

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – September 14, 2016

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, September 14, 2016 at 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Wayne Spires, Larry Boudreau, Bernie Regenbogen, Dan O'Connor, Linda Sherbo, Richard Malone, Heather Gillis, Justin Tinker

Regrets: Roger Nesbitt, Gerry Mabey and Rob Alexander

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Suzanne LeBlanc Healey, Director Curriculum & Instruction; Kate McLellan, Director of Education Support Services; Debbie Thomas, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration, and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He welcomed Mr. Justin Tinker as the new member for Subdistrict 12.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fowler noted that in the absence of Mr. Mabey, Item 4.3 would be addressed by Mrs. Watson. With that noted, he asked that if there were no questions or concerns with the amended Agenda, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Regenbogen moved that the amended Agenda be approved. Ms. Sherbo seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the August 24, 2016 meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Spires moved that the Minutes be approved. Mr. Malone seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.3 Public Comment

None

3. Presentation

Mr. Fowler welcomed Mr. Kevin Doucette from Ernst & Young to the meeting. He advised that this exercise provided an opportunity to look at what infrastructure the District currently has in the inner city of Saint John with a goal of improving situations in the area. Mr. Doucette then presented an overview of the findings which were outlined in the document "*Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) Multi-year Infrastructure Planning – Saint John Inner City Schools*" that was posted with Council's meeting materials and forms part of these minutes.

He explained that there are seven schools within the inner city with varying grade configurations including: four K-8 schools (Hazen White St. Francis, Princess Elizabeth, Prince Charles and St. John the Baptist/King Edward); one K-5 (Centennial School); one K-2 (M. Gerald Teed Memorial School) and one 3-8 school (Millidgeville North). The average age of the seven buildings is 58 years old and from 2001 – 2014, enrolment has declined by 26%.

The objective was to examine the potential of a grade reconfiguration for the Saint John inner city schools to grades K-5 and 6-8 for future infrastructure planning. The reconfigured elementary schools should have no more than 400 students. The end goal includes vacating leased spaces at Hazen White St. Francis and St. John the Baptist/King Edward.

He noted that the existing school infrastructure does not have sufficient space for the requested grade reconfiguration because of two 'pinch points' created when changing one of the existing schools to a 6-8 middle school:

- Millidgeville North has space available to reconfigure the school to a middle school; however, M. Gerald Teed Memorial (the closest school) does not have sufficient space for the 223 K-5 students to be moved from Millidgeville North;
- if Princess Elizabeth were converted to a middle school, Hazen White St. Francis and Centennial Schools will not have enough space for the additional 243 K-5 students, considering there is potential for the Early French Immersion program changing from grade 3 to grade 1 entry (currently under review by the Government of New Brunswick).

Mr. Doucette advised that their recommendation would be to build a new 6-8 middle school (600 students) for the Saint John inner city schools if the District decided to reconfigure the schools to K-5 and 6-8. The cost estimate would be approximately \$24.6M - \$25.6M, depending upon the cost of the land and any topographical challenges.

Once built, a new middle school would take in students in grade six to eight from across the inner city area, necessitating a grade reconfiguration. Recommendations include:

- Amalgamating St. John the Baptist/King Edward School into Prince Charles School, which would otherwise become a trigger school once the grade six to eight students leave (i.e., fewer than 100 students or less than 30% capacity). The district could then close St. John the Baptist/King Edward, and save on lease costs.
- Amalgamating Hazen-White/St. Francis School into Princess Elizabeth School, which too would become a trigger school once grades six to eight students leave. The district could then close Hazen-White/St. Francis, and save on lease costs.
- Amalgamating either Centennial School or M. Gerald Teed Memorial School into Millidgeville North School. The district could then close either Centennial or M. Gerald Teed.

The report estimates school amalgamations could mean an estimated \$1.5M in deferred maintenance cost avoidance and the potential for \$1.9M in leasing cost savings. An estimated \$728,000 in annual staffing and operational costs could be reinvested to offset the potential additional costs of student busing to a new middle school.

Following the presentation, Council asked numerous questions of Mr. Doucette which he clarified. Mr. Fowler then enquired if Council was ready to make a motion to begin a study of the inner city schools and asked for any comments. He explained the process would be to present information to the community and ask for their feedback. Mrs. Watson also noted that we would look at other options that may be presented during these consultations. Meetings would include two public sessions per school over the next few months with a decision to the Minister in March.

