



Deputy Minister's Bulletin

Volume I, Issue 10

Fall 2011

Message from the Deputy Minister

by Pamela Hine

Welcome back!

The days are shorter, trees are turning gold and red and school is back in session. I hope everyone had a wonderful summer break and is looking forward to another great year.

We recently received the results of the cross-government 2011 Employee Engagement Survey, which helps us to see our organization's strengths and areas where we can improve. It is one of many tools we use to connect with and learn about our employees and their perceptions about work.

The Department of Education's overall engagement score went up four points from 58 to 62 per cent. The percentage of respondents in the 'high engagement' category increased from 38% in 2010 to 44% in 2011 – which is a significant jump. The percentage of respondents in the 'low engagement' category declined from 4% in 2010 to 3% in 2011.



To learn more about the Department of Education's 2011 Employee Engagement survey results, please [follow this link](#).

The Comprehensive Human Resource Plan—fostering employee engagement

by Jennifer England

The most recent Employee Engagement results for the Department of Education indicate some of our strengths and weaknesses as an organization. While our formal "Engagement Index" gives us a reading of 62% it is important to remember that engagement surveys are a helpful starting point for deeper conversations and inquiry with colleagues. While surveys take the pulse of how we are doing in leadership, direct supervision, and job support and recognition they don't help answer the question "what does this mean and what should be done"?

To create a strong sense of belonging, trust, creativity and innovation, engagement must begin with everyday conversations and leadership practices grounded in shared values and principles. And this is where the new Comprehensive Human Resource Plan for the Department of Education begins. Deputy Minister Pam Hine and her Executive Management Committee have formed the official steering committee for the project and will appoint members to participate on the Working Group on Monday, September 26th. The Working Group will engage all staff to develop the Comprehensive

Human Resource Plan. The plan will include themes such as human resource management, recruitment and retention, leadership and training, and positive workplace initiatives. The intention of the project is to widen the circle of involvement, connect people to each other, and create meaningful action at all levels of the organization with respect to how we support *all* department and school-based staff.

To keep up with the project's development, look for bi-monthly updates through a new storytelling publication that will feature staff narratives on work-place/work-culture topics.

And last, but not least, please consider this the official call for a new 'name' or 'title' for the Comprehensive Human Resource Plan project. All creative suggestions are encouraged and can be sent to Jennifer.England@gov.yk.ca as soon as possible.

Would you like to submit a story to the DM Bulletin?
Contact Chris Madden in Communications: 456-6789.

Building resiliency in Yukon students

Stacey Burnard has been with the Department of Education since 2003. Many of you may know her as an Educational Psychologist, but she has recently moved on to become the department's Social-Emotional Learning Consultant.

"The Social-Emotional Learning Consultant is responsible for helping build resiliency in children, fostering social responsibility and building positive relationships among students," said Stacey. "This year we are focusing on territorial-wide resiliency survey in conjunction with Dr. Wayne Hammond."

Social-emotional learning, according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), encompasses five main areas:

Self Awareness – the ability of children to assess their own feelings, interests values and strengths;

Self Management – the ability to regulate emotions and persevere in overcoming obstacles;

Social Awareness – understanding different perspectives and empathizing with others;

Relationship Skills – fostering cooperation and the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully;

Responsible Decision Making – using ethical, academic and community-related standards to make choices.



Stacey Burnard has a new role in the department. She is the new Social-Emotional Learning Consultant

With Stacey moving from her former position in Special Programs, the department's current team of Educational Psychologists consists of: Peter White, Allison McNeill, Meggan Cooper, Sharon Davis and Dawna Lewis.

Introducing the department's new HR Director

It is a pleasure to introduce Dick Chambers, the Department of Education's new Human Resources Director. Dick started on August 16 and will be replacing Val Jensen as she moves on after dutifully serving the department since October 1994.

Dick has worked extensively with the Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta education systems as an education management consultant over the past five years, serving on both the Staff Allocation Formula Advisory Committee and the Demographic Adjustment Advisory Committee here in Yukon.

He moved to Whitehorse to take this position and has begun the process of settling in. "My wife and I both enjoy the North. We think Whitehorse is a great place and are excited to be here," he said. Prior to his move to Yukon, Dick divided his time between Prince George and the East Kootenays in British Columbia.

Dick spent most of his career as a superintendent in different districts across British Columbia. In fact, he was the longest serving superintendent in B.C. with 22 years on the job. Of B.C.'s 60 current superintendents, Dick has personally mentored 15. In total, this will be his 40th year in education.

As Director of Human Resources, Dick hopes to use his broad experience to help his unit work interdependently with all other



Dick Chambers is entering his 40th year in education—and his first year living in Yukon.

arms of the department. "It's important that our work be interconnected," he said. "We all need to support one another."

Welcome to the team, Dick!

2011 Aboriginal Employees Award of Honour – Call for nominations

Nominations are now open for the 3rd Annual Aboriginal Employees Award of Honour. If you know of an outstanding Aboriginal colleague who has demonstrated excellence in any capacity, please consider nominating them for this prestigious award. The nomination deadline is: Friday, October 21, 2011 at 5 pm.

Education employees who have received the award in previous years include Fran Etzel in 2010 and Stephen "Kawsha" Reid in 2009.

If you would like to nominate someone or get more information, [follow this link](#).



Renovation Update

Renovations of the Education building at 1000 Lewes Blvd. are nearly complete and the Special Programs unit has settled in to its new, sunny location near Resource Services.

Thank you to everyone for your patience as renovations have continued throughout the building. The area where Special Programs vacated is taking new shape and will soon be occupied by Advanced Education staff.

Currently, some members of Advanced Education's Labour Market Development team work out of the Elijah Smith Building on Main Street in Whitehorse, but expect to see those folks moving into their newly-renovated office spaces at 1000 Lewes Blvd. in October.

Biking on break

Throughout the summer, the department's Policy, Planning and Evaluation unit has made three bikes available to staff who need to travel to meetings or who would like to take their breaks on two wheels.

Director of Labour Market Programs and Services Shawn Kitchen and Communications Officer Chris Madden have taken to riding the Millennium Trail loop during breaks as of late. Their average time is about 12 minutes.

"It's a great way to break up your day and get some fresh air," said Shawn. "I like to get out there and rip up the pavement."

"We started taking the bikes out late in the season," said Chris. "It's a lot of fun—We should have been doing this all summer."

It won't be too long before winter comes along and the bikes take off for the season. If you haven't taken one for a ride yet, time's running out!



Creative costumes—start planning!



It wasn't so long ago that the "Black Eyed Peas" came to visit on Halloween.

Lynn LeBarge, Trish Millions, Peggy Dorosz, Val Jensen, and Bonnie Palamar came up with this creative costume idea in 2009. Then, in 2010, the Human Resources team came up with another group costume—decked out in white scrubs and face masks. It would be great to see more of these creative Halloween costume ideas around the department in 2011.

For you folks who would like to get into the spirit this year, start planning! Halloween is right around the corner...