



**ANGLOPHONE SOUTH
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

District Education Council

490 Woodward Avenue
Saint John, New Brunswick
E2K 5N3

November 22, 2019

Hon. Dominic Cardy
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Dear Minister Cardy:

At the November 13, 2019 meeting of the Anglophone South District Education Council, a motion was made and passed to approve the 2019-20 expenditure plan allocation that was presented to Council by Director of Finance & Administration, John MacDonald. A copy is attached for your records.

The plan presented forecasts a break-even position; however, as you are aware, there are serious concerns with regard to chronic underfunding for replacement costs for staff and in funding for Education Assistants. This was evidenced when Council twice voted to defeat the plan, and again in the remarks noted in attached draft Minutes of the meeting.

We look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss ongoing funding challenges.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Robert Fowler
Chair

/cmm
Encl.

Copy: George Daley, DM, EECD
Robert Penney ADM, Administration & Finance
Zoë Watson, Superintendent ASD-S
John MacDonald, Director, Finance & Administration ASD-S

• PHONE: (506) 658-5300 • FAX: (506) 658-5399

Anglophone South School District		2019-2020	
Description	EED	ASD-S	2019-2020
	Budget	Forecast	Surplus/ (Deficit)
	2019-2020	To March 31/20	
INSTRUCTION			
Regular Instruction (1725.88 FTE's as on Sept.19)	\$150,614,598	\$145,924,376	\$4,690,222
Education Support Services	24,615,650	27,415,385	(2,799,735)
Total Instruction	175,230,248	173,339,761	1,890,487
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT			
School Administrative Support	6,106,433	6,149,765	(43,332)
Teachers Educational Leaves and TWCF	229,700	229,700	0
Total Instructional Support	6,336,133	6,379,465	(43,332)
STUDENT SUPPORT & SUPPLEMENTARY ED. PROGRAMS			
Student Support Services	396,600	396,600	0
Community Schools	789,400	789,400	0
Total Supplementary Education Programs	1,186,000	1,186,000	0
OPERATION & MAINTENANCE			
Total Plant - Operation and Maintenance	26,857,218	27,566,700	(709,482)
Total Pupil Transportation and Trips	12,077,900	12,389,698	(311,798)
DISTRICT OFFICE OPERATIONS			
District Education Council & PSSC	92,000	92,000	0
District Office Overhead (including facilities rental)	5,754,300	6,213,500	(459,200)
Total District Office Operations	5,846,300	6,305,500	(459,200)
Total Employee Benefits	16,493,673	16,783,748	(290,075)
Total Information Technology	325,000	325,000	0
Special Projects	153,400	230,000	(76,600)
GRAND TOTAL	\$244,505,872	\$244,505,872	\$0

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting – November 13, 2019

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Chair; Roger Nesbitt, Vice Chair; Kristen Murphy, Bernie Regenbogen, Wayne Spires, Dan O'Connor, Larry Boudreau, Heather Gillis, Justin Tinker

Regrets: Richard Malone, Linda Sherbo, Lory-Ann MacAskill

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Allan Davis, Director of Schools, Hampton Education Centre; Paul Smith, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration; Derek O'Brien, Director of Schools, St. Stephen Education Centre; Peter Smith, Director Education Support Services, Gary Hall, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fowler suggested that in Ms. Sherbo's absence, that item 5.2 be removed from the Agenda. He asked if there were no questions or concerns with the amended Agenda that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the agenda be approved. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the October 9, 2019 meeting and asked that if there were no questions or concerns that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Spires moved that the Minutes be approved. Seconded by Ms. Murphy. Motion carried.

2.3 Public Comment

None.

3. Member's Notebook

Mr. O'Connor noted that he attended the Belleisle 49th Harvest Auction which raised \$27,000 for the elementary and high school. The event showed amazing community spirit and he would recommend it if you have the chance to take it in next year. Forest Hills PSSC hosted PRUDE to get advice regarding hosting a multicultural night. They invited other PSSCs and it was very informative and well attended. Glen Falls hosted "Bring Your Parent to School". Students invited their parents for a brown bag lunch in their class. It was well attended with two thirds of parents showing up. The idea was if parents were comfortable coming to the school, it would make the education based conversations easier.

