

New superintendent looks forward to building up results in district

By SHANE MILLS

Free Press staff writer

The challenges that face Dick Chambers as he takes over the helm of School District #57 are not new — they are just enlarged.

On Wednesday, Mr. Chambers was introduced as the new superintendent, replacing Phil Redmond who announced at the beginning of the school year his intention to resign.

Presently the superintendent of schools in the Golden area, Mr. Chambers has been a superintendent for 17 years. He also spent 1978 to 1984 in the Stikine school district, working as a teacher, vice-principal, principal and assistant superintendent.

"I think we need to focus on what our job is and that's education," says Mr. Chambers. "We need to look at the three Rs, social responsibility,

safer schools and how we can go about getting better results."

Noting that the Prince George School District has made an effort over the past few years to improve its academic results, Mr. Chambers says that will be a continuous goal.

When he arrives to start work on August 1, Mr. Chambers could be taking control of a new-look district.

Aside from a new superintendent, the board has a new chair in Bill Christie and will have one, maybe two, new trustees after byelections are held later this summer.

"I think it's an excellent opportunity," says Mr. Chambers. "But at the same time it's not like the district will be losing its entire corporate history. These are good people, but one of the reasons I wanted to come here was because of the quality of people. I want to work with these people."

As to how he ended up in Prince George, Mr. Chambers admits the decision snuck up on him. "I'm very excited to be coming to Prince George, but the decision is one that crept up on me," he says.

He says after serving so long in one place and presiding over the amalgamation of three boards into one that it was time to grow. "I was looking for something larger, I wanted to grow and Prince George matched," says Mr. Chambers.

As to dealing with a district that is substantially larger (about three times), Mr. Chambers says many of the problems remain the same — especially declining enrolment and a shortage of teachers.

"The enrolment is forecast to level off in the next couple years," he says.

"And I'm looking forward to working with UNBC and CNC to create some new opportunities. I know Phil (Redmond) has worked closely with them and I want to keep that up."



Chambers

Looking for a little bit of teaching history

School board put their support behind the efforts of the Prince George Retired Teacher's Association Heritage Committee to collect and preserve educational artifacts and records pertaining to the history of Prince George schools.

The group is currently housed at Highland Elementary but association member Carole Caldwell expressed hopes the society will partner with UNBC in the future. The 2,400-item collection of the heritage committee includes old textbooks, ledgers, trophies, pictures, report cards and recorded interviews with past educators.

Anyone who has artifacts from PG's education history or knows a past teacher or administrator willing to be interviewed by the committee is encouraged to contact them.

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