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Directions Newsletter

Regular Meeting of the Board – December 2016

Literacy Status Report

Presented by Kathy Robson, Level 1 Coordinator

Chinook School Division Literacy goals:

"By June 2017, Saskatchewan Reads will be implemented." and "By June 2018, high impact writing instructional approaches will be implemented."

In the last two years, Chinook has been part of a provincial team involved in developing a document called "Saskatchewan Reads" and "Saskatchewan Reads for Administrators", which are in place to support divisions in meeting the provincial outcome developed from the Educational Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). Director Liam Choo-Foo led the committees with Kathy Robson coordinating the provincial project with the other divisions. *Saskatchewan Reads* has had a positive impact on the Chinook Balanced Literacy plan. The main areas of focus have been independent reading and assessing during guided reading, as well as increasing teacher awareness of the importance of the learning environment.

Under the *Saskatchewan Reads* Hoshin, Chinook has been focusing on Professional Development (PD) for all teachers. These Professional Development days have focused on early literacy intervention, learning environment, independent reading, guided reading, writing and small group instruction.

Targeted professional development and follow up coaching has occurred in the following grades:

- Grade 4 and 5 - formative assessment and guided reading, writer's workshop and independent reading, and;
- Grade 7 and 8 - interactive read aloud/shared read, small group instruction, independent reading and word work.

Saskatchewan Reads for Administrators was developed for principals and vice-principals to use in supporting teachers implementing *Saskatchewan Reads* in their school. Professional development around *Saskatchewan Reads for Administrators* has been the focus of administrator meetings this year. Training in using Levelled Literacy Intervention (LLI) and follow up coaching has also occurred for new teachers to LLI.

Celebrations include:

- Implementation of *Saskatchewan Reads* in our schools
- Environments focused on developing a reading culture
- Creation of classroom libraries in all classrooms
- In school administrators focusing on and improving their knowledge around literacy and in leading their teachers in implementing *Saskatchewan Reads*

- Implementation of LLI in more of our colony schools
- Intervening with our vulnerable readers in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2
- Teachers feeling knowledgeable in changing their practice
- Chinook's involvement in *Saskatchewan Reads for Administrators* provincially

Going forward, Chinook will continue to implement a process throughout the Division to improve literacy skills in the early years (kindergarten - grade 2). This process will involve using specific resources along with coaching. There will be a focus on developing instructional practices in writing in grades K-8 and research will be done on best practice in literacy and reading intervention in grades 6-8. We will also continue to collect information as a Division on the Early Years Evaluation (EYE) and the students who are "Not Yet Reading" (from the Fountas and Pinnell assessments) to make sure that our interventions are targeting our struggling students. We will also explore alternate ways of delivering Professional Development sessions to reduce costs and preserve instructional time.

Math Intervention Update

Presented by Ed Varjassy, Curriculum Coordinator

Chinook has implemented a math intervention program (tier 2) in all schools for grades K-2 and 6-9. Chinook has built a program based on Numeracy Nets that focuses only on number concepts, this includes 8 checkpoints in each grade. The basic concepts of math is used as pre and post intervention assessment, which assesses the end of grade expectations for number strand outcomes only. Borrowed from the Saskatoon Catholic intervention program, it is available for Grade 1 and Grade 2.

We are now in the second full year of the K-2 program, with 126 students or 10.8% of K-2 students currently in Math Intervention. Seven new math intervention teachers are being trained and coaches are available in schools as support for new and continuing intervention teachers.

There has been an excellent success rate, with 90% of students successful in 6 to 8 checkpoints. The Basic Concepts Assessment shows a 45% average improvement for Grade 1 and 2 intervention students from the beginning to the end of the year. In other words, most of our intervention students are where they are expected to be at the end of the year!

The 6-9 Math Intervention uses "Do the Math Now", which is a commercially developed program from Marilyn Burns. There is a focus on Multiplication, Division and Fraction foundational understanding, in addition to regular math class.

There has been excellent improvement with the grade 6-9 Math Intervention, from beginning to end of unit assessments. 97% of students have 10% or more improvement in their results. In addition, students who received intervention have improved their overall score on end of year grade level assessments. Chinook is now in the second full year of the program, currently with 147 students or 9.2% of grade 6-9 students in Math Intervention. Nine new math intervention teachers are being trained and coaches are in school support for new and continuing intervention teachers.

In both Math Intervention programs, the data verifies that our targeted students are improving, which is also supported by anecdotal comments. Moving forward, as teachers become more and more experienced with the math intervention programs, the students will continue to improve as well. The tier 3 early years math intervention development program is currently underway as well.

2017-2018 School Calendar

The 2017-2018 school calendar was approved by the Chinook Board at the meeting on December 12, and has subsequently been approved by the Ministry of Education, as per the regulations in the Education Act.

The Chinook Calendar Committee developed two calendar options for the 2017-2018 school year. Through an online vote in November, several Chinook employees and parent stakeholders voted on their preferred calendar for the 2017-2018 school year. As a result of the vote, “Calendar B” was chosen.

Our Division practice has always been for a committee to create calendar options for our staff to consider. Typically, we try to set our Division calendar early so that families plan in a proactive manner.

Key Points

- The first day for students legislated follows Labor Day – September 5, 2017.
- Parents and Chinook staff had the opportunity to state their preference through the online survey.
- The chosen calendar was 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.

Defined Requirements

- **The Saskatchewan Education Act requires the following:**
 - A minimum of 950 hours of instructional time per year;
 - Six weeks of summer vacation;
 - Traditionally a post Labour Day student start time;
 - A Christmas break that begins no later than December 23 and ends not sooner than January 2; and
 - A Spring break with no more than 5 consecutive days.
- Ministry recommended February Break is February 18-24, 2018, to accommodate The Saskatchewan Winter Games in North Battleford
- Ministry of Education Provincial Examinations – January 25-30; June 22-27
- 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

Highlights of the chosen Calendar (B)

197 days including non-instructional days; 186 instructional days including conferences

- September 5 student start
- Shorter Christmas break
- February break (February 18-24)
- Longer Easter break
- Unbalanced semesters (94 student days semester 1; 92 student days semester 2)

Survey Results

A total of 943 people voted in the online survey (169 more than last year)

- 459 staff participated in the vote (159 are also parents)
- 469 parents/guardians participated in the vote
- 15 community members participated in the vote
- **57.4% chose “Calendar B”**

[Click here to view the 2017-2018 calendar.](#)

Eastend SCC Board Grant for “Buddy Bench”

The Eastend School Community Council (SCC) set a wellness goal to help encourage and support the students and teachers of Eastend School. They are focused on developing a safe and caring school environment for all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Early last year, the Eastend SCC began discussing the idea of a Buddy Bench for their school yard. A Buddy Bench is a special bench located in a central area of the playground. Students who are feeling lonely, lost or simply looking for a friend can sit on the bench. Other students are encouraged to notice when a classmate is on the bench and may be seeking support. They can approach the Buddy Bench and offer to help out. The purpose is to eliminate exclusion and loneliness on the playground, while encouraging students to offer support to each other through inclusion and compassion.

The Eastend SCC has raised over \$500 to put towards the purchase of a Buddy Bench. The Board approved \$500 from the Chinook School Board grant program to fulfill the SCC’s goal to purchase a Blue Imp Buddy Bench.