



Prairie South School Division No. 210

Annual Report to Electors
September 1, 2006 - August 31, 2007

About the division

Our Mission

Nurturing Communities of Learners

Our Vision

Learning Excellence

Our Guiding Principles and Shared Values

Learning: We value learning in all we do.

Accountability: We value the effective and efficient use of resources.

Respectful, caring communities: We value communities that support learning through a caring, respectful and inclusive environment.

Unity: We value unity of purpose through a culture that recognizes diversity and equity.

Excellence: We value excellence based upon high expectations for all, directed toward student success.

Communication: We value transparent and effective communication achieved through networking and teamwork.

Our Logo





Gord Stewart
Chair, Board of Education

Message from the Chair

Report of the Prairie South Board of Education, with respect to educational developments for the period September 1, 2006, to August 31, 2007

August 30, 2006, marked the first day of the first full school year for Prairie South School Division, and signaled the beginning of a rewarding, yet challenging period of coming to terms with the realities of the new division.

Since the division's inception in January 2006, the Board of Education along with its administration had worked hard to bring seven legacy divisions together to create a single, unified organization. The inaugural eight-month period prior to the start of this fiscal year provided us with an opportunity to begin to develop a common understanding and culture, examine existing programs and resources and establish a foundation from which to move forward.

Our first full school year, 2006-2007, coincided with a provincial change that aligned school divisions' fiscal years with school years rather than calendar years. The change should allow for better linkages between educational activities and the financial resources used to deliver those activities.

Policy governance

In September, the Board adopted a set of policies and procedures to guide the activities of the school division. The policies covered Board, central office and school operations; outlined the roles and responsibilities of school community councils and the process for their establishment; set out division expectations regarding transportation, facilities, staffing and business administration; and outlined the instructional program, along with school and student supports.

The policies and procedures reinforced and supported the Board's adoption of a policy governance model. In this model, the Board sets policy based on its values and priorities, approves the budget and plan for the year and then delegates the implementation of policy, budget and plan, along with the day-to-day management of the division, to the Director of Education. Essentially, the Board sets the vision and provides the resources and the Director and her team are charged with making it happen.

Learning environments

In October, the Board received the results of a review of all facilities in the division (except the Hutterite Colonies and Associate schools). We commissioned the review earlier in the year to gain a better understanding of the condition of our schools and ensure staff and students are working and learning in safe, effective environments, conducive to today's education programs.

Declining enrolment:
School review

I believe our fundamental task in this area will be to maintain our focus on a proactive approach to facilities planning and management that ensures schools reflect the needs of students.

In January, our Board addressed its most serious challenge – a steady decline in enrolment – with its decision to review schools in seven communities. The decline was evident at schools across the division. Its effects were far more pronounced in some of our smallest schools in the rural areas, where it was becoming challenging to deliver an effective learning program in a fiscally responsible manner. Significant excess capacity at schools in Moose Jaw provided an opportunity to review the delivery of education programs in the city with an eye to efficient and equitable use of resources.

The Board worked with administration to establish a set of objective criteria to compare schools and identify those to be reviewed. The criteria related to things like grade clusters and multi-grading, high school credit options, pupil-teacher ratio, enrolment trends and facility utilization and costs. Our goals through the process were three-fold; we wanted to ensure:

- quality learning experiences,
- effective and efficient use of resources, and
- a viable and sustainable school division.

The review process wasn't easy for anyone involved – trustees, communities or division staff. Still, we had the best interests of students to motivate us, and plenty of opportunity for information sharing and listening. Ultimately, the Board decided in May to close Briercrest, Crane Valley, Limerick, Willow Bunch and École Ross schools at the end of the school year, and Chaplin School at the end of the 2008-09 school year.

These weren't easy decisions, nor do we think that they somehow magically 'fixed' the challenge of declining enrolment. We will continue to see enrolment declines for the next several years at least. When the decline levels off, projections indicate that our enrolment will be closer to the 5,000 mark, than the current 7,200 students.

Our task as a division, then, will be to determine how best to deliver education programs effectively and efficiently to a much-smaller group of students, spread out across the same, large geographic area.

