

Information Morning - Saint John



High schools return to full-time learning on hold



Play Segment

14:09



Share Segment

Today was supposed to be the first regular school day in a long time for many high schoolers.. But that plan is now on hold. New Brunswick's Health Minister Dorothy Shepard made the announcement on Saturday. we'll hear from her and then Anglophone South superintendent, Zoe Watson, speaks with Zoe Watson about the pivot. Intro: It was supposed to be a return normal today for most high school students and teachers in the province. But like everything else during this Covid 19 pandemic...nothing is normal. The plan to have high school students return to the classroom full time has been postponed.

Aired: April 12, 2021

A Dozen Anglophone South Schools Have Experienced Outbreaks

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

[News](#)

Apr 15, 2021 5:21 AM

The Anglophone South School District has dealt with outbreaks at a dozen schools over the course of the pandemic.

The most recent one over the Easter weekend involved Loch Lomond School in east Saint John.

At Wednesday night's monthly District Education Council meeting, Superintendent Zoe Watson said everyone responded as quickly as they could.

"Certainly would like to commend Principal Greg Norton who, despite being out of town to visit his family for Easter, put his binder in the trunk of his car in case you get a call," Watson said.

She called the move "very proactive."

Watson said they were able to inform families Saturday night and Public Health began their work Sunday morning.

Custodians did extra sanitizing on Monday and the school opened the next day as planned after the long weekend.

This outbreak was the first since early February.

Watson said Claire Tooley, the district's Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, continues to conduct visits to schools to ensure protocols are followed.



The Anglophone South School District Education Council held its monthly meeting on April 14, 2021.
(Video capture image)

UPDATE: Student 'disappointed' by delay to full-time classes



Sussex Regional High School Grade 12 student Katelyn Taber said she is disappointed, but understanding of the province's decision to delay the return to full time in person learning for high school students.

Photo: Justin Samanski-Langille/Kings County Record

© Published 4 hours ago



Justin Samanski-Langille | Kings County Record

When news broke Saturday high school students would not be returning to classes full-time as of Monday, the first thing that went through Katelyn Taber's mind was "here we go again."

A senior at Sussex Regional High School, Taber said she understood the need for the province to delay the previously announced move, given the worsening outbreak of COVID-19 cases in the north-west region of the province, but she said the fact the announcement was made over a weekend, was surprising.

"We have had to prepare ourselves not to get our hopes up, but I was definitely disappointed when I heard the news," said Taber. "I was looking forward to going back with my friends."

Despite the bad news, she said she is holding out hope full-time classroom learning will return at some point before graduation time comes, even though there are only two months of classes left. She said any amount of extra time she can spend with her friends would be worth it.

"Obviously the social aspect [is important], but it's the mental stress [virtual learning] puts on us students, that we have to be self-motivated to learn at home," said Taber. "It helps when you are not online all the time. It's a little less stress on our academics. I think we can do better when we are in person and can ask our teachers questions in person, each day."

ASD-S Superintendent Zoë Watson said in an email schools in the district spent the weeks between the return to full-time classroom learning being announced on March 19, and the scheduled return on Monday re-working operational and teaching plans. But in the week leading up to the scheduled change, she said news of increased variants and cases, including one in a Saint John school, generated concern.

"All of this led to us hearing more hesitancy and anxiety expressed by some staff, parents, and students about the full-time, in-person return to school," said Watson. "Teachers have had to pivot quickly to adapt their lesson planning back to the blended learning model, from in-person instruction."

Watson said the ever-evolving pandemic situation has been a challenge for students, parents, and school staff, but the district is proud of the work everyone has done to make the continuous changes work smoothly.

Watson said should the province decide to make the move to full-time, in-person classes later in the school year, most of the preparation work will have already been done.

However, Rick Cuming, president of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association and co-president of the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation, told Brunswick News in a previous interview he wants high schools to stick with the current hybrid model for the rest of the year.

"So changing the system again in May, we just wouldn't really think that's going to be a great idea, because of the huge strain on everyone in the system, and [given that] the end of the school year would just be on the horizon."

On Tuesday, Education Minister Dominic Cardy said students and parents can expect to get a look at what the rest of the school year will look like by the end of the month, but noted the unpredictable nature of the pandemic means there could be more last-minute changes like the one seen in Saturday's announcement.

EDUCATION

School district creates anti-racism, diversity committees



Published 10 minutes ago

Marlo Glass | Telegraph-Journal

The Anglophone South School District has created committees to address anti-racism, sexism and diversity in the school system.

