

**Horizon School Division No. 67
ERIC JOHNSON ROOM**

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 – 1:00 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting Agenda

A – Action Items

A.1 Agenda	
A.2 Minutes of Regular Board Meeting held Tuesday, March 31, 2015	ENCLOSURE 1
A.3 Re-Appointment of Horizon School Division Principals with the commencement of the 2015-2016 school year as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holly Godson (Three-Year Term)• Sheldon Hoyt (Three-Year Term)• Alyson Archibald (Three-Year Term)• Kim Kerr• Kelly Schmidt• Klaas Hoekstra• Allan Rancier• David LeGrandeur• Crystal McGregor• Dan Vanden Dungen	
A.4 Lord's Prayer	ENCLOSURE 2

D – Discussion Items

D.1 Budget	
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I- Information Items

I.1 2015 Horizon School Division High School Graduation Dates	ENCLOSURE 3
I.2 Trustee/Committee Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zone 6 ASBA Report – Marie Logan• Facilities Committee Report – Derek Baron	ENCLOSURE 4
I.3 Associate Superintendent of Finance and Operations Report – John Rakai	
I.4 Associate Superintendent of Programs, Services and Human Resources Report – Clark Bosch	ENCLOSURE 5
I.5 Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Report – Erin Hurkett	HANDOUT

Correspondence

- Congratulations Letter to HSD RAP Students
- ASBA Email #34 + Minister's Comments re Initiative to Establish Teaching Practice Standards
- Maclean's Magazine Article re Teen rights
- Education Law Reporter
- Newspaper Articles pertaining to HSD

ENCLOSURE 6

Horizon School Division No. 67

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The Board of Trustees of Horizon School Division No. 67 held its Regular Board meeting on Tuesday, March 31, 2015 beginning at 1:00 p.m. in the Eric Johnson Room

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Marie Logan, Board Chair
Bruce Francis, Board Vice-Chair
Blair Lowry, Rick Anderson, Derek Baron, Jennifer Crowson, Terry Michaelis

ALSO PRESENT: Wilco Tymensen, Superintendent of Schools
John Rakai, Associate Superintendent of Finance & Operations
Erin Hurkett, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
Barb McDonald, Recording Secretary
J.W. Schnarr, Taber Times

REGRETS: Clark Bosch, Associate Superintendent of Programs, Services & HR

ACTION ITEMS

A.1 Moved by Jennifer Crowson that the Board approve the agenda as presented with the following addition:

Under Action Items:

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------|--|
| A.5 | Request for the use of the Central School Gymnasium | Carried Unanimously | AGENDA
APPROVED
54/15 |
| A.2 | Moved by Derek Baron that the Board approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting held Tuesday, February 24, 2015 as provided in Enclosure 1 of the agenda. | Carried Unanimously | BOARD MEETING
MINUTES
APPROVED
55/15 |
| A.3 | Moved by Terry Michaelis that the Board approve the February/March Payment of Accounts report in the amount of \$4,468,373.06 as provided in Enclosure 2 of the agenda. | Carried Unanimously | PAYMENT OF
ACCOUNTS REPORT
APPROVED
56/15 |
| A.4 | Moved by Bruce Francis that the Board approve first reading of Policy HK <i>Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting</i> as provided in Enclosure 3 of the agenda. | Carried Unanimously | FIRST READING OF
POLICY HK
APPROVED
57/15 |
| A.5 | Due to additional requests for the increased utilization of the Central School gymnasium from other Horizon schools, as a result of a lack of current gym space available in several Taber schools and the Barnwell school when the approved construction project there commences, the Board entered into discussion regarding the current rental agreement that expires at the end of June 2015 with Kid Zone. Kid Zone is an afterschool program offered by private operators that use Central School facilities including the gymnasium. | | |

Moved by Derek Baron that the Board not renew the Central School rental agreement contract with the Kid Zone private operators in light of the recent requests from Horizon schools to utilize the space for after school athletic activities. Further, that the space at other Horizon schools in Taber be considered as alternatives for Kid Zone.

NON-RENEWAL OF
KID ZONE
APPROVED
58/15

Carried Unanimously

DISCUSSION ITEMS

D.1 Transportation Policy Meeting Date

The Board has set a meeting date of Monday, June 8, 2015 beginning at 9:00 a.m. to re-open discussions regarding the Transportation policy.

D.2 2015 Budget

Discussions were held regarding the implications to education regarding the Provincial Budget that was released on March 29th. The Horizon School Division Budget Committee will be meeting on April 14, 2015 to have further discussions on how this budget will be impacting students, staff and the jurisdiction.

INFORMATION ITEMS

I.1. Financial Report

Phil Johansen presented a financial report to the Board for the period ending February 28, 2015.

I.2. Superintendent's Progress Report

Educational Leadership

- Planning has taken place for the jurisdiction's leadership symposium. This symposium, taking place in April is part of the jurisdiction's ongoing focus on building the leadership capacity of Horizon's principals and vice/assistant principals.
- Work was also undertaken as part of the jurisdiction's new principal / leadership cohort where new and aspiring leaders come together regularly to improve their practice.

Student Welfare

- Meetings and conversations have been ongoing regarding student welfare. Dialogue with schools revolved around student conduct matters that could have led to recommendations for expulsion. In some cases, multiple agencies have met to not only discuss interventions that ensure the learning needs and safety of individual students is being met but that the safety of all students is considered.

Fiscal Responsibility

- Budget meetings have been held with the senior administrative leadership team and discussions regarding the implications of the 2015 budget are ongoing.

Personnel Management

- Principal evaluations are ongoing for Horizon's seven probationary principals. Meetings with all seven principals occurred in March.
- Meetings were also had to discuss reappointments of principals. Conversations and reflections regarding practice were guided by the principal quality practice guidelines.

Policy

- New policies continue to be developed and old policies reviews in light of the upcoming proclamation of the Education Act.

Strategic Planning and Reporting

- The senior administrative leadership team met to review jurisdiction priorities and discuss current work and its alignment with the jurisdiction goals.

- Conversations with Intellimedia have occurred as the jurisdiction finalizes transitioning from google docs to Powerschool as the platform for Individual Student Plans
- A meeting was attended with W.R. Myers and ACE Place regarding student program planning and how it relates to the provision of Knowledge and Employment courses.

Organizational Leadership and Management

- As per the provincial framework agreement, the Superintendent in collaboration with the Board and senior leadership met with a number of representatives from the Alberta Teachers' Association. Conversations included discussions around needs based staffing and other hiring practices.
- A meeting was organized between the principals of D.A. Ferguson, W.R. Myers, and Taber Mennonite School to arrange facility sharing given the student attendance numbers at TMS. Meetings also occurred with MCC and George Epp regarding accessing more space for Taber Mennonite School.
- Other meetings that were attended included
- High School Video Conferencing meeting
- Administrators' meeting
- Enchant student programming and how collaboration with Horizon MAP could enhance high school completion rates.
- To enhance transparency and superintendent visibility, I've been attending every schools' staff meeting to engage staff in a dialogue about where Horizon is going, what Horizon's priorities are, and provided for an open and honest Question and Answer session regarding staff's inquiries.
- I was also able to attend the provincial CASS / AB ED Learning Symposium
- One of the jurisdiction's goals focuses on ensuring student needs in relation to the jurisdiction's continuum of supports and services. This was the focus of the March division wide professional learning day and the upcoming administrator leadership symposium will continue to focus on bringing this structure into being in every school within Horizon.

Communications and Community Relations

- Conversations with home school providers are ongoing. I had the opportunity to spend the day at Circle Hill, north of Vauxhall, and engage in conversations with some 400 Low German Speaking Mennonites (LGSM) who home school their children.
- I also attended Alberta Education's Low German Speaking Mennonite community forum where conversations revolved around successes, challenges, and next steps to meeting our students' needs.
- Conversations with the Lethbridge College and Taber and District Adult Community Learning regarding Trades programs for youth and adults stemming from the D.A. Ferguson/W.R. Myers value management scoping session also occurred.
- Lastly, I am pleased to indicate that I was able to attend Copperfield colony's high school graduation ceremony.

I.2 Trustee/Committee Reports

2.1 Zone 6 ASBA Report - Marie Logan, Zone 6 Representative, provided some of the following highlights of the Zone 6 meeting that took place on Wednesday, March 8, 2015 in Lethbridge:

- A task force has been established to explore and examine if a different way of bargaining with public sector unions can be considered
- The Student Learning Assessments that are to be piloted for the fall of 2015 have now been rescheduled to begin in the Fall of 2016
- The Speak-Out Conference this year will be taking place from April 17-19. This conference is a Student Engagement Initiative to support Alberta youth in sharing education ideas and experiences with each other and the Ministry. *Speak Out* is dedicated to providing students with opportunities to be leaders of change in their schools and communities. Through this initiative, students, ages 14 to 19, from across the province are provided with the tools they need to engage in discussions about their education with each other and with key education partners on how to improve the education system in Alberta.

2.2 Administrators 'Meeting Report

Terry Michaelis reviewed highlights of the [Administrators' meeting](#) which took place on March 10, 2015

2.3 Facilities Committee Report

Derek Baron, Facilities Committee Chair, provided an update on work undertaken during the past month within the Facilities Department. The [March Facilities report](#) was enclosed in the agenda and included the following highlights:

2015 Maintenance and Renewal (IMR)

Chamberlain School IMR Project 2

- The Horizon School Division No. 67 engaged MPE Engineering Ltd. to evaluate the Fire Separations of the Chamberlain School as a result of the 2005 assessment report questioning the adequacy of the fire separations between the central corridor and adjoining rooms. After required remediation's, MPE Engineering conducted a final inspection and issued required certifications

Enchant School

- Repointing and repair of exterior masonry has begun. Brick and mortar replacement has been extensive. Stucco walls will be strapped using CCA preserved lumber and finished using resilient synthetic polymer to enhance its esthetics appeal.

Lomond School IMR Project 1

- Flooring for the classrooms and main floor corridor has been completed. Standard colors were selected by the facilities department along with new rubber base throughout. The remaining flooring including the lower 1961 corridor, and the 1956 entry is now underway as well

Lomond School IMR Project 2

- The flooring in the administration and staff room were replaced during the week of February 16. The existing flooring was removed, and the flooring was prepared by Horizon in-house staff. Professional flooring installers completed the project. The staff room and remaining administrative storage space flooring is to be replaced as time and access permits.

Hays School Underfloor ducting

- Underfloor ducting replacement, repair and cleaning have been completed. The overall condition of the ductwork is now acceptable to very good. Several sections required repair while approximately 8 linear feet required replacement. No additional repairs or replacement should be required within the next five years.

Maintenance Projects

- In conjunction with the flooring replacement and upgrading through Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal in Lomond School, Horizon facilities crews are also continuing the process of repairing corridor and classroom walls. Repainting has begun as well.
- A heating and circulating pump was repaired and replaced in Vauxhall High School
- Inspection and repair / replacement of playground equipment is underway. This project was undertaken by certified facilities staff.
- Testing and repair of all Horizon commercial cross connection backflow preventers is underway.
- Boiler chemical testing and the annual recertification are underway and is expected to be complete by April 15.
- LED lighting upgrading in various schools is being undertaken - particularly in exterior lighting.

Thermal image Scanning

As part of Horizon School Division No. 67's annual preventative maintenance program, thermal image scanning was conducted at DA Ferguson Middle School and WR Myers High School during regular school hours on the complete electrical distribution systems with a full electrical load applied.

During these scans and tests, a number of "warm" and "hot" spots were identified. Where possible, corrective action was taken, in one case a facility wide shut down will be required.

Maintenance work During February and March

During the past month, a total of 157 new Service requests and generated preventive maintenance requests were submitted through Horizon's electronic service request generating software, Asset Planner. Requests included climate control, plumbing, electrical, access, painting requests, etc

Several other Maintenance repair projects and preventative maintenance projects were undertaken. Graffiti removal, wall repairs and painting, plumbing and heating repairs, installation of tack boards, and relocation of the display screen and shelving unit at WR Myers High School, rooftop unit repairs etc.

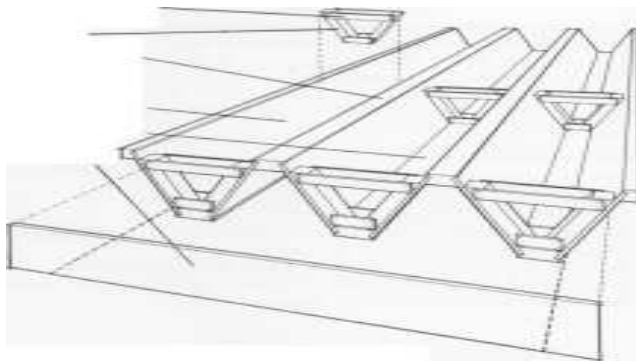
DA Ferguson WR Myers Structural Review

Horizon School Division nNo. 67 engaged MPE Engineering to undertake an investigation into the condition of the interior cinderblock foundation walls, the trofdek roof support structure and the roofing structure over the existing gymnasium.