Advocating for students

We also need to ensure the provincial government understands the changes occurring within our division and how they can support our vision of *Learning Excellence*. The Board spent time this year meeting with government officials to share our concerns about changes to the Foundation Operating Grant that have reduced funding to rural school divisions, the inequities those reductions have created provincially and the effect on students and taxpayers locally.

Looking forward

We will continue to advocate on behalf of our students and in favour of equitable education opportunities for all.

In the coming year, we anticipate both challenges and opportunities as we work toward our mission of nurturing communities of learners. Our focus will be on making the best of our opportunities, while seeking creative responses to the challenges, in order to provide meaningful education opportunities to all of our students.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon Stewart
Chair, Board of Education
Prairie South School Division





Brenda Edwards
Director of Education

Stimulating learning

Message from the Director

Report of the Director of Education, concerning the progress of education in the period September 1, 2006, to August 31, 2007

Prairie South School Division's first full school year was full of remarkable learning opportunities for students, staff and senior administration alike. Everywhere I looked, I was proud to see our vision of *Learning Excellence* brought to life in our schools and classrooms.

We kicked off the year with an all-staff event to strengthen and build on our progress toward a common culture based on shared values and purposes. From that day forward, we proceeded at a pace that varied from full-speed to warp until well after students left for summer vacation.

Education

The exciting new learning taking place in our schools today is definitely different than what past generations would find familiar. Teachers are using technology and collaboration, and looking beyond the classroom for inspiration and opportunity.

Can you imagine using the world-class synchrotron to carry out a high school science experiment? Chemistry students from Avonlea School had an opportunity of a lifetime when they analyzed soil samples at Canada's national facility for synchrotron light research in Saskatoon in September – only the second high school class in the world to use a synchrotron.

How would you explain the concept of '1,000' to students in Grade 1 and 2? Westmount students, guided by their teacher, created a "1,000 Names" wiki (a form of collaborative web site that allows content editing by anyone with access) and started collecting names. In about three months, they'd reached their goal, having collected names from near and far – even as far away as Denmark and the Philippines.

There are so many more examples:

- Grade 9 students from Peacock composing and illustrating children's stories, and later sharing them with young students from Cornerstone Christian School;
- Mankota students using scaling concepts in math to construct a model of a dinosaur skeleton three times larger than the existing model;
- The Palm project at Prince Arthur Community School, where students used Palm handheld computers as tools to write, edit and share ideas, while the two teachers leading

the project evaluated whether such tools improve writing skills; and

- Bengough students learning about citizenship from the national to the local level, using blogging and art projects to reflect their own thoughts.

The list could easily go on for several pages. From soap box derbies to claymation animation, from landscaping to giving facials and manicures – our students had countless opportunities for hands-on, practical learning across the curricular spectrum.

PLCs – working together

Learning like this doesn't happen by accident – although serendipity may play a role in uncovering opportunities. It takes dedicated professionals, often working together in teams, focused on student results.

Throughout the year, teachers met in small groups – called Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) – to collaborate on methods and programs to better nurture communities of learners. Some PLCs addressed specific age groups, others looked at individual content areas. The common denominator: a focus on how best to support and ensure success for every student.

Planning for improvement

We also made significant progress toward implementing the provincial Continuous Improvement Framework (CIF) process in our division. The CIF, which is mandated by the Ministry of Education, is based on the advancement of four provincial priorities for education renewal:

- Higher literacy and achievement;
- Equitable opportunities for all students;
- Smooth transitions into and through the system; and
- Strong system-wide accountability and governance.

We've set ambitious goals in each of those priority areas and established benchmarks at several grade levels in reading, writing and math. As well, we've outlined plans to expand the assessment in future years, and measure progress against the existing benchmarks. The information flowing from this continuous measurement will help us to identify areas where we may need to adjust and improve our instruction to help students learn better.

Student diversity

Our focus on students is an inclusive one – and we continued to demonstrate our commitment to meeting the needs of *all* students, including our most vulnerable and at-risk learners. We developed the Student Diversity Procedural Manual and then worked with staff to ensure they understood what was in it and how to implement it.

