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Directions Newsletter Regular Meeting of the Board – January 2015

Technology Status Report

Presented by Rob Geiger, Manager of Information Systems

Chinook is approximately 50% of the way into the School/Facility upgrades that have been planned. The department has taken on some of the larger challenges first and will continue on with the rest of the schools in the plan with projected completion in June.

These upgrades include:

- New IBM servers - Enterprise level with powerful hardware and are easily maintained.
- New HP switches and wireless access points - Enterprise-grade and can be remotely managed, which is especially important with the geography of our division.
- Palo Alto Firewalls - Enterprise-grade and remotely managed. These allow Chinook to identify and prioritize layers of access and bandwidth for quality of service in the facilities.
- CommVault Backup – allows daily backups of all files on the server and includes 30 days of changes.
- Lenova Laptops – these are durable and sustainable with a four-year warranty. At this point they have been piloted at École Centennial for students and are available to teachers through the Earn Your Laptop initiative.
- Xerox Renewal – Windows Server 2013 was included in the server upgrade and requires new copiers for compatibility in many of our locations. This was negotiated with Xerox in the agreement and involved no change in our contract agreement, in fact will cost us less.
- IBM Upgrade Journey – All six of the major recommendations will be addressed by June 2015. The recommendations included: Risk Mitigation, IT & Program Alignment, Communications & Standards, Key Projects, Boost Credibility, and New Projects.
- SharePoint - has been implemented in the launch of the new Division and school websites as well as the staff internal Portal. SharePoint is easy to use and update, with files accessible from anywhere. SharePoint can be used for student

course work and parent communication and has incredible potential for other uses as well.

- School Connect – this online tool allows student monitoring, file distribution and screen sharing.
- Other Software installed – Windows Server 2013, SCCM (System Center Configuration Manager), Active Directory, and Zoho support and ticket tracking for Chinook Help Desk and TIS support.

One of the fundamental trouble-shooting techniques universal to Information Technology is to make as few changes as possible before testing those changes. However, in order to move Chinook TIS forward in a timely manner, many changes needed to be made at once. In addition, due to the dedication and skillset of the TIS team Chinook will be able to start Phase 3 of the upgrade plan without IBM's direct support. The learning curve for TIS has been incredibly steep, but the team has embraced the challenge with energy and enthusiasm. At the facilities, Chinook staff members have been very patient with the changes and challenges that have come with the upgrades as well.

Financial Report to November 30, 2014

Presented by Sharie Sloman, Controller and Rod Quintin, CFO

Revenues: Revenue receipts are accelerated this year as a result of property tax remittances. The cycle for property tax collections is unbalanced with a larger proportion of collections during the first quarter. Operating grant receipts of 26% are tracking to budget and align with the portion of the year expired. Capital grant receipts are difficult to accurately budget within a given period as they are dependent on the timing of capital work completions.

Overall year to date revenue of \$32.5M is 38% of budget.

Expenditures: Years to date expenditures for most areas including Governance, Administration and Transportation are closely aligned with budget planning. Plant Operation and Maintenance costs are cyclical in nature dependent on weather and maintenance activity. There are some variances in Instruction due to benefits, sick leave, sub salaries and sub plans.

Overall, the year-to-date expenditures of \$22.7M are at 26% of budget.

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week

The Saskatchewan Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week is **February 8-14, 2015**. The theme for this year is "Learning Together for the 21st Century".

2015-2016 School Calendar

The 2015-2016 school calendar was approved by the Chinook Board of Education on January 12, 2015 and will be submitted to the Ministry of Education for review. The Ministry proceeds with their approval process after May 1, as per the regulations in the Education Act.

The calendar was recommended and voted on by staff, parents and community members through an online survey that was open in December. Two calendar options were developed by the Chinook Calendar Committee, which is comprised of Chinook Staff and Chinook School Community Council Representatives. The chosen calendar was the “Tornado” option with students starting on September 1, a two-week Christmas break, a February break and an Easter break.

With Labour Day being later than we have been accustomed to in recent years (September 7), legislative changes were made permitting students to start prior to Labour Day in 2015. Information and a modified calendar will be sent to Chinook staff and parents and it will be posted on the Chinook websites as well.

Defined Requirements for the school calendar:

- The Saskatchewan Education Act requires the following:
 - a minimum of 950 hours of instructional time per year;
 - six weeks of summer vacation;
 - post Labour Day student start time;
 - a Christmas break that begins no later than Dec 23rd and ends not sooner than January 2nd; and
 - a Spring break with no more than 5 consecutive days.
- Ministry of Education Provincial Examinations – January 26-29; June 23-26.
- Chinook Board of Education requires (3 professional learning community days; 2 student conference days; 3 professional development days; 3 admin days; and one convention day).

Key Points:

- The Minister of Education has introduced legislation to amend The Education Act to allow the school year to begin prior to Labour Day when required. With a late Labour Day in 2015 (September 7), our calendar options have been developed with the amended legislation in mind.
- Chinook parents and staff will have the opportunity to state their preference through an online survey.
- The chosen calendar will need to be reviewed and approved by the board in late December and then approved by the Ministry of Education.
- As in the past, schools will have the opportunity to work with their local school communities to determine specific student conference times and formats.