

Charter Board Message March 2014

As you may be aware, our school has been experiencing challenges in our transportation system. As part of these challenges, three of our transportation employees have, or will be, ending their service with us. The resignation of long service employees is an undeniable indicator of strain in our organization and we are deeply saddened by these events. Part of our response to this situation is to call for a full review of our transportation standards and procedures. We will be arranging for an external audit to examine every aspect of transportation: safety, efficiency, prudent conduct, and best practices. The most sacred ground in running a rural school division is the safe transportation of students; it is our biggest exposure and one which we take very seriously. We are a small system operating in a harsh environment with limited resources and limited fall back options; therefore we must operate with the absolute highest standard. We will not compromise, especially in the area of safety protocols. We need to know, and be able to prove, that our system is living up to these ideals.

Thank you for your support and feedback during this time. It was notable that without fail each expression of concern was also an expression of love for our school and a desire to see it succeed on all fronts. We recognize that people want our system to work well and are looking for ways to help us achieve that. This contributes to our continued strength, in spite of difficulty. We are committed to doing everything possible to live up to your trust.

As far as daily operations, regular and spare drivers are in place for each of the routes, plans are being developed for provisional coverage of the responsibilities of the transportation director, and ads are being posted for the vacant positions. We thank you for your patience during this transitional period.

Thank you to all who were able to attend the Valhalla School Foundation AGM on March 13. In addition to the required general membership meeting agenda items, we appreciated the reports on the wonderful work of the School Council and the Ski Hill committee, as well as Mrs. Mumert's very interesting presentation on our Reading Mastery Program and Mr. Mumert's encouraging news regarding the enrolment of 15 students in Kindergarten for next fall. Returning directors, Brenda Kjemhus, John Moutray and I, were acclaimed for new 3 year terms, and Tracy Campbell, was acclaimed to the remaining 2 years of the term that she has been filling in the interim. Thank you to each of these dedicated people for their willingness to carry on in these positions. In addition, I would like to extend my gratitude to the board as a whole for all of their work through the year. Board work is not always visible to everyone, however this oversight is essential to the functioning of the school and our directors strive to make sound decisions, with the best interests of our students as priority.

Although it still looks like winter, spring is getting closer and we are certainly looking forward to the refreshment that will bring. We wish all of our stakeholders a wonderful spring break and as always, if there are any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Jolene Kochendorfer, Chair