

Superintendent Report - November, 2010

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SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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school level within our Board. As we move forward in this twenty-first century, effective school leadership is paramount when it comes to

Principals have many duties and responsibilities; however, primarily they are the instructional and managerial leaders of their schools. They also are involved with political, social and moral issues when it comes to dealing with students, staff, and communities, School Advisory Councils, School Board and the Department of Education. They must have good human relation skills to accomplish these roles and responsibilities. Communication skills are vital to school leadership. Effective school principals use these communication skills to run efficient and successful schools.

Collaboration with staff and other groups such as School Advisory Councils will enhance their role of school leader while, at the same time, build trusting support from the very people who they deal with on a daily basis. Principals know their students and staff best and develop goals and objectives that are tailored to the needs of their students. Most of our schools are involved in accreditation and have developed their particular goals with the help of staff, parents and students at the secondary level. Most goals centre on literacy and numeracy, others promote a safe learning environment so that students can develop to the best of their ability. To achieve these goals, principals must facilitate a shared vision and resolve a process to achieve that vision. The development of a school culture conducive to learning is essential to achieve the vision and goals of a school. Principals spend a tremendous amount of time building the capacity for change in their schools. It is a continuous struggle and many feel some of the managerial duties take them away from their primary role as instructional leaders. There is a delicate balance required in this dilemma and principals are most effective when they can accomplish their day-to-day responsibilities while focusing on the bigger instructional picture. The School Board and central office staff are support systems for principals in the struggle to achieve school based goals. Directors, Co-ordinators, Consultants, Lead Teachers and Mentors all have a vital and sensitive role in helping principals in their quest for change and improvement in their schools. Building Capacity for Educational Leadership: Programs and Student Services, under Director, John Astephen, has embarked in an initiative to further support principals in their very important role as educational leaders in their respective schools. Beginning in early December, through the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium's Professional Learning Programs, principals in the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board will be able to access the following four Professional Learning Modules throughout the school year: December 6,

7 & TBA (2010) Module 13 "Using Assessment to Improve Teaching and Learning"; January 12 - 14, 2011 Module 8 "Schooling and Social Justice"; February 9-11, 2011 Module 2 "Strategies for Teaching and Learning"; and, May 2-4, 2011 Module 9 "Programming for Students with Special Needs". Registration fees will be provided for principals on a first come, first served basis as resources permit. In an effort to build capacity within the Board as well as at the site level, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board Co-ordinators and Consultants have been, and will continue to be, trained as facilitators for these and other modules. This, in turn, will enable more immediate access to these professional learning opportunities for all educators within the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board without the additional costs in time and financial resources in travelling to other areas of the province to participate. These are examples of support systems for our principals. There is no question that the demands on the principal have become more intensified over the past ten years. I came across an old quotation from Evans, 1995 "WANTED!..A miracle worker who can do more with less, pacify rival groups, endure chronic second guessing, tolerate low levels of support, process large volumes of paper and work double shifts. He or she will have carte blanche to innovate, but cannot spend much money, replace any personnel or upset any constituency". Now I don't believe for a minute that our principals have it that bad, yet the underlying theme for support is obvious. We are very fortunate to have a hardworking and caring group of principals within the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. They are committed to raising student achievement and improving interaction with parents and other community groups. They promote safe schools that include facilities and equipment that are safe and in good working order. They develop overall school discipline policies through PEBS and maintain the effective supervision of these policies. They build strong relationships with their teachers and show that they care about them. Effective principals celebrate success at all levels within their schools whether it involves staff or students. We see examples each month that are sent to the Board Chair and we join them in their celebrations and accomplishments. I would also like to commend our schools for the wonderful "Remembrance Day" ceremonies they organized during the month of November. It is so important that our students learn about and remember the sacrifices of those who fought and continue to fight for our freedom. These moving and dignified services serve a stark reminder how fortunate we are to live in a beautiful part of Cape Breton and indeed within our great Country of Canada. The following "thank you" was placed in the Cape Breton Post on November 1st Veteran, Rory MacRae.

THANK YOU

Congratulations to all teachers in the
Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board
Through your dedication the students
Are aware of the meaning regarding
Remembrance Day!

My sincere appreciation

A Veteran: Rory MacRae

Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct your attention and that of the board members and staff, to read the comments from our school principals that are forwarded to you as Board Chair and are placed on our Board's Website (www.cbv.ns.ca). These items represent the awards, achievements and successes of our students and staff within the boundaries of the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. Again, I ask the principals to ensure that the Board Chair is kept abreast of these important communications.