



Algoma District School Board

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MEDIA RELEASE

Algoma District School Board holds first Committee of the Whole Meeting for the 2014 / 2015 school year

Positive feedback around Summer Learning Program

For three weeks in August, Algoma District School Board (ADSB) led a Summer Learning Program (SLP). Designed to support primary students with literacy or numeracy needs, its goal was to minimize summer learning loss and to improve Literacy and Numeracy skills for selected Grade 1 and 2 students. It also supported First Nation, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) primary students with literacy needs while immersing them in a cultural environment.

Nearly 80 students were invited to take part in the program which was held at three locations across the city: Parkland, F.H. Clergue and H.M. Robbins public schools. There were six classes (four literacy, one FNMI literacy and one numeracy) with six qualified teachers and twelve support staff. Smaller class sizes and three adults per room allowed for many learning opportunities.

Each morning the students were involved in academics which included small group, individual and large group activities. Following lunch, support staff had students take part in recreational activities and cooperative games. At this time teachers were also able to work one on one with students. Special field trips were organized including trips to the fire hall, the library, the art gallery and to a Pow Wow in Garden River to celebrate Jordan Nolan who was home with the Stanley Cup.

Co-administrators, Carol Lucio and Lorrie Morley were very pleased with the program. They saw engaged students, many of whom increased their literacy or numeracy level or maintained the level they were at in June. Parents received report cards following the three week program. The same report cards were supplied to the teachers who received the students into their classrooms this fall. Students did a pre and post-test which will provide administrators with data about the program. This information will be shared at a later meeting.

ADSB staff engaged in summer learning

At Tuesday's Committee of the Whole meeting, Principal Debra Kent and Davey Taylor updated Trustees on a summer learning session that was held for administrators in August. Taylor is the Board's new Wellness Special Assignment Teacher. Weaving well-being into the work place was the focus of the 2-day summer session. A keynote address was presented by Jane Riddell the Chief Operations Officer for 30 years at GoodLife Fitness. She shared some of the highs and lows that have grown GoodLife Fitness into the success it is. The management team of GoodLife, over time, honed in on what their shared values were and what they would use as criteria for decision making. Those shared values are: caring, trust, integrity, passion, peak attitude, happiness and personal fitness.

In speaking with Algoma District School Board's principals, vice principals and managers Jane reiterated that strong leaders recognize the talent of their staff. They understand the importance of feedback from employees and seek it out even if it has to be a difficult conversation. She also echoed Director Lucia Reece's message that staff well-being is a critical part of job satisfaction and staff motivation.

ADSB administrators worked through eight interactive sessions which were hosted by community partners involved in health, fitness and well-being. Sessions included yoga and meditation; physiotherapy and learning the effects of the “sitting disease”; healthy eating ideas including ways to boost daily energy; fitness drills and cooperative games that can be shared at schools; junior leadership opportunities through Right To Play; learning the link between exercise and the brain; and outdoor education opportunities that are offered locally.

Later in August, ADSB staff members from business departments at the Education Centre, North and East offices and the Plant Department took part in a session led by Doug Bolger. Doug is a facilitator with Learn2Solutions.

This group of ADSB employees doesn't always have direct contact with students but plays an important role in the strength of our system and the key roles of support staff and how they affect students and schools. The day provided a great way to show appreciation and to develop a link to the Board's Mission: “We build confident learners and caring citizens.”

Achieving Excellence: Next Steps for Ontario & Algoma District School Board

Director of Education, Lucia Reece shared her summer learning and reflections on a research paper, “The Rich Seam,” authored by Michael Fullan and Maria Langworthy. Reece provided key highlights from the document, noting its implications for the student-teacher partnership, school and system leaders, as well as Trustees and policy makers. The document also offers insight on how technology can be best utilized to support learning and innovation in the classroom. Reece also noted that the research paper provides deep insight and complements Ontario's new document “Achieving Excellence.” Director Reece noted that ADSB's Strategic Priorities, Mission, Vision and Values are remarkably well aligned with both documents, and that Trustees can be assured that the Board's priorities and direction will serve the system well in advancing the Board's priorities and improving student achievement and instruction.

Funding the Faught Fieldhouse

Superintendent of Education Asima Vezina updated Trustees about a fundraising campaign that was launched last week. The Algoma District School Board and members of the John Faught family have joined together to create the Sergeant John Faught Fieldhouse through an online fundraising campaign. The campaign was officially launched on Wednesday, September 3rd with the unveiling of the campaign website: www.fundthefieldhouse.com.

In 2013, the ADSB broke new ground with the construction of the first artificial turf field in Sault Ste. Marie. The field was built as part of the new school construction for Superior Heights Collegiate and Vocational School and has since been widely used by schools and community groups of all ages from across the city. Recently, as a response to the increasing community interest, the ADSB approved a special fundraising project with the Faught family to honor the memory of Sergeant John Wayne Faught, former student and football player of Bawating Collegiate and Vocational Secondary School. The goal of the project is to raise enough funds to build a community Fieldhouse in Sgt. Faught's memory adjacent to the new field.

The fundraising campaign is an important way to recognize a local hero. Superintendent Vezina told trustees that Sault Ste. Marie and surrounding area can look forward to a visible campaign which will continue to get the word out about this important fundraising effort.