

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – April 10, 2013

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, April 10, 2013 at Sussex Regional High School, 55 Leonard Drive. The following council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Gerry Mabey, Roger Nesbitt, Rob Fowler, Bob McDevitt, Charlotte McGill-Pierce, Wayne Spires, Larry Boudreau, Stephen Campbell and Sherman Ross.

Regrets: Gary Crossman, Don Cullinan and Joanne Gunter

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Kate McLellan, Director Education Services, Paul Smith, Senior Education Officer, Hampton; Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

The media was present.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Nesbitt, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. as Mr. Fowler was called away from the meeting unexpectedly.

Mr. Nesbitt advised that Mr. Crossman, Mr. Cullinan and Mrs. Gunter would be unable to attend this meeting and send their regrets.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes

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

Mr. Nesbitt referred to the Minutes of the March 27th meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mrs. McGill-Pierce moved that the Minutes be approved and Mr. Mabey seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Public Comment

None

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Follow up to High School Student Presentations

Discussion centered around the possibility of a follow up session being arranged for student councils of all high schools to meet in one place to have an opportunity to communicate with their peers, discuss common concerns and share successes. It was felt that a meeting such as this could lead to great ideas going forward.

With consensus from Council, Mrs. Watson and her staff will investigate a possible date (June 1st) and work with students and teacher advisors to develop a format for such an event and report back.

3.2 Policy 409 Update

Mrs. Watson advised that the multi-year school infrastructure plan (5 year plan) for submission to the Minister is due by June 30th. She stated that this could be extended into summer and she will check with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. September 30th is the deadline to submit summer improvement projects.

The old District 8 Executive Limitations policy had a spring date to notify the Department if they were planning to close a school – it has to be a one year consultation process. It was suggested that if there is a potential school closure, it will be imperative that all DEC members are completely familiar with Policy 409. In light of this, the policy will be uploaded to the DEC portal.

3.3 Transition of Students between levels

Mrs. Watson explained that this year ASD-S will develop a consistent plan across all Education Centres as each was using a different time table. The plans should be similar. All SEO's and principals have reviewed the plan going forward. There will be some changes, and with change, comes concern. The plan is as follows:

One day in May, all current kindergarten children will remain at home and new kindergarten children will attend for the day – Hampton Education Centre one set date of May 31, 2013 and St. Stephen and Saint John Education Centres will select their date and ensure the SEO is aware. The day after Labor Day will see half the kindergarten children attend and day #2, the other half, and on day #3 all students will attend kindergarten.

Elementary to middle school (when you change buildings) – there will be a short visit in late May/early June for a couple of hours. First day after Labor Day, only grade 6 students attend and on day #2 of September, all students 6-8 attend. This does not happen in K-8 schools.

Middle to high school transition is the first day after Labor Day for all Centres and only grade 9's come on day #1, on day #2 all grades 9-12 attend except in Saint John Education Centre where on day #2, grades 10-12 attend only, and on day #3 all are present in Saint John.

These transition plans will require the permission of the Minister as we are changing the school calendar and Mrs. Watson will seek permission. Clear and concise communication with parents will also be an important part of this plan.

A few members of Council voiced their concern over these changes and felt that children would be adversely affected, stating they will be confused and disappointed with the changes. Mr. Smith explained the reasoning behind the changes and advised that from an educational perspective, this plan was the most appropriate and addresses children's most pressing concern of "will I get lost". Considerable discussion on the pros and cons of these changes took place. Suggestion was made to leave the current transition policies in place and change them next year. Mrs. Watson suggested that now is the best time to make policies consistent across all Education Centres. She and the Senior Education Officers will discuss further.

Council was advised that there will be a letter coming from one PSSC to Mr. Smith and the District Education Council outlining their concerns with the new transition plan. Mr. Nesbitt ended the discussion advising that Council would leave the matter with Mrs. Watson and her staff to review feedback.

4. Presentations

4.1 PALS & Community Schools Presentation

Mr. Nesbitt welcomed Ms. Debbie Fisher, PALS Coordinator, and Ms. Erica Lane Community Engagement Coordinator ASD-S to the meeting.