We partnered with schools to improve services for students with learning disabilities. We established an intake process for

referrals to our Student Support Services team and piloted an electronic program plan. Our work in this area will continue, as we strive to lead the way in achieving *Learning Excellence* for each one of our students.

School Community Councils

At the community level, the division held elections for and established School Community Councils (SCCs) at all schools in November (except the Hutterian and Associate schools, which have an alternative form of governance).

We hosted an orientation session for SCC members early in the new year and had each council develop a constitution to guide its operations, as per provincial legislation. We will continue to work with our SCCs to build their capacity to contribute meaningfully and appropriately in school-level governance.

Operations

Supporting educational needs

On the operations side of the organization, things were no less busy as staff worked to establish and improve the business infrastructure necessary to support a school division more than twice the size of any of the legacy divisions.

A few of the major initiatives undertaken in this area included:

- Installing Polycom systems at eight sites to facilitate communication and learning opportunities;
- Establishing a content management system for web sites and a learning management system for distance education;
- Conducting a facility review of all schools (except Hutterian and Associate) to determine their condition;
- Undertaking a major capital renovation project at Prince Arthur Community School; and
- Supporting the school review and consideration process with the provision of data (enrolment trends and projections, pupil-teacher ratios, facility reports, transportation impacts, etc.).

Restructuring work continues

The continued work of restructuring, coupled with the day-to-day operations of a school division and the addition of new initiatives mandated by the province or brought forward by the Board, meant human resources at the division level were spread very thin trying to juggle and meet the many demands. It is to their credit that we have managed to keep all of the balls in the air.

Restructuring will remain a work in progress over the next few years. Our task will continue to be making the transition to a unified school division and managing the changes that flow out of that transition with minimal disruption to our primary task of providing a high-quality education to our students. It's an ambitious task – but one we embrace whole-heartedly.

Dedicated staff

It's been an amazing year of learning in Prairie South and I want to take this time to recognize and thank all of the staff for their hard work and dedication. Their continued focus on the needs of students, amidst a sea of change and transition, speaks volumes about their professionalism and talent.

The commitment they have shown to living our vision and mission continues to make a difference to students in each of our schools every day.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Edwards
Director of Education
Prairie South School Division



"Pi" Day activities at Gravelbourg Elementary School (right).

A wagon-wheel bench made as a PAA project in Central Butte School (left).

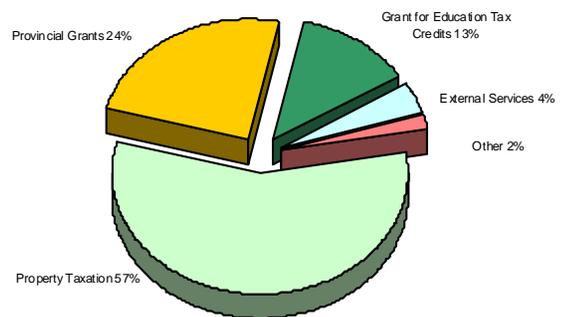
Financial Summary September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007

REVENUE	2006/07
Property Taxation	\$ 43,534,546
Provincial Grants	17,850,592
Grant for Education Tax Credits	9,800,761
External Services	3,284,771
Complementary Services	473,285
Tuition & Related Fees	115,189
Other Revenue	610,057
Total Revenue	\$ 75,669,201

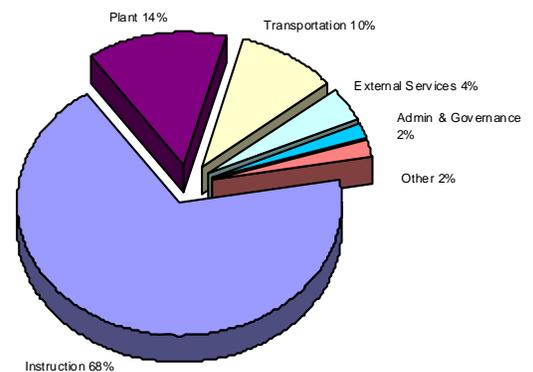
EXPENDITURES	2006/07
Instruction	\$ 51,116,631
Plant	10,411,007
Transportation	7,491,056
External Services	3,210,830
Administration	1,268,119
Governance	621,810
Complementary Services	991,462
Tuition Fees and Related Fees	381,749
Interest and Bank Charges	150,755
Total Expenditures	\$ 75,643,419

