



HPSD 48 carries out three successful community planning sessions in 2009-2010

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HIGH PRAIRIE, AB – An increased focus on community inclusion through enhanced public engagement opportunities at the school level is helping to positively shape education planning strategies within High Prairie School Division (HPSD).

The good news falls on the heels of three successful community planning sessions held at HPSD schools over the course of the past month. They included High Prairie Elementary School on March 23, Ecole Routhier School in Falher on March 25, and Lakeside Outreach School in Slave Lake on March 30.

Community planning sessions were formally introduced by the school division last year following a recommendation from the board of trustees. That recommendation called for the implementation of effective solutions to directly involve the public in educational improvement strategies at the school and division level.

“Specific measures and targets for improvement have been established within our Three Year Education Plan to significantly enhance the quality of education and the effective delivery of programs and services,” says HPSD Board of Trustees Chair Joyce Dvornek.

“Input from teachers, parents, school councils, Alberta Education, students, the community and other stakeholder groups has assisted us in developing a plan which reflects the unique needs of students and the communities we serve.”

High Prairie School Division Superintendent Laura Poloz says strategies such as community planning sessions accurately reflect targeted areas of improvement which are identified each year through Alberta Education’s Accountability Pillar survey results in grades 4, 7 and 10.

The Accountability Pillar surveys teachers, students and parents by gathering information on the quality of education provided by Alberta school authorities and their schools. Teacher and student surveys are conducted online while parents are surveyed by mail.

“The Accountability Pillar is an extremely important assessment tool which provides school authorities (such as ours) with a wide range of data that paints a vivid picture of how well we are



High Prairie School Division Education Technology Support Coach Vern Griebel (top left in photo) leads volunteer participants in a community planning session discussion regarding effective learning strategies at Ecole Routhier in Falher on Wednesday, March 25, 2010. The key event was one of three community planning sessions held during the month of March at HPSD schools. Additional planning sessions took place at Lakeside Outreach School in Slave Lake and High Prairie Elementary School in High Prairie.

performing,” Poloz explains. “It allows jurisdictions the chance to identify successes and opportunities for improvement which help to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for students.”

Poloz adds that HPSD has made a commitment to conduct three school community planning sessions each year, noting that each school is responsible for hosting a community planning session every four years.

“These community planning sessions are another effective way of strengthening the community’s sense of ownership and pride in the school and education system,” Poloz says.

Ecole Routhier School Principal Richard Fournier says feedback he received from participants during the recent evening community planning session was extremely positive.

“One individual commented that the community planning session was very informative and clearly demonstrated how the school is continually striving to improve,” says Fournier.

“Another comment that was made related to the excellent diversity and balance of community participants involved in the working groups and the fact that all members were extremely focused throughout the evening.”

High Prairie Elementary School Principal Jamie Babcock echoed those remarks by stating that the response from the community was favourable and supportive.

“The community participants appreciated the four Grade 6 students who offered their assistance by answering relevant questions about the school,” Babcock says. “Several participants also expressed how much they appreciated being consulted, while others were impressed with the results of our Leveled Literacy Intervention program which began this year.”

Poloz, meanwhile, says the presence of trustees and central office administrative staff at the recent community planning sessions helped to ensure the division’s plans “are accurately aligned with the recommendations of the greater community.”

High Prairie School Division wishes to extend a special thank-you to all volunteer community participants in the Slave Lake, High Prairie and Falher areas for their important contributions at these three recent community planning sessions.

HPSD schools scheduled to host community planning sessions in 2010-2011 include Prairie View Outreach in High Prairie as well as Kinuso School and Roland Michener Secondary School in Slave Lake.

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***For more information please contact HPSD No. 48 Superintendent Laura Poloz
at 780-523-3337 or HPSD Communications Officer Kevin Laliberte at 780-837-3337.***