Trofdek

Trofdek roofing and flooring systems were used from 1957 to approximately 1975, this is a, trough-shaped lightweight structural system for roofs and floors. Units are fabricated components consisting of V-shaped beams with slanting plywood webs attached to lumber flanges. They were designed to span as much as 14 meters between principal supporting members. The trofdeking used at DAF spans approximately 9 meters.

Typical Trofdek



Design

Since 1960's Trofdek sections are basically multiple plywood beams with sloping webs, with due regard for sloping webs and location of web splices. Special attention to shear deflection is required. Regular inspection and maintenance is required to maintain integrity

Purpose of study

MPE Engineering has undertaken the project to determine the deflection stability of the roofing system presently in place, and to determine its expected remaining lifespan as well as determining the need, if determined to be one, for structural reinforcement necessary to carry rooftop mechanical equipment and abnormal snow loads.

Final reports of the investigation concerning the trofdek structure, cinderblock condition and gymnasium structure are expected to be available in May 2015.

- Enhancement of fire separations between the central corridor and adjoining rooms at Chamberlain School
- Completion of flooring project in the main corridor as well as replacement of flooring in the administration and staff room of Lomond Community School
- Repair and painting of games lines at the Hays School gym
- Update of maintenance projects throughout the division
- Updates on the Facilities Department Administration

I.3. Associate Superintendent of Finance and Operations Report

Mr. Rakai provided the following report

- Mr. Rakai participated in a Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) stakeholder meeting that Horizon received an invite from the Minister of Treasury Board and Finance to attend – the meeting identified plans to remove LAPP from statute legislation covering the pension plan and move the plan into a true employer/employee governed plan
- The Division is waiting for Provincial approval of the 60% stage drawings and specifications for Barnwell and Warner School construction projects
- Attended a meeting with the Warner Community Hockey Society
- Reported that the outcome of the commercial transportation audit that took place in March was successful – the audit score of 10.12% non-compliance is a pass. Further work will be done address those areas that are deficient
- The RFP for the jurisdiction-wide new multi-function device contract has been awarded to Xerox. The new equipment will start be installed into schools after the Easter break
- Met with the Warner Hockey School regarding the commercial transportation audit results

I.4 Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Report

Erin Hurkett's report was distributed as a handout and included the following information:

Literacy & Numeracy

1. Colony Guided Reading Observations – Erin is visiting Colony teachers to assist with guided reading practices. Erin models some lessons and observes and gives teachers feedback in relation to this practice.
2. Word Work Workshop for beginning teachers – Erin facilitated a word work (phonetic, phonemic awareness, sight word recognition) workshop for new teachers at the division wide PD day.
3. David Slomp from the University of Lethbridge continued his work with Sr. High School teachers – teaching for transfer in writing.
4. Attended a training session for Literacy Place for the Early Years.
5. Assisted D.A. Ferguson with BICS and CALP strategies for ELL students.
6. Trained MAP teachers how to assess using the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmarks and assisted them with setting up their literacy intervention program.
7. Facilitated a professional development session with Milk River Elementary teachers in relation to using assessment to inform instruction and how to facilitate guided reading sessions.
8. Organized a numeracy committee meeting that was facilitated by Lenee Fyfe. Lenee is a teacher from Lethbridge who created a numeracy assessment directly linked to the Alberta Curriculum for grades K-9. The Committee was trained in how to use the assessment and will recommend the assessment to their schools.

Inclusive Learning

1. Division Wide Professional Development Day: March 9th – Kurtis and Lorna Hewson facilitated a morning workshop with Horizon staff regarding the Collaborative Response Model. The model includes the importance of assessment, collaborative team meetings, and an articulated pyramid of interventions. When all of these components are in place in a school, schools are better equipped to make informed decisions about meeting the needs of all students.
2. Leadership Symposium Committee –The Committee has continued to plan for the April leadership symposium. Kurtis Hewson will facilitate the first day's session regarding the Collaborative Response Model as a follow up to the division wide PD day. The senior leadership team will lead the second day where a focus will include identifying the components of a quality classroom environment (the first level of the pyramid of interventions).
3. Collaborative Team Meetings - Erin, Ann, and Daelynn met with Vauxhall High School staff for a collaborative team meeting. Staff identify students whose needs they would like to address to a further degree (behavioural, emotional, or academic), and the team shares expertise and discusses various ways to support students in the classroom.

21st Century Learning Competencies

1. Attended a Colony workshop on Project Based Learning and presented the units that were developed by the division that can be utilized in Colony settings (The Big Picture, Environmental Choices, Surviving Extremes).
2. Attended a trade school meeting with individuals from Lethbridge College to discuss future possibilities of trade opportunities for students and adults in Taber.

Other

1. Attended the joint Horizon/ATA PD Committee meeting.
2. Attended a meeting to discuss scheduling between DAF, Myers and TMS
3. Attended an inter-jurisdictional Alberta Education meeting regarding the Low German Speaking Mennonite population.
4. Attended a home schooling (LGSM) meeting.

Director of Learning

Amber Darroch

Key Action Areas:

21st Century Learning Competencies

1. Assessment - Horizon's Policy Committee of stakeholders reviewed Policy HK Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting. One of the leading educational researchers and speakers on assessment, Dylan William, presented in Edmonton on February 18. Amber attended with Shannon Fulton from Chamberlain School; the session was excellent.
2. CTF Implementation - Career and Technology Foundations is Alberta Education's curriculum for implementation in the 2015-16 school year. Amber has been working with school staffs to understand this increased focus on career possibilities, project based learning, and more authentic assessment in junior high option classes. Seven schools have arranged for short workshops to support their teachers in this work.

Effective and Purposeful Use of Technology

1. Multi-function Business Machine Request for Proposal (RFP for copiers) - The RFP was provided to two shortlisted vendors selected from the responses the previous "RFI". A selection committee comprised of Amber, John Rakai, Klaas Hoekstra, Darryl Moser, Sanjeev Pradhan and David Harmon heard presentations on Monday, Feb 23. Xerox Canada has been awarded the contract and an implementation plan is underway to replace all current equipment new Xerox machines. Anticipated delivery to all sites is the week of April 20th.
2. Alberta Education School Technology Advisory Committee (STAC) - Amber attended this meeting in Edmonton on January 21 and was part of a dialogue about the state of effective technology integration across the province, and the successes/obstacles school jurisdictions are experiencing. The next meeting will be in May.
3. Internet Bandwidth Improvement - The Technology Department, working with Axia, the company who administers the Supernet in Alberta, completed the infrastructure upgrade on Thursday, February 19. Initial results indicated that a Horizon student or staff member working on a computer at one of our sites saw an increase of speed from 5 Megabits per second (Mbps) to over 50 Mbps. Computers worked noticeably faster. As soon as users encountered this improvement, usage increased so much that the network was saturated within a number of days. The reason the system becomes so slow is the increased number of devices connecting to the network. Next steps are being taken to increase bandwidth another increment, and switching to a new service provider in July will result in significant further improvements.

Inclusive Education

1. The Leadership Symposium Planning Committee has planned for a focus on a Collaborative Response Model, as a follow up for leaders to the Division Wide professional learning session facilitated on March 9th. This year's symposium has been moved to Waterton Lakes Lodge upon the request of some administrators to find an alternative to the Bloomin' Inn near Pincher Creek. We were pleased to find a suitable venue that also offers us \$1000 in savings over last year for accommodations and meals.

Other

1. Crisis Response - Amber joined the ad hoc committee struck to give a final review of the Crisis Response resource. She also observed WR Myers/ DA Ferguson lockdown practice on February 11 and debriefed about best practices for all schools with Taber Police Service and the two schools' administrators.
2. University of Lethbridge Faculty of Education Keynote Address for PS II Students - Amber was asked to be the keynote speaker at a one day conference of all Professional Semester II students at the U of L. The session focused on inclusive education, classroom management, and positive relationships with students. The U of L has it's biggest group of PS II's this semester: about 240 students.
3. Online Substitute Teacher Dispatch/Teacher Absence Module - WR Myers and DA Ferguson will be piloting this new service upon the return from Easter Break. Orientation sessions for substitutes were held March 25 and 26, and teacher sessions are March 30 and 31.

Correspondence

No items of discussion came forward from Correspondence as provided in Enclosure 8 of the agenda.

COMMITTEE ITEMS

Moved by Rick Anderson that the Board meet in Committee.

Carried Unanimously

COMMITTEE
59/15

Moved by Derek Baron that the meeting reconvene.

Carried Unanimously

RECONVENE
60/15

Moved by Bruce Francis that the meeting adjourn

Carried Unanimously

MEETING
ADJOURNED
61/15

Marie Logan, Chair

Barb McDonald, Secretary

Dr. Hamman School Parent Council
4820 56 Avenue
Taber, Alberta, T1G 1H4

April 14, 2015

Dear Mr. Tymensen,

Dr. Hamman School Parent Council (as per Horizon School Division's 'Lord's Prayer Policy Code HNA') formally requests of the Horizon School Board that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer become part of the schools' opening exercises beginning in the 2015/2016 school year.

The Dr. Hamman School Parent Council surveyed the school parent community for their input and took direction from the results of that survey. Attached is a copy of the survey and below are the results.

80% of the parent population responded with a yes or no.

Of the 80% who responded, 88% said yes and 12% said no to the question; "Should the Parent Council request of Horizon School Board that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer become part of the School's opening exercises beginning in the 2015/2016 school year as per the new Horizon Division Lord's Prayer Policy?". All responses were signed and dated and are on file at Dr. Hamman School for your perusal, if desired.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and await your reply.

Sincerely,



Tammy Janzen

Dr. Hamman School Parent Chair

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PARENT SCHOOL COUNCIL: LORD'S PRAYER SURVEY

As your School Parent Council, we want your input. Should the parent council request of the Horizon School Board that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer become part of the school's opening exercises beginning in the 2015-2016 school year or not? As per the new **Horizon School Division policy**, upon a formal request from Parent School Council, the Horizon School Board would consider the request and provide direction from there. We, as your School Parent Council, want to know what you as our school community wants us to do. Do we put forth a formal request for the Board to consider directing the Lord's Prayer be included in opening ceremonies this fall, or do we not put forward a formal request?

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Only the Horizon School Board can make the decision to include the Lord's Prayer in opening exercises.**
- This survey is to determine if a strong majority of our school parents want the council to submit a request to the Board to consider including the prayer in opening exercises beginning the 2015-2016 school year.
- This **is not a vote to reinstate the prayer or not reinstate it.** We do not have the authority to do that.

HORIZON POLICY INFORMATION (Just to be sure that you, as parents, have the correct information)

- **If** a request is put forward, and **if** the result is that the Board directs the school to include the Lord's Prayer in the opening exercises beginning in the fall of 2015:
 - parents are informed of the practice at registration each year
 - parents are provided the opportunity to exempt their child from the recitation
 - annual written approval is provided to parents wishing their child to be excluded
 - provisions are made for students who are excluded from recitation
 - non-participants are treated discreetly and with respect at all times
 - non-participants are still expected to adhere to behavior expectations
-

Please return this survey to the school by March 30th, 2015. Only one survey is to be submitted per family. If you want your input to be considered in the count, your signature is required. It is extremely important that you complete and return your survey for your family. We, as your School Parent Council, want you to have a voice. For validity purposes, we have determined we need **70%** of the surveys returned and that **70%** of those returned will need to be **in support of the Parent Council** submitting the formal request to the Horizon School Board. This is to ensure that there is "strong majority" for the request going forward. If that level of support is not shown, the request will not be made by the School Parent Council.

_____ Our family **supports** the School Parent Council requesting of the Horizon School Board that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer become part of the school's opening exercises beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

_____ Our family **does not support** the School Parent Council requesting of the Horizon School Board that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer become part of the school's opening exercises beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

FAMILY NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

SIGNATURE

DATE



HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 67
2015 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION DATES

SCHOOL	GRADUATION DATE
Ace Place	Wednesday, June 24 th Heritage Inn - Taber
Chamberlain/Arden T. Litt	Saturday May 30 th 11:00 a.m. – Ceremony at Chamberlain School 6:00 p.m. Dinner at the Burdett Hall
Erle Rivers High School	Friday June 5 th 7:30 p.m. at the Milk River Civic Centre
Lomond	Saturday, May 9 th Banquet at 6:00 p.m. Ceremonies at 8:00 p.m. Lomond Community Centre <i>(Asking for Attendee from Division Office to give a reply to the Toast to Division Office)</i>
Horizon MAP	
Taber Mennonite School	Thursday, June 25 th Dinner is at 5:00 p.m. Ceremonies at 7:00 p.m. Barnwell Senior Centre
Vauxhall High School	Friday, May 1 st Dinner at Mennonite Brethren Church at 5:30 p.m. Ceremonies at Vauxhall Community Hall at 7:00 p.m.
W.R. Myers High School	Friday, May 22 nd : Graduation Exercises at Taber Civic Centre at 4:00 p.m. <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> Saturday, May 23 rd : Picture in the Park at 4:00 p.m. Banquet at Taber Civic Centre at 5:00 p.m.
Warner	Friday, May 29 th 6:00 p.m. Warner Civic Centre



April 21, 2015

HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION NUMBER 67 - FACILITIES DEPARTMENT
Facilities Committee Report
Jake Heide

In an effort to free up time in the summer months for additional preventative maintenance, esthetic improvements to the exterior and interior of facilities and power shut down projects, facility crews have been actively involved in IMR and other projects throughout the school year and have seen many projects through to fruition.

