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Directions Newsletter Regular Meeting of the Board – December 2014

Literacy Status Report

Presented by Kathy Robson, Level 1 Coordinator and Bob Vavra, Superintendent of Learning

The Balanced Literacy goal identified by the Board for 2013-2017: *"By June 2017, 90% of students in Chinook School Division will be meeting or exceeding expectations in reading, based on selected school division-wide assessments."*

The Balanced Literacy maintenance plan has a goal of maintaining the effective instructional practice in literacy within our division, with Balanced Literacy becoming the "way we do business". There are 5 areas of focus within the Balanced Literacy Maintenance plan. They include professional development for new teachers in the components of Balanced Literacy, Levelled Literacy Intervention (LLI), Early Literacy, Coaching (Literacy and LLI Coaches) and Project CRISS (CReating Independence through Student-owned Strategies) training for middle years and high school teachers.

The award-winning Levelled Literacy Intervention program is a priority for the Division within Balanced Literacy. LLI has been implemented in Grades 1-2 in all schools, and in grades 3-5 currently in 15 schools, as well as in three Hutterite colony schools. Professional Development days are scheduled for LLI and there is an LLI Intervention Coach. The Board's LLI program received the Premier's Award for Innovation and Excellence at the Saskatchewan School Boards Association's Fall General Assembly in 2013.

In Early Years Literacy (K-1), the Early Years Evaluation (EYE) was completed for all public school kindergarten students and within two colonies. Other priorities include the Chinook Early Literacy Assessment, building strong practice, and targeted reassessments in June. Within Middle Years English Language Arts (Grades 6-8) there will be a pilot team of teachers who will focus on researching and making recommendations on effective assessments and best practice in ELA.

This year Chinook has been part of a provincial team involved in developing a document called "Saskatchewan Reads", which is in place to support divisions in meeting the provincial reading Hoshin developed from the Educational Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). Director Liam Choo-Foo has been leading the committee with Kathy Robson coordinating the provincial Saskatchewan Reads project with the other divisions. Saskatchewan Reads will have a very positive impact the Chinook Balanced

Literacy plan with the current research on independent reading and guided reading, as well as increasing teacher awareness of the importance of the learning environment.

Other celebrations include:

- 83% of students are reading at grade level after participating in Leveled Literacy Intervention.
- Maintaining reading levels above 80% through our balanced literacy maintenance plan and LLI.
- Expansion of LLI to upper elementary.
- Integration of early literacy strategies in our colony schools.
- Intervention with vulnerable readers in Kindergarten and Grade 1 (Early Years).

Going forward, Chinook will continue maintaining Balanced Literacy, expand LLI in Grades 3- 5 and colony schools, improve literacy skills in Early Years, and will focus on best practice in literacy and intervention in Middle Years.

Herbert School Music Lessons and Choir

The Board granted approval of the Herbert School Community Council's request to provide music lessons to students at the school during class time. The purpose of the request is to provide an option for music programming. In addition to the lessons, the teacher will lead an extracurricular children's choir outside of class time for interested students.

Synrevoice "School Connects" Bus Notifications

Chinook School Division will begin using the Synrevoice "School Connects" direct parent notification system for transportation communications starting in January 2015 for the following schools: Ashley Park, Central, École Centennial, Fairview, Irwin, SCCHS, Stewart Valley, Success, Waldeck and Wymark.

Testing for implementation will be happening in the meantime so families may receive test calls over the next while. Currently the bussing notifications will be by phone call only, with the possibility of a text message option later on. The "School Connects" system allows for one phone number per student only. Please contact your school office if you need to update your primary contact information.

2015-2016 School Calendar Options

The Chinook Calendar Committee has developed two calendar options for the 2015-2016 school year. This year ALL Chinook employees and parent stakeholders may vote for their preferred calendar for the 2015-2016 school year, and community members are welcome to vote as well. Our Division practice has always been for a committee to create calendar options for our parents and staff to consider. Typically we try to set our division calendar early so that families are able to plan in a proactive manner.

This year both of our calendar options will be posted online, and parents and staff may vote using Survey Monkey and voting is open until Friday, December 12. The vote results will be gathered by the calendar committee who will make a recommendation to the Chinook Board of Education who will have final say on the calendar at the December Board of Education meeting.

More information and the survey link is on the Chinook website at www.chinooksd.ca.