Surplus for 2006/07	\$ 25,782
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Revenue 2006/07



Expenditures 2006/07



Operating Highlights

Selected highlights of the 2006-07 fiscal year:

- *Total revenue:* \$75.7 million (57% property taxes; 37% provincial grant and education tax credit; 6% other revenue)
- *Total expenditures:* \$75.6 million (68% instruction; 14% plant; 10% transportation; 8% other)
- *Surplus:* \$25,782
- *Total municipalities* (cities, towns, villages and rural municipalities): 84
- *Mill rate:* 21.3 (2006); 23 (2007)
- *Total schools:* 45 (including 2 associate schools and 5 Hutterian colony schools)
- *Total students:* 7,207 full-time equivalents, PreK to Gr. 12 (PreK and Kindergarten students are counted at 50% to reflect the level of program offered at this age)
- *Total school-based teachers:* 517.74 full-time equivalents
- *Pupil-to-teacher ratio:* 13.92
- *Total rural and city school bus routes:* 143

Learning Highlights

Selected highlights of the 2006-07 school year:

In our schools

- **Rouleau School** hosted 250 students at a successful Student Leadership Conference in March.
- **Baildon Colony School** offered Kindergarten to six-year-old students. Previously students at the school started at age 7, entering Grade 1 directly.
- Grade 8 students at **Sunningdale School** in Moose Jaw benefited from their involvement in an online math enrichment program. Grade 1 and 2 students took part in a Guided Reading program through a cooperative effort between the school and community.
- Students in **Bengough School**'s Kindergarten-to-Grade 2 classroom learned the art of blogging and used it similar to more-typical journals. It made editing and revising easier and allowed the students to share their work with family, friends and classrooms on the other side of the world.
- **Eyebrow School** staff and students worked to learn sign language; the K/1/2 class and several students continue to sign "O Canada" each day.
- **Coronach School**'s Law 30 students held a mock trial, using the expertise of local RCMP officers to learn courtroom procedure and analyze the effectiveness of the justice system.
- **Central Collegiate Institute** in Moose Jaw combined Grade 9 Physical Education, Health and Career Guidance classes into a new Wellness course under a theme of 'leadership.' Larger classes (about 50 students) were taught by two teachers and met all afternoon every other day – allowing for more flexibility in the types of activities teachers could plan.
- **Craik School** partnered with the Craik Sustainable Living Project (eco-center) to deliver sustainable environmental curricula to students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart, visited **Mossbank School**, where he gave a speech to the entire school body and later explained provincial government to History 30 students.
- Grades 4 to 8 students from **Westmount School** in Moose Jaw performed the musical, "Clowns" and were justifiably proud of their success!
- **Lindale School** in Moose Jaw implemented a Guided Reading Program in Grade 1 and by June almost 70 per cent of those students were reading at or above grade level.
- **Riverview Collegiate Institute** in Moose Jaw enhanced learning opportunities for more than 150 students with its laptop-cart project. Students using the laptops have opportunities to be more independent in their learning and to communicate more often with teachers and other learners.
- **Assiniboia Elementary School** hosted a Grades 5-8 Student Conference with guests from its neighbouring schools – Willow Bunch, Crane Valley, Mossbank and Limerick. Popular sessions included Asian painting, East Indian Stick Dancing, burrowing owls and Native dancers.
- **Mankota School**'s Practical and Applied Arts 10 class undertook a major landscaping project, developing the school yard.

- **Gravelbourg Elementary School** initiated a community/school Buddy Reading and Writing program to promote literacy and peer/community interaction.
- **Lafleche Central School** held monthly “R-E-S-P-E-C-T” sessions. Classrooms could earn popcorn parties by earning special cards.
- **Rockglen School** formed an Art Club to enthusiastic response. An Art Fair during Education Week offered a variety of workshops and activities for students and visitors.
- **Assiniboia 7th Avenue School** initiated a Guided Reading Program in Grades 1 and 2. Students are slotted at their own reading comprehension level.
- **Gravelbourg High School** implemented school nutrition guidelines recommended by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association within the school, and completed a new student canteen.
- Grade 7 students in their second year of **Palliser Heights School’s** Intensive French Program demonstrated the most gains in oral proficiency levels over one year throughout the province’s Grade 7 Enhanced French Program.