Responding to urgent and growing needs to ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability, monitoring energy and utility usage including electricity, gas and water has been a major focus for the facilities and caretaking crews over the past months and years. With continuing fluctuations in weather conditions, regular monitoring and adjustments of air supply volumes, temperature settings including the mixed air temperatures in major air handling equipment is a part of the day-to-day routine. Horizon School Division No. 67 has been very successful in maintaining a minimal environmental footprint as part of the operating practices.

A complete review of all caretaking contracts has been completed. In accordance policy FEF, Horizon School Division No. 67 will be retendering two contracts this summer. After a thorough review of all active contracts, a determination to re-tender Vauxhall Jr. / Sr. High School and Hays School was made.

Outlined below is a summary of additional progression in the past month.

2015 Maintenance and Renewal (IMR)

Chamberlain School IMR Project 2

- Complete: Architectural firm, together with Engineering group completed final inspections of the recommended corrections undertaken in-house. The inspections indicated no further actions required to meet building code requirements. A formal report from the engineering group is forthcoming.

Chamberlain School Contingency Project

- Pricing for Stucco replacement with brick on the West gymnasium wall and the South side of the 2004 section have been received. The contract was awarded to the low bidding contractor. Stucco removal and wall preparations will be done in house, while the brick installation and the stucco cap will be handled by the successful bidding contractor.

Enchant School

- Repointing and repair of exterior masonry is complete. Stucco walls will be strapped using CCA preserved lumber and finished using resilient synthetic polymer to enhance its esthetics appeal. Stucco replacement start time is forthcoming

Lomond School IMR Project 1

- Flooring for the classrooms and main floor corridor has been completed. Standard colors were selected by the facilities department along with new rubber base throughout. The remaining flooring including the lower 1961 corridor and the 1956 entry is now underway.

Lomond School IMR Project 2

- Project complete

Hays School Underfloor ducting

- Project complete

Maintenance Projects

- In conjunction with the flooring replacement and upgrading through Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal in Lomond School, Horizon facilities crews are also continuing the process of repairing corridor and classroom walls. Replacement wall covering is underway.
- Relocating data, phone and power supply lines for the replacement XEROX Multi-Function Devices in all school facilities is complete. In several cases, a power upgrade was required while fax and data required relocation.
- Inspection and repair / replacement of playground equipment is underway. This project is ongoing and is being undertaken by certified facilities staff.
- LED lighting upgrading in various schools. Particularly in exterior lighting.
- Replacement mill work in the Kindergarten classroom at Hays School is complete.
- Removal of obsolete fire hose cabinets and extinguishing equipment is in progress. After testing the equipment, it was discovered that valves and other isolation means no longer functioned properly. Upon consulting with the local Authority Having Jurisdiction, a determination to remove the equipment was made.
- Added level access and safety railing to the mezzanine over the coach's office and the storage space on the stage of WR Myers gymnasium. Added bracing was provided and installed where the new access door was cut in. The door frame and door itself were salvaged from previous projects.

Thermal image scanning

As part of Horizon School Division #67's annual preventative maintenance program, thermal image scanning was conducted at DA Ferguson Middle School and WR Myers High School. A "Hot" spot was discovered on the main distribution Center in the primary electrical room of the 1949 building in WR Myers.

In order to facilitate repairs, a facility wide power shut down was undertaken on Monday April 6, 2015. Repairs were completed and the system was re-tested.

A review of the feasibility to undertake future thermal image scanning in house is underway. Cost comparison, and time are key factors in determining feasibility.

All school facilities are to be scanned and tested annually. Non school facilities such as the maintenance shop and main administration building are to be tested biennially.

Maintenance work During February and March

During the past month, a total of 89 new Service request and generated preventive maintenance requests were submitted through Horizons electronic service request generating software, Asset Planner. Requests included climate control, plumbing, electrical, access, painting requests etc

Several other Maintenance repair projects and preventative maintenance projects were undertaken. Graffiti removal, wall repairs and painting, plumbing and heating repairs, installation of tack boards, and relocation of the display screen and shelving unit at WR Myers High School, rooftop unit repairs etc.

DA Ferguson WR Myers Structural Review

TrofDek

Horizon School District #67 has engaged MPE Engineering to undertake a review (structural) of the DA Ferguson and WR Myers School in Taber. MPE noted that DA Ferguson School has a “TrofDek” roof structure over most of the classroom areas. This product was used on some schools in Alberta in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s. While the initial visual review does not indicate there are any issues with the Trofdek roof structure, MPE is continuing to access technical information regarding the product e.g. load / span tables.

A complete report is forthcoming.

Care taking Tenders

Invitations for the supply of caretaking services for Hays School and for Vauxhall Junior / Senior High School are now being advertised. Bidders will be required to attend a site visits and tour in May 2015.

The successful bidder will provide caretaking services and sidewalk snow removal services only. All supplies will be provided by Horizon School Division’s facilities department.

April, 2015

Associate Superintendent of Programs and Services Report – Clark Bosch

Human Resources:

- I met with each Principal regarding their school's needed teaching allocation. The result of these meetings suggested the need for 7.8 FTE additional teachers. Initially this number was reduced to 5.0 FTE and then it was further reduced to 2.5 additional FTE. The increases will allow for appropriate admin time and the reduction of our part-time teaching staff. At this time we may have 15 fewer part-time teachers next year compared to this year.
- We are moving ahead with our teacher staffing timeline as proposed in January. This timeline will allow us to staff teaching position far earlier than we have in past years enabling us to maximize teacher retention and attraction.

Early and Inclusive Learning:

- March 9 PD Day

Ann and Lynn worked with Erin Hurkett to plan and coordinate a morning session for all staff on the Collaborative Response Model facilitated by Kurtis and Lorna Hewson from Jigsaw Learning. They also planned 15 sessions for support staff in the afternoon, the focus of which was supporting literacy and numeracy within the inclusive classroom. Session evaluations were extremely positive, and feedback from support staff indicated that they would appreciate more frequent PD of this nature.

As a follow-up to the morning session, Ann, Lynn and Erin continue to work with Jigsaw Learning to plan for a full-day session on the Collaborative Response Model at the administrators' symposium in April. Principals and vice-principals will have an opportunity to look more closely at the components of the model – assessment, pyramid of interventions and collaborative teams – and to determine next steps for their schools.

- CASS Inclusive Education Sub-Committee

As a member of the CASS Inclusive Education Sub-Committee, Ann has had the opportunity to contribute to discussions at the provincial level on the current state of inclusive education in Alberta and future direction. On March 27, the committee met with Dean Lindquist, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Learning Supports and Information Management Division to discuss successes and challenges and to provide an overview of the work of the committee.

- Collaborative Work of Inclusive Learning Team

In the past two months the inclusive learning team from division office has attended collaborative meetings with staff in Vauxhall High School, Chamberlain School and DA Ferguson School to provide support to teachers and identified students.

Ann and Lynn have also facilitated three meetings with staff from Children's Allied Health and principals and learning support teachers from LT Westlake, Chamberlain and Barnwell to plan for pilot projects in those three schools. Following the initial meeting, Barnwell School had an occupational therapist and a speech-language pathologist in classrooms on the morning of March 24, and we met with teachers and therapists in the afternoon to discuss concerns and possible solutions. Chamberlain and LT Westlake have dates set aside in May and June for their classroom visits.

- Early Learning

Screening for children aged 3 to 5 starts on April 20 and will be held in schools this year. Schools are also accepting registrations for pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten.

- Budget Reminder:

- **What are Centralized Funds?** - Centralized Inclusive Learning funds are intended to meet the needs of students who require more individualized support, and to ensure that specialized services, such as REACH or psychologist/behaviour support, are accessible to students in all schools, regardless of school size, location or demographics, through division office. Centralized supports may include:
 - Learning assistants for students who require individualized supports (assigned to schools)
 - Learning Support Teacher time (assigned to schools)
 - Speech language assistant time to support speech/language development (assigned to schools)
 - Psychologist/Behaviour support
 - Access to REACH consultants (Division pays an hourly rate)
 - Professional development for teachers and assistants to support inclusive practices
 - Sub costs for team meetings/IPP meetings that require more time than a regular parent/teacher conference
 - Administration/coordination of specialized supports and services (In-house, regional, community-based)
- **What are Decentralized Funds?** - Decentralized funds are a means of channeling resources “to provide for a continuum closer to the learner” (*Planning for a Continuum of Specialized Supports and Services*, Alberta Education, 2012). Schools are best placed to identify the strengths and needs of each learner and to plan for and provide universal supports and targeted interventions. Learner profile data gathered from assessments, such as literacy or numeracy benchmark assessments, or from interest/learning preferences inventories, enable schools to establish their own priorities in terms of the strategies and interventions needed. Decentralized funds are weighted to reflect the need for early intervention, with Div. I students receiving 38% of funds, Div. II 28%, Div. III 22% and Div. IV 12%.

Decentralized funds may be used to provide or enhance supports such as:

- Differentiated instruction and assessment
- Benchmark assessments
- Literacy and numeracy supports/interventions
- Flexible scheduling and groupings
- Assistive technology
- Positive behaviour supports
- Collaborative planning time
- Lead teacher time (E.g. Literacy)
- Increased learning support time
- Assistant support

FNMI Education:

- Lisa Sowinski continues to enable some parents to get to and from appointments with appropriate service agencies. Many of our families in need have no way to keep these appointments without Lisa's help.
- Lisa has attended school-based meetings along with students and parents in an effort to assist in success planning for our FNMI students who are struggling.
- Introduced some mothers to Karen Kallen (constituency assistant) to help them receive their family allowance, they have been cut off for some reason and Karen will assist them with this.
- Doing presentations with Elder , had one at Dr. Hamman and have a couple coming up in April one in Grassy Lake and the other at DAF.
- Lisa has been helping students going on to post-secondary school with applications and bursary programs applications.
- Providing support and encouragement to students that have fallen behind to get assignments in order to receive full credit.
- Working with family services to get some students tested that may have FASD.
- Providing support to a family who has had issues with the band by directing them to the proper agencies that they need to resolve the issues.
- Meeting some new families that have moved to Milk River and Warner.
- Assisting families by familiarizing them to the food bank and other agencies that are needed.
- Helping fill out forms for Kidsport, registration forms for status, finding out when they can go get pictures for treaty cards at another reserve other than theirs.
- Lisa continues to transport some students to school, and continues to facilitate the picking up and dropping off of homework for students who have been ill.

Counselling:

- We have Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) at both VHS and Myers. Around 5-10 students each week attend meetings. We have met with the Taber Public Library about having a movie night to talk about gender/sexual stereotypes. We've also been in contact with GSAs in Lethbridge.
- We sponsored Pink Shirt Day (anti-bullying) in February.
- Psychology Club received \$500 from the Community Foundation of South West Alberta. We are planning a Drugs Over Dinner event where we invite students and community members to take part in a frank, open discussion about drugs and addiction over a light meal. We are looking to collaborate with TCAD on this as well.
- Mentorship is currently underway at Dr. Hamman, Central and Myers. Going great!

