

February 8, 2008

## Greetings

My first month as the new Deputy Minister of Education has gone by incredibly fast. The first two weeks were spent meeting with Ministry staff and becoming familiar with the respective portfolios within the Ministry. The past couple of weeks I have had the pleasure of meeting with our various education partners and stakeholders. I have appreciated learning more about the unique successes and challenges that currently exist within schools and districts across the province. I am genuinely impressed with the education system's focus on student achievement and commitment to improving the life chances of every child in the province.



various school and district-based initiatives and student success stories. I encourage you to keep me informed of any best practice initiatives that you feel should be included in upcoming editions of the *Report on Education*.

Regards,



James Gorman

## New To The Superintendents of Achievement Division -Rod Allen

By way of introduction, I come to you from the BC Public Service Agency where I was Deputy Minister since 2005. Prior to that, I was the Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and before that held senior positions in Advanced Education, Partnerships BC, Finance, and Economic Development.

Having worked in a variety of areas across government, I can tell you that the Ministry of Education and its partners are known for the high calibre of their work, the skill and dedication of their staff, and their steadfast focus on student achievement. I am proud to be part of the Education team and look forward to meeting and working with you in the days and weeks ahead. I plan to start visiting some schools and districts in the very near future.

The *Report on Education* will now be sent out on a monthly basis. We are committed to keeping you well informed about various Ministry led initiatives, and I have certainly enjoyed reading past editions that showcased

...So, one day I'm the Superintendent of School District No. 54 (Bulkley Valley) where I understand the culture, know everyone, and everyone (including me) clearly understands my role in the organization, and the next day, I feel like the new kid on his first day of middle school. Luckily the Ministry is full of wonderful people who quickly tried to make me feel at home. Even then it was still culture shock.

We are in a period of consolidation and capacity building, with a clear focus on student achievement. I'm excited about my new role as a Superintendent of Achievement and look forward to working with districts to help build district and provincial capacity. I also see that I have a role to play in helping build healthier connections between the Ministry and districts and to bring a stronger "field perspective" to the Ministry.

I can be found at [Roderick.Allen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Roderick.Allen@gov.bc.ca) or (250) 213-3000.

## District Literacy Plan Forum

Can you imagine the outcome when community agencies, school districts, and colleges throughout BC are all collaborating to plan and provide services that support literacy learning for all citizens? A glimpse of the energy and enthusiasm that is possible was evident at the first Provincial District Literacy Planning Forum held in Vancouver on January 31, 2008.

The concept of District Literacy Planning was introduced in the spring 2007. Ten 'demonstration districts' were identified and asked to develop District Literacy Plans by December 21, 2007. During the fall of 2007, regional forums were held throughout the province to provide introductory information to school district teams. At the January 31<sup>st</sup> Forum, representatives from the 'demonstration districts' gave examples of the work they are doing to engage with community partners to support literacy learning for early learners, K-12 students, adults, and Aboriginal people. The main themes that emerged through the day included the following:

- District Literacy Plans are meant to utilize current literacy planning and initiatives and, if they are not already doing so, to fully engage all community literacy partners
- Building positive relationships among partners is essential
- Developing relationships takes time and patience
- The initial step of assessing literacy assets and activities is fundamental to ensuring that there is a coordinated approach
- There is no one 'right' format for a District Literacy Plan...it is expected that DLPs will evolve as relationships develop, collaboration occurs, and the district and community becomes more proficient in identifying needs, strategies, and ways to monitor their progress toward achieving their shared goals
- It is important to be creative in developing ways to address the literacy needs of target groups
- While there are community commitments to literacy, there are concerns for the sustainability of programs.

Penny Tees, President of BCSTA, provided insightful advice when she said, "This is the first time in history, that I am aware, that Boards of Education have legislated responsibility beyond K-12 and while it seems muddy right now it will get clearer....At stake is the opportunity to increase public support for education and this is an opportunity to do it right, community-by-community, to build long-term capacity...The details aren't easy right now; there are many partners and it is challenging. I hope we can keep the big picture in mind, and it will be big if we can do it right."

