

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

APRIL 2018

TRUSTEES

Ron Schreiber, Chair
Okotoks

Harry Salm, Vice Chair
Strathmore

Mark Chung
Drumheller

John de Jong
Brooks

Michelle Rude-Volk
Oyen

Vijay Domingo
Canmore

Joanne Van Donzel
High River

Andrea Keenan
MD of Foothills

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Scott Morrison
Superintendent

Dr. Bonnie Annicchiarico
Associate Superintendent

Michael Kilcommons
Associate Superintendent

Vincent Behm
Associate Superintendent

Jerry Bagozzi
Treasurer

Rhonda Schachterle
Director of Student Services

Cheryl Kuemper
Director of Curriculum and
Instruction

Dave Lunn
Director of Facilities

Dawn Quinlan
Director of Human Re-
sources

Faith Committee

The Faith Committee met recently, and had many items to share. They were especially satisfied with the impact of Jason Evert's guest speaking, as his message was accepted enthusiastically by many students and parents. He addressed the topic of human sexuality from the Catholic context of respect for oneself and for others. The

committee is already invested in planning for next year's Faith Days, and utilizing the new Grade 5 religion curriculum, which will be ready this Fall. Also upcoming this September will be the roll out of planning for the *#Relationships in a Digital Age*, a homegrown and widely anticipated educational response

to the need for our students to develop relationships in our increasingly digital age. On May 7, the entire division will once again be pursuing Adoration of the Blessed Eucharist in each of our communities. The opportunity to spend time in quiet reflection and prayer with our Lord has been warmly received in recent years.

Budgets Current and Future

Associate Superintendent Michael Kilcommons reported that the financial situation for the current year is essentially on track. Staffing costs represent the biggest portion of their spending, and CTR is on budget. In terms of goods and services, they have overspent in some areas, such as snow removal and heating this year, but it is anticipated that those amounts can be offset with money underspent in other areas, such as site-based budgets. They expect to finish balanced, but if

there is a small surplus, it will be spent on furniture, equipment, and technology needs.

Mr. Kilcommons also addressed the 2018-2019 budget, which the finance department and senior administration have been working on for months. The preliminary draft is due to the government at the end of May, but it will be revised as necessary over upcoming months as enrolment and staffing levels fluctuate. The finalized budget is submitted

each year in November, after the official September 30 enrolment count, and after reconciling all of the previous year with our auditors. Currently the division is working to increase staffing, which should be covered by the recently renewed Classroom Improvement Funding (CIF).



PACE – Parents Advocating for Catholic Education

The PACE Committee has continued its whirlwind tour of our division, and has now been asked to branch out.



Arrangements are being made for this dedicated group to share their message of advocacy for Catholic education to the community of Medicine Hat Catholic Schools. To date, the group has met with parents in almost all of our commu-

nities, with literally hundreds of our own community supporters. They have been able to share their enthusiasm for Catholic education, as they also encourage others to embrace the opportunity we have in Alberta.

Successfully Wrapping up this Year and Planning for the Next

Superintendent, Dr. Scott Morrison, reported that Superintendents' Updates are shared monthly, and these highlight the many messages they are proud to share. He did emphasize a few in more detail:

- Members of the Board and senior administration have shown great leadership at the provincial level, as they have advocated for English Language Learners, inclusive schools, and advocacy for Catholic education with the Alberta School Board Association, the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta, and the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association.
- They are really pleased with the plan for nine administrative CLCs for 2018-2019, which advance CTR's Three Year Education plan. It is true to the intention of Professional Learning Communities, and models good CLC planning for schools.
- Curriculum Redesign: CTR's new Associate Superintendent, Mariette Moss, and CTR's Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Cheryl Kuemper, are

already embroiled in plans to introduce and implement new Grades Kindergarten to Four curriculums (which is at least a year away).

Associate Superintendent Vincent Behm reported on hiring for next year.

- The Human Resources Department has effectively managed several transfer requests, including some reciprocal exchanges of staff that benefited all parties. They are well into the hiring process for new positions, and he expressed satisfaction with the fact that most of the new positions have incorporated existing staff who are currently holding non-continuous positions.
- Human Resources will be interviewing soon for two Principal positions, one in Brooks and one in Okotoks.
- Mr. Behm also promoted the upcoming awards evenings on May 10 and May 17. Celebrating people and their accomplishments not only on those evenings,

but also online and in the schools has definite ties to wellness and job satisfaction. We look forward to honouring our staffs' talents.

- Next year there will be a special Vice Principal Leadership council, which will take advantage of the leadership capacity of our 'second-in-commands'. Amongst other efforts, they will focus on wellness in the schools and issues related to First Nations, Inuit, and Metis education.



“In recent years they have been diligent as a division in ensuring that supports and interventions are readily available in every school, for practically every imaginable circumstance.”



Maintaining Safe and Caring Schools: Three Year Education Plan

The portion of the meeting that allows each month for a report on their 'big' plans, focused on an introduction of the Trustees to **ARC**. In recent years they have been diligent as a division in ensuring that supports and interventions are readily available in every school, for practically every imaginable circumstance. ARC stands for – **Attachment**

(of a student to at least one adult), **Regulation** (the students' ability to self-manage), and **Competence** (the efficacy and confidence with which they want their students to move forward). This is not a new initiative, but rather, an identification of the overarching themes, which tie together all of their current efforts to support stu-

dents and staff: MANDT, VTRA, Restorative Justice, ACES, and Zones of Regulation, are some of the more formal initiatives they use in various schools and circumstances to create and maintain safe and caring schools.

Many Great Things Happen in Our Communities

The community of Okotoks hosted a Ward meeting since the last Board meeting. The minutes with more detail are always attached to the Board Meeting agendas on our website, but a few highlights are noted here.

Okotoks Ward I:

This Ward includes St. Mary's School, École Good Shepherd School, St. John Paul II Collegiate, St. Francis of Assisi Academy, and Holy Trinity Academy.

Faith: Bishop McGrattan visited many of the CTR Catholic Okotoks schools this past month as part of his parish visits. His presence was powerful, as he actively engaged with students at their level. His Grace is supportive of one of our recent student-initiated developments. Initiated by students from Holy Trinity Academy, and guided by St. James Youth Coor-

dinator, Amy Heggenstaller-Boon, the students have formed an ecumenical Alpha group. This initiative brings together students of all faiths to further enrich their spirituality.

Learning: CTR Catholic's schools have always done a wonderful job of communicating and celebrating the time of Lent. This year, they are focusing more intently on recognizing that there are also 50 days of Easter. It is amazing how all the Ward I schools have taken this message to heart and are really celebrating the Easter season. Interestingly, this insight about the 50 days of Easter was communicated to administrators by CTR Catholic's Coordinator of Religious Education, Jennifer Rorke, prior to the Easter break and it's clear our administrators are learners as well!

Safe and Caring: Every school in Ward I has engaged in learning experiences around the topic of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit education. They have had guest speakers, blanket exercises, and smudge ceremonies. They have learned about residential schools, the 60's Scoop, and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) recommendations. Ward I schools are well on their way to enhancing their ability to be a positive force in advancing the goals of the TRC.

Stewardship: Both École Good Shepherd School and Holy Trinity Academy have used popular School Council events to help promote the work of the group, Parents Advocating for Catholic Education (PACE). PACE has done presentations at both





Joanne Van Donzel,
Trustee for High River
and area

The truth of Christ and knowledge of God's creation will be experienced by and manifest in the students, staff, parents, and supporters of our Catholic School Community.



Trustees' Corner by Joanne Van Donzel

Happiness

Considering the state of mental health in the community and the country it is urgent that we teach our children what happiness is, where to find it, and to be aware of the happiness traps.

What is happiness and where do we look for happiness?

Positive psychology researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky elaborates, describing happiness as "the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile."

The desire to be happy is on every person's mind, no one seeks unhappiness. We speak of wellness, which is defined as long-term happiness. We have fond memories of short bursts of happiness such as getting married, bringing a child into the world, passing an exam, buying a new house or car. From science we learn that these experiences create endorphins, which we want more of because they make us feel good and give us joy, and excitement. The desire to have these experiences continually is addictive. As is evident around us, people strive to create a life full of these events, however when it is impossible to make them occur, depression follows.

Commercials constantly show us how to become happy. The more we believe in them the unhappier we become, since these images do not reflect the reality of life. Social media may have the same effect on our mental state. It is seen as a tool of communication to find new friends and, in return, show ourselves, and give and receive comments on what is seen and read. This activity is hoped to produce the endorphins that should result in happiness. However, the opposite occurs in many cases, because the

expected feedback is not coming or is negative.

The concept of happiness is very personal - it depends on personal situations and experiences. The search for happiness can lead someone in many different directions. Many believe that money and glamour make a person happy, however when in possession of it there is a need for more. Why should this be? If you have ever had something brand new in life you know how happy you were, but after a while the novelty wears off and the search for something else or more of the same rears its head.

Many seek happiness in exciting experiences such as parties, travel, food, daredevil stunts, concerts etc., however these become boring after time when repeated over and over. Many want to "find themselves", and look for the insight in foreign places, customs and cultures, in comparison with opposites personal awareness may be acquired. However, a lack of compassion and tolerance may lead to frustration and discontent with the world. When immersed in another culture, the experience may result in comments such as, why can these people not behave, like or say things the way we do.

However a person needs to find himself within his soul, look inward for meaning.

Our Catholic teachings assist and provide insight into, that what inspires the soul. Prayer, meditation and reflection on values and actions in daily life help to establish the goals that will lead to happiness and long-term wellness. We all possess gifts and talents, that give us joy, such as making music, playing on a sports team, reading to seniors or children, contributing to God's creation

by gardening and feeding a family. There are too many ideas to list here.

Although we all aspire to happiness, our daily experiences, images of war, abuse and hopelessness throw a spin on our effort to be happy and content. These events and reports influence our state of mind and affect us negatively. Our faith helps us to cope and find opportunities for action that make a positive impact on mankind, such as the "me to we" movement. An example of a child's inspiration and initiative to act in a positive manner, to create a better world by looking, caring, and working for others instead of oneself.

We have to be grateful for short-term experiences of happiness and know that they do not last. But find long-term contentment and meaning through a passion for something that serves mankind. Eulogies do not reflect on the size of the car the deceased drove but on the care and love that was evident for family, friends, and community. In brief, a feeling of wellness can be achieved by being grateful for good health, for the enjoyment gained from art and entertainment, and from relationships within community and friends. We are here because we can do good with our gifts and talents for ourselves, family, friends, and the community. Thus make our lives meaningful.

I am very happy to say that the teachers and staff in our school division are addressing the concept of wellness as part of our wellness curriculum because it is urgent that we teach our children what happiness is, where to find it, and to be aware of the happiness traps.

Remember that Trustee biographies are available on CTR's website at: <http://www.redeemer.ab.ca/Trustees.php>.

Next Board Meeting Date

The next Board meeting will take place on **Thursday, May 24**, at The Centre for Learning@HOME, Okotoks, AB.

For any information on items in this publication, please contact Michael Kilcommons, Associate Superintendent, at mkilcommons@redeemer.ab.ca or at 403-938-2659.