The committees are a new initiative for existing policies which have been in place for several years, said Rob Fowler, chair of the District Education Council.

The committees are comprised of both district and school leaders, along with community members, “to build and implement a strategic plan to promote diversity and address heterosexism and discrimination in ASD-S culture,” said the policy report, which was presented at Wednesday night’s council meeting by anti-racism committee head Peter Smith, director of education support services for ASD-S.

The anti-racism advisory committee is tasked with advising the district on fostering an anti-racist learning environment for students.

“This policy is ensuring all members of the school community are welcomed, accepted and supported,” said superintendent Zoë Watson at the meeting.

Dr. Timothy Christie, a member of the committee and also a regional director of Horizon Health Network, said it’s not enough for an environment to be not racist, it should also be anti-racist.

“Our children are going to school, and need be able to do it in a safe, violence- and harassment-free environment,” he said, “which is an environment that is anti-racist.”

Christie said historically, institutions may have not been openly or overtly racist, but they’re not doing enough to be anti-racist, “which is actively making sure environments are safe for people.”

The report said it was clear from all members of the committee “that racism exists both on a systemic level and a cultural level within our schools, and school staff are not always empowered to recognize and respond to this.”

Christie said he hopes the committee will foster a culture of anti-racism by developing policies for how the organization should deal with instances of racism, and could also possibly

advocate for changes in curriculum to include Black history.

“A committee like this has the opportunity to tell the truth about the contributions of Black people in history, for instance, the contributions of immigrants in New Brunswick.”

Matthew Martin, president of Saint John Black Lives Matter, is also a member of the committee. He said it’s an important step in bringing “different expertise and experiences to the table” that might not be achieved just by talking with individuals.

Watson said the anti-racism committee will help leadership at the school district “apply an anti-racist lens to systems.”

“The committee also offers invaluable insights into the experiences Black, Indigenous, and people of colour have in our schools and in our community,” she said in an emailed statement.

In addition to the anti-racism committee, in March, 69 principals received a two-hour awareness training on anti-racism, Watson said.

“Our district curriculum co-ordinators have been supporting schools in diversifying their resources and helping teachers learn how to have meaningful discussions about race in the

classroom.”

At the committee’s meeting on March 17, they identified two ways in which the district could move forward with anti-racism policies: By investigating how other jurisdictions take anti-racism action, and to develop a district policy which “sets expectations for staff and protections for students who are Black, Indigenous, and people of colour.”

That policy would be similar to the policy which currently sets expectations and protections for students who are members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The LGBTQ+ committee, led by Jennifer Grant, school counselling co-ordinator for the district, is to help the district “identify next steps” in addressing LGBTQ+ issues within the district, which includes “investigating ways to ensure the psychological safety of staff who are members of the LGBTQ+ community.”

“We want to make sure our focus on LGBTQ+ initiatives aren’t just for students, but for staff as well,” Smith said.

NEWS

'It's an honour!': Hampton High School recognized for sustainability



From left: Hampton High School teacher Laura Myers, Grade 10 Environmental Science student Siobhan Hourihan, and Principal Rosemary Southard show off the NB Power Energy Efficiency Excellence Award the school received Thursday for their efforts to make the school more energy efficient and promote sustainability.
Photo: Submitted

Justin Samanski-Langille | Kings County Record

Hampton High School has won an NB Power Energy Efficiency Excellence Award in the education category.

The awards, which were originally scheduled to be presented in person last April, were presented virtually on Thursday.

"It's an honour to be selected for this award, and that we are being recognized on a provincial level for the sustainable projects we are doing," said teacher Laura Myers, who accepted the award on behalf of the school. "It is a whole school effort ... and I hope everyone feels they had a part in getting this award."

In addition to faculty and students, Myers said the wider Hampton community deserves credit as well, as community volunteers are directly involved in many of the school's sustainability initiatives.

Over the years, the school has been a leader in sustainability through actions like becoming the first school campus in the province to become completely smoke-free, installing solar panels, making an effort to reduce energy usage wherever possible, and running both a greenhouse and a food forest on the property.

"You don't do these things in the school for recognition, but it is still nice to be recognized, and I am hoping when other schools hear about the things we are doing at Hampton High School, they will be motivated to do it themselves," said Myers.

In a news release, NB Power President and CEO Keith Cronkhite praised this year's winners, and said he was excited to be able to celebrate them on Earth Day.