If you wish to have more information regarding District Literacy Planning, please contact Jacquie Taylor at: [Jacquie.Taylor@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Jacquie.Taylor@gov.bc.ca)

## March 2008 Education Month

In this, my first edition of the *Report on Education*, I am pleased to provide you with an overview of the Ministry's plans for Education Month.

As with all of the events surrounding the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the founding of the Crown Colony, the point is to celebrate the breadth and magnitude of British Columbia's accomplishments. In the field of education, those accomplishments are particularly striking. Within just two lifetimes, BC's education system has gone from a single school in Fort Victoria to a world leader, addressing the needs of learners of all ages.

Through a special Provincial Proclamation, the Lieutenant-Governor has declared March 2008 Education Month. We at the Ministry have called it 'The Celebration of Learning,' and we're coordinating a variety of high profile events throughout the month, including Interactive Innovations and a reception for the Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence.

### The Celebration of Learning Online Calendar

The centrepiece of Education Month will be the Celebration of Learning Online Calendar. That's where we'll showcase a range of education-related events

– hosted by the Ministry, school districts, schools and education partners.

My hope is that by looking at the Online Calendar, by seeing the mix of early learning, K-12 and adult education events that take place in BC, people across the province will have a chance to reflect on and to celebrate the truly first-rate job that we, cumulatively, are doing at providing our communities with opportunities to learn.

The Online Calendar will be accessible from the Ministry's webpage shortly before and during Education Month. Visually the Online Calendar will resemble a traditional calendar. The top half will feature a Student e-Gallery – an online art gallery displaying art submitted by K–12 students. I would like to encourage all students to submit a work of art. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to participate in a pivotal, historical celebration. The deadline for submission is February 15, 2008.

The lower half of the Online Calendar will feature education-related events and will provide hyperlinks to the websites of host organizations. The bottom half of the Calendar will feature archival photographs, as well as historical video and audio clips, presenting some striking images from the history of education in BC.

Families of school-age children will be particularly interested in the Celebration of Learning Online Calendar. The Ministry will run a trivia contest based on information presented in the calendar. As a grand prize, one B.C. family will win a trip to the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, including travel expenses, hotel stay, museum tickets and a behind-the-scenes museum tour.

For more information on the Celebration of Learning Online Calendar, the Student e-Gallery or the trivia contest, please contact the Ministry's Internal Communications Officer, Grant Sheppard at: ([grant.sheppard@gov.bc.ca](mailto:grant.sheppard@gov.bc.ca)).

## Key Ministry Education Month Events

The Ministry will be hosting several high-profile events during Education Month, including:

### *Interactive Innovations (March 2-4)*

Interactive Innovations will use technology to its best advantage, connecting five key educational themes and eight Keynote Speakers to address them and involve the hundreds of attending educators from throughout North America in an innovative, interactive experience. For more information, please see <http://www.interactiveinnovations.ca/index.html>

### *Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence*

The Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence were created to recognize outstanding BC teachers who have made exceptional contributions to benefit their school and improve student achievement. The Premier's Awards provide students, parents, teachers and other members of the community an opportunity to celebrate those educators who make a difference in BC schools. An awards reception will take place in Victoria on early in the month.

### *Reel Vue Student Film Project and Festival*

Reel Vue is run by the Ministry, BCSTA and numerous film industry partners. Students are invited to submit works of visual art, writing or music for adjudication (deadline February 22). Winning entries will be announced early in the month. Students will be brought to the Gulf Islands Film and Television School on Galiano Island during the last week in March, where they will have the opportunity to collaborate on making films relating to five BC history themes. For more information, please see <http://reelvueonline.com/big/>

### *BC 150 Years*

Education Month is just one of the ways people in BC will celebrate this meaningful anniversary. Many events, projects, and programs will be held in honour of the founding of the Crown Colony. For a high-level picture of province-wide events and celebrations not specifically education-related, please visit the BC 150 Years website at: <http://www.bc150.gov.bc.ca/bc150.aspx>