- A new group for helping both students who struggle with depression and their friends who struggle with how to help them is in the planning stages. The goal is to teach the students how they can help but also how to maintain proper boundaries and their own self-care when they have loved ones that struggle with mental health concerns.
- The 4th R program with the grade 9 class out at Grassy Lake is underway. The program focuses on effective relationship skills such as conflict management as well as refusal skills, which includes turning down the pressure to use drugs or alcohol. The staff at the school has noticed an increase in smoking by grade 10 students so they are hoping this program will help prevent the grade 9s from following the same route.
- Triple P parenting program is going well in Vauxhall. We have had 4 participants show for the first 2 sessions, which is 3 more than in the previous years it was put on. As a result of the program, 2 of the participants have signed up for further 1-1 parenting sessions with the FCSS parenting coach who is co-facilitating the program with me.
- Resiliency Campaign is underway and the Postcard selection for the event occurred March 24, which resulted in great participation from many community members. The celebration night is in May at the Taber Community Center. This program involves schools from a number of different schools within our division. It is a great night, and we encourage anyone to join us!
- Clinical Team Leader attended a Train the Trainer PD opportunity on The PREPARE Model for School Crisis and Prevention and Intervention. She hopes to run training for our Division and community partners before the end of the school year.
- We are also looking at a couple of programs we may offer training to principals and teachers in to build in Mental Health awareness into schools and classrooms. These programs all encourage social-emotional literacy and creating cultures of support.
- Universal programs continue to run throughout the division on topics such as conflict-resolution and emotional literacy (i.e., Kelso's Choice, Kimochis, Superflex and MindUP)

Career Counselling:

- **Meeting the Need of all our Schools:** Garth recently did some work with the Vauxhall MAP programs around career themes and found the students willing and eager to consider a wide variety of occupations and training. This represents a portion of the growing demand for career related programing and advising that has outstripped our ability to provide even a basic program capable of supporting teachers and students in our schools. Many of our grade 8 to 12 students are haphazardly preparing for their transition from high school as evidenced by the numbers who do not use Career Cruising in any capacity other than to complete assignments in CALM class. A basic program would try to make sure that every student gets several presentations or meetings each year including an introduction or re-fresher on Career Cruising, access to a career fair, a basic transition planning presentation, a career development presentation and then access to individual help if they need it. This is all pretty basic stuff that other school divisions have moved to address but we have been stretched too thin to accommodate in each of our schools.
- **Xploring The Trades Committee:** This group created a Youth Exploring the Trades event called YETT that was fantastic at introducing apprenticeship trades to students. They also participate in the Trade Recognition Gala that recognizes apprenticeship businesses that mentor youth through the RAP program. This group just became an education subcommittee of the

Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce. There is potential here for our rural students to develop a higher level of connection with Lethbridge employers and with our voice they could continue the good work started by Xploring Trades. Meetings are held in Lethbridge on the second Tuesday of every month at 8 am.

- **Parent Outreach:** Workshops are being offered in the North and South areas of Horizon School Division for parents of grade 10 and 11 students. The workshops will cover dates and requirements for college, university and trades entrance. This is similar to our early workshop for grade 12 parents with the hopes that parents will make one of these meetings. Workshops are scheduled in April.

Resources for Parents

- ☑ **Scholarships** - how do we get them, how many are out there and when do we start looking?
- ☑ **College, University, Trades and Polytechnic Admission Updates** - what is happening?
- ☑ **Career or Academic Planning** - resources for parents

Parents of Grade 10 and 11 students are invited to attend:

Vauxhall: April 22nd at 6:30 and done by 7:30 **Where:** in the Vauxhall High School Library

Warner: April 21 at 5:30 and done by 6:30 **Where:** Warner School Library

Call or email Garth at 403-360-2737 or garth.mouland@horizon.ab.ca for more information

- **Career Rally:** Dates are proposed and invitations are ready to go out. Garth will be attempting to meet with principals in the next two weeks in person to person meetings to gain a commitment to the event and to begin the process of arranging transportation. Student numbers have reduced to a point in the south schools that the day will be a half day event and the northern rally will continue to be a whole day procedure.
- **Career Wiki:** At the suggestion of Warner School we added a page called Graduation and Transition that includes information on obtaining a high school diploma, helps students find entrance exams for US schools and links to the new NCAA Eligibility Center web page.
- **Myers Online Registration:** For the first time students had the opportunity to register for classes online. The career practitioner and office staff worked with one class at a time in the computer lab and had students enter their own course registrations. This process took place on March 25 and 26.
- **Myers Web Page:** The Career Corner appears on the Myers web page with updates on graduation, the career newsletter and scholarship information.

- **Review of Program Goals**

- 1.1 Provide students with career counselling
- 1.2 Promote advantages of career management
- 1.3 Supply and promote career resources
- 1.4 Promote and provide special career events
- 2.1 Provide career programming
- 2.2 Connect present education to career choices
- 2.3 Liaise with career / school related groups or projects
- 3.1 Advise and assist students as they prepare to act on their transition plans
- 3.2 Assist parents

High School Redesign:

- Representatives from all of our high schools currently participating in High School Redesign will be attending an Alberta Education session in May in Calgary.
- We will be hosting a High School Principals meeting in May where we will be visiting all things in the High School world in an effort to move forward on the foundations of the HS Redesign project. These foundational areas include: **(This meeting has been cancelled by AB ED)**
 - Mastery Learning
 - Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum
 - Personalization
 - Flexible learning Environments
 - Educator Roles and Professional Development
 - Meaningful Relationships
 - Assessment
 - Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Environments
 - Home and Community Involvement

Vauxhall Baseball Academy:

- Attended the VAB Gala evening in March.

Warner Hockey School:

- Met with Director of Hockey Operations, Mikko Makela, regarding a student discipline decision.
- Met with Hockey school staff regarding student discipline moving forward.
- Met with parents of the Warner Hockey School during their Showcase to clear up any question they may have regarding the Hockey School moving forward. At the moment the Hockey School is in the middle of solving issues it is facing in regards to a number of facets of the program.

Hutterian Brethren Schools:

- Clark and Gary have had discussions with German teachers and many Ministers regarding the 'pooling' of the 8-10 minutes per day dedicated for German Studies. The discussions were to collect feedback on the possible move to a one-hour block of time at the end of the day, 27 times (Wednesdays) throughout the school year. Based on the feedback received, we will be moving forward with this timetable adjustment for the upcoming 2015-16 school year. We have always appreciated the benefits from the support provided to students, staff and Horizon School Division by our German teachers, Ministers, elders and community members. The pooling of time into one larger block of prep time will hopefully benefit teachers a bit more and ultimately our students.
- 2015-16 Budget concern. From the perspective of colony schools, with many grades and 100% ELL school population, 'support' to help facilitate the curriculum delivered is imperative. The proposed hits to both 'decentralized incl. ed.' and 'ELL' that we have the potential for devastating affects at all schools. Unlike town schools, who would be able to reduce the support via seniority, or lowest person on the totem pole, our pain would be spread throughout every school. We cannot simply remove 1-2 support staff and have the remaining assistants absorb and carry the load - due to the fact that we are at 18 isolated sites.
- Colony Teachers will be attending the Alberta Colony Educators Conference May 15-17 in Olds.

Teacher Evaluation:

- I continue to evaluate five teachers.

College of Alberta School Superintendents:

- I attended the spring CASS learning symposium in Calgary where I took part in sessions dealing with Alberta Education direction in regards to High School Redesign as well as sessions surround staff mentorship, accommodation and retention.

THIS LETTER WAS SENT TO THE FOLLOWING 14 HORIZON STUDENTS REGARDING THEIR RECENT GRADUATION FROM THE REGISTERED APPRENTICE PROGRAM AT LETHBRIDGE COLLEGE:

- **Devin Schutter:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Agricultural Equipment Technician Journeyman certification
- **Ryan Tessemaker:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Automotive Service Technician Journeyman certification
- **David Zacharias:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Automotive Service Technician Journeyman certification
- **Jonathan Dorohoy:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Electrician Journeyman certification
- **Nick Goodrich:** Completed the required number of first level hours of workplace learning towards his Electrician Journeyman certification
- **Joey Tams:** Completed the required number of second level hours of workplace learning towards his Electrician Journeyman certification
- **Isaak Friessen:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Gasfitter Journeyman certification
- **Hunter Andrus:** Completed the required number of second level hours of workplace learning towards his Heavy Equipment Technician Journeyman certification
- **Skyler Jones:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Heavy Equipment Technician Journeyman certification
- **Tim Kleiner:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Heavy Equipment Technician Journeyman certification
- **Joey Tams:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Heavy Equipment Technician Journeyman certification
- **Liam Holchek:** Completed the required number of second level hours of workplace learning towards his Instrument Technician Journeyman certification
- **Austyn (Seamans) Moser:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Instrument Technician Journeyman certification
- **Jesse Thurston:** Completed the required number of hours of workplace learning towards his Welding Journeyman certification
-

April 2, 2015

On behalf of myself and the board of Trustees of Horizon School Division, I would like to extend our congratulations for your graduation from the RAP (Registered Apprenticeship Program) and for achieving the required number of hours of workplace learning towards your _____Journeyman certification.

Your achievement represents both your skill and personal attributes. We know that your commitment towards your future career goals requires hard work and dedication in all that you do both in and out of school. You have a bright future as you move forward with a quality skill set to accomplish your goals.

Sincerely,

Wilco Tymensen
Superintendent

Marie Logan
Board Chair

From: **Scott McCormack** <smccormack@asba.ab.ca>
Date: Tue, Mar 31, 2015 at 9:41 AM
Subject: ASBA President's Email to Board Chairs # 34 - Minister's Initiative to Establish Practice Standards
To: *Board Chairs <BoardChairs@asba.ab.ca>
Cc: *Superintendents-Email <Superintendents-Email@asba.ab.ca>, *Secretary Treasurers <SecretaryTreasurers@asba.ab.ca>

Dear Board Chairs,

The following Board Chairs Email #34 is being sent to you on behalf of Helen Clease, President.

Scott McCormack
Executive Director, ASBA

Dear Colleagues,

I recently attended the International Symposium on the Teaching Profession in Banff at the invitation of Education Minister, Gordon Dirks. While hosting this summit, much discussion has taken place relative to the profession of teaching and a shared interest in collaboratively pursuing excellence.

In the spirit of this objective, the Minister invited myself, along with the presidents of ASCA (Brad Vonkeman), CASS (Karl Germann) and ATA (Mark Ramsankar), to participate in an announcement on Sunday, March 29, 2015. The announcement was scheduled to introduce an important initiative the Minister plans to advance.

Thank you also to CASS for the comments to follow mirror much of what they have communicated to their members too.

The Minister's comments are attached to this email.

Further to the Minister's comments, the following is a summary of planned actions stemming from the announcement:

1. Develop a revised and updated Teacher Quality Standard
2. Develop a leadership practice standard for school principals.
3. Develop a leadership practice standard for system leaders.
4. Review and update, as needed, the teacher growth, supervision & evaluation policies which will need updating to align with the new Teacher Quality Standard.
5. Develop a strong focus on supporting new teachers through mentorship programs.
6. Develop 'Alternative Pathways - A Bridge to Teaching Program.' The program will allow certificated journeypersons and other trade professionals to become certificated to teach CTS courses.

I provided comments which emphasized:

- * collaborative engagement with school boards and other education stakeholders in advancing this work;
- * school boards' commitment to excellence at all levels in our education system - including for teachers, school leaders and system leaders
- * a need for balance between promoting system improvement and assuring excellence in the system; and,
- * a focus on the lenses school boards rely on in supporting transformation in the education system:
 - it must be student-centered and provide enhanced opportunities for student success
 - it must be financially sustainable now and in the future
 - it must retain flexibility for school boards to shape the delivery of education in order to meet the needs of local communities

I further communicated that system excellence, for our students, will be achieved through coordinated, intentional commitment, at all levels of the education system.

We understand details of the work that will take place will be finalized in the coming months. The formalization of leadership practice standards for teachers, school leaders and system leaders, and being provided the opportunity to have input into the review and development of the other action pieces are very positive developments.

The education partners look forward to a collaborative engagement to accomplish the goals announced today. I anticipate there will be significant opportunities for all education stakeholders to provide input and feedback.

As we move forward I will ensure you are kept informed.

Helen Clease
President

SPEAKING NOTES
HONOURABLE GORDON DIRKS
Minister of Education

Thanks for joining me this morning.

I am proud to be part of this weekend's Pan-Canadian and International Summit on Education. I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to listen to many of the delegates describe their challenges and successes in many areas that impact the education of our students, both in Canada, and around the world. It's interesting that despite varying systems, we share many of the same priorities – including, providing the best educational experience for all of our students, and their success.

In fact, we have some students who have participated in a number of the Summit's sessions, and their input and recommendations have been insightful and positively focused, providing us with a view of the learning experience from their perspectives.

That is why I can't think of a better place to announce an innovative initiative we will be implementing to benefit our Alberta students, the teachers that provide them instruction, and the leaders who support those teachers.

This initiative is a collaborative effort by key education stakeholders that will promote

excellence in teaching, and excellence in leadership by school principals and division leaders.

First, we will develop a revised and updated Teaching Quality Standard that describes the skills, competencies and standards that will guide Alberta's teachers now and in the future.

This Teaching Quality Standard will provide a foundation for post secondary teacher preparation programs, for mentorship of new teachers, and the ongoing professional development of teachers.

Second, we will develop new leadership practice standards for school principals and division leaders that will similarly serve as a foundation for preparation and development of principals and superintendents.

Third, we will review and update, as needed, the teacher growth, supervision and evaluation policies which will need updating to align with the new Teaching Quality Standard.

Next to parents, teachers are the single most important contributor to student success.

Fourth, that's why we will be developing a strong focus on supporting new teachers through mentorship by experienced teachers.

Through these initiatives, we will foster the ongoing development of excellence in the teaching profession by our certificated professional teachers, principals and division superintendents.

And one final area of focus to be announced today is what we are calling Alternative Pathways – a bridge to teaching program.

This program will allow certificated journeypersons and other trade professionals to become certificated to teach students in courses offered through our Career Technology Studies program.

These initiatives in teaching and leadership excellence will help maintain Alberta's strong reputation as a world leader in education.

Developing these initiatives in teaching and leadership excellence will be a shared collaborative effort by the education partners in Alberta, some of whom are here today.

I would now like to invite their remarks on these very important initiatives in teaching and leadership excellence.

Thank you.

The men behind the rights, they're defending

Teen rights used to be, in effect, whatever their parents dictated. But Millennials and Generation Z have pushed back, and the balance of power is shifting

[Luc Rinaldi](#) - March 13, 2015



Ron Felsen had been a teacher since 1998 and a vice-principal for five years when he got the top job at Northern Secondary School in tony north Toronto. The new principal—who already had at least 10 proms under his belt—was hardly inexperienced. A month later, he was presiding over the Halloween dance when he decided to shut it down one hour in. “We’re not talking about one or two kids drunk,” he says. “We’re talking about a cafeteria full of kids falling over on each other.”

To combat the culture of drinking, Felsen asked police to deliver a school-wide presentation on safe partying—to no avail. Six times in three years Felsen had to remove inebriated students from school dances, sending them home or even to the hospital to have their stomachs pumped. Eventually he cancelled all senior dances save the prom, a milestone often marked by much pomp and excess. He was already at his wit’s end when sharply dressed students spilled out of limos and filed into the hall’s front doors for 2013’s end-of-year dance. Once again he had to call the parents of one extremely intoxicated girl who was slurring her words and staggering around. The next year, he held her up as an example to the student council as he pressed his case for a Breathalyzer at the prom-dance door as a last resort.

The council argued against it, but after Felsen discovered at least one school in each of Ontario’s 32 English school boards used them before prom, he pitched the idea to the parent council and they bought it. “They know their kids and they know their kids’ friends,” he says. “They hear stories.” Two days before tickets went on sale for the 2014 dance, Felsen announced that, from now on, entry to the prom would require a ticket—and a breath test.

Student council vice-president Simon Gillies was incredulous. “Is this legal?” he asked president Brett Gorski. Other students were equally enraged; one put up posters

depicting Felsen with the Orwellian caption, “Big Brother is watching you.” As heads of the student council, Gorski and Gillies figured it was up to them to fight back.

Gillies swiftly started doing his own research. He found Section 8 of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)—protection from unreasonable search and seizure—and a Toronto District School Board policy that warned against unreasonable grounds for search and seizure. At the recommendation of his father, a lawyer, Gillies contacted the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, which quickly lent its support to a lawsuit—quashing Gillies’s worries that they might dismiss council as “just a bunch of whiny kids” fighting for the right to party. They connected the students with Jonathan Lisus, a Toronto lawyer willing to work the case for free. “They basically knew what the issues were,” says Lisus, who filed a Charter challenge against the school board. “They just needed help procedurally advancing them.”

Despite meetings and letters, Felsen—who had sought his own legal advice—wouldn’t budge. As the two sides waited for a court date, they made an interim agreement: there would be no Breathalyzers at the 2014 prom. Before the dance, Gorski and Gillies held a meeting for all Grade 12 students. “We worked for this,” Gorski told them. “Let’s do it right.” Three hundred and ninety people attended prom. Not one was reprimanded or removed for underage drinking.

Related: [Teen girls take over the world](#)

Since then, a 17-year-old successfully sued her landlord for refusing to rent her a Toronto apartment. Last October, a Catholic high school student in London, Ont., used the Charter’s freedom-of-religion provision to get an exemption from mandatory religion class. The next month, three Vancouver families filed a lawsuit against their school board for allowing transgendered students into the washroom of their choosing, claiming it violated other children’s right to privacy.

Then there was the strip search. In late February, a 15-year-old high school student in Quebec City was caught sending a text message to a friend that said “Do you want pot?”—a running joke in a school that had seen a string of recent locker searches. The principal and vice-principal interrogated the girl, whom they suspected of selling drugs, for an hour and a half before the two female staff members asked her to strip behind a curtain so they could search her clothes for drugs. She did, but they found nothing. Now the family is planning to sue for damages in the Superior Court of Quebec. “Everybody has the right to privacy, and that’s a bit lowered at school because it’s a student and you need to manage them,” says François-David Bernier, the lawyer representing the family. “But they made a big mistake.”



Jacques Boissinot/CP

Teenagers used to be second-class citizens whose rights were, in effect, whatever their parents decided they were. And kids, for the most part, accepted that. But, like all teenagers who have challenged authority, [Millennials and Generation Z](#) have started pushing back and the balance of power is shifting. “Young people today are much smarter and more aware of their rights than may be fashionable to admit,” says Sukanya Pillay, executive director and general counsel for the civil liberties group that helped with the Breathalyzer case. “They’re not taking things lying down. They’re not just going to accept whatever’s prescribed to them.” Kids these days know their rights, and, for better or worse, they’re defending them. And winning.

The cultural shift started in 1979, the year Pink Floyd released *The Wall*, the seminal rock opera that featured the hit single *Another Brick in the Wall (Part 2)*. In one section of the song, a chorus of children belts out the line that’s been repeated, with gusto, by millions of kids, millions of times since: “Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone!”

With that refrain, the English prog-rockers tapped into the zeitgeist of their day. The United Nations had declared 1979 the International Year of the Child, which “really created an excitement,” says David Morley, president and CEO of Unicef Canada, who remembers watching people march through the streets in Brazil in support. Though it may have had more significance in the developing world, where exploitation, health care and education were a concern, Canada wasn’t immune from its effect. For one, the [Children’s Aid Foundation](#) was established to support the most vulnerable children in society: those in the child-welfare system. “That year fundamentally changed the way the world thought about the rights of children,” says Morley.

Read More: [Your teenager’s scary brain](#)

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the first part of a new Constitution, was signed into law in 1982. Two years later, the Young Offenders Act established a separate justice system for children between the ages of 12 and 17, recognizing that they did not have the same moral, intellectual or emotional maturity as adults. [The 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), the UN’s most widely ratified treaty, recognized “that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance.” A decade later, after a Charter challenge to Section 43 of the Criminal Code, which permits spanking, the Supreme Court of Canada set out new boundaries on the use of disciplinary force against children. Today, students learn about the Charter as early as Grade 5 and again in new courses like the mandatory half-credit civics class introduced in Ontario in 2000.

Young people, on the cusp of adulthood and itching to assert their independence, have always had a don't-come-into-my-room kind of attitude that harkens back to James

Charter challenges

More and more teenagers—or their guardians—are suing schools and invoking the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Here are six of the most recent cases.

Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law;

Guarantee of Rights and Freedoms

1. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Fundamental Freedoms

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

A freedom of conscience and religion;

B freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;

C freedom of peaceful assembly; and

D freedom of association.

Democratic Rights

3. Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.

4. The House of Commons and every province that has a legislative assembly shall, as far as possible, meet in accordance with the times and places fixed in the return of the writs as a general election of its members.

5. The House of Commons and every province that has a legislative assembly shall, as far as possible, meet in accordance with the times and places fixed in the return of the writs as a general election of its members.

6. The House of Commons and every province that has a legislative assembly shall, as far as possible, meet in accordance with the times and places fixed in the return of the writs as a general election of its members.

Mobility Rights

7. (1) Every citizen of Canada has the right to enter, remain in and leave Canada.

(2) Every citizen of Canada has the right to move to and take up residence in any province, and to pursue the gaining of a livelihood in any province.

(3) The rights specified in subsection (2) are subject to any laws or provisions of general application in force in a province other than those that discriminate among persons primarily on the basis of province of present residence, and (4) any laws or provisions of general application in force in a province shall not be so construed as to deny or postpone any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Equality Rights

14. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Official Languages of Canada

16. (1) English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the legislature and government of New Brunswick.

(2) Nothing in this Charter limits the authority of Parliament or a legislature to advance the equality of status or use of English and French.

(3) The English linguistic community and the French linguistic community in New Brunswick have equality of status and equal rights and privileges, including the right to distinct educational institutions and such distinct cultural institutions as are necessary for the preservation and promotion of those communities.

(4) The role of the legislature and government of New Brunswick to preserve and promote the status, rights, and privileges referred to in subsection (3) is affirmed.

(5) If anyone has the right to use English or French in any debate and other proceedings of Parliament, (6) if anyone has the right to use English or French in any debate and other proceedings of the legislature of New Brunswick, (7) if the statutes, records and journals of Parliament shall be printed and published in English and French and both language versions are equally authoritative, (8) if other English or French may be used by any person in, or in any pleading or process issuing from, any court established by Parliament, (9) if other English or French may be used by any person in, or in any pleading or process issuing from, any court of New Brunswick, (10) if any member of the public in Canada has the right to communicate with, and to receive available services from, any head or central office of an institution of the Parliament or government of Canada in English or French, and (11) any member of the public in Canada has the right to communicate with, and to receive available services from, any office of an institution of the Parliament or government of New Brunswick in English or French.

Nothing in sections 16 to 20 abrogates or derogates from any right, privilege or obligation with respect to the English and French languages, or other of them, that exists or is created by virtue of any other provision of the Constitution of Canada.

Nothing in sections 16 to 20 abrogates or derogates from any legal or customary right or privilege acquired or enjoyed either before or after the coming into force of this Charter with respect to any language that is not English or French.

Minority Language Educational Rights

23. (1) Citizens of Canada (a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or (b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.

(2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received as a receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province (a) if the right of citizens of Canada under subsection (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province (b) applies in respect of a declaration made under subsection (3) of subsection (1) applies in respect of a declaration made under subsection (3).

(3) A declaration made under this section is a declaration that the operation of a school board in a province shall have such effect as is specified in the declaration.

(4) Parliament or a legislature of a province may extend a declaration made under subsection (3) of subsection (1) or (2) in respect of a declaration made under subsection (3).

Enforcement

24. (1) Anyone whose rights or freedoms, as guaranteed by this Charter, have been infringed or denied may apply to a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain such remedy as the court considers appropriate and just in the circumstances.

(2) Where, in proceedings under subsection (1), a court concludes that evidence was obtained in a manner that infringed or denied any rights or freedoms guaranteed by this Charter, the evidence shall be excluded if it is established that, having regard to all the circumstances, the admission of it in the proceedings would bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

General

25. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any abrogated, limited or restricted rights or freedoms that persons to the aboriginal peoples of Canada including (a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamations of October 3, 1763 and (b) any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

26. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed as derogating from the operation of any other rights or freedoms that exist in Canada.

27. This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

28. Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

29. Nothing in this Charter abrogates or derogates from any rights or privileges guaranteed by or under the Constitution of Canada in respect of denization, separate or government schools, or a reference to this Charter to a province or to the legislature assembly or legislature of a province shall be deemed to include a reference to the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories, or to the appropriate legislative authority thereof, as the case may be.

Nothing in this Charter extends the legislative powers of any body or authority.

Application of Charter

30. (1) This Charter applies (a) to the Parliament and government of Canada in respect of all matters within the authority of Parliament including all matters relating to the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories; and (b) to the legislature and government of each province in respect of all matters within the authority of the legislature of each province.

(2) Where a law or program of a province has effect after three years from the date it comes into force, (3) Parliament or the legislature of a province may expressly declare in an Act of Parliament or of the legislature, as the case may be, that the Act or a provision thereof shall operate notwithstanding a provision included in section 24 or section 25 of this Charter (4) An Act or a provision of an Act in respect of which a declaration made under this section is a declaration that each operation of a would have but for the provisions of this Charter referred to in the declaration, (5) A declaration made under subsection (3) shall cease to have effect five years after it comes into force, or on such earlier date as may be specified in the declaration, (6) Parliament or a legislature of a province may extend a declaration made under subsection (3) of subsection (1) or (2) in respect of a declaration made under subsection (3).

Citation

31. This Part may be cited as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"It must not be childlike first principles, its basic values and ideals which it is together as Canadians to be beyond or beyond together there is a way of life and a spirit of values which make it proud of the society that has given it such freedom and such immortality."

B. Trudeau

81, 1982-83

A Section 2 Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion.

A Catholic high school student in London, Ont. used this

Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*, says Pillay. But today's youth have grown up in a wildly different environment than previous generations. "We always hear about how kids don't understand privacy rights because they're ceding their privacy with social media and Facebook." But Pillay sees Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat as a testing ground where kids are introduced to the concept of rights by trial and error—who can see what they post, whom they can block and whom they can delete from their online lives.