In the community

- As part of the Building Ethics in Students Today (B.E.S.T.) program, Grade 8 students from **William Grayson School** in Moose Jaw learned about local and world communities by working in the community and then donating the money they raised to buy chickens in an emerging country.
- **Eyebrow School** partnered with the Tugaska Library to host an Aboriginal Storyteller for all students to attend.
- After noticing a lot of debris along a path near Spring Creek during a school walk in the Fall, students from **John Chisholm Alternate School** in Moose Jaw ‘adopted’ the area, volunteering to clean it up and keep it clean.
- **Glentworth School** has developed a partnership with Grasslands National Park that allows Grade 11 and 12 Biology students to spend a day working on projects within the Park in conjunction with Park representatives.
- **Riverview Collegiate** School Community Council worked with the school to gather support from the University of Regina, SaskWater and Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation for the delivery of a Wildlife Management course.
- Future inventors at **Assiniboia Elementary School** displayed their talents to the community at the Grade 6,7,8 Science Fair.
- Together, our schools have donated tens of thousands of dollars to local, provincial and national charities and fundraisers, including: The Terry Fox Foundation, Jump Rope for Heart, Telemiracle, Relay for Life, Family First Radiothon and more.

On the field and in the gym

- The school division and the colony worked together at **Baldon Colony School** to make Physical Education a requirement for the school’s students. Previously, it had not been taught for several years, at the request of the colony.

- In **A.E. Peacock Collegiate's** "Challenger Run", Grade 9 students are given the opportunity to challenge themselves to run for 30 minutes straight, with no walking in between. The class requirement is 15 minutes – the additional time is strictly optional. Students who've taken the challenge regularly surprise themselves by their own success!
- English Language Learners at **Central Collegiate Institute** in Moose Jaw learned to do the scorekeeping for volleyball and basketball and then provided that service for all of the regular season games and tournaments – an opportunity to use their English skills in an authentic context.
- The **Central Butte** Bulldogs hosted CanAm Bowl XI, an annual football match-up between graduated all-star players from Canada and the U.S.

Awards and achievements

- **Rouleau School's** Senior Boys and Senior Girls Volleyball teams took home Provincial 1A Championship medals, earning Silver and Bronze, respectively.
- Students from **Peacock Collegiate** in Moose Jaw picked up five provincial Skills Canada medals (one Gold, two Silver and two Bronze). One of the students went on to win Silver in the IT-Office Applications area at the national competition.
- **Coronach School** athletes brought home four provincial Track and Field medals: one Gold, one Silver and two Bronze.
- A student from **John Chisholm Alternate School** received a SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Award for leadership and community involvement.
- The **Mossbank School** Drama Club placed second at the Regional Drama Festival and also won runner-up for Best Visual Production, acting awards and backstage work awards.

Did you know?

You can find up-to-date information about what's going on at our schools on our school division's web site: www.prairiesouth.ca.

Check it out!



Board Information



Back Row: Joan McMaster, Gord Stewart, Ron Gleim, Lew Young, Marion Piché. Front Row: Neil Buckler, Wilfred Lethbridge, Ray Boughen, Claude Duke, Lance Bean

Ron Gleim

Subdivision 1

Including the communities of:

Chaplin
Central Butte
Eyebrow
Mortlach
Crail

Lance Bean

Subdivision 2

Including the communities of:

Rouleau
Caronport
Briercrest
Avonlea

Wilf Lethbridge

Subdivision 3

Including the communities of:

Limerick
Mossbank
Assiniboia
Crane Valley

Neil Buckler

Subdivision 4

Including the communities of:

Bengough
Rockglen
Coronach
Willow Bunch

Marion Piché

Subdivision 5

Including the communities of:

Gravelbourg
Lafleche
Kincaid
Glentworth
Mankota

Ray Boughen

Claude Duke

Joan McMaster

Gord Stewart

Lew Young

Subdivision 6

Elected at large within the city
of Moose Jaw