"At NB Power, we envision a more sustainable energy future and are committed to helping New Brunswickers save energy at home and at work, through behaviour changes and efficiency upgrades," said Cronkhite. "[Thursday's] award recipients exemplify a commitment to energy savings which helps the environment and drives our economy."

Awards were also presented in five other categories by NB Power Thursday, including: Joe Waugh with Horizon Health Network for the legacy category, Jane Burchill in the rising star category, Homesol in the partnership category, the University of New Brunswick Kinesiology Building in the innovation category, and the Village of Perth-Andover in the community category.

EDUCATION

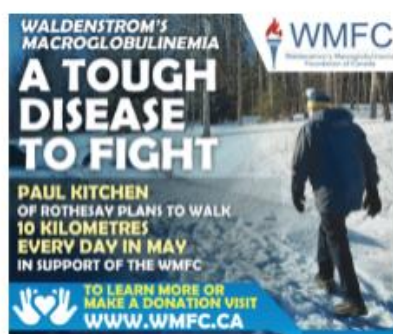
Miramichi vice-principal recognized with excellence award

Miramichi Leader

A Miramichi teacher has been recognized with an Excellence in Education award by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Krista Page, the vice-principal at Max Aitken Academy, was among 10 award recipients from the anglophone sector announced Friday in a news release from the department.

“It’s a great honour to recognize these 10 educators for their determination, passion and incredible dedication to fostering a positive learning environment,” Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Dominic Cardy said in the release.



“Their commitment to excellence is particularly inspirational during the challenging times we are living due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The awards acknowledge individuals who have shown "exceptional dedication, ingenuity, leadership, passion and professionalism" in the education and early childhood learning sectors, according to the release. They also highlight "innovative methods of fostering development, exceptional efforts to promote a positive learning environment and initiatives to support students with difficulties."

Page and Lori Johnson, a teacher at Dalhousie Regional High School, were saluted from the Anglophone North School District.

Recipients from the Anglophone South School District are teachers Bridget Miller of Quispamsis Middle School and Emily Somers and Scott Legge of St. Stephen High School.

From the Anglophone East School District, teachers Karen Baggs of Sunny Brae Middle School in Moncton and Margo Belliveau of Moncton's Bernice MacNaughton High School have been honoured.

Teachers April-Dawn Lanteigne of Sunbury West School in Fredericton Junction, Holly Brown of Tiny Bubbles Early Learning Centre in Fredericton and Tracy Graham of Nackawic High School are the Anglophone West School District recipients.

The awards will be presented Saturday at a virtual ceremony.

10 N.B. Educators Recognized

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

Brad Perry

Apr 27, 2021 8:55 AM

Ten New Brunswick educators have been recognized by the province for their outstanding work.

The Excellence in Education Awards were awarded during a virtual ceremony on Saturday.

Three of the winners were in the Anglophone South School District: Bridget Miller at Quispamsis Middle School, along with Emily Somers and Scott Legge of St. Stephen High School.



Lindy Buckley / CC

"It's a great honour to recognize these 10 educators for their determination, passion and incredible dedication to fostering a positive learning environment," Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Dominic Cardy said in a news release.

"Their commitment to excellence is particularly inspirational during the challenging times we are living due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

The awards recognize those who have shown exceptional dedication, ingenuity, leadership, passion and professionalism in the education and early learning systems.

They also highlight the success of innovative methods of fostering the development of young children and students, exceptional efforts to promote a positive learning environment and initiatives to support students with difficulties.

KV High Off To 'Reach For The Top' Nationals

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

[Brad Perry](#)

Apr 30, 2021 7:41 AM

Kennebecasis Valley High School's *Reach For The Top* team is once again off to the national championship.

KV High defeated Fredericton High School 420-320 for its eighth straight provincial championship.

Jason Thorne, coach of the KV High team, said it was a tough competition and they were happy to come out with the win.

"We played Fredericton High very closely this season. They were certainly our biggest competition and going into the final game they had beaten us a couple of games previous to that this season," Thorne said in a phone interview.

"We were expecting a really close competitive game in the final and it was certainly very exciting."

This title – the school's 15th in the past 16 seasons – also breaks Fredericton's previous record of 14 total championships.

Thorne said this season has certainly been different than usual because of the restrictions related to COVID-19.

While practices have been a combination of in-person and online, Thorne said all competitions have taken place virtually.

"We have had the opportunity to play teams from outside the province online, so we have played some Ontario tournaments in preparation for our provincial championship here, but that certainly has been very different using an online buzzer system and video conferencing platforms," said Thorne.

