

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – December 9, 2015

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, December 9, 2015 at 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Wayne Spires, Roger Nesbitt, Stephen Campbell, Larry Boudreau, Charlotte McGill-Pierce, Joanne Gunter, Bob McDevitt, Kerry Olinskie, Gerry Mabey and Don Cullinan.

Regrets: Sherman Ross

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Paul Smith, Director of Schools, Hampton Education Centre; Debbie Thomas, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration; Kate McLellan, Director of Education Support Services and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Mr. Fowler passed on regrets for Mr. Ross. Mr. Fowler welcomed ASD-S winners of the Minister's Excellence in Teaching Award Mark Perry, Kennebecasis Valley High School; JoAnn Watters, Princess Elizabeth and Rose Theriault, River Valley Middle School. He also welcomed PSSC and community members from Deer Island and St. Martins who were in attendance.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Agenda with Council and asked if there were no questions or concerns that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the Agenda be approved. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the November 18, 2015 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. Cullinan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.3 Public Comment

Angela Rogers, Chair of Deer Island PSSC addressed Council and introduced Lois Mitchell who would present on their behalf.

It was noted that Deer Island feels that the moving of their middle school to Fundy High School is actually a 'closure' of their middle school and reviewed the reasons why including: travel issues; emergency issues that may happen while students are at school; students being bused with high school students; attendance issues; transportation issues with the ferry; safety while on the ferry; safety of students if bus breaks down on the roadways. She also reviewed middle school advantages to staying on Deer Island, including: leadership opportunities; high academic standards; participation in extracurricular activities; sense of family/community; time spent outside; no issues with truancy, alcohol or drug abuse, suicide. It was noted that the health of the students would suffer; not a lot of time to do homework; no free time or family time; students from Deer Island do not see Fundy High School as 'their' school and have a life-long attachment to Deer Island Community School and there would be an impact on the K-5 students left behind.

It was felt that there were no benefits in having one middle school for Eastern Charlotte and that it works well only in theory. The costs would be less time and the quality of education would suffer. There would be an impact on physical and emotional health as well as safety concerns. The community would lose a vital piece – Deer Island is unique and they are proud of it! This process has been stressful for parents, students, staff and teachers have not been permitted to speak; their ability to access information has not been easy.

Mrs. Watson noted that the process for teachers to have input would be for them to communicate with the Chair, via email or written submissions instead of standing up in a public forum. Mr. Fowler commented that staff are in an awkward position – the only instruction they receive would be to answer in facts only, not their opinion. This stand is taken by the NBTA.

Question arose when do middle school numbers become 'too few'? Ms. Mitchell commented that Deer Island numbers are going up to 24. Mrs. Watson clarified that there are currently 9-10 students in grades 6-8 at the school and a forecast of 18 for next fall.

Mr. Fowler thanked the Deer Island community for their presentation.

Mr. Jason Garnett, PSSC Chair from St. Martins addressed Council. His question was how do Council members who are unable to attend the public meetings get the information that is presented? Mr. Fowler advised that detailed notes are taken by the Superintendent and shared, with copies posted on the portal for all Council members.

He advised that there will also be a meeting to review all presentations, notes and letters and information received in order for Council to make an informed decision.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Garnett for attending on behalf of St. Martins School.

3. Business Arising

3.1 Policy 409 Sustainability Review Update: Lawrence Station; Morna Heights/Grand Bay Primary/Inglewood:

Mr. Fowler advised that the second Policy 409 meeting had taken place on November 24th at Lawrence Station and it was well attended with 6 presenters. Notes from this meeting have been posted for Council on the portal.

The second Policy 409 meeting for Morna Heights took place on December 7th also with six presenters. The meeting was polite and respectful with about one half of the gymnasium filled with community members.

The second Policy 409 meeting for Grand Bay Primary and Inglewood School was held on December 8th with numerous community members addressing Council. Notes from this meeting and the Morna Heights meeting will be posted to the DEC portal for Council members to review.

3.2 Minister's Excellence in Teaching Award Winners

Mr. Fowler advised Council of his attendance at the award ceremony held in Fredericton and that this is a highlight every year for him. He then introduced each of the three ASD-S winners and played their vignettes.

The winners are Mark Perry, Kennebecasis Valley High School; JoAnn Watters, Princess Elizabeth and Rose Theriault from River Valley Middle School.