Ms. Lane began the session with the statement that the goal of these groups is to enrich the lives of our students! She referred to an "Activity Checklist" which outlines everything that is happening in ASD-S schools and asked that it be posted on the DEC portal for all to review. This document outlines student oriented programming, health related programming, family oriented programming and programming through other agencies, as well as information on the many ways these programs assist and give back to our students and the community.

Ms. Fisher provided some background on how the PALS program began thirteen years ago and how it has evolved to where it is today. The basic premise was connecting local businesses to provide for the needs of seven identified schools in priority neighbourhoods. Today the program has expanded to include 22 PALS schools, 100 partners and 1000 volunteers! The PALS program has become a model for other areas, including Abbotsford, BC.

The program depends upon the assistance of many volunteers and partners who work to provide basic needs, mentoring, numeracy and literacy skills and much more to our students.

Ms. Lane went on to explain that Community Schools were created in 2006 to foster relationships, primarily with children and youth - 7 days a week – well beyond the traditional school hours – and to provide services that address their diverse needs.

She outlined the role of the Community School Coordinators and shared “A Day in the Life” ... which sees them starting out very early serving breakfast and ending late in to the evening, well after most of us have ended our day at 5 p.m. These coordinators work very hard and are very committed to serving the needs of our students and their community.

Members of Council were impressed with the commitment and extent of involvement these two groups have in our students’ lives. Mr. Mabey mentioned that he had attended a PSSC meeting the previous evening where he learned what a Community Schools Coordinator does and he was amazed at all they do. Mr. Nesbitt commented that he has heard from principals about the great work coordinators do for the schools.

Questions regarding how more schools can become PALS/Community schools were raised and addressed. Mrs. Watson advises that there are no monies for additional staff in the budget so conversations are happening with regard to how best use the resources we currently have.

Mr. Nesbitt thanked the group for their time and their informative presentation.

4.2 NB Teen Awareness Apprentice Program (NBTAP) Presentation

Mrs. Watson advised Council that this presentation would be delayed due to an upcoming public announcement by NBTAP in the near future.

5. New Business

None

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent’s Report & Updates

Mrs. Watson advised Council members of the death of Steve Knudson, an ASD-S Educational Assistant at Rothesay Park School who passed away this week and outlined plans to reach out to both students and staff of the school.

Mrs. Watson briefly updated Council on the Student Attendance Forum which she and Mr. Spires and Mr. Crossman attended on April 9th in Fredericton. She advised that

there were action items that came from the meeting for each attendee and that we want to begin by pulling attendance data for our new District.

Mrs. Watson updated Council on the first meeting with NBTA/EFNB Presidents and Directors representing 8 Branches which was held on Monday, April 8th. It was a three hour meeting with a very large agenda; however, feedback following the meeting was positive. Mr. Spires commented that ASD-S was taking a leadership role with these groups and expressed his congratulations to Mrs. Watson and her staff.

Mrs. Watson provided a quick synopsis of upcoming drama productions and distributed a program for the Elementary Drama Festival happening April 16 & 17 in Saint John. She also noted that Kim Giddens of Belleisle Regional High School was recently awarded the Home & School Volunteer of the Year Award at a special ceremony at her school.

She advised that grade 2 program information meetings for parents were given the go-ahead by the Department. Staff explain to parents the grade 3 FI program and the grade 3 English program. No decision on grade 1 Immersion at this time.

6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates

As Mr. Fowler had to leave the meeting unexpectedly, there was no update.

6.3 Correspondence

None

6.4 Members Notebook

Mr. Mabey reminded all members to take a few minutes to vote online for Island View School who are in the running for a \$20,000 grant in the Trees of Knowledge competition. They are the only school in the running from the Atlantic Provinces. There are approximately 30 days left to vote and you can vote as many times as you want at www.majestatressofknowledge.ca Adults who vote are also eligible to win \$10,000!

Mr. Spires spoke about the Student Attendance Forum he attended on Tuesday. He felt that ASD-S was very well represented. He felt the day was well spent, making contacts and he advised that information will be forthcoming as a result of the meeting. There was a wealth of information to be gained and all comments were accepted as is.

He suggested that we should look into attendance in ASD-S and identify if there are any issues – and if so, get a handle on it.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Nesbitt thanked all who attended this evening's council meeting. The next meeting will be held at the St. Stephen Education Centre, 11 School Street, St. Stephen on May 8, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Nesbitt, Vice Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary