

Superintendent's Report for DEC
March 2, 2021

ENDS #1: Provide positive, safe, healthy, and inclusive learning and working environments for children, youth, and staff. Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator Clare Tooley continues to make her visit to schools, accompanied by a Healthy Learners Nurse, to do audits of the Operational Plans. The template used is attached and forms part of this report. Each school Principal receives a copy of their report, as well as direct feedback during the visit, and five schools were visited in February, with another nine having their Operational Plan reviewed on their website. The detailed school report is also reviewed by me. We continue to receive many questions about school activities, mask use etc. Just prior to March Break schools often have special winter activities and events and again this year had to be creative in deciding what could be safely done – there were many theme days and special dress-up days. Many schools raised money for Big Brothers, Big Sisters as they are unable to have their annual Bowl for Kids event. Anglophone Superintendents decided to communicate with graduates and their families about graduation as we are at the time when plans need to be in motion for June. It is challenging to plan anything with certainty for June; however, given the vaccination roll-out schools are not planning large scale in-person graduation ceremonies. The focus will be on honoring each graduate with their family, following the Public Health guidelines.

Under the leadership of Amy Marshall, the Home Learning program continues to be busy, providing service to approximately 130 students – there are currently 10 in-home tutors and 7 teachers offering support to students.

We have welcomed 68 newcomer students since January; of these 39 came through AEI (Atlantic Education International) at the high school level.

ENDS #2: Demonstrate continuous improvement by increasing engagement through innovative teaching and assessment practices, promoting mental fitness through social-emotional learning. Over the past few weeks, Jillian Ingalls-Garey has been in discussion with Catlin Tucker, a leader and presenter in the area of online learning and specifically the N.B blended learning model. As part of our District Improvement Plan we have set a goal to support our school/district leaders and SPRs in online learning. We have been able to book Catlin to present to approximately 50 of our SPRs and other leaders who can be released for the afternoon of March 23rd. HR feel we are good to release that many high school teachers for the afternoon providing the situation with the virus remains stable. Administrators can take part as well. We have negotiated an agreement to host the recording of the session until April 27th. There will be an opportunity on the April 14, 2021 PD Day for teachers to view the recording. The teaching and assessment strategies which she provides, while applicable to our current blended teaching model, are great strategies which apply to all teaching situations. We have endorsement of her approach and strategies from many of our own teachers/Principals who have been following her work.

We have purchased a resource on blended learning from ASCD to provide to every high school teacher. Principles and Practices for Effective Blended Learning is a “fold out” laminated desk guide with strategies and ideas for online and face to face teaching. These will be distributed next week, to SPRs to review with the Core Leadership Team of the school. Some brief PLC activities will be provided for SPRs to lead with their teams to engage them in the document. This will be a great resource and preparation for the Caitlin Tucker session.

Many teachers have participated in Office 365 self-directed PD completing over 1000 hours of coursework covering MS TEAMS, on-line teaching, and connecting virtually. Teachers have appreciated the flexibility to do the coursework at their own pace and go back and review as needed. The technology coach teachers have been busy supporting high schools with the daily real-time connections required each class beginning second semester.

We have not been able to bring groups together for PD; however, a few examples of on-line include; modern history teachers offered sessions on an e-book “Teaching Historical Thinking,” elementary/middle/high school social studies teachers offered a series of sessions on historical thinking concepts, a First Nations book study, “Speaking Our Truth” by Monique Gray Smith, Mi’kmaq art PD offered virtually with artist Tara Francis visiting classrooms to do an activity. Coordinator Laura Taylor is making many excellent First Nations education opportunities for our teachers.

The “Good for Kids” FI Reading Intervention program has been on-going since November at elementary and middle schools with most students receiving nine to twelve 30 minute sessions three times per week in a small group. This will end later in March and conclude with a post-test. This initiative is funded by EECD and a team of retired teachers work with the students.

We continue to offer French language proficiency courses for teachers using various formats including informal conversations on line, individual on-line courses, groups and over the March Break two courses will be offered, one in person and one on-line.






NB Science Week will be celebrated March 15-18 and will feature daily keynote speakers, virtual classroom sessions, lunch and learns and K-12 STEAM challenges. Keynotes will be delivered by Dr. Jennifer Russell, Michael Edwards from Science East as well as Jacob Lingley from Brilliant Labs.

ENDS #3: Ensure all members of the school community to be welcomed, respected, accepted and supported and to address heterosexism and discrimination. Sussex Elementary, Bayside Middle and M. Gerald Teed presented on their Capacity for Courage Grant which is a support, mentorship and funding program for educators and students who wish to lead dynamic change toward equity in their increasingly diverse schools and communities. The focus this year of the C4C grants is on improving the mental health in NB newcomer students through the development of social and emotional learning competencies, the NB global competencies and active engagement in experiential learning. Up to \$2K was available per school through EECD and PETL and ASD-S received three of the nine grants.