Mr. Spires wanted to congratulate the Culinary 110 class at St. Stephen High School who developed a program to feed their teachers through their class. Teachers pay \$4 to cover costs. This is a great initiative which should be celebrated.

Ms. Gillis wanted to congratulate Bayside Middle for raising \$22,000 for the Children's Wish Foundation. For reaching their goal, the Principal and Vice Principal were to be "hosed" by the Fire Department; however, weather forced the cancellation until a later date. They school has raised well over \$400,000 over the past 18 years.

4. Presentations

4.1 ENDS # 1 - positive, safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments.

Peter Smith, Director of Education Support Services, Ann Hogan and Alberta Stanton Rousselle, Healthy Learner Nurses, Dan Vallis, Subject Coordinator Health and Physical Education and Lynn MacDonald, International Student Coordinator, provided Council with an overview of what's been happening under ENDS #1 – Positive, safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments. The monitoring report was posted with Council's meeting materials for their review and forms part of these Minutes.

Peter Smith provided an update on the three main strategies including expanding Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS), enhancing capacity of school based "Education Student Support Teams (ESST) and improving the quality of alternative education programs. He noted that these initiatives are on target.

Ann Hogan, Alberta Stanton Rousselle and Dan Vallis spoke on the goal to increase capacity in schools/early learning centres by providing current information on nutrition, physical activity, school safety and current health topics. They provided an update on Policy 711 (Healthier School Food Environment), work that has been done to provide schools with information on cannabis, vaping and smoking; on-going work on concussions and Policy 704 (Health Support Services) with regard to diabetic and allergies and anaphylaxis education and training. They spoke about the measles outbreak in May/June of 2019 and follow up work with regard to checking student immunization records.

Lynn MacDonald shared updated data with regard to newcomers and international students. The growth has been significant with only 12 newcomers arriving in 2010 and 531 to date in 2019 - a total of 1588 over the last 10 years. She spoke about the work being done to build capacity to support newcomers in our schools, including an online course offered through UNB and a grant "Bridging Cultures".

Following the presentation, Mr. Nesbitt moved that the monitoring report for ENDS #1 be accepted as presented. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler thanked Peter Smith and his team for an informative presentation.

4.2 Provincial Assessment Results

Nick Munn, Supervisor Data & Accountability shared with Council an overview of the provincial assessment program results for 2018-19. This included EYE-DA results for language and communication; English Reading and English Language Proficiency; French Second Language Reading and Second Language Oral Proficiency; Mathematics, Scientific Literacy and Student Contextual Information. Results provide an opportunity to compare ASD-S results with other districts and provincially. They are also provided by school on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website. This assessment report is attached to and forms part of these Minutes.

Mrs. Watson advised that the report will be posted on the ASD-S website, under the About Us tab tomorrow.

5. Business Arising from Minutes

5.1 Expenditure Plan Approval 2019-20

Mr. MacDonald advised that the current expenditure plan is the same as what was presented at the October meeting with two exceptions: under Regular Instruction, the teacher FTEs were updated to reflect the additional 20 teachers the District received from EECD in early October due to enrollment increases; and, under Education Support Services, the number of Education Assistants (EAs) was adjusted to reflect the increase to 800 EAs as of November 1.

Mr. Fowler asked that with the additional dollars added to the plan, whether or not the District was now more confident that a balanced budget could be achieved. Mr. MacDonald confirmed the District was.

Mr. Fowler then read into the record a letter from Minister Cardy dated November 7, 2019 with regard to the 2019-2020 Expenditure Plan which Council has twice rejected. This letter is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. He then advised that Council members would be given an opportunity to express their thoughts and following comments, a vote would take place on the Expenditure Plan.