Today's cohort of teens is the first to grow up almost entirely in a digital, post-9/11 world. Because of their technological sophistication, they can witness and participate in conversations about rights, whether the topic is [invasive anti-terror legislation](#) or WikiLeaks and government secrecy. "We're facing mass state surveillance," Pillay says. "There's a trickle-down effect. In schools, administrations are taking a more heavy-handed approach to the students. But the students, exercising their democratic rights, are saying, 'Wait, that's not right.' "

Zakaria Abdule has witnessed the transformation. Since graduating from high school, the 24-year-old University of Toronto student has worked on a handful of human rights issues with youth, including the Policing Literacy Initiative, which connects police to diverse communities to improve service. "We see it everyday. Young people are like, 'Hold up. We may be young, but we don't feel we should be treated a certain way because of our age. We feel like our voices matter.' " He hopes the groundswell of awareness closes the gap between young people and often-inaccessible disciplines like law, especially among underprivileged kids and teens who don't have an equal opportunity to exercise their rights. "Parents that are working two or three jobs," he points out, "they don't have time to advocate."

[Parents](#) are still the gatekeepers for their kids' rights because, until they're 18 or 19, depending on the province, kids can only launch lawsuits through a litigation guardian. That's usually an adult, but, in the case of emancipation—where a minor is an adult in the eyes of the law—young people can act on their own. Last March in New Jersey, a teen who moved out of home sued her parents for child support; the 18-year-old asked for \$654 a week, plus money for legal fees and tuition. The emancipation was contested, but she eventually abandoned the lawsuit and moved back home, only to receive a \$56,000 scholarship from a New England university. Then, in December, another New Jersey student, a 21-year-old who lives with her grandparents, successfully sued her divorced parents for nearly \$17,000. In a blog post called "The age of entitlement," her mother describes her daughter as a hard-drinking, rebellious runaway who managed to spin the law to her advantage. "She doesn't want a family; she wants money," her mother wrote. "And the courts have told her that this is completely acceptable." Never have young people had so much power, but most don't grasp the need for great responsibility. Michele Peterson-Badali, an Ontario Institute for Studies in Education psychologist who specializes in children's rights, says there's a gap between young people's awareness of their rights and their understanding of what it entails: the responsibility to respect the rights of others. "They might think they're savvy and act like they're savvy, but they're not," she says. "Even at 16 . . . few kids will understand that rights are a bounded entitlement. I can't do whatever I want. I can't say things that are hateful. I can't hurt somebody." And that's what throws adults into an uproar: if they're still the same old irresponsible, mischievous and occasionally nefarious kids, why hand them so much power? "There tends to be a gut reaction on the part of adults to feel threatened by the idea—'these kids, they have too many rights,' " says Peterson-Badali.

"I think that's a misconception." The trick, she says, is to ensure kids properly appreciate what rights really mean.

These days, they're learning much of what they know from television and YouTube videos. "We've interviewed thousands of children, and I haven't met one who knew their rights," says Katherine Covell, co-founder of the Cape Breton University Children's Rights Centre. The centre developed a curriculum that incorporates rights-based case studies and role-play exercises and shopped it around to schools, but Canadian educators weren't interested. "If you're going to respect the rights of the child, you have to listen to them and give them opportunities to express their opinions," Covell says. "A lot of teachers were wary of that." British schools, meanwhile, embraced the program and saw a drastic transformation over its 10-year implementation: bullying all but disappeared, discipline issues dwindled and children performed better academically. "You can't just have Rights Week or Rights Day," Covell explains. "It's not a quick fix."

Along with the recent swell in cases involving children's rights, there have been abuses. Children, exercising their new-found power, can subvert the laws to serve their own malicious, if not criminal, purposes.

It was April 2012 when Ontario teacher Susan Dowell learned this the hard way. When the Grade 4 students walked into their music class at a school north of Toronto to find Dowell was the substitute for their regular teacher, they immediately started horsing around and putting her patience to the test. "I've been doing this for 15 years. My intuition told me to nip that in the bud," says Dowell, 52, who was a real estate agent before she switched careers. She sent four kids to the office. After the bell, Dowell moved on to cafeteria duty—or, as she describes it, "being thrown into a pack of wolves." As she watched over the screaming, food-flinging masses, a boy walked by and tossed an uneaten banana into the trash. "You don't throw perfectly good food out," she told him. "Take it home or eat it or save it for after school." He took the banana out of the garbage, peeled it, took one bite and threw it back in. By the end of the day, Dowell had decided she wouldn't substitute teach at the school ever again, but it was too late.

The following week, she was dismissed from another job because students at the previous school complained that she had used excessive force on some and publicly humiliated another. She drove home in a daze. Her union told her to wait on word from the Children's Aid Society, whom the vice-principal had called to sort out the matter. In the meantime, she wasn't allowed to step on school property or talk to other teachers. "I had no support," she says. "No one to talk to." Eventually, she learned that the boy with the banana had told his parents Dowell made him eat from the garbage. She says the parents complained to the vice-principal, who interviewed the troublemakers sent to the office; they said she'd grabbed one of the girls by the neck. According to Dowell, no one asked for her account.

It was a month before Children's Aid cleared Dowell's case, allowing her to return to work. The events had shaken her, though, and tarnished her reputation. Kids and colleagues treated her differently, she says. The accusing child and parent, however, faced no consequences. Dowell's union told her that this was the "new normal"—she would have to grin and bear it.

She did—for a while. Last year, while on a long-term placement she thought would finally lead to a steady teaching position, Dowell was accused of scratching a student. She was off work for three weeks. Again, the case was dropped. To this day, she doesn't know who complained.

"Kids just have no idea of the ramifications of what they're saying or the power they have," she says. There have always been—and there will always be—bratty kids, but today's parents are raising increasingly entitled children, she says. In her eyes, it's become an us-versus-them battle, and young people now have the advantage. "When did that switch happen?" she asks. "I would correlate it entirely with when children began to understand that they had rights."

In 2012, a B.C. student launched an elaborate accusation of sexual assault against her teacher, lifting scenes from a TV show to describe his actions and creating a fake diary as evidence. Most cases are kept quiet, and false accusations aren't recorded, so no official statistics exist. But a 2010 Nipissing University study about a shortage of male teachers showed 13 per cent of 223 male Ontario teachers surveyed had been falsely suspected of inappropriate behaviour. School boards, says McGill University associate professor Jon Bradley, who has spent years studying false accusations, don't have basic policies to deal with an allegation, such as consulting all involved parties and explaining to accusers the implications of a false allegation. "It's innocent until proven guilty. If a teacher is guilty, they can hang from a lamppost," says Bradley. "But we need procedures." Even in an era when kids can and do sue adults, they can do just as much damage without any legal action at all.

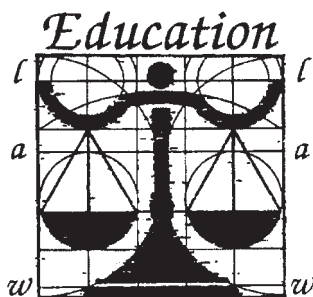
Nine months after the 2014 Northern Secondary School prom, Ontario's Superior Court ruled in favour of Brett Gorski and Simon Gillies, deciding that mandatory Breathalyzer tests violated their constitutional right to freedom from unreasonable search and seizure. The two teens were relieved—and proud. "I hear in my classes, 'Don't ever put anything you did in high school on your resumé,'" says Gorski, now a business management student at McGill. But you'll find the case on her CV; taking the school board to court taught her more than any law course could. "It was interesting that two 18-year-olds, fresh out of high school, were able to make an impact," says Gorski, who intends to continue being an advocate for social justice. "When I talk to Grade 9s, they think it's exciting that they can stand up for their rights. It's kind of foreign to take a principal to court."



Principal Felsen is proud of his students' professionalism in handling the court case, though he's still worried about drinking at the prom. (Photograph by Jaime Hogge)

Now principal Felsen has a most pressing concern: with the 2015 prom about three months away, how does he prevent the usual bacchanal? "It does tie our hands a bit," he says of the court's decision. Parents expect him to put on a prom year after year, but he, like other administrators, is running out of tools to combat underage drinking. Because of the decision, Malvern Collegiate in east Toronto, which has used the Breathalyzer on students for years, will stop using the test, and dozens of other schools will likely follow suit. Felsen wouldn't be surprised if high schools decide to get out of the prom business altogether, even though he knows that would cause even more of an uproar than the Breathalyzer did, given their social status as a rite of passage.

He does see one upside, though. "I think it's a great civics lesson," he says. "We teach kids about rights and responsibilities, so here's a great lesson about how decisions are made and what you do about decisions you're not happy with. We have appeal measures and all sorts of different things we as adults do, and certainly kids should know they have that ability as well." He's heartened by Gillies and Gorski, who were professional and polite throughout the case. As for future students, "I'm confident that kids will do the right thing," he says. "If I didn't have confidence in kids, I wouldn't be a school principal."



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STUDENTS and THE LAW

Breathalyzer Testing at Prom Violates Charter Rights

Facts

Simon Gillies and Brett Gorski (the “Students”) were Grade 12 students at Northern Secondary School (the “School”) in Toronto which was part of the Toronto District School Board (the “Board”) in 2014.

Ron Felson was the principal (the “Principal”) at the School. The senior prom was set for May 29, 2014. On April 29, the Principal informed that School Council that he had decided to introduce breathalyzer testing at the 2014 prom. All students would be required to undergo breathalyzer testing before they would be permitted to enter the prom.

The reaction of the Student Affairs Council was that the students were insulted and opposed to the use of the breathalyzer.

The rationale of the Principal in adopting the mandatory breathalyzer testing was that it was a last resort to counteract a culture of alcohol consumption and intoxication at school dances and proms. He testified that at any given dance or prom at least two students had been sent home or to hospital because of severe intoxication.

Cause of Action

The Students brought an application to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice seeking a declaration that the breathalyzer policy was a violation of their rights guaranteed under Section 8 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the “Charter”).

Decision

The Court issued a declaration that the mandatory breathalyzer test as a pre-condition of entry to a Toronto high school prom infringes the rights of high school students to be free from unreasonable search or seizure as protected under Section 8 of the *Charter*.

Reasons

Whether the Charter Applies to School Authorities at Prom

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that a private entity may be subject to the *Charter* when carrying out inherently governmental actions and implementing a specific government policy or program if the activity is truly “government-

tal” in nature. It is well-established law that a school board is the branch of government and subject to the *Charter*.

Although the prom was carried out off-site, it was a school sponsored event and the Principal was acting under his capacity as principal. Therefore, the *Charter* rights applied at the prom.

Whether Section 8 is Engaged by Mandatory Breathalyzer Testing

Section 8 of the *Charter* provides that “Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.” Whether the *Charter* rights are engaged depends on two questions:

1. Whether the students consented to the breathalyzer?
2. Whether there is a privacy interest of the students to be protected such that they would have a reasonable expectation of privacy?

Consent

There was no express consent to the breathalyzer testing. The Students were insulted and opposed to the mandatory breathalyzer as recorded in the minutes of the Student Affairs Council Executive Minutes. The Board argued that consent may be implied from the circumstances. The Students were notified prior to the sale of tickets that a mass breathalyzer screening would take place. In purchasing the tickets, the Students would be implicitly consenting to the breathalyzer test as a precondition of their entry.

The Students argued that any such consent was as a result of coercion. Prom is a rite of passage for high school students and students would be denied attendance if they refused to comply. The Court, however, found that students were not compelled to attend. Rather, attendance was voluntary and the students could withdraw their consent. The students were capable of providing their consent and had freedom to choose whether or not to be subjected to the breathalyzer screening as a condition of entry.

The Court did not find that the students were aware of the nature of what they were being asked to give their consent or aware of their right to refuse to permit school authorities to engage in the breathalyzer testing. They were also unaware of the potential consequences of giving consent.

The question for the Court was whether the students had sufficient information available to make a meaningful choice to attend or not to attend. It was questionable whether students can make a meaningful choice given they are asked to choose between missing an important event and a social milestone, and being subjected to a seizure of a bodily sample.

The Board argued that the consequences of not consenting to the breathalyzer screening were being denied entry and not being refunded the cost of the ticket. The Court took the view that the consequences of giving consent to the breathalyzer were broader than the Board argued. Students are also waiving a *Charter* right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure. On the whole, the Board cannot establish that the students had waived their *Charter* rights. Therefore, the students did not consent to the breathalyzer test, which is the first hurdle to engaging the Section 8 rights.

