



academics enriched with music

Allocation of Additional Government Funding

As you are well aware, in October 2011 Premier Alison Redford and Education Minister Thomas Lukaszuk made the announcement that school boards would be provided with an additional \$107 million to address priorities in the classrooms. I wanted to take this opportunity to share with our Suzuki families and our community details on how Suzuki Charter School allocated its share of the additional \$107 million in funding to address priorities in our classrooms.

Our school's jurisdiction portion of the \$107 million was approximately \$120,000. Our school's administration met and brought forward to the Board recommendations regarding spending of the additional funding announced by Alberta Education. The Board of Directors, after careful consideration, made its decision that the additional funding would be spent in five areas to better our children and classrooms. Dollars were directed to the following areas; materials to support students' indoor activities, technology in the classrooms, academic research, improvement of music studios and the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement grant.

Our children spend a larger amount of time indoors during the winter months due to the cold weather. The school wanted to ensure that children have an appropriate amount of materials and activities to stimulate and strengthen cognitive and physical indoor undertakings. The school has already purchased and will continue to add materials and activities to support this initiative.

The amount of learning that occurs in the classroom through the use of technology is phenomenal. Children today learn in many different ways and teachers with the use of technology can extend the ability to instruct a broader spectrum of learners. The school will be purchasing class sets of iPads and a SmartBoard for the media centre to provide students opportunities for practice and review utilizing technology integration designed to individualize learning experiences and provide immediate feedback.

At Suzuki Charter School we instinctively know that something amazing takes place in our hallways and classrooms. The children that attend this school challenge themselves academically, musically and in their personal growth. In our quest to better understand this phenomenon and to then be able to share it with other interested educators we undertook the first phase of a program evaluation project. Working with the Educational

Psychology department at the University of Alberta, a program evaluation design was developed that would allow the school to then execute a complete program evaluation if it so desired. The key question that would be answered through this program evaluation was “To what extent does parental involvement and engagement at the Suzuki Charter School contribute to student outcomes in academics, music and personal development?” We now are at the point that we can execute on that design work and the Board has decided to allocate money to continue the program evaluation work.

Suzuki Charter School is thrilled with its new home at the former Capilano School. After going through the settling in stage we found that the music studios required improvements in the sound proofing as sound transference was an issue. In early 2011, the school requested a report from Alberta Infrastructure to help us understand what the structural issues were that were impacting the sound transference issue. The report provided the school with a number of recommendations as to how the issues might be addressed. The school has put money aside to commence addressing these issues. The school is now in the process of requesting quotes from contractors for the work that needs to be done in the music studios.

Since 1999, the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS I) has been at the forefront of encouraging and promoting creativity and innovation in Alberta schools. AIS I supports projects that focus on student engagement, inquiry, critical thinking, 21st century learning, literacy and many other areas of learning. Due to cutbacks in Education this grant had been reduced by approximately 40% in the past year. The school has allocated back to this area the amount that it had been reduced by in the past so that we can continue with the educational projects we feel are important to our children’s learning.

I hope that the above information has been helpful in getting everyone up to date on some of the important events that are coming up and that have taken place at our school in the last few months. If anyone has any questions please feel free to contact me via email or in person.

Monica McCormack
Board Chairperson
Suzuki Charter School Society