Mr. Fowler read from a written submission which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. Some comments expressed included: Mr. Fowler commented that to ask the District to provide an expenditure plan by July 1st is impossible as the District does not get a final budget from the Department until as late as May; he suggested that the July 1st date should be adjusted within the Education Act to reflect reality; he noted that expenditure plans have been rejected by DEC's before and the Department simply went ahead with the budget that had been presented – no grandstanding fight or lines in the sand; the Minister's requirement for monthly monitoring will increase the workload of staff and is a bully tactic and the threat to dissolve Council is not something the Minister can easily do – there is a process and it would be unlikely to happen before May when our term ends; it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find that a DEC that stood up for proper funding for students with special needs was dysfunctional; Council is aware that we cannot pass a deficit budget; however, we have taken a stance regarding underfunding. Line items are being robbed to fund EAs and this is dangerous – taking dollars from maintenance and repairs will lead to serious problems down the road.

Mr. Fowler expressed his disappointment with the way the Minister has handled this situation. Council asked for only a meeting and was flatly refused unless we pass an Expenditure Plan.

Mr. Nesbitt commented that we have an obligation under the Education Act to pass an expenditure plan - and we have a balanced plan. He felt that the point has been made with regard to the underfunding for educational assistants, etc. and by not passing the Expenditure Plan, we are making life more difficult for district staff and we are also causing increased and sustained animosity between ASD-S and EECD. So, for these reasons, he would be voting to approve the plan tonight.

Ms. Murphy read from a written submission which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. Some comments expressed included: Her disappointment with the tone of Minister Cardy's letter of November 7, 2019 and the need to collaborate to solve problems; Council was presented with a balanced expenditure plan; however, funds provided by the Department were insufficient and the budget was underfunded in several line items; the strain on the EAs has increased with the District requiring 800 positions, of which only 673 are funded by the government, leaving 127 unfunded positions; the hope that if the plan is approved tonight that Minister Cardy will revisit the monthly monitoring schedule he has imposed on District Staff and allow them to focus their efforts on ensuring the delivery of a world class education system; Ms. Murphy commented that she did not see any good coming out of a public battle between the Minister and Council and that any tax dollars spent by the Department in litigating this matter are much better spent in the furtherance of education; despite her misgivings, she would vote to approve the proposed budget as presented tonight.

Mr. Regenbogen read from a written submission which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. Some comments expressed included: the first expenditure plan showed a \$2M shortfall (mainly due to underfunding of EAs) and after revision it was balanced; however, that was accomplished by a reduction of other line items; this Minister does not see the need for EAs and is unaware of the effect that inclusion has in our classrooms; ASD-S has some of the oldest infrastructure in the province and the cost to maintain is substantial and we cannot keep postponing required maintenance – buckets under leaky ceilings, 3 out of 5 washroom stalls out of order, 2 out of 5 sinks out of order, windows leaking, plaster cracked and leaking – this is a sad environment for our students; Council is not voting against a balanced budget but supporting our front line staff by protesting the chronic underfunding of the District; threats from the Minister to dissolve Council and the need for District staff to now report monthly are actions of a school yard bully; Mr. Regenbogen advised that he would be voting against passing the expenditure plan.

Mr. Spires read from a written submission which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. Some comments included: students deserve a world class education and the District has tried year after year to provide this while funding has been insufficient and there has not been the consultation needed to address the deficits; a high percentage of our NB students live in poverty (16.4%) and the educators in our schools are feeding, medicating and supporting our students to the best of their ability; Mr. Spires advised that he would begrudgingly vote to accept this expenditure plan in the hopes the Minister would reconsider the freeze-out of this Council and begin working in collaboration.

Mr. O'Connor commented that the last two versions, which we rejected were \$1.9 million short and it has now ballooned to \$2.7 million. Mr. O'Connor stated he was not ready to concede defeat and abandon the fight to bring attention to the funding pinch points. He commented that it seems Minister Cardy has a different meaning of collaborate - it seems more to be aggressive collaboration. Mr. O'Connor felt we should continue to aggressively collaborate and reject this plan. He stated that he was given advice at a recent PSSC meeting to "keep up the good fight".