In March all Principals will participate in a 2-hour virtual PD awareness session on anti-racism – we have intentionally divided the Principals into their cluster groups (by size and level) as we want discussion and sharing to take place. This is facilitated by Peter Smith. The second part of the morning is focused on the new EEC Policy 713 on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. A power point is shared which Principals can in turn share with their staffs. Over the last few years ASD-S has done considerable work on building awareness around LGBTQ and now we want to ensure all are aware of the new policy.

ENDS #4: Maximize the engagement of families and the community through effective communication and outreach.

2020-21 Communication Plan

Date	Object	Key Message	Vehicle	Channel
				
February 8, 2021	Confirmed case at SSHS		Email to SSHS families	School messenger
February 10, 2021	Blended Learning Expectations	Message to high school families		School messenger, social media
February 18, 2021	High School graduation expectations	Message to Grade 12 families		School messenger

Planned Media

<i>Feb 1</i>	<i>ASD-S seeing need increase for mental health supports</i>	CBC Info AM	Peter Smith	https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-28/clip/15822220
<i>Feb 26</i>	<i>Grade 2 students making connections with New Brunswick seniors thanks to pen pal project</i>	CTV	PES	https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/grade-2-students-making-connections-with-new-brunswick-seniors-thanks-to-pen-pal-project-1.5324701

The St. Croix Courier featured a wonderful article about the theme of “Kindness” at St. Stephen Middle School, under the leadership of guidance counsellor Tyler Yost. Students are learning how they can impact others by an act of kindness or a few kind words. This is part of a broader strategy on teaching social-emotional learning which is part of our DIP this year. Each morning Mr. Yost speaks to students as part of the announcements, acting as a role model for this

initiative. The article has been included in the DEC materials as I expect not many members see the Courier.

The communities in ASD-S continue to support schools – albeit the initiatives may need to look different.

The annual nutritious snack/cereal drive usually led by the Saint John Seadogs was cancelled and JDI stepped up with a team of volunteers who on three Saturdays in February collected food items via a physically distanced drive through setup around the city using the PALS Kids on the Go bus.

Through the Canadian Tire “Jumpstart” program 4230 face masks for elementary students were donated; each individually packaged with fun patterns.

Quispamsis Elementary collected personal care items and food items in February to donate to the Coverdale Centre for Women. They also walked from QES to Shannex to build snowmen for the residents, along with some singing outside.

Milltown Elementary has recently become involved in a program through their local Superstore called, “Fresh Choice.” Every student takes home a full bag of fruit to share with their families. They also have a program called “Grub Club,” where families pay \$25/month and each week students are sent home with produce/stew packs. There is a considerable saving to the families as they are paying wholesale prices. These programs are in response to high food insecurity due to the pandemic.

In Saint John this is the fifth year for the “Give Love, Feel Good Campaign,” with EMERA and The Feel Good Store as partners. This year’s focus is on the digital divide among students and prior to the December holidays, EMERA donated \$15K to Hazen White St. Francis so they could purchase i-pads. The campaign is ongoing and involves the inner-city K-5 and K-8 schools. They are challenging other businesses to get involved.

OTHER

Erica Lane and I participated in a meeting of board representatives from Bee Me Kidz and a second follow up meeting with Principals of the inner city K-5/K-8 schools to provide up to date feedback on the program.

Plans are taking shape for our annual Turnaround Achievement Awards which will be hosted virtually by Education Centre. The initiative will be supported by the Technology Coaches and a point person in each Centre – Jennifer Grant in SSEC, Erica Lane in SJEC and Jeff Nelson in HEC. The annual Heritage Fair now has 17 schools registered – a Heritage Fair Teacher Toolkit was created and received excellent feedback. School Fairs will happen in March with participants

moving to the regionals in April. It is very positive to see some of the annual spring events happen, as they celebrate students and the work of our schools.

Leadership Development has continued this year in ASD-S with 26 educators in year one and 18 in year two, the modules are being done virtually with Communications completed, as well as Systems Leadership, and Legal Aspects is on-going with five weekly evening sessions. We are the only District offering the program this year – thank you to Gary Hall and others who are helping to facilitate.

We celebrate Rothesay High School on being named an AP Capstone School – as part of the Advanced Placement Program. They will be able to offer AP Seminar next school year.

If we return to the yellow phase of recovery after the March Break, programs like SISTEMA (percussion and stringed instruments) and the strings program will be able to begin, as well as sports at middle and high school with games within our region. This will be welcomed by our schools. The EYE-DA assessments for children entering Kindergarten in fall 2021 will also be able to re-start. When schools re-open next week, their Operational Plans will be similar to the September opening.

EECD in partnership with the NBTA will be adding three additional teacher counsellors to their team. One position will be added for ASD-S to support the work of Ronna Gauthier who is in her third year in the District. I represent Superintendents on the provincial counselling committee and will participate this week in the interviews for the three positions.