports to youth in the Bonnyville area. She noted it was just one year ago since Northern Lights was invited to discuss mental health supports with the Bonnyville Health Centre and other stakeholders and already there are supports in place benefiting students.
- Board Chair Mandi Skogen thanked Nelson Heights School for their invitation to participate in Pink Day. She was pleased to help with the barbecue and take part in the house competition.

## Transportation Update

Director of Transportation Matt Richter reported that school start up went well despite an increased demand for in-town busing following the Board's decision to eliminate fees. In-town buses filled up in just one day, and waiting lists were created to deal with the increased demand.

Overall in town bus ridership has increased by one third. So far, requests have been accommodated in Cold Lake with existing buses and routes. One in-town route is being added in Bonnyville and one is being added in Lac La Biche. Richter said he expects another influx of requests for busing once the weather gets cooler and more buses may need to be added at that time.

The elimination of fees has created some challenges. One is longer rural ride times for routes where the

bus also picks up students in town. The other is accommodating requests for additional bus stops. Richter noted he has received requests for in town busing from families who live less than 300 metres from a school and they are having to walk further to catch the bus than they would to walk to school.

School of choice ridership has also increased from Caslan and Kikino into Lac La Biche, due to the Board's decision to waive school of choice fees at that end of the Division.

## ASBA Friends of Education

The Board decided to nominate Inside Education for the Alberta School Boards' Association Friends of Education Award. Inside Education offers programs to students and teachers, including the Alberta Boreal Careers Project and Navigate Youth Water Leadership Summit, which several Northern Lights Schools have taken part in.

## CUPE Agreement

The Board passed a motion to ratify an agreement with CUPE.

## Enrollments and Staffing

Superintendent Rick Cusson reported that while final enrollment numbers will not be submitted to Alberta Education until September, the Division's unofficial student enrollment is 6,041 students. This is lower than 2015-2016 official enrollments, but about 20 more than the Division was projecting for 2016-2017. Cusson noted that since the Division was expecting lower enrollments, staff reductions were done at the end of last year. Some staff were added in Cold Lake at the beginning of the year to address increased enrollment.

## Partnerships Update

Director of Community Partnerships and Engagement Heather Stromquist provided the Board with a report detailing the many partnerships that have provided enhanced educational opportunities for students in the Division.

She highlighted a unique experience offered to Northern Lights students last year when the Division was asked to create a choir to perform at a Johnny Reid concert in Cold Lake. Twenty-one students from throughout the Division had the opportunity to meet Johnny Reid and perform with him on stage.

## Next Board Meeting

The next Regular Board Meeting will take place on September 29 at Division Office in Bonnyville.

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