Mr. Tinker read from a written submission which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. Some comments included: balancing the needs of the children of Southern NB with the fiscal realities the province faces has at times been difficult; however, we have always been able to work collaboratively among Council, the communities we serve and the Minister's office; staff have put forward a balanced expenditure plan but funds had to be diverted from other line items to cover funding shortfalls; repeated attempts to voice concerns have been ignored; inclusive education is enshrined in our schools by Policy 322; however, the budget provided does not allow what is required to accomplish this in our classrooms; ASD-S has faced shortfalls over the last three years of \$1.25M, \$1.5M and now \$2.8M; EAs are underfunded by nearly 12%; the Minister now threatens to dissolve Council for our unwillingness to rubber stamp a deeply flawed budget; Mr. Tinker stated that he looks forward to a time when the Office of the Minister of Education once again respects the mandate of the District Education Council and the important stewardship role we carry out in local governance. He advised that he would begrudgingly vote to accept this expenditure plan as imposed and hope that the Minister reconsider the freeze-out of this Council and begin working in collaboration.

Ms. Gillis expressed that she has been at the Council table for 3.5 years and the District has been continually underfunded. Funds are required to ensure student success. She felt the tone of the Minister's letter showed a lack of respect for this body and was not sent in a spirit of collaboration. She is unsure whether or not the Minister will actually meet with Council if the plan is approved.

Mr. Boudreau commented that most times he votes against the expenditure plan due to serious underfunding. He was happy to have the support of colleagues this time who voted it down and feels that should speak volumes to the Minister. He felt that the Department of Education has no idea what a DEC is and how it runs. He thanked the media for their support but felt that sometimes they do not go in depth enough and should push for more answers from the government. He questioned why the Minister would impose monthly checks on the District when he accepted the balance budget presented. Mr. Boudreau

stated that he has never given into a bully and won't start now. He commented that to have someone in his position (Minister), and perform in the manner he has, it is contrary to the open democratic society we live in today. He hopes that the Minister will accept that these comments made are in the spirit of collaboration and open dialogue as he himself had mentioned.

Mr. Fowler then thanked Council for their comments. He noted his frustration over the years with underfunding and that we do not have the luxury of saying there is no money available to help a student in need. Taking funds from other line items is dangerous. If the plan is approved tonight, Council will still need to maintain pressure on this topic.

Following these comments, Mr. Spires moved that the expenditure plan be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Nesbitt. Motion carried. Mr. Regenbogen, Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Boudreau and Ms. Gillis voted against the motion.

5.2 PSSC Orientation Subcommittee Update

As Ms. Sherbo was not in attendance, this item was removed from the Agenda.

6. New Business

6.1 Council Staff Relationships #1, 2 & 3

Due to time constraints, Mr. O'Connor moved that item 6.1 be moved to the December meeting. Seconded by Mr. Regenbogen. Motion carried.

6.2 Green Paper Response to the Minister

The response letter that was drafted and posted with Council's meeting materials tonight for review was available for members who wanted to sign it. Communication will be sent to those who were absent to determine if they wish to sign. The letter will then be forwarded to the Minister.

6.3 Capital Improvement List 2020 – Revision

Mr. MacDonald reviewed a Briefing Note that had been prepared and posted with Council's meeting materials for review. An increase in severe rain storms has led to increased flooding in the basement of Bayside Middle from storm water run-off. A project to separate storm water from sanitary was approved for summer 2018 but the project was larger and more expensive than originally planned and only part of the work was completed in 2018. Phase 2 was expected to proceed in summer 2019 but funding fell through due to the higher than expected cost.

Mr. O'Connor then moved that Phase 2 of the Capital Improvement Project for Bayside Middle School for storm/sanitary water separation be added to the Capital Improvement List at the number five position for 2020-21. Seconded by Mr. Nesbitt. Motion carried.

7. Information Items

7.1 Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Watson advised that her report was posted with Council's meeting materials for their review.

Last week ended with some very sad news about the death of two ASD-S employees – long time St. Stephen Centre EA Anna McShane James died after a short period with health issues. Anna worked at St. Stephen Elementary and most recently at St. George Elementary School. Dallas Richardson, a custodian at St. Martin's Elementary died after a period of failing health - Dallas had been a bus driver in the District as well. Mrs. Watson asked for a moment on silence in their memory.

Mrs. Watson reminded Council of the New Brunswick Student Leadership event happening Thursday, Nov 14th at the Delta in Fredericton. She advised Council of a recent award from the AP College Board of Advanced Placements – ASD-S was added to the 9th Annual Canadian AP Honour Role and the ceremony was followed by a Saturday PD session at St. Malachy's High School for all AP teachers. The gentleman from AP College Board was able to spend a few minutes with the Minister after the Education Summit.

7.2 Chair's Report and Update

Mr. Fowler advised that he would be attending the NBSLA event tomorrow in Fredericton and the Minister's Excellence Awards on Saturday. ASD-S has three winners who will be announced at the banquet. Also, a reminder that the Minister's Forum is set for November 27th. He advised Council that Mr. George Daley is our new Deputy Minister, replacing John McLaughlin who will be retiring in December.

He advised that the Superintendent's Evaluation documents have been sent to the committee; however, they have not yet had a chance to meet.

7.3 Correspondence

None. All correspondence was posted for Council's review.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and reminded Council the next meeting will be held at 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 beginning at 5:30 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary

Bob Fowler

Chair comments re letter from Minister Cardy

The Minister indicates that we are obligated by law to pass a balanced expenditure plan by July 1st of each year.

First and foremost – it is virtually impossible to pass a plan as mandated by July 1st. Since we don't get a final budget from the department until much later. This year as an example, we were still working on FTE adjustments with EECD staff a week before our October DEC meeting. I think we can safely say that we could argue that point in court if it came to that. I would suggest that this approach by the Minister be noted but softened considerably and perhaps adjust the Act to reflect reality.

With respect to the reference to 40.3(2) and 50.2 of the Act. The last two times a DEC has not approved an expenditure plan – the Department did exactly as the Minister has decided – they simply went ahead with the budget that had been sent. There was no grandstanding fight and no lines in the sand.

With respect to the requirement that our district staff now report monthly the the ADM Finance instead of quarterly - I am disappointed that the Minister would use the threat of a significantly increased workload on our staff. This is a pure bully tactic and it does not reflect well.

The threat to take us to court and have us declared dysfunctional is over the top. First of all – let's be realistic – we have 5 months left and the chances of it getting before a court in that short time frame (and a decision handed down) is slim. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a DEC that stood up for proper funding for students with special needs, to be dysfunctional. Yes, the plan proposed was balanced but only because we are forced to steal from other line items to do so. These are line items that we are not comfortable reducing. We are left with a balanced budget but it does not address our needs properly. As an example, we could balance the budget by deciding not to pay our bus drivers – of course that's ridiculous but we feel that reducing repairs and maintenance, is very dangerous long term. Certainly, in the court of public opinion, I would hope that the general public would understand our concerns.

Kristen Murphy

I was extremely disappointed with the tone of Minister Cardy's letter of November 7, 2019 and fail to understand how we could possibly receive a letter of this nature "in the spirit of collaboration and open dialogue" as he states. When I think about collaboration, I think about solving problems, having conversations, hearing perspectives and working together. It requires a little bit of good faith. We asked for a gesture of good faith and were denied.

The Minister is correct that this Council was presented with a balanced proposed expenditure plan. What is important to note is that although it was "balanced", funds provided by the Department to run this District were insufficient and the budget was underfunded in several line items. And tonight we see the strain on the EA's has increased, with the District requiring 800 positions, of which only 673 are funded by the government, leaving 127 unfunded positions. District Staff worked hard to balance the budget regardless but in order to do this they had to rob Peter to pay Paul. This gets us no further ahead.

I appreciate and understand that New Brunswick is facing tough economic times. This is the fiscal reality we live in and difficult decisions must be made as a result, but it seems to me that the rights of children in general are often a trailing after thought. They are the future and their education is key. We have a collective duty to ensure their success.

