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December 7, 2007



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Hello Everyone,

Another busy week – but it was great to be able to spend more time meeting with constituents and attending events in Prince George.

There was quite a bit of news in my own Ministry this week. For the fourth consecutive year, school districts will receive \$5 million in Literacy Innovation Grants to help students build better literacy skills. Across the province, most school districts and independent schools have used this money in the past to focus their efforts on areas of highest need, decreasing literacy gaps between boys and girls, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. This brings the total government investment in literacy since 2001 to over \$130 million.

Applications are open for the second annual parent congress which will occur in Vancouver on Jan. 28th. This forum will provide parents with the opportunity to gain a greater, first-hand understanding of the education system, and will allow the government to hear directly from parents about what's working and what isn't.

If you are a parent or legal guardian, I encourage you to apply online. Applicants will be chosen at random to attend. Ministry of Education staff will help ensure that all regions of B.C. are represented and that parents from public, independent and band

Ask Your MLA.

Useful Phone numbers

BC Nurseline: 24 hour,
Toll free 1-866-215-4700

PharmaNet Hotline: Mon-Fri
(8:30-4:30pm) 1-800-387-4700

Health Info Line: Mon-Fri
(8:30-4:30pm) 1-800-465-4911

Victim Link: 7 days a week,
24 hours, 1-800-563-0808

schools are selected. Attendees will have their expenses covered by the Ministry of Education.

The application deadline is noon on Friday Dec. 21, 2007. For more information on the parent congress and for application forms, visit:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apc/

I would also like to encourage you to nominate a deserving teacher you know for a Premier's Award for Teaching Excellence.

The Province will recognize up to 20 outstanding B.C. teachers who have made exceptional contributions that benefit their school community and improve student achievement. These teachers will be honoured in a special ceremony in Victoria and will receive \$1,500 for professional development.

Categories include: literacy, distributed learning, Aboriginal learning, environmental awareness, healthy living/physical education/coaching, school leadership, community engagement, skills training/career preparation, lifetime achievement (20+ years), and beginning teacher (0-5 years).

The deadline is next Friday, so plan to nominate a teacher today! To find out more, please visit:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/teacherawards/.

I am sure that many of you are enjoying the Christmas Season rush, with shopping, events, Christmas cards... the list goes on. Please be sure to find a moment to remember why we celebrate and to reach out to those less fortunate than us! You will feel blessed when you do. I look forward to seeing you out and about.

Until next week . . .
Shirley

Question of the week:

What Steps Has BC Taken to Divert E-Waste From Landfills?

As British Columbians purchase new computers and electronics this Christmas season, B.C.'s new e-waste recycling program has already diverted more than 1.8 million kilograms of electronic waste from landfills since the industry-led program began just three months ago.

The government of British Columbia makes industry responsible for collecting and recycling the electronic products they manufacture and sell. There are currently two industry groups operating programs in B.C. The Electronics Stewardship Association of B.C. represents the majority of electronics producers selling computers, monitors, desktop printers and TVs. The Western Canada Computer Industry Association also has an approved product stewardship plan for electronics.

The 1.8 million kilograms of electronic waste includes approximately 10,000 televisions, 60,000 computer monitors, 20,000 CPUs and 30,000 printers that have been diverted from landfills. Electronic waste contains toxic metals like lead, mercury and cadmium, which can end up in surface and groundwater. Because those materials are valuable and reusable, old electronics are often illegally exported for salvage to developing countries with very poor labour practices. B.C.'s new regulations require industry to have safeguards in place to prevent this from happening.

Electronic waste recycling continues to expand across British Columbia as the number of units diverted from landfills increases and more collection sites for customers are opened across the province. Metal and plastic recovery and reuse supports a secondary processing industry and will eventually lead to the elimination of e-waste from municipal landfills. Visit www.recycling.gov.bc.ca to learn more about electronic product stewardship in B.C.

In addition to electronics, British Columbia has industry-led product stewardship programs for paint, oil, beverage containers, tires, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, gasoline, solvents and flammable liquids. B.C. continues to develop new programs and intends to add two more product categories to industry-led stewardship in 2008.

News Around the Province

\$5 MILLION TO SUPPORT STUDENT LITERACY ACROSS B.C.

For the fourth consecutive year, B.C. is presenting the province's school districts with \$5 million to help students build better literacy skills, bringing the four-year total to \$20 million. The literacy innovation grants are making a real difference in the lives of students and the work being done to improve literacy is one of the reasons international tests like PIRLS and PISA are ranking BC students as some of the best in the world.

Across the province, most school districts and independent schools are focusing their efforts on areas of highest need, decreasing literacy gaps between boys and girls, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Last year, for example, the Sunshine Coast school district's literacy programs helped teachers identify struggling readers, increased understanding of what helps students succeed, improved Aboriginal literacy, and increased the effectiveness of mentoring and buddy-reading systems.

Over the last three years, we've seen great progress from many students who were struggling with reading," said Greg Russell, board chair of the Sunshine Coast school district. "Last year alone, the number of children in our program who are meeting or exceeding the required reading levels went up by almost 50 percent."