KV High will now move on to compete in the national championship, which is scheduled to take place online from May 29 to 30.

The team has captured the national title three times since 2010.

EDUCATION

Reach for the top: KVHS team breaks records at provincials



The Kennebecais Valley High School team won provincials at the Reach for the Top competition. From left to right: Coach Jason Thorne, Kyla Seyler, Jackson McElman, Tyler Newell, Andrew Bachynsky. Teammate Eli Nason is not pictured.
Photo: Jason Thorne



Published an hour ago

Sean Mott | Telegraph-Journal

Jason Thorne waited until after his team won provincial gold to tell them they had also broken two records at the same time.

"I waited to tell the team after the game about the records because I thought the weight of the game itself was sufficient," said the Kennebecasis Valley High School teacher.

Thorne is the coach for the school's Reach for the Top team, a group dedicated to competing in a Canada-wide knowledge contest. The team scored provincial glory this week, establishing its school as one of the

its school as one of the most dominant forces in competition in New Brunswick.

Now the team is setting its sights on national glory next month.

"We've traditionally been very competitive at nationals," Thorne said. "Year in, year out, we're competitive."

Thorne has coached the school's Reach for the Top team for more than 20 years. The team competes against other groups in round-robin single-day tournaments that test its knowledge of everything from chemistry to the Oscars.

"This year it was changed to a virtual competition played over a few weeks," he said.

Thorne's team tore through the round-robin system, racking up win after win until it was tied with fellow dominant team Fredericton High School, who it faced in a tournament-deciding game.

Kennebecasis lagged behind Fredericton in the early goings of the game, but the valley squad roared back to secure a win and provincial recognition with a score of 420 to 320.

"We certainly work very hard," Thorne said. "It's been an odd year for sure because we've done practices virtually. We've still managed to practice as much as we can."

Team captain Jackson McElman, who is in his last year with the team, appreciated being able to snag victory during such a strange school year.

"It felt kind of special in a way," he said.

According to Thorne, the Kennebecais team earned more than trophy with its victory last Tuesday. The team has won 15 provincial championships in the last 16 seasons, breaking Fredericton High's record of 14. KVHS has also won eight consecutive provincial championships, another new record.

"(The team) was pleasantly surprised," Thorne said. "I'm certainly very pleased."

Thorne has given his team the rest of the week off before it begins training for the national competition, which will be held online in late May. The team has won nationals in 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2015-16, the most of any school from New Brunswick.

"Given a few lucky breaks, anything could happen," McElman said.

NEWS

Break a leg: Students figure out how to go on with the show



Snow White cast members Shelby Scott and Dakota Peacock rehearse ahead of a pair of live-streamed performances scheduled for May 14 and 15.

Photo: Submitted

© Published 4 hours ago



Justin Samanski-Langille | Kings County Record

Theatre is set to return to Hampton High School this month for the first time during the pandemic, and while it won't look the same as previous productions, the magic of theatre will still be there.

From May 13 to 15, the Hampton High School Theatre Company will be putting on live stream-only productions of *Charlotte's Web* and *Snow White*.

"Each performance will be performed live, but it will be virtual," said director Shane MacMillan. "It's a different type of experience, but yes, the magic is still there. It's a different type of magic, but it is theatre, so there will always be magic there."

Bringing the two productions to stage during the pandemic has been a challenge in more ways than one, said MacMillan, with multiple delays as case counts have risen and fallen, and with a laundry list of public-health rules for cast and crew alike to follow.

Besides not having a physical audience, he said everyone had to adapt to wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing at all times, even for the actors performing on stage, having

duplicates of many props and costume items so they can be cleaned in between each actor's interactions with them, and contact-tracing information must be collected for everyone entering the theatre.

"Art is not meant to have restrictions ... so that in itself has been a challenge," said MacMillan. "You have to totally rethink how you stage a scene for example, and go about it based on the rules and regulations in place ... but you can't look at it as a drag. This is the way it is, and that's what you have to accept. This [theatre] program is 25 years old and you either let the program die or you do what you have to do."

For Grade 12 student Shelby Scott, cast as Snow White and many other roles in the eponymous production, adjusting to these new rules has been a challenge, but a worthy one.

"I'm really happy to have a production we can do this year," said Scott. "It's nice to have some semblance of a normal year in such a unique year, and just finish the year on a good note."