Minister Cardy has made it clear that he has adopted the proposed balanced expenditure plan despite our stated concerns, so, in a way, this Council's vote on the budget proposal is inconsequential, but I hope if this budget passes tonight that Minister Cardy will revisit the monthly monitoring schedule he has imposed on District Staff, as he states in his letter, and allow them to focus their efforts on ensuring the delivery of a world class education system.

I feel I am left with no choice by to vote to approve this budget. The Minister is clear in his letter, which is not a dialogue and certainly not collaboration, but a directive and a threat. Quite frankly, I do not see any good coming out of a public battle between the Minister and this Council, who are supposed to be collaborators in educating our youth. That won't get us anywhere. Furthermore, I believe any tax dollars spent by the Department in litigating this matter are much better spent in the furtherance of education. This is apparent and evidenced by the pressures in our budget and the budgets of other Districts.

Despite my misgivings, I vote to approve the proposed budget as presented tonight.

Dermie Reganbogen

RESPONSE TO BUDGET LETTER FROM MINISTER

THE FIRST BUDGET PRESENTED TO US BY STAFF SHOWED A \$2 MILLION SHORTFALL, PRIMARILY DUE TO UNDERFUNDING OF EA'S. ONCE STAFF REVISED THE BUDGET, IT WAS BALANCED. HOWEVER, THE BALANCE WAS FORCED BY A REDUCTION OF MAINTENANCE AND SALARIES, A CONDITION I WAS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT AS A COUNCILLOR.

THE BACKDROP TO THIS IS A MINISTER WHO DOESN'T SEE WHY WE NEED ALL THESE EA'S ANYWAY. HE IS OBVIOUSLY UNAWARE OF THE EFFECT THAT INCLUSION HAS ON OUR SCHOOLS AND STAFF. DON'T GET ME WRONG- I BELIEVE IN INCLUSION, BUT IT REQUIRES MORE WORK WHICH REQUIRES MORE STAFF, WHICH REQUIRES MORE MONEY

YES STAFF HAS PRESENTED A BALANCED BUDGET. HOWEVER OUR DISTRICT HAS SOME OF THE OLDEST INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE PROVINCE AND THE COST TO MAINTAIN IT IS SUBSTANTIAL. WE HAVE GONE THROUGH THE 409 PROCESS ON SEVERAL SCHOOLS WHICH WOULD ALLEVIATE MUCH OF THE MAINTENANCE ISSUES. HOWEVER, IT COMES AT A SUBSTANTIAL CAPITAL COST FOR WHICH THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT HAVE FUNDS. AS A RESULT, OUR GENERAL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR BUDGET IS HIGH JUST TO KEEP THE SCHOOLS OPERATING. SINCE OUR BUDGET IS MOSTLY COMMITTED TO SALARIES AND OTHER HR EXPENSES, THE ONLY WAY WE HAVE TO BALANCE A TIGHT BUDGET IS BY POSTPONING REQUIRED MAINTENANCE. IF YOU LOOK AT IT AS A LINE ITEM, YOU MIGHT SAY SO WHAT. BUT GO INTO A SCHOOL AND SEE BUCKETS UNDER LEAKY CEILINGS, 3 OUT OF 5 WASHROOM STALLS OUT OF ORDER, 2 OUT OF 5 SINKS OUT OF ORDER, WINDOWS LEAKING, PLASTER CRACKS AND LEAKS, AND THE LIST GOES ON. NOW ITS NO LONGER A LINE ITEM BUT A SAD ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR KIDS. THIS IS THE BUDGET WE HAVE TO CUT BACK TO SUPPORT THE UNDERFUNDING FROM THE DEPARTMENT.

OUR EA'S AND THE TEACHERS WHO MAKE UP THE FRONT LINE STAFF ARE A GROUP OF HARD WORKING, CARING, DEDICATED MEN AND WOMEN WHO REALLY CARE ABOUT OUR CHILDREN. IN MY OPINION, THE DEPARTMENT, AND THIS MINISTER IN PARTICULAR, UNDERVALUES THEIR CONTRIBUTION.