Reasonable Expectation of Privacy

The Supreme Court of Canada set out the test to determine whether a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy in the context of search and seizure in the decision of *R. v. Spencer*. The factors to be considered include the following:

1. The subject matter of the search;
2. The student’s interest in the subject matter;
3. The student’s subjective expectation of privacy; and
4. Whether this subjective expectation of privacy was reasonable in the circumstances.

In considering the circumstances, the Court ruled that students have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their breath samples. The test goes to lifestyle and personal choices of the individual. The object of the *Charter* is to foster values of dignity, integrity and autonomy. Personal information that individuals in a free and democratic society would wish to maintain control from dissemination includes information that tends to reveal intimate details of lifestyle and personal choices.

A student attending school would have a subjective expectation that his privacy, at least that the privacy of his body, should be respected.

Is There a Diminished Expectation of Privacy in the Context of the School Prom?

Diminished expectations of privacy in schools have been recognized by the Supreme Court because teachers and school authorities are responsible for providing a safe environment and maintaining order and discipline. The role of teachers is such that they must have power to conduct a search and students will be subject to reasonable searches. Therefore, students have a diminished expectation of privacy.

Despite a diminished expectation of privacy, that does not give schools the authority to override the students’ *Charter* rights. Given that the students did not consent to the breathalyzer testing, their Section 8 rights have been engaged.

The Standard for Reviewing the Seizure of Breath Samples

Once the Section 8 rights are engaged, it must be determined whether the breathalyzer testing is a reasonable search and seizure. The criteria for a reasonable search recognizes that school officials must be able to act quickly to protect their students and provide an orderly atmosphere for learning. The considerations include the following:

1. A warrant is not essential to conduct a search of the student by the school authorities.

2. The school authority must have reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of school regulations or discipline and that a search of a student would reveal evidence of that breach.
3. Courts should recognize the preferred position of school authorities to determine if reasonable grounds exist for the search.
4. Reasonable grounds may include information from one credible student, information from more than one student, or may be based on a teacher's or principal's own observation, or any combination of these elements which the school authority considers to be credible.

In the circumstances, the Court could not conclude that the Principal had reasonable grounds to believe that a school rule had been violated to justify the use of the breathalyzer test. The Principal did not form anything more than a suspicion that some students would be drinking before the prom. Suspicion does not meet the threshold of "reasonable grounds to believe". Even the Board's own search and seizure procedures warn against having only a reasonable suspicion. The procedures also state that a suspicion is not enough to ground a *Charter* compliant search or seizure.

This finding was sufficient to lead to the declaration sought by the Students; however, the Court went on to consider the other issues raised by the case.

The criteria for search has been modified in a school setting

Even where school officials have the authority to conduct a search or seizure, the search must be carried out in a reasonable manner. For the search to be considered reasonable, as set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Collins*, the test is the following:

1. The search must be authorized by law.
2. The law itself must be reasonable.

3. The manner in which the search is carried out must be reasonable. It should be carried out in a sensitive manner that is minimally intrusive.

The *Education Act* authorizes school authorities to conduct searches and seizures in appropriate circumstances. This statutory authority granted by the *Act* is reasonable. Carrying out the breathalyzer test however would not be carried out in a sensitive manner. Students could be humiliated and demeaned by lining up to give a breathalyzer test in public view of the other students. Searches of the person are more intrusive than the search of a person's home or their business. Searches of body cavities are viewed as being the most intrusive. Searches of body samples and impressions are less intrusive and body searches are viewed as the least intrusive.

The administration of a breathalyzer test (a highly intrusive search) is disproportionate given the nature of the suspected breach of school rules. The Court did not condone the underage consumption of alcohol but ruled that there are several other effective methods to screen for alcohol consumption that do not involve bodily integrity. The Board had not proved that there was a widespread health and safety concern arising out of the "Culture of drinking" that necessitated a significant intrusion into the bodily privacy of the students. The threat posed in this case is not as serious as that of a student who may possess a weapon at school. Other measures to determine if students had been drinking were less intrusive. Accordingly, the Court ruled that the seizure of a breathalyzer sample would be unreasonable.

Whether the Violation of Section 8 is Saved by Section 1 of the Charter

Under Section 1 of the *Charter*, a violation of Section 8 rights may be ruled as permissible if the violation meets the test of being a reasonable limit prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

The onus of proving that a limit meets the Section 1 *Charter* provision rests on the Board. The limit must be of sufficient importance that it warrants overriding a constitutionally protected right or freedom. Secondly, once the Board shows that the justification for the limit is of sufficient importance, then it must show that the means chosen are reasonable and demonstrably justified.

The breathalyzer test itself is not prescribed by law for the health and safety of the students. Nothing in the *Education Act* or the Regulations provides that a breathalyzer is an appropriate mechanism to fulfil the Principal's function.

The safety of the students and maintaining school discipline is a pressing and substantial objective; however, there is not a sufficient rational connection between the objective and the administering of the breathalyzer test. The Board has failed to bring evidence to demonstrate that there is a major health and safety concern in consuming alcohol at dances and proms. Rather, the evidence indicated a small number of incidents where students were sent home or to hospital or disciplined for having consumed alcohol. The breathalyzer test was a deterrent as opposed to a reactive step. The decision to impose mass breathalyzer screening for all students is not rationally connected to the health and safety of the students or discipline objectives of the school authorities.

Administering a breathalyzer test does not minimally impair the students' rights. The breathalyzer screening is a disproportionate reaction by school personnel. Therefore, the violation of the students' Section 8 *Charter* rights was not saved under Section 1 of the *Charter*.

Simon Gillies et al v. Toronto District School Board, 2015 ONSC 1038

Authored by
Donna Wickens, B.A., LL.B



Quebec Student Strip-Searches

Facts

In February 2015, a student was strip-searched at Neufchâtel High School in Quebec City. According to the school principal, there were reasonable grounds to believe that the fifteen-year-old girl was selling drugs at the high school. No drugs were found as a result of the search.

The girl's family are threatening to bring an action against the school and De la Capitale School Board arising from the search. The case has given rise to a firestorm of controversy. The Quebec Minister of Education, Yves Bolduc, initially supported the strip search and stated that strip-searches are allowed in Quebec schools. Following his initial statement, he backtracked and ordered an independent review. A week later, he resigned.

On February 19, 2015, the Quebec Premier, Philippe Couillard, pledged that strip-searching children will no longer be allowed in Quebec schools.

Was the strip-search a breach of the student's Charter rights?

As the breathalyzer decision above illustrates, school officials do, in some circumstances, have the authority to search students to maintain student safety and school discipline.

Of the criteria set out in that decision, two criteria have the most relevance to the strip-search of this student. In determining whether there were reasonable grounds for the search, the school authority must have reasonable grounds

to believe that there has been a breach of school regulations or discipline and that a search of a student would reveal evidence of that breach.

Secondly, if there were reasonable grounds for the search, it must be carried out in a way that is reasonable. It should be carried out in a sensitive manner that is minimally intrusive.

“In determining whether there were reasonable grounds for the search, the school authority must have reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of school regulations or discipline and that a search of a student would reveal evidence of that breach.”

None of the media reports have indicated how the school Principal arrived at the decision that she had reasonable grounds to believe that the girl was selling drugs. But not only does the Principal have to believe the girl was selling drugs, the Principal also had to have reasonable grounds to believe that a physical search of the girl would result in finding the drugs (as opposed to them

being hidden, for example, in her purse or in her locker.) Mere suspicion is not enough. The fact that no drugs were found begs the question of how the Principal could have had reasonable grounds to believe that the student had drugs on her person.

According to reports, one teacher held a blanket to cover the student, while the student removed all of her clothes and passed them out to be examined by the Principal. Was this search carried out in a sensitive manner and was it minimally intrusive? Were there other means of detecting whether the girl was carrying drugs?

These are grey areas and all of the facts involved in this search have not been made public. Certainly, public reaction has been strongly opposed to strip-searching students. The least risky alternative for a principal in this situation would be to call the police. This gives rise to another question? Would it be more sensitive to search the girl at school or to have her arrested and taken to the police station to be searched?

No action has been commenced, and if an action is commenced, depending on the facts established during the investigation of the claim, no trial may ensue. In the meantime, boards have to formulate policies to keep drugs and weapons out of schools while respecting the Charter rights of students.

Sources: Globe and Mail: February 19, 2015; February 26, 2015

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TEACHERS/EMPLOYEES and THE LAW

Denial of Leave Overruled by Arbitrator

Facts

Nancy Mulholland (the “Teacher”) is a teacher at Rosedale School teaching Grade 2 in the afternoon and music to other grades. Rosedale is part of the Lambton Kent District School Board (the “Board”). She had the opportunity to join an educational trip to India led by an Associate Professor at the University of Waterloo. Four teachers employed by another board had been granted permission to take the trip. The Teacher requested a leave of absence for February 25, 2015 to March 29, 2015 which included the March break.

In her supporting memo submitted to the Board, the Teacher made the following points:

1. The Rosedale community would benefit from the trip given the number of families who have immigrated to Canada from India and Pakistan;
2. With time to prepare, there would be little disruption to her students;
3. Her teaching colleague was supportive.

The Board considered the request on three occasions. The Director and the Superintendents were involved in the final decision. The Board refused to grant the leave because they did not agree that the benefits of the trip would outweigh the concerns about granting the leave. The main concerns were:

1. The length of the leave in the middle of the school year;
2. The disruptive impact on her students resulting from her absence;
3. Teachers have a long summer vacation to accommodate lengthy trips;
4. Granting the leave would create a precedent for other similar requests.

Cause of Action

The Teacher filed a grievance to compel the Board to grant the leave of absence.

Decision

The Arbitrator ordered the Board to grant the leave of absence request.

Reasons

The Collective Agreement

There was no clause in the Collective Agreement that dealt with such a leave. There was, however, Article 16.04.3 that provided:

“A leave, necessitated by exceptional circumstances, may be granted by the Director of Education.”

Review of the Board’s Decision

The Arbitrator ruled that the leave request warranted the careful consideration that the Board “says” it was given. His view was that the Board’s concern about of length of leave in the middle of a school term was a reasonable concern. The standard created by the words “necessitated by exceptional circumstances” is high.

The Arbitrator also acknowledged that an arbitrator should be careful not to substitute his own judgment for a reasonable discretionary decision. However, he found that the Teacher was persuasive and ordered the Board to grant the leave.

Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario v. Lambton Kent District School Board (Mulholland), 2015 CanLII 5526 (ONLA)

Authored by
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Implications and Applications

It is not clear in the decision if the Arbitrator was finding that the Board did not give a fair and reasonable consideration to the request or whether the Board’s decision was unreasonable in the circumstances. In any event, he substituted his decision for the Board’s decision.

Teacher Granted Reinstatement

Facts

Anthony Ross (the “Teacher”) was a teacher with 20 years of experience teaching with the Scarborough Board of Education and the York Region District School Board (the “Board”). He had been assessed as a satisfactory teacher. In 2010, a former student (the “Student”) came forward with allegations of sexual assault by the Teacher when he was in the Teacher’s Grade 8 class during the 1994-1995 school year.

Criminal charges were brought against the Teacher and he was acquitted. The Board then conducted its own investigation and terminated his employment on the following grounds:

1. The Teacher engaged in grooming behaviour;
2. The Teacher established an inappropriate personal relationship with the Student and had inappropriate influence over the Student; and
3. The Teacher touched the Student in an intimate and sexual manner.

Cause of Action

The Teacher filed a grievance over his dismissal.

Decision

The Teacher was reinstated.

Reasons

Issue for the Arbitrator

The question for the Arbitrator was whether the Student's version of the events while he was still in Grade 8 was an accurate description of the events. The onus was on the Board to prove that they were accurate. It was not sufficient that the Board prove the mere possibility that the Student's story was true. The standard of proof was on a balance of probabilities. The Board's evidence must be sufficiently clear, convincing and cogent.

Lack of Corroboration and the Credibility of the Student

The Student and his sister both testified about an incident that took place during a tutorial session in their basement. The sister discovered the Student sitting in the Teacher's lap. The Teacher denied that the event ever occurred. There were some factual discrepancies between the story told by the Student and the testimony of his sister. The Student said that he immediately jumped out of the Teacher's lap while the sister said that he remained in the Teacher's lap. There was also a discrepancy about whether the matter was discussed that night at dinner and finally, whether the Student and the Teacher were working on a computer.

The Arbitrator found these factors were serious flaws in the Student's testimony. The mother did not testify to confirm whether the incident had been discussed at dinner that night or not. The failure of the mother to testify and the discrepancies in the Student's and his sister's testimony cast doubt on the Student's general credibility. Based on the Teacher's denial, the Arbitrator did not accept that the incident in the basement had happened at all.

On-going Relationship

Following the Student's Grade 8 year, the Teacher maintained a relationship with the Student's family, in particular with his two sisters. The Student's evidence was that he tried to avoid any contact with the Teacher. In 2010, there was an incident where the Teacher attended a soccer game where the Student's niece was playing. The Student did not attend. The Student then had a dispute with his own wife, where he told her about the sexual abuse. He then told his family, and then the police, leading to the charges against the Teacher.