4. New Business

4.1 Governance Policies #8 - 10

Mr. Fowler asked if there were any changes or updates required to the policies that were posted on the portal for tonight's meeting.

Mrs. Watson commented that in policy GP 8 – Effective Communication - Communication with Parents – the title “Senior Education Officers” should be deleted as they are now referred to as “directors”.

Mrs. Watson also noted that she would like to recommend a change under DEC/PSSC Communication in the same policy. She explained that the bullet point that reads “Principals will forward minutes of PSSC meetings to the DEC Secretary” – this is not

always possible as Principals often have a difficult time to get the Minutes. She suggested that this should read “Principals will forward minutes of PSSC meetings **when available** to the DEC Secretary”.

Mr. Fowler then called for a motion to amend policy GP - 8 as per above comments. Motion was made by Mr. Nesbitt and seconded by Mr. Cullinan. Motion passed.

4.2 Council Staff Relationship Policies # 1 - 3

Mr. Fowler then asked for a motion to accept GP #9 & 10 and Council Staff Relationship policies #1 – 3 as written. Motion was made by Mr. Nesbitt and seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

4.3 Policy E-5

Mr. Fowler provided background information on the former policy E-9 (from School District 10) and the work that had been done. He also talked about the recent work done by the DEC Chairs and Stacey Brown on the current draft (E-5) which is before Council tonight. It has now been vetted by the DEC Chairs and provincial DEC members. He stated that what the affected students face every day is very difficult to deal with. Mr. Fowler stated that he would like to see this policy adopted in ASD-S.

Mr. Fowler then asked for comments or questions from Council on draft policy E-5.

Mr. Nesbitt stated that no one should be ostracized; however, felt that this should be included under the Positive Learning Environment (E-2) policy which could be amended.

Mr. Spires advised that he contacted those who had worked on the original policy and advised that they were pleased with this new draft. He felt the policy has ‘teeth’ and will help students feel included; to be free to be themselves.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce felt that it was a modern, worthwhile policy and felt that it would put us ahead of the curve.

Mr. Mabey felt there was no need for a separate policy. Mr. Fowler explained that the research shows that we do need it – it is about protecting, not promoting.

Mr. McDevitt felt that the time has come and he would support it.

Mr. Boudreau felt that we need an inclusive policy for “everything”. Not just LBGQTQ, bullying, etc. Other people need to be taken care of. Our E-2 policy could be re-evaluated and put ‘teeth’ into the policy to back it up.

Mr. Fowler advised that we currently have some 25,000 anti-bullying programs in Canada.

Mr. Nesbitt commented that a policy is a statement – backed up by strategies and felt that is where our focus should be.

Mr. Campbell then suggested that Council table this matter until next month providing more time for review. Mr. Fowler suggested that the draft has been available long enough. Mr. Fowler then asked for a motion to table this item until January. Motion was made by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Mr. Nesbitt. Five members were in favour, five opposed. Mr. Fowler then cast the deciding vote and the motion was defeated.

Mr. Fowler next asked for a motion from Council to approve the adoption of E-5 as presented. Motion was made by Mr. Spires and seconded by Mrs. McGill-Pierce. By a vote of 6-3, the motion was carried.

4.4 Budget Update

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the financial report that was posted with Council's meeting materials for tonight. He is forecasting a break-even year and noted that replacement costs are better than they were last year. There are some areas where we see higher costs, but overall, it is better. Mrs. Watson noted that there is some pressure under Education Support Services – we added 14 EAs from September due to students moving. We cannot move EAs past October so there was a need for more EAs. As well, there was an additional School Intervention Worker added.

Mr. Fowler then called for a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Mr. Nesbitt motioned that Council accept the financial report as presented. Mr. Mabey seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. Information Items

5.1 Superintendent's Report and Updates

Mrs. Watson advised that we had learned late last week of the sudden death of a kindergarten student at Dr. Leatherbarrow Primary School in Hampton. Cilas Hoyt was hospitalized early last week and passed away a few days later. The Hoyt family have other children in Hampton area schools. Support was provided to Lisa Jardine and her school community; members of the District team were at the school as well as our NBTA Counsellor Carmen Meehan. Mrs. Watson asked for a moment of silence in memory of Cilas Hoyt.