AS A DEC, WE AREN'T VOTING DOWN A BALANCED BUDGET. WE ARE SUPPORTING OUR FRONT LINE STAFF BY PROTESTING THE CHRONIC UNDERFUNDING OF A SYSTEM AND SITUATION THAT WAS CREATED. BY THE DEPARTMENT.

THE MINISTER HAS CHOSEN TO ACT LIKE THE SCHOOL YARD BULLY. HE HAS NOW ACCEPTED THE BUDGET IN THE ABSENCE OF OUR APPROVAL. FURTHERMORE, IF WE DON'T RUBBERSTAMP IT, HE WILL FORCE THE

DISTRICT STAFF TO REPORT TO HIM MONTHLY INSTEAD OF QUARTERLY, AND RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW THEIR BOOKS AT ANY TIME. HE WOULD OF COURSE REVISIT THIS IF WE APPROVE THE BUDGET.

AND, IN TYPICAL BULLY FASHION, IF WE DON'T APPROVE THE BUDGET HE THREATENS TO DISSOLVE THIS COUNCIL. I HAVE ALWAYS TOLD MY KIDS NOT TO LET THEMSELVES BE BULLIED. IF YOU CAN'T TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF A SITUATION, STAND UP TO THEM. I GUESS I WILL FOLLOW MY OWN ADVICE.

Mr. Minister: the District Education Council has tried year after year to provide for the students in our district. With many different ministers, changes, new programs and the lack of consultation in regard an appropriate budget to follow the policy guidelines as set down by the Department of Education. Our children deserve a world-class education with access to learning opportunities that will improve their comprehension of math, literacy, science and vocational training. These foundational skills will allow our youth to continue to succeed long after they graduate. Exploring new educational approaches to teach more students allows our young people to better compete in our province's ever-changing job markets. There are 141, 593 people in **New Brunswick** who are under the age of 18 and approximately 23,221 (16.4%) of them are living in **poverty**. There are 107,640 seniors in **New Brunswick** and approximately 11,733 (10.9%) of them are living in **poverty**. Approximately 38,984 **New Brunswickers** are receiving social assistance. These are not new facts. Educators in our schools are feeding, medicating and supporting the students of New Brunswick Schools through their teaching skills. Education for the last fifty years has been a political football. Funding for schools and there operations has not been sufficient. We have always had the politicians blaming the poor showing on standardized testing and the quality of education the students graduating from the schools of New Brunswick received, on the school districts and the teachers who have to educate the student placed in their care daily, monthly and yearly; no matter the circumstances the teachers find the students coming from, the teachers do their best for every student under their care. We have the experts in our world class classrooms but what the teachers and students do not have are the financial stability from home to school to all be equal in becoming equal collaborating good citizen because of our socio-economic boundaries. I will be voting to begrudgingly accept this budget as imposed, so that we can move on with the business we were elected to perform. Mr. Minister, regardless of the outcome of this vote, I sincerely hope that you will reconsider your freeze-out of this Council, and begin working in collaboration with us.

Wayne A. Spores

Justin J. J. J.

Since 2001, District Education Councils have provided local governance, leadership and community input in New Brunswick's education system as Partners in Education. Balancing the needs of the children of Southern New Brunswick with the fiscal realities New Brunswick faces has at times been difficult, but we have always been able to work collaboratively among the members of this Council, the communities we individually and collectively represent, and the Minister's office in Fredericton. Historically, even with hiccups along the way, yearly budgets have been passed with a common understanding that we are making the best decisions possible for the students of Anglophone South School District.

Unfortunately, that hasn't been the case in 2019 and that leads us to where we are tonight. In September, staff put forward a balanced budget proposal, which this District Education Council voted down because funds had to be diverted from regular classroom instruction to cover other responsibilities like replacement costs and Education Support Services. Despite our repeated attempts to voice our concerns internally to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Minister has chosen to ignore our requests to be heard and consult together, as partners in education. Instead, the Minister now threatens this very Council with dissolution for having stood up for the District we are called to be stewards of.

