



KOOTENAY LAKE UPD8

Volume 1, Issue 7

October 15, 2008

WEDNESDAY MORNING MEMO

From the Desk of the Superintendent, Patricia Dooley . . .

Regional Staff Development: Let's Keep Talking About Assessment with Damian Cooper

We can be justifiably proud of our work on assessment for learning in SD #8 and our region: At two recent provincial meetings, the Kootenays were recognized as being "ahead of the game and provincial leaders" in relation to assessment for learning, and I deeply enjoy hearing about the successes being experienced by our students as these strategies are used. A bit of history:

In 2002, after the announcement about a Graduation Portfolio, the Kootenay-Boundary Regional Planning Team decided to place a regional focus on assessment in recognition that the Portfolio would thrive in a culture where the power of assessment for learning and the power of student demonstration of their learning was understood. Since 2002, the Regional Planning Team has planned a hosted a conference for middle and secondary educators which has been largely focused on the Graduation Program and more recently on Assessment for Learning.



On October 9 and 10, approximately 100 educators from 5 districts in the region took part in a two day session entitled "Let's Keep Talking About Assessment" held at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort.

The speaker, Damien Cooper, was back for the second year in a row and had also done summer sessions this year in Grand Forks, Castlegar, Nelson, Cranbrook and Invermere. Mr. Cooper's book Talk About Assessment is a key resource being used throughout the region and contains numerous practical tools and examples organized around 8 big ideas.

The group included 29 people from SD#8 with all but one of our secondary schools represented: Schools were supported to attend through a grant from the district staff development budget: Assessment for Learning is a direction in School

District #8 and is supported by the development and implementation of common assessments organized around B . C. Performance Standards, the District Literacy Action Research project and various other practical ways to support teachers in implementing assessment for learning practices. The work of Damien Cooper and others reflects the research of Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, who identified 6 key strategies as ones that will enhance learning. These include:

1. posting learning intentions
2. establishing clear criteria
3. providing descriptive feedback
4. designing thoughtful questions to engineer class discussions
5. making learners the owners of their learning
6. setting up students as learning resources for one another.

Three years ago, the Network of Performance Based schools introduced the strategies we had been working with in SD#8 as a core part of the Network expectations. Last year, the British Columbia Leadership Council make Assessment for Learning and these 6 strategies the focus of the provincial webcasts and that focus is continuing this year.

**District
Mission:
"We focus on
excellence for
all learners in
a nurturing
environment."**

A Big Thank You: Payroll Services



The illness of Mary Wolinski has placed a big strain on our payroll department and caused a great deal of extra work in the Board Office. I would like to especially thank Heather Smith, Shauna Martens, Kecia Engman for their work in getting the payroll out for the past month. I would also like to thank Cora Leduc, Penny Bush and of course Monica Schulte for the extra duties they had to take on during this time. I know everyone in the district appreciates your efforts!

We are pleased to say that Judy Poohachoff joined us beginning October 14 on a temporary basis in the Payroll Department. Welcome, Judy!

The District Calendar: 10 Days Out

This part of the Wednesday morning bulletin will be used to share key district happenings for the 10 days following that edition of the bulletin.

- October 16, Leyton Schnellert, Board Office (9:00—3:00)
- PVP Meeting, October 21, Board Office (9:00—3:00)
- Celebration of Learning, October 21 (4:30—8:00), Prestige
- Rural Schools Conference, October 22-24, Vancouver
- Healthy Lifestyles Committee, October 23 (12:30-3:30), Board Office
- POPARD Videoconferencing Workshop, October 24 (9-3), Board Office
- PRO-D, October 24, Self-Directed

Thought of the Week:

"If you only expect the very best, you will very often get it!"

. . . Somerset Maugham

October 24: POPARD Videoconferencing Workshop, Board Office

Functional Behaviour Analysis: The ABCs of FBAs . . . Goals for Learning

In this workshop, participants will:

- Gain an understanding of challenging behaviours
- Practice identifying and defining behaviours of concern
- Become familiar with several methods for tracking, observing and measuring behaviour
- Practice developing FUNCTIONALLY EQUIVALENT REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOURS (FERB's!)
- Understand the connection between functional assessment and intervention plans (BSP)

DISTRICT STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: VALUED MEMBER!

Thanks to Terri Richardson for all her work to create powerful staff development opportunities to support students and staff.