

Team Aims To Help Establish Safe Work Sites In Local School Division

November 26, 2019 Regular (Public) Meeting of the
South East Cornerstone Public School Division (SECPD) Board of Education



Submitted by Norm Park, Contracted Reporter for SECPD

They have toured the sites, visited with personnel, provided recommendations and suggestions to help create safe work environments for employees of the South East Cornerstone Public School Division.

“We are the boots on the ground,” said Carolyn Griffin, who was joined by Sandra Cripps with an update for the division board members on November 26 regarding the work they are engaged in with the school division through the Saskatchewan Association of Workplaces in Health.

Griffin said she was able to set up office space, set out selected schools and other facilities, toured each location and met with staff members as well as having reviewed previous administrative safety procedures and safety audits and with the collaboration of others, now set a course of action. She noted her first set of visitations in the western sector of the division took her to Yellow Grass and Weyburn in the western part of the division, then to Estevan, Carievale and Redvers regions in the south and eastern sectors as they set about the task of updating safety and health policies. She said they had workshopped some of those items at the central office in Weyburn to ensure that “everyone gets the same message on standards, legislation, transportation.”

Griffin outlined the six elements for safety management systems and informed the board members they were providing an update on the education sector for safety policy, establishing an occupational health committee for transportation and facilities in Estevan, incident policy process, training in some areas such as hazard identification, WHMIS education and training and fit testing as well as orientation sessions. The program carries a three-year mandate for full implementation.

Griffin said school division bus drivers received orientation and checklists to help them identify such things as saving space, moving safely and storage. Those lists are also going to be delivered to maintenance and caretaking personnel.

Cripps said identifying the problem areas “gives them the opportunity to comply while examining and assessing the spaces they have to work within and then relook at them pre and post events so they know where things are and how to find them quickly and easily.”

The two women said site re-visitations a few months later indicated that improvements that were brought about were being maintained and “we learned how the two months during school breaks are probably the busiest time of year for these people,” Cripps said.

The two also discussed the mechanical and technician’s use of “just in time,” arrival of parts for buses and other equipment and how they were very astute in terms of knowing differences in prices and availability of various parts.

“We saw a strong level of commitment,” said Cripps. “We also parachuted in on their time, yet we received positive responses after they got over the ‘you want to do what?’ question.”

The two also noted how there was compliance with the need for clean and safe work spaces and especially in the carpentry and electrical sites, “we learned rarely does anyone borrow someone else’s tools or material,” said Cripps, adding that by creating cleaned out spaces, “dangers are reduced by four to 14 per cent. It also allows them to get rid of out-of-date items.”

The women provided examples of the improved conditions through a short series of photographs. The 5S steps were also explained to board members, and that included the first step of sorting followed by setting in order, shine, standardize and then sustainability.

Griffin said they will continue to work with the first group of schools while selecting another set of seven schools to carry out the template activities set up for the first group. That will be followed by a workshop for reporting the processes used, testing and recommendations and revisions of process, if needed. They will also identify the top three hazards in SECPSD.

The second round of visitations will include Bienfait’s Weldon School, plus schools in Oxbow (Prairie Horizon), Alameda, Carnduff, Manor and Carlyle.

“We will compile evidence that what we’re doing is correct,” said Cripps “and if that is the case, then we’ll have a blueprint you can follow for the division with a sustainability plan to move forward.”

Deputy Director of Education, Keith Keating thanked the two presenters. He added additional thanks “for this large pool of knowledge and resources you have given us. We look forward to working with you.”

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