Making these grants available for a fourth year means districts can expand literacy programs from early learners to middle and secondary programs focusing on struggling readers. Some districts are also choosing to develop summer reading and family-focused literacy programs. This year, each school district is also being provided with funding to help develop a coordinated district literacy plan.

B.C.'s school districts face a diverse set of challenges, from geographic to cultural, as they work to increase literacy levels. There is no single solution that will be the answer for all districts, but BC's literacy innovation grants allow every district to lead a collaborative effort to build vibrant, literate

communities.

Boards of education are now responsible for leading the development of district literacy plan with their community partners. The Ministry of Education is broadening the focus of this year's literacy innovation grants to support districts in this important work. All districts and independent schools may submit a proposal for an innovation grant. Once the proposals have been received, grant amounts are determined based on student population and overall literacy needs.

The \$20 million in four-year funding for innovative literacy programs and the co-ordination of local literacy efforts supports the Province's Pacific Leadership Agenda and will help B.C. achieve its goal of being the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.

Since 2001, the government has invested over \$130 million in literacy for British Columbians through the Province's literacy strategy, ReadNow BC. These programs have delivered approximately \$32 million in literacy funding for schools, teachers, parents and others; \$25 million for new textbooks; \$30 million for early learning; \$25 million for adult literacy; and \$15 million for libraries.

This week's bouquet of recognition goes to...

David Wharrie and the Spirit of the North Foundation for 14th Annual Festival of Trees. This years event was a record breaking success.

Thank you for all you do in our Community and setting the stage for this wonderful season of giving.

Community Announcements

Eva Scott is looking for your help once again! This year Eva putting together 60 backpacks filled with hygiene products, school supplies, scarves, hats, gloves, etc. to be given out to homeless women in transition at New Hope Society's Christmas Dinner Celebration on Dec. 23. Donations may be

dropped off at Shirley Bonds MLA office or
contact Eva at 962-0823

Poster Contest
Discover Your Community....
History in Art

Artists create a poster depicting a historical event in their community within the last 150 years. Prepare a written description of their artwork detailing the name of the event, the date it took place and why it is significant to their community. The four category winners (K-Grade 3; Grade 4-6; Grade 7-9; Grade 10-12) will be invited to spend a "BC 150 Discover Your Capital" day in Victoria and attend an award ceremony at the Parliament Buildings. Full contest rules and entry forms @ www.leq.bc.ca

Mark your calendar...

- ❖ Nov 28 – Jan 1 - **FREE PARKING DOWNTOWN**
- ❖ Dec 7-Cougars Burgers for Kids-The team will be spread out at all five A&W locations. 50% of sales during that hour will go to Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Prince George.
- ❖ Dec 7 – Valemount Late Night Christmas Shopping.
- ❖ Dec 7 – St Michael and All Angels's Anglican Church present a dramatic reading of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" at 7:30 pm. Tickets \$10.00, Proceeds to Prince George Public Library
- ❖ Dec 7 & Dec 9 – Santa Train Leaves CN Rail Station at 7:45pm and 8:45pm - Four one hour trips when Santa comes aboard to hand out treats. \$5 for 12years and under, \$10 for Adults. Proceeds to Salvation Army. Call Barbara at Salvation Army for more info.564-4000 ext. 227
- ❖ Dec 8 – Rotary Food and Clothing Drive. Bring donations of food and clothing to the Cougars game tonight, donations for the Salvation Army.
- ❖ Dec 8 & 9 – 6pm - A King is Coming to

Town, a musical Christmas dessert theatre event at Gateway Christian Ministries, 2055 – 20th Ave. Tickets \$5 for more info 563-1003

- ❖ Dec 10 – International Human Rights Day! check out what's happening at Books & Co and CNC. Join the worldwide events, for more info contact George Harding, 561-0092
- ❖ Dec 12 – Big Brothers-Big Sisters - A Celebration of Magic at the Civic Centre - pre-dinner visit from Santa and after dinner show by hypnotist JayDee. Tickets are \$20 for more info call 563-7410
- ❖ Dec 14-SPCA Food and Supplies Drive- Bring donations to the Cougars game tonight against Kamloops Blazers.
- ❖ Dec 15- Annual Teddy Bear Toss – Cougars game against Kamloops.
- ❖ Dec 20 - 22 – Bel Canto Choir presents A Christmas Carol at Prince George Playhouse tickets \$15 at Studio 2880 or Call 962-1663
- ❖ Dec 21 –23 - The Nutcracker- presented by Judy Russell' Enchainment Dance Centre at Vanier Hall. Tickets available at Studio 2880
- ❖ Dec 31 – A New Years Night at the Museum – family sleepover at the Exploration Place on December 31. For more info call Jennifer at 562-1612 ext 242

If you are a non profit organization and would like to advertise an upcoming event or share a story please email [Shirley](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter. If you would like to see something specific in the next edition of Ask Your MLA, please [email me](#). If you know someone who would like to receive our newsletter, email their name so we can add them to our list.



My second e-newsletter, **People, Places & Projects** showcases great people and projects in our area. To subscribe to **People, Places & Projects**, [click here](#). To read past editions to go: [People, Places & Projects online](#).

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