Education in New Brunswick is inclusive. One of the greatest strengths of our province is that students with special needs — ADHD, autism, learning disabilities, giftedness, and mental or physical disabilities — are taught in the same classroom as other students. This inclusive education is enshrined in our schools by Policy 322 from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, which we as a District are tasked with following.

That policy requires that the Department, as well as school districts, establish and maintain systemic supports for public education that make inclusion of all students a practical reality. These supports include personnel, as well as policy, funding and capacity-building strategies. They need to be systemic and ongoing. The policy also stipulates that the Superintendent of our District must:

- Ensure that consideration is given to enhanced supports for individual schools to meet identified needs that are evidence-based and objectively defined, and
- Maintain appropriate funding sufficient to meet student and teacher needs that may not be anticipated prior to the start of the school year and that require additional resources.

The budget, as allocated from Fredericton, does not allow for that. There is no Educational Assistant in the District who is unneeded or under-utilized, and yet we continue to hear about children being underserved or families being forced to move elsewhere because the required supports simply cannot be provided. Over the last 3 years, our School District has faced Education Support Service funding shortfalls of \$1.25M, \$1.5M, and most recently \$2M. Despite meager increases in funding from Fredericton, that budget is increasingly being outpaced by the documented, proven needs of the children in our classrooms.

Mr. Minister, by unilaterally imposing this budget on our School District, you place our District and our Superintendent in serious danger of operating in violation of Policy 322 without continuing to steal from other line items. Our District cannot ensure that financial consideration is given to enhanced supports as identified, and we cannot ensure sufficient funding to meet needs when we are already robbing from other line items to the tune of \$2.8M to make up for the shortfall.

In the 2019-2020 School Year, the need for Educational Assistants provincially is being underfunded by nearly 12%. This means:

- funds that should be going to put teachers in classrooms,
- funds that should be going to provide cutting-edge learning opportunities for students and educators,
- funds that should be going to keep our buildings maintained to the standards that our students and staff deserve,

are being diverted because we need to make up for the funding shortfall inflicted by the Department. At this point, we are uncomfortably close to being forced to choose between satisfying the mandate of inclusive education and providing the safe buildings and needed supports in which to share that inclusive education.

The District Education Council tried to reach out to you, Mr. Minister, to address this systemic shortage, as well as a systemic shortage in funding for replacement costs. Each time our request to discuss these issues was flatly denied. You continued to refuse to meet with your "Partners in Education" until the budget you have now imposed on our School District was approved by this Council.

In the face of our unwillingness to comply with your bullying tactic and instead stand up for the students, families and communities we represent, you now threaten to dissolve the District Education Council for our unwillingness to rubberstamp a deeply flawed budget. You continue an unnecessary attack on your "Partners in Education" like a schoolyard bully.

In your Green Paper, you commit to the idea "Quote: Government will look to enhance community engagement by empowering school governance". I would like to publicly ask Minister Cardy - by refusing to engage with the non-partisan, locally elected body that provides school governance and ignoring our concerns, how exactly does your approach reflect on that promise?

The Premier was right to imply that when politicians interfere with education that it ends up a disaster. Mr. Minister, your actions over the last 2 months have done much to prove him right. Your refusal to even speak with your "partners in education", followed by a threat to pursue dissolution of this council - community leaders representing 70 schools across 12 regions of Southern New Brunswick, is not indicative of a spirit of collaboration or open dialogue. I look forward to a time when the Office of the Minister of Education once again respects the mandate of the District Education Council and the important stewardship role we carry out in local governance.

With my mind now having been spoken, I will be voting to begrudgingly accept this budget as imposed, so that we can move beyond this impasse and begin consulting on the broad, systemic challenges that deserve our shared attention. Mr. Minister, regardless of the outcome of this vote, I sincerely hope that you will reconsider your freeze-out of this Council, and begin working in collaboration with us, as many of your predecessors have.