



# Matthew Matters

Volume 11

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## School Development News

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This issue of our newsletter is devoted completely to School Development and what that means to our school and school community.

In previous newsletters we would have informed parents that School Development is a process in which all schools in our province are required to take part. It is a step by step process which requires the school to do a review of its strengths and challenges, and to develop a set of goals based on this review. These goals would then form a strategic plan which guide the school's growth over a three year period. This plan, and the school's review process, are also validated by an external team, which visits the school and conducts interviews with parents, teachers, and students. This team then provides support, and direction to the school as they begin the process of working through their plan.

## Our Internal Review

The Internal Review at Matthew Elementary started over a year ago. At that time you might remember filling out surveys we provided which gathered information on such things as school climate, teaching and learning, and school leadership. Students and teachers also filled out surveys and members of our schools internal review team also studied such things as CRT results, attendance data, and school schedules. During this process of our Internal Review we held two days at school where teachers, invited parents, and invited community members looked at all of this information and analyzed it to determine our schools strengths and challenges.

**2008/2009**

### School Closures

May 18

June 25 is our Last Day

### Mark Your Calendar!

- \* May 1st school closing at noon.
- \* May 4th KinderStart students take the bus.

A reminder to Kindergarten parents that Friday is the first day of the month and the classes rotate.

School Closing at Noon on Friday,  
May 1st, for Staff School Development Session.

Kinder Start Session Coming Up On  
May 4th—Students take the bus!!

## Our Critical Issues

Over the two days that our school community reviewed our questionnaires and other sources of data, several issues became apparent that might guide our strategic plan for the next three years:

Individualizing instruction is an issue that should guide teacher learning. That means that we need to focus on how we support learning for each individual child even though they sit as part of a large class.

Teachers need to focus on Assessment for learning. This means that teachers need to use assessment more to guide their teaching than to figure out what a child has retained at the end of a unit of work. Research suggests that frequent and ongoing assessment is better suited to help students learn than traditional chapter tests and unit tests. We need to find out early what the children do not know and teach to that.

Constructed Responses in Math are also an area on which we want to work on. The traditional multiple choice questions are being handled well by our students, but when it comes to writing about their learning in Math it is obvious that students have trouble.

We also want to expand the opportunities for students to connect to school outside the curricular day. Can we get more children involved in a more varied group of activities than we presently have?

We also need to focus on Individual reading programs in Elementary and Intermediate. It is not alright for elementary students to be responding to text that is too easy, or too difficult for them. In K to 3 we do a really good job of this and it needs to continue through to grade 8.

And, finally, there is evidence that we need to find a way to incorporate technology into our classroom instruction. Technology is a part of the life of every student, and our instruction needs to reflect that.

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## External Review

This week a team of educators selected from our District will visit our school and review the process we used to arrive at the above issues. They will interview staff, students, and parents, and they will review the plans we have created to address the challenges stated above. On Friday afternoon of this week, school will close so this team can present their report to staff members. They will validate our findings and offer suggestions as we begin to action our plans. We are really looking forward to this opportunity.

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