Scott said the pandemic rules mean there is a lot more to have to think about while on stage – keeping your spacing from other actors and only touching certain props for example – but it all becomes part of the usual rehearsals, and as *Snow White* only features two performers, it is a bit easier.

MacMillan said that dedication to the craft and drive to make the two productions happen regardless of the challenges is shared by all cast, crew, and supporting parents and school staff involved in the production.

As for what audiences can expect when they tune in virtually later this month, MacMillan said *Snow White* will be a unique experience as just two actors perform all the character roles in the fairytale, while blending in a healthy dose of dark humour, while *Charlotte's Web* will bring the beloved classic to the stage with all its charm.

Tickets for the four performances, two of each play, are available by donation at <https://www.showtix4u.com/events/17989>.



Information Morning - Saint John



ASD-S superintendent speaks to policy of retaining or promoting students



Play Segment

13:01



Share Segment

Following our interview with a mother concerned about her son being pushed ahead to grade 2, host Julia Wright speaks with Anglophone South superintendent Zoe Watson. Watson says the district has seen an uptick in the number of parents inquiring about having their children repeat a grade.

Aired: May 4, 2021

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-28/clip/15840989>

New Brunswick

Pandemic cause of major learning gaps with students, superintendent says



'It's been a difficult year for families, for students and for our teachers'



Elizabeth Fraser · CBC News · Posted: May 04, 2021 12:45 PM AT | Last Updated: 32 minutes ago



Anglophone South School District superintendent Zoe Watson says the province's inclusion policy does not permit public schools to use retention as a standard education practice. (Julia Wright / CBC)

[12 comments](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused numerous learning gaps for students and forced teachers to make more adjustments because of it, the superintendent of the Anglophone South School District says.

Zoe Watson said more parents were inquiring about children being held back a year last year because of the three-month school closures.

This year, some parents have chosen to home-school their children, and others have stayed home all year because of health concerns. Some students attended, but parents chose to keep them home during the red and orange phase of COVID-19 restrictions.

"It's been a difficult year for families, for students and for our teachers," Watson said.

Rothsay woman desperate for son to be held back

Watson made the comments while responding to a Rothsay mom's fight to hold her son back a grade level after she was told he would be promoted to Grade 2, despite arguing he isn't ready.

Tanya White is desperate for her six-year-old son Nikki, who has high-functioning autism spectrum disorder and is developmentally delayed, to repeat Grade 1.

Nikki can't read and missed eight and a half months of school. Because of his father's health issues, the family has been living on a roller coaster since last May, "surviving moment to moment, day by day," White said.

Nikki returned to school in January of 2021, and his father died a month later. White said she is appealing the decision to promote her son to Grade 2.

Watson wouldn't speak to White's specific case but said the district has seen an uptick in questions about students repeating a grade since the pandemic started a little over a year ago.

She said school districts across the province are seeing fewer students held back because of the province's inclusive policy.

Retention 'not a standard of practice'

During an interview with *Information Morning Saint John*, she referred to a section in New Brunswick's 2013 inclusive policy about grade retention.

"In New Brunswick, public schools are not to use retention as a standard education practice," she said.

However, she did say that if a student is retained, they must be placed on a personalized learning plan, where educators would have to give details on teaching strategies and different teaching approaches in the second year of a grade level.

- [Rothsay mom begs for son with autism to be held back a year](#)

Watson said students who are promoted to the next grade level are capable of making educational gains.

"However ... their learning problems must be addressed and we cannot continue to just pass them along," she said.

Watson said supports also have to be put in place, such as curriculum and the amount of work received.

"It may not be in everything," she said. "Maybe it's a literacy issue. Maybe it's a numeracy issue. This allows the teacher to target instruction."

Watson said she understands there are different views and opinions about retaining a student to a particular grade level.

When she was working as a teacher in the Sussex area, Watson said, more students were retained. Sometimes, a student might be kept back twice.

"As I reflect back on many cases, it didn't always give us the desired outcome," she said. "Sometimes as students got older, it would lead to disengagement and attendance issues."

Learning problems need to be addressed

Education Minister Dominic Cardy said Monday the province is reviewing its inclusion policy.

Early last year, Cardy called for a review of New Brunswick's inclusive education policy [while on a province-wide tour seeking feedback on his green paper on education reform](#).

He was also calling to group students from kindergarten to Grade 2 together.

Watson reiterated that if a parent isn't happy with a decision to promote their child to another grade, there is an appeal process with the district, parents and the school.

"At the end of the day the learning problems that the child is having need to be addressed," Watson said.