Mrs. Watson referred to a letter from John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration with regard to the implementation of a new on line booking system for rentals in January – this letter of explanation will be sent this week to groups that rent our schools. A committee of current Principals worked with our Mr. MacDonald to examine our rental process and fee structure – the fees have not changed since prior to the 2012 amalgamation of three Districts. The new fee structure will be introduced but will not take effect until September 2016. The fee is waived for not for profit youth oriented activities.

District staff Lynn MacDonald and Pam Miller are ASD-S representatives on provincial committees planning for the arrival of refugee families in the District. At this point we know NB will receive approximately 1,500 Syrian refugees between December and March of 2016; about 85% of the refugees will settle in Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John, and about 15% will settle in rural areas. We know those arriving first will be primarily privately sponsored.

Mrs. MacDonald is working with Newcomer Connections (YMCA) as they are the settlement agency in Saint John responsible for housing and settling the families. They will be hiring two settlement workers and these staff members may be housed in schools. We are involving the District Education Support Services team next week in discussions, and developing an intake process that will give schools more information on each student. A Welcome Kit for new families is being developed, as well as educational materials to be used for students and staff. In the Saint John Centre, Director of Schools Debbie Thomas is looking at space availability in schools and is in the process of communicating with Principals. There are many plans to be made and DEC will be updated as more information becomes available. At this time we do not have exact dates they will arrive, numbers, or where they will live.

Good news to CELEBRATE this week as Coles McAllister Place donated books and \$5,000 dollars to Forest Hills School for their "Giving Tuesday 2015" campaign. The book store adopted the school late last year and have donated several books and an additional \$1,200 from their online campaign. The Mill Rats presented Forest Hills School families with vouchers for up to 6 free tickets each for the December 23rd game. Havelock School and Fairvale Elementary schools received \$7,000 each from Kings Valley Wesleyan. As well, the Saint John Sea Dogs were at Princess Elizabeth School reading to students as part of their "Hat Trick for Literacy" program which is happening in 32 of our elementary schools.

Mrs. Watson advised Council of the retirement of long time educator from the St. Stephen Education Centre, Keith Pierce. He was a former Director, Superintendent, Learning Specialist and recently a School Reviewer. We thank him for his many years of service and wish him well in retirement.

This week and next week, ASD-S will CELEBRATE many Christmas concerts, choirs, breakfasts and dinners as we move closer to the holidays. We hope that Council will be able to take in some of the great events happening in ASD-S. The Christmas Concert list has been posted to the portal.

Mrs. Watson advised that Jenny MacDougall, Director of Schools in St. Stephen Education Centre has been working with the parent committee from Eastern Charlotte in preparation for the move of the grades 6 to Fundy High School in the fall of 2016. The next item on the Committee's agenda will be the re-naming process in order to incorporate the full middle school grades that will soon become part of the school. A sub-committee will be formed with Mr. Boudreau acting as Chair. The committee will look for a community member to join this group, and we have requested a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development representative to sit as well in accordance with Policy 409.

Mrs. Watson reported to Council that the 2015 ASD-S Christmas card has been chosen from the many elementary school entries received. District staff voted by placing 'dots' on their favourite selection. Our winner was a grade 5 student who will be presented with a framed copy of her card design along with cards to send out to her family and friends. Mrs. Watson will present this during the school Christmas concert on Monday, December 14.

5.2 Chairperson's Report and Updates

Mr. Fowler commented that he had attended a delicious dinner of ham and potato scallop at Hazen white St. Francis and would attend the Hammond River Valley Christmas Dinner being held on Thursday of this week.

5.3 Correspondence

None

5.4 Members Notebook

Mr. McDevitt commented on the St. Malachy's Syrian Refugee Day which he attended. He advised that it was very well put together with good speakers and outlined the many things happening to prepare students to understand the crisis and how to welcome these new students.

Mr. Boudreau asked if there was any chance for a change to the facilities rental charges that are set to happen in Sept 2016. Mrs. Watson advised that for youth not for profit there would not be a charge; however, for adult not for profit, there will be a fee.

Question was asked if ASD-S is being kept in the loop with regard to the refugees who will be arriving in the city. Mrs. Watson advised that we are in the loop, but not a lot of information is known at this time.

Question arose on whether Council was required to make a motion to form a sub-committee to review the re-naming process for Fundy High School (as it gets ready to accept a full middle school program in the fall of 2016) which would be chaired by Mr. Boudreau. Motion was then made by Stephen Campbell and seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

6. 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, January 13, 2016 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary