

MEDIA RELEASE

KPDSB postpones closure of Evergreen Public School

January 11, 2012

Trustees met at Dryden High School on Tuesday, January 10, 2012 for a regular board meeting.

Kenora elementary teachers Shannon Bailey, Jana Kuemper, and Ainsley Norlen presented the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program report. The program is an annual, project-based professional learning opportunity for teachers that promotes self-directed professional development and the development of leadership skills for sharing learning and exemplary practices on a board-wide or province wide basis. Teachers can submit proposals to the Ministry of Education and a committee selects projects they will fund. One of the projects chosen for 2011-2012 school year was submitted by Bailey and her colleagues.

The project, titled Teachers Improving Literacy Skills for Primary Students Using Technology, uses technology as a means to increase student engagement and improve the overall literacy skills of students in grades 1 and 2. Funding was provided by the Ministry of Education to purchase 10 iPads with the KPDSB providing an additional ten iPads. Bailey and her team have seen a dramatic increase in student engagement since the implementation of the iPads in students daily learning and expect to see an overall increase in student achievement by the end of the project. Trustees heard personal accounts from the teachers about students in their classrooms, particularly at-risk and special needs students, who have embraced the new technology and have benefited greatly from it.

Dean Carrie, Superintendent of Business, and Scott Urquhart, Student Success Leader, presented the 21st Century Learning Plan update. The plan was developed by a committee made up of administration and school staff and focuses on three areas: hardware and equipment implementation, supports and professional learning for staff, and assessing the work being done to inform future decisions regarding technology in schools. Initiatives such as wireless access for students and staff in all of our secondary schools and laptop pilot projects at three elementary schools where every staff member and all students in grades 5-8 were given their own netbook laptop are a result of the 21st Century Learning Plan.

For the 2011-2012 school year, the committee agreed to allocate \$100,000 to wireless device projects, allowing teachers to further explore the use of technology in their classrooms. The committee requested schools to submit projects they would like to try with their students and after reviewing 27 applications from staff, the committee approved 11 pilots, many of which involve iPads for use in classrooms. Staff who received funding for their pilot project are scheduled to report their successes by June 2012.

Trustees voted to amend a motion from April 2011 that slated Evergreen Public School in Kenora for closure at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. As a result, Evergreen Public School will remain open for the 2012-2013 school year. The amendment was made to allow the Board time to consider presentations made by the Lake of the Woods Development Commission regarding education and training in the Kenora area.

Dave Penney
Chair

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Jack McMaster
Director of Education