It was suggested that a tour of the seven schools could be arranged for Council members who may not be familiar with the buildings that are outlined in this report. Mr. Doucette also suggested that a tour of a new school (there is one in Fredericton) would give a clear picture of what to expect in a new middle school building.

It was noted that it might be useful for new members to have information on what a “middle school” and an “elementary” school is – the different needs and wants for the different levels.

There being no further discussion, motion was made by Mr. Regenbogen that we begin the study of the inner city schools in Saint John. Ms. Sherbo seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau voted against the motion.

4. Business Arising

4.1 PSSC Orientation Session Dates

Mrs. Watson provided recommended dates for a session in each Education Centre. It was noted that two Council members would be unable to attend their session, and therefore the dates were revised as follows:

St. Stephen Education Centre – St. Stephen Middle School – October 5th
Hampton Education Centre – Hampton High School – October 18th
Saint John Education Centre – Donaldson Room – October 25th

Council recommended that these dates be provided to Principals as soon as possible. Mr. Fowler noted he will have a meeting with those who volunteered to assist with the planning of these sessions.

4.2 Update on Budget Request to the Minister

Mr. Fowler reminded Council that following last month's meeting, a letter was sent to the Minister requesting assistance in funding to offset the projected shortfall of approximately \$1.2M as Council is not permitted to run a deficit. He was pleased to note that after consultations with the Department, the District has received additional funding of approximately \$823,000 which has been allocated as a result of the savings from the closure of three schools in the District. It was noted that 100% of the Human Resources savings from a school closure in year one, 50% in year two and 25% in year three are to be returned to the District but had been cut from this year's District's budget. This allocation represents all three years of savings. This should allow the District to balance the budget for the 2016-17 school year. He advised that the Department has also committed to reviewing the funding for Educational Assistants and School Intervention Workers as the District was severely underfunded for staff in these areas based on projections of staff required. He felt this was very positive news.

Council members asked if this new budget is now realistic for the District and what would happen if we had a shortfall. Mr. MacDonald noted that this is only a 'forecast' and that the District does quarterly updates and would be able to flag anything that might be of concern. He advised that he was comfortable with the revised budget and will monitor it carefully as the year progresses.

Question arose on the need for Educational Assistants in the schools and whether or not it was going down or staying the same. Mrs. Watson advised that in the Hampton Education Centre the number of EAs has gone down over the last 3 years but increased this year over last. St. Stephen has increased but this year remained the same and Saint John Education Centre has shown a steady increase.

Following the discussion, Mr. Spires moved that the revised budget for the 2016-17 year be approved by Council. Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau voted against the motion.

4.3 Update on New West Side School in Saint John – Naming Subcommittee

In the absence of Mr. Mabey, Mrs. Watson advised Council that a letter has gone to the Minister to appoint a committee member for this group. Debbie Thomas has been named as the District representative. Mr. Mabey will name a community member. Once all are in place, the subcommittee will begin the process of choosing three names to submit to the Minister.

5. New Business

5.1 Surplus Land Request – Town of St. George

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the Briefing Note that was prepared and posted for Council in response to the request from the Town of St. George to declare some District land as surplus. He advised that he talked to the school administration at Fundy Middle and High School and was advised that the school does use the tennis courts in question and were concerned about what they would receive in return.

Mr. MacDonald in his Briefing Note recommended that Council might want to go back to the Town for formal confirmation of whether or not the school would be permitted to use the new facility during school hours, free of charge. He stated that he had broached this subject with them, but there were no guarantees provided as they would have to wait for a feasibility study to be completed. He also advised that the feasibility study could not go forward until the land was declared surplus.

Mr. Boudreau spoke to the request and advised that this was a great community effort and that he would like to see it go forward. He was confident that the school would be able to use the facilities as they chose the location because it was next to the school. He did not want to have Council hold up the project when the LSDs were all on board, as well as corporations and the community. The Town cannot move forward without the land.

Mrs. Watson commented that this was a large piece of land they were looking to have declared surplus.

Concerns were raised by Council members including what would happen if the land was declared surplus and the project/feasibility study did not proceed – would the land revert back to the District? Discussions took place about possible motions, or motions with conditions.

Following discussions, Mr. Boudreau moved that Council declare the land surplus. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Mr. Fowler cast the tie-breaking vote to approve the motion. Motion carried.

