



# Superintendent's Message

November 2010

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## Introduction

As snow becomes more frequent in the weather forecasts, we change the tires on our vehicles and try to meet our goals for the fall in advance of the holiday season. The first three months of the school year have been busy; some highlights of the period follow for your information. As always, you are encouraged to submit items which may be of interest to the APSEA community.

## Halloween Costume

- Jim Parsons, BVI Itinerant Teacher

Tarah Sawler is a Grade 6 student in NS. Using Braille, a cane and all sorts of technology daily, Tarah is a very good student with a great imagination. For example, she wanted to dress up as an eyeball on Halloween'en. Her mother thought maybe an eye doctor would be a good idea. They came to a compromise and created an "eyeball ophthalmologist!"

To create your own eyeball ophthalmologist, simply cover a crash helmet with a white sheet and draw a huge eye on it. Next, make a spectacle (i.e., when is a pair of glasses not a pair?) so the good doctor can see better. Finally, put on a white lab coat with a name tag that reads, "Dr. Seymour Klearly." Dr. Klearly works at "Malpractice General Hospital." The letters on the eye chart read, " I AM NOT ABLE TO READ ANY ONE OF THESE LETTERS."



A great Halloween'en costume, Tarah!

## **Staffing Update**

The following staff members were hired or changed position since the last message in October.

Lynn MacGregor – Library Media Supervisor (APSEA Centre)

Rachel Perrier – Administrative Assistant (APSEA Centre)

Greg Wolfe – Maintenance Supervisor (APSEA Centre)

Join us in welcoming Lynn, Rachel and Greg to their new roles on the APSEA team.

## **APSEA Updates**

### **Strategic Plan**

Despite a busy fall, the important work of the SP committees has continued, with the few membership openings being filled.

In accordance with the reorganization outlined in the Strategic Plan in June 2009, Audiology Services will be moving to the DHH division from Resource and Assessment Services. The implementation was delayed due to the absence of a full-time Director for DHH programs. Effective 1 January 2011, Audiology will come under the leadership and supervision of the DHH Director, Lori Moore. We will endeavor to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

The highly-acclaimed three-day *7 Habits of Highly Effective People Signature Program* has been confirmed for the Leadership Cohort for 6-8 December. Grounded in Stephen Covey's book of the same title, participants will learn how to: take initiative, balance key priorities, improve interpersonal communication, leverage creative collaboration, and apply principles for achieving a balanced life. Pending this offering, the option of making the program available to more APSEA staff will be considered.

Priority 3.1 (c) of the SP directs that the “performance appraisal process” be reviewed and updated; job descriptions, performance criteria and appraisal methods are being prepared based on current standards. While this process unfolds, the necessity of continuing performance appraisals remains. For the current school year, a concerted effort will be made to evaluate Senior Management and Supervisors, using the existing “Handbook for Staff Evaluation.” At the same time, a plan will be developed to have all staff evaluated within a reasonable time frame.

## **Board News**

### Autism

On 29 October, the Board approved a recommendation to proceed with the implementation of “Action on Autism”, designed to facilitate sharing and collaboration among the four provincial Departments of Education in supporting children with ASD. An advertisement for the Autism Project Coordinator position is being posted, with the expectation that it be filled early in 2011.

### Property

Given the current real estate market and the ongoing maintenance of the buildings, the Board has decided not to actively pursue the sale/re-development of the APSEA property in the near future.

Both buildings are currently well-utilized through APSEA-related operations, with excess space being leased. Previous concerns about the condition of the facility, particularly the roof and the windows in the residence building, have been largely addressed over the past couple of years.

With the probability APSEA will continue to occupy both buildings, attention will now be given to our space utilization ... to ensure our facilities are designed along lines of efficiency, functionality and proximity. Toward this end, Directors and Supervisors are asked to discuss challenges, needs and suggestions regarding space, so that any necessary movements/renovations are fully considered.

### Governance

On 23 November, Minister More introduced Bill No. 106, an Act to Amend the Handicapped Persons' Education Act, which will be known as the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority Act. These amendments will “ensure that current terminology is reflected in the legislation.” More substantive changes to the APSEA Act will need to be pursued in future.

### Annual Report

The Board accepted the Annual Report for 2008-09, which is now available on the website.

### Budget

The Atlantic region has entered a period of fiscal restraint. Accordingly, publicly funded institutions have been asked to identify measures which would result in cost-savings. APSEA is also expected to engage in such an exercise. In the budgeting process, we will be working with the Financial Advisory Committee to seek ways of effecting savings with a view toward minimizing negative impacts on student programs and services.

## **Looking Ahead**

The Program Advisory Committee will meet at APSEA on 14 December 2010.

### Christmas Break

For staff at the Centre, the last working day before the break is Friday 17 December. However, as in the past, the Centre does remain open during the break.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bertram Tulk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "B".

Bertram Tulk, EdD  
Superintendent