“The details about the first incident were only recalled by the Student after he used a technique of “visualization.” The Arbitrator ruled that the description might not be an actual memory but might be a reconstruction in the Student's mind of how the incident might have happened.”

Specifically, the Arbitrator rejected the Student's evidence that he avoided further contact with the Teacher based on the Teacher's testimony that over the years, they had many pleasant conversations.

Similar Fact Evidence

The Arbitrator permitted another young man, “C,” to testify at the hearing about a similar set of facts that involved the Teacher. C testified that he was at camper at a summer camp where the Teacher worked as a camp supervisor during the same time period. His evidence was that the Teacher kissed him on the cheek and told C that he (the

Teacher) loved him. The Teacher took C shopping for a watch, which in the end was not purchased. Finally, the Teacher gave C a birthday card and \$20.

The Teacher denied these events had occurred saying that “it was not my practice.” The Arbitrator ruled that C was a credible witness and preferred C's testimony over the Teacher's. C testified that the behaviour made him feel uncomfortable but that he did not consider it sexual.

The Arbitrator ruled that the evidence gave credibility to the Student's claims that he had been kissed and hugged but did not assist the Board in proving the more serious charge of sexual abuse and rather cast some doubt on that allegation.

Lack of Details about the Abuse

The Student's testimony was that the Teacher masturbated him four or five times. He could only remember details about the first occasion. The Student could not remember any details about the other occurrences including where they happened, what was said or anything else.

The details about the first incident were only recalled by the Student after he used a technique of “visualization.” The Arbitrator ruled that the description might not be an actual memory but might be a reconstruction in the Student's mind of how the incident might have happened. The evidence fell short of proof on the balance of probabilities with clear, cogent and convincing evidence.

Risk of Discovery

All of the alleged activities took place in areas where that Teacher could be discovered, in a classroom with an unlocked but closed door, in the family home where other family members were present and in a parked car on a driveway. The Arbitrator questioned whether the Teacher would engage in these behaviours when there was a significant risk of being caught.

Conclusion

The Student sincerely believed that he was abused by the Teacher but memory is fallible. Much of his testimony fell short of the standard of establishing clear, cogent and convincing evidence that sexual abuse occurred on a balance of probabilities.

The Teacher had engaged in a relationship with the Student that was largely appropriate. However, hugging him or kissing him and telling the Student that the Teacher loved him were not appropriate. This inappropriate behaviour, in itself, did not form a reasonable basis for dismissal of the teacher with no disci-

plinary record. The Arbitrator ordered that the teacher be reinstated.

York Region District School Board v. Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (Anthony Ross), 2014 CanLII 77450 (ONLA)

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Implications and Applications

This case illustrates the difficulty of proving allegations of abuse based on recovered memories. On the one hand, the Arbitrator acknowledged that abuse victims repress the memories of the experience. However, he went on to observe that teenagers have very exact memories of their teenage years.

The case also illustrates the difficulty of the Arbitrator in accepting the evidence of the Student even where he implied that the Teacher was less than honest in his denial of an inappropriate relationship with the Student as a camper. The ultimate result can only be explained by the fact that the Arbitrator was unwilling to see the Teacher discharged based on the suppressed and then recovered memories of the Student.

In a case such as this, where there are credible allegations of abuse, the Board was required to investigate the allegations and make a decision about disciplining the Teacher. At the criminal trial, the Court ruled that it preferred the evidence of the Student over the Teacher's evidence but it was not sufficient to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt. The Arbitrator's view was that the Board could not be faulted in how it proceeded even though he ordered that the Teacher be reinstated.

Claim Again President of Vancouver Olympic Committee Dismissed



John Furlong (the "Teacher") was originally from Ireland.

He worked as a volunteer teacher at Immaculata Elementary School ("Immaculata") in 1969-1970 in Burns Lake, British Columbia. He taught physical education and coached sports. In 1970, he moved to Prince George where he was a volunteer

teacher at Prince George College. He immigrated to Canada permanently in the mid-1970s.

He later went on to chair the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Bid Corporation and then was President and CEO of the Vancouver Olympic Committee for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

On September 12, 2012, the Georgia Straight newspaper published an article

claiming that the Teacher had physically abused students at Immaculata in 1969-1970. On July 24, 2013, Grace West (the "Student"), brought an action against the Teacher, the Roman Catholic Prince George Diocese, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver and the Catholic Independent Schools Diocese of Prince George.

The Student alleged that the Teacher was her physical education teacher at

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Immaculata and that he had physically and sexually abused her during the 1969-1970 school year. The Teacher denied any abuse of any students.

At the examination for discovery, the Student testified as to all of the schools she had attended. They included St. Mary's for kindergarten to Grade 3, followed by a residential school, Lajak, then a school called Silverthorne. Her final school was named Houston which she attended for both elementary and high school. She testified that she had attended no other schools but after a break in testifying, she testified that she had attended Immaculata from 1964 to 1977. Later, she said she had attended there for only one year when she was six and in kindergarten.

The Student also gave evidence of her date of birth, that her father's first name was Freddie and that she had been called Jessie as a child.

Following the examination for discovery, the Student's lawyer withdrew as her counsel and she has not been represented by a lawyer.

Cause of Action

The Teacher brought an application to dismiss the Student's action against him.

Decision

The action against the Teacher was dismissed.

Reasons

By the time of the hearing for the application to dismiss, the Student had essentially abandoned her claim. Although

served with notice of the application, she did not respond or appear at the hearing.

The evidence before the Chambers Judge was the following:

- The Student's testimony at the examination for discovery outlined above;
- The affidavit of the Teacher denying any abuse ever and stating that he had never met the Student;
- Attendance records maintained by St. Joseph's School in Smithers, BC that showed a student named Jessie West had been enrolled May 9, 1967. The student named as Jessie West was a student in each year up to and including the 1969-1970 school year, the year in question. The date of birth

of the student matched that Student's birthday as she testified at the examination for discovery and the father's name was listed as Freddie.

- Attendance records from Immaculata showed no child named Grace Jessie West attended any class during the 1968-1969 and 1969-1970 school years.

The Judge concluded that based on the evidence before him, the Student had not ever attended Immaculata and specifically did not attend during the 1969-1970 school year. Her claim that she was abused while attending Immaculata was dismissed.

West v. Furlong, 2015BCSC 216

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Kid Zone kicked from Central gym

By J.W. Schnarr
Taber Times

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With two schools in the hunt for gym space, a local after school program could find itself out in the cold.

During their regular meeting on March 31, Horizon School Division board of trustees made the decision not to renew a contract with Kid Zone Child Care for after school use of the Central School gym during school months due to a pressing need from other HSD schools.

Ward 4 Trustee Derek Baron said with upcoming modernization construction, Barnwell School is set to lose their gym. The plan since the beginning of their modernization plans was for those Barnwell students to use the Central School gym in Taber. Additionally, Taber Mennonite School has also been discussing the opportunity to make use of the gym at Central

School, and this has caused a conflict.

Kid Zone's Charlotte Horvath said the organization has been forced to seek alternative rental space for their program. Forty-eight children currently take part in Kid Zone, with more than half subsidized through the provincial government. Horvath said transportation could prove to be a major issue for any new venue as many of those registered children are bus students.

"This has left us in quite a predicament," she said.

Horvath said the organization is also concerned with the possibility that moving to a new space could result in a fee hike for parents. She said she was disappointed in the decision by the board.

School Superintendent Wilco Tymensen said over the past number of years the Kid Zone Child Care Program had been contracting the space to provide an after-school pro-

gram. With the contract coming up for renewal at the end of the year, however, council has decided not to renew so that the division schools in need may make use of the gym.

Currently, the program operates at the school during the school year and at the Knox United Church through the summer.

Horvath said Kid Zone helps many families in need of child care. She said parents often ask about an appropriate age for children to be left at home unattended, and added the Alberta government will subsidize children up to the age of 12 and special needs children to the age of 14.

"We feel children should probably be in childcare until that age," she said. "Some are more responsible at a young age, but at what point do you want to take that chance? It's all fine and dandy until there is an accident at home."

"We feel we provide the community with a place for their children to go," said Horvath.

Additionally, Horvath said the program is valuable as it provides a place for children to be physically active, express themselves through creative projects, and be around their friends.

"It's a place where they can be themselves and do some fun activities where it's safe," she said.

Kid Zone has been in operation since 2003, and has made use of the Central School gym since 2003. In 2008, the program began operating a summer program. Three years ago, the division requested Kid Zone find another space during the

summer months over what Horvath described as a "maintenance issue."

She said there are still discussions to be had with the division in regards to this issue, as word of the decision was handed down on Good Friday.

"We are looking, we just don't know where we're going to end up yet," she said.

Cuts coming to programs, services HSD facing deep cuts

By J.W. Schnarr
Taber Times

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English Language Learners and at-risk youth are facing cuts to their programming if Budget 2015 is implemented. In addition, a freeze on new student funding and a change in how the Horizon School Division board of trustees can access their reserves is going to lead to more cuts in programming, services, and resources, according to School Superintendent Wilco Tymensen.

Vice Chair Bruce Francis called

the cuts "ridiculous" in summing up the announcement.

"It makes zero sense," he said, going on to say the province was behaving like "a dictatorship" in the handling of the budget.

Budget 2015 laid out by the Alberta PCA government includes program spending cuts ranging from 1.9 per cent to 3.1 per cent, with an overall average of 2.7 per cent. These cuts will not be made to teachers, however. Instead, they will need to be made through operations.

The amount could mean close to \$1 million, and will result in a sig-

nificant impact on classrooms. Areas expected to take big hits from the freeze include high needs and at-risk students as well as English Language Learners, and could affect how transportation is handled by the division.

But Tymensen said there are more issues to consider, which will raise that amount to \$1.65 million. This includes about \$400,000 in amortized funds the board has been spending every year to pay off buildings and projects they funded themselves.

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"I think it's important to recognize that, historically, we have about \$400,000 worth of unsupported amortized capital assets," he said.

"What that basically means is we supported buildings that were not supported by Alberta Education.

"The board has used reserves in the past to support these assets and they are being written off at about \$400,000 every year. "The money's already been spent."

A new budget process which will limit how school divisions spend their reserves will also limit the board from using that money to balance their budgets, something they have done in the past.

According to the board, this will result in a further reduction in programs, services, and resources, as that \$400,000 amor-

tization will have to be found elsewhere.

"Primarily, what (the Minister of Education) is saying, is school divisions, and public servants in general are operating in an unsustainable structure.

"By forcing school divisions to look at these (structures), he's forcing them to make significant changes operationally so they can come into alignment with the new fiscal reality, which is moving forward in this province because of the oil prices dropping."

According to material provided by the division, the board's requirement to remove \$1.65 million from its non-teacher instructional expenses equates to a 12.89 per cent cut in funding.

The need to make such extensive cuts when reserve funds are available is clearly unprecedented and will result in financial decisions that will see the loss of

entire programs and services within Horizon.

"What are the actual effects for classrooms, students, and staff?" he asked.

"We don't yet know. Senior administration has been having in-depth conversations. There are some programs that are looking at a high per cent reduction, so they will simply cease to be.

"Other programs will have significant cuts.

"This is forcing us to look at making reductions in some pretty important areas."

In an official response to the budget, board chair Marie Logan said the board has been prudent and responsible with tax funds in the past, and the new requirement to seek ministerial approval for using operational reserves runs "contrary to the board's local autonomy and the vision of Inspiring Education, and severely limits Horizon's

ability to address funding cuts."

"It handcuffs us during tough economic times," said Tymensen. "It forces us and leverages us to make drastic, significant, difficult decisions around our physical reality."

Another worry for the board is the fact that new student funding has been frozen for the next three years, something which wasn't immediately apparent in the announcement of cuts.

There will be no funding for new students over the next three years.

Tymensen said the lack of funding for new students could potentially be a huge hit for many divisions around the province.

"We're talking about 46 students in our jurisdiction," he said, adding those students amounted to a direct funding cut of \$300,000 before inflation.

"I'm sure there are districts out there that have thousands of

new students.

"When you look at the big Metro boards, (it could be) equivalent to a loss of \$15 million dollars to them."

He added as thousands of new students arrive in Alberta schools every year, the money lost through the funding freeze quickly adds up.

"In three years, it will be the equivalent loss of revenue of six rural jurisdictions receiving zero dollars," he said.

He noted the media releases by the province have not told the whole story when it comes to how hard the school budgets will be affected by cuts.

"When you see the press release saying they cut (2.7 per cent), it's really a two per cent cut and no funding for new students," he said.

"What they fail to tell you is that no funding for new students will feel like a 20 per cent cut moving forward."