

December 14, 2007

Seasons Greetings

The Learning in Action Showcase

On December 7, 2007, at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the BC School Trustees and BC School Superintendents Associations, hosted the second annual Learning in Action Showcase that was held in conjunction with the BCSTA Board Academy - Mastering Our Mandate. Once again, the showcase was a major success, due in no small part to the initiative and leadership of education teams from 44 school districts, who have worked diligently to create and implement innovative, ground-breaking programs to increase the success of all students in their districts.

Reflecting five key topics of Leadership, Literacy, The First 10 Years, Middle and Secondary Years, and Equitable Futures, district education teams prepared engaging displays and presentations to share with their colleagues and education partners.

This year, we even saw the participation of student leaders from School District No. 85 (Vancouver Island North) who participated in a Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Stream to Sea education program that focuses on creating citizens who are both locally and globally aware, and who can answer the question - how can I make a positive difference. The results were evident at the Showcase - many classes that have participated in the program have received certificates of recognition, stewardship certificates and stewardship enrichment certificates.

The Showcase ended with a gala dinner to celebrate and recognize the truly valuable work being done by districts and their education teams.

The Learning in Action Showcase follows from the highly successful Interactive Innovations Conference, which connects host sites across the province to participants across North America on five key educational themes presented by eight renowned Keynote Speakers. Be sure to register for Interactive Innovations III (March 2-4, 2008) at www.interactiveinnovations.ca/.

FSA Update

The field test of the Reading and Numeracy multiple-choice components of Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) was administered to grades 4 and 7 students in 100 BC schools during October 9-19, 2007.

The 100 schools included some from all BC school districts, independent schools, rural and urban schools and large and small schools. The objective of the field test was to identify what aspects of e-FSA need fine-tuning before February 2008. All of the 100 schools participated in the field test and provided important feedback on their experience. There was a 97% student participation rate for Grade 4 students and an 87% participation rate for Grade 7 students.

I'd like to offer these schools, their principals, teachers and students a giant thank you. I understand that there were a few challenges along the way – but you may recall that there were lots of administrative challenges when FSA was introduced nine years ago. The feedback that we received from the field test will help us do the necessary fine-tuning before e-FSA in February.

Samples of both e-FSA sections and the written response sections are now available for students, teachers, principals and parents to view, use and become comfortable with the new formats. Check the following website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa

Seven training sessions have been held across the province so teachers and other school district staff can become familiar with the local scoring process, samples of student work at the different scale points and use of the provincial scoring guide. Four more sessions will be held in January. The scoring/training materials are also available at: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa

The FSA Administration Instructions booklet will be sent to schools by mid-January and posted on the website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa

Quick Reference for Healthier Food Choices

I am pleased to let you know that the updated *Quick Reference for Healthier Food Choices* and the new *Criteria Chart for Food and Beverage Sales Guidelines* are now posted on the Healthy Schools website at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm under Tools for Healthy Eating.

Fruit/Veggie Snack Program

Application Forms are now available for sign-up **for September 2008 participation.**

The new application form for September's (2008) intake is now up on Agriculture In The Classroom website at: www.aitc.ca/bc/snacks/media/Final%20application%20form%202008_oct.pdf

Farewell

It has been my privilege to have served as Deputy Minister of Education for the past 6 1/2 years. As I move to new challenges, I want to express my thanks to you.

BC has a world class education system as evident by international assessments. This is due in large part to your leadership in our schools. Your commitment to excellence and to improving the life chances of our students is appreciated.

Enjoy a well deserved holiday break.



Emery Dosdall, Ed D
Deputy Minister of Education