5.2 PSSC Budgets

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the PSSC budget document that was prepared and posted for Council. He explained that the rate is \$2.40 per student (same as last year) with \$500 being provided to smaller schools. He also noted that enrolment is based on September 2015 final numbers.

Discussion took place on the different activities that schools use this money for including School Connects, parent communications and programs, etc. Mrs. Watson advised that the District would be paying for 50% of the cost of School Connects so that the District can use it in case of emergencies.

Mr. Boudreau moved that Council approve the PSSC budgets as presented. Mr. Spires seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. MacDonald will ensure this information is provided to all Principals.

5.3 Naming of Fields, Libraries, etc. /Policy 409

Mrs. Watson asked Council if they would like to be involved in the naming of fields, libraries, rooms, etc. within schools as it is identified in Policy 409 as a DEC responsibility. She explained that this is something that they could delegate to the Superintendent to oversee. After a short discussion, Mr. Boudreau moved that the Superintendent assume this responsibility on behalf of the DEC. Mr. Regenbogen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report and Updates

Mrs. Watson advised that on Sunday, September 11th we learned of the unexpected death of a grade 8 student from Sussex Middle School, Matthew Palmer. Matthew was well known in the Sussex area, a young boy with muscular dystrophy who had just had a surgery at the IWK and returned home. His mom Melana is a long time staff member at Sussex Middle School and his sister attends Sussex Regional. Staff gathered on Sunday evening with support from the Crisis Response team to put plans in place for Monday morning with the students. She asked for a moment of silence in Matthew's memory.

The opening of schools went fairly smoothly across the District as we welcomed approximately 23,000 students. There were six schools needing additional classes, and there were transportation concerns in St. Martins and in Grand Manan which are being worked out. She noted that media have been enquiring about enrolment numbers but that it is too soon to determine as there is still a lot of movement during the first weeks of school.

Open House events and the selection of PSSC members continue; Mrs. Watson offered a thank you to staff for being available to meet parents. The schedule for all the events has been posted on the portal for Council.

The most recent issue of NBTA News featured three articles by ASD-S educators – Heather Ingalls from Grand Manan shared the story of the two service dogs Skittles and Grace; Anne Ervin from Lakewood Heights was one of 54 educators who participated in Project Overseas and worked in Dominica over the summer. There was also a great article by Tim Zammit, an exchange teacher from Willunga High School in South Australia who is working at Woodlawn in Saint John.

Mrs. Watson noted that tonight in the Donaldson Room Gary Hall was hosting a professional learning session for about 50 early childhood educators on how to use books with young children. Living Saint John, as part of their early literacy strategy provided funds to purchase books for daycares.

Mrs. Watson advised Council that she and John MacDonald and Paul Smith met with the Town of Hampton to review their plans for a new multipurpose facility next to the arena and pool. The Town will undertake public consultations including the local service districts from Hampton, Upham, Norton and Kings County to gather feedback. If this proposal moves forward, they will be looking to the District to declare some land next to Hampton Middle School as surplus.

6.2 Chair Report and Updates

Mr. Fowler reminded Council about the information on the Policy Governance Training that had recently been sent out by Stacey Brown. He encouraged all members to attend (Oct 28 & 29) and to register with Stacey. He noted that expenses would be covered by the District.

6.3 Correspondence

None, all correspondence posted on the portal for Council's information.

6.4 Members' Notebook

Mr. Regenbogen advised that he had attended a number of open house events and that they were all very well done. He noted that at Princess Elizabeth the Community School Coordinator did an extremely good job – organizing 50 volunteers from Kings Church (Quispamsis) for the evening. They provided 400 back packs, haircuts for the students, games, family pictures, clothes, etc.

Mr. O'Connor reminded Council of the upcoming mental health session being organized by the four Saint John High Schools – "It Takes a Village to Raise a Teen: A Family's Journey to Mental Wellness". It will be held on Tuesday, October 4th at 7:00 pm at Saint John High School. All are welcome.

Ms. Gillis advised that she has attended open house events at Champlain Heights, Bayview and Prince Charles and that all went very well. She will attend two more next week.

Mr. Spires has attended numerous open house events in his area and was welcomed and offered a chance to speak to parents and families in attendance.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and advised that the next meeting will be held at 490 Woodward Avenue on Wednesday, October 12, 2016 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary