

speaking notes

Sept. 23 Council of School Councils Meeting System Update

Susan Church
Deputy Chief Superintendent

Thank you Chair Bowen-Eyre and Trustees.

I am pleased to be here this evening. I would like to thank you, on behalf of the Calgary Board of Education, for attending this evening's meeting. I'd also like to recognize each of you for your commitment and dedication to your school community and the CBE as a whole.

As deputy chief superintendent of schools, I support David Stevenson, our chief superintendent, in managing our school system. I am also responsible for leading the day-to-day learning and operations in each school, supported by five area directors. These area directors, in turn, support each one of our principals.

In my position now, and throughout my career as an educator, principal and area director, I have seen the value of a dedicated school council. I have seen the benefit to a school community, to the school staff and students.

I know that school council chairs and executive members field many parent questions and help them understand the role of Council and where to seek assistance if they need it. I always associate tireless leadership with School Council members. They were always open to listening to me as a principal and worked to do whatever was needed to support the students and the school. They also provided invaluable insights and advice that enabled my leadership of the school community.

We are committed to continuous improvement as an organization. All of the work the CBE does is guided by our Three-Year Education Plan. The details of our draft Three-Year Education Plan are available on our website, but in short, it is our roadmap to student success.

learning | as unique | as every student



**Calgary Board
of Education**

The current draft Three-Year Education Plan focuses on personalizing learning, building the professional capital or strength of our staff, and engaging with our many and varied stakeholders, including you.

We focus our work on creating an environment where each of our students can become an engaged learner and be prepared for success in life, work and future learning.

We believe that the work that happens in each classroom, with each student, each day, is what really matters. That is where the efforts of parents often intersect. As individuals committed to education, we all have the opportunity to support that classroom work and make a real difference to a child's learning.

In addition to our Three-Year Education Plan, we are guided by and work with Alberta Education under the *School Act*, and soon, the *Education Act*.

Aligned with our learning strategy this year is participation in the second pilot year of the Alberta Education Grade 3 Student Learning Assessments. Although Alberta Education has recently made participation optional, the CBE will continue to participate as a district in the second pilot year. A comprehensive support plan for teachers and principals has been developed for the 2015 pilot. If you have questions about the Student Learning Assessment pilot, please contact your principal for more information.

I imagine many of you are hearing about the Student Vote Federal Election 2015 initiative, which invites students to participate in, and learn about, the democratic process. It is a parallel election for students under the voting age, which coincides with official elections. This initiative provides a valuable learning opportunity for our students, and we've just recently learned from Student Vote that the Calgary Board of Education has the highest participation rate of any school board in Canada right now. In an email, Taylor Gunn, President & CEO of CIVIX Canada and Student Vote said, "In the Calgary Board of Education, 148 of 231 schools have already registered. Congratulations to you and your teachers! This is amongst the strongest rate of registrations in comparison to other boards across the country, and is certainly an accomplishment to be proud of." And we are proud, because we know that when our students participate in learning opportunities like this they become better equipped to participate as engaged and responsible citizens.

Outside of the classroom, transportation has been on the minds of some parents this month. We heard parent concerns regarding the travel distance to a yellow school bus stop for some students and have responded. We are making changes, and those of you with children transported on yellow buses will have received communications about these changes already. If you have questions, please contact your school.

This year will also see work done on some exciting capital projects. We continue construction on 31 new schools and major modernizations.

Our enrolment continues to increase, and this year we have more than 117,000 students. Calgary's population has grown tremendously, and our need for new schools close to where students live has never been greater. We also need to modernize existing schools, many of which are more than 40 years old, to meet the learning needs of 21st century learners. We are excited about these projects and what they will bring to our students, and look forward to sharing project updates with you throughout the year.

To close, I'd like to leave you with a reflection and show you a video that we shared with all of our principals a few weeks ago.

It's important we understand and recognize that each day, each moment, matters. What we can accomplish in a day in our system is truly astonishing. With that in mind, I would like to show you a brief glimpse of what one day looks like in our system. On June 10 we asked schools and service units to submit photographs that demonstrate what a typical day looks like in the CBE. The video you're about to see highlights just a few of the learning experiences staff and students were engaged in across our system that day. There were many submissions and together they present a fascinating picture of the richness of our learning environments as we develop well-rounded citizens. They represent a strong present and great hope for an even brighter future.