

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – May 8, 2013

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at the St. Stephen Education Centre, 11 School Street, St. Stephen. The following council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Gerry Mabey, Roger Nesbitt, Rob Fowler, Bob McDevitt, Charlotte McGill-Pierce, Wayne Spires, Stephen Campbell, Gary Crossman and Don Cullinan.

Regrets: Larry Boudreau, Joanne Gunter and Sherman Ross.

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Stewart Stanger, Director of Human Resources; Jenny MacDougall, Senior Education Officer, St. Stephen Education Centre; and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

A member of the public was in attendance.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Mr. Fowler advised that Mr. Boudreau, Mr. Ross and Mrs. Gunter would be unable to attend this meeting.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes

Mr. Fowler 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. Nesbitt moved that the Agenda be approved and Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the April 10th 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 Student Council Day – Saturday, June 1

Mrs. Watson advised that a committee had been established to coordinate with staff advisors and students to develop an agenda for the day. She noted that there are a number of other community events happening that day and was concerned about attendance.

3.2 Transition of students between levels

Mrs. Watson addressed the concerns that were raised at the last meeting regarding transition days. She noted that she and Paul Smith, Senior Education Officer for the Hampton Education Centre, reviewed the process and discussed it with 5 principals. They discovered that there had been some misunderstanding of how the process would work. Those issues have been clarified. Mrs. Watson has not heard from any PSSC and Mr. Smith has only had one parent call.

Mrs. Watson has requested permission from the Minister to delay school start by one day for students not involved in a transition to a new school.

Mrs. Watson advised that once permission is granted, the Senior Education Officers will send out information to parents to explain the transition process, and that it will also be posted on the website.

As well, Mrs. Watson advised that feedback would be obtained from parents, principals and students regarding the spring and fall transition experiences to gauge the response to the changes. This will be done in the fall. This process is not written in stone and could be adjusted going forward based on feedback received.

Council reiterated their feeling that communication and feedback would be a critical aspect of this process.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce advised that Quispamsis Middle School were not participating in the transition process as they have no room to house kids for a visit. Mrs. Watson advised that she will follow up on this with the principal.

4. Presentations

4.1 Human Resources Update 2012-13

Mr. Fowler welcomed Mr. Stewart Stanger, Director of Human Resources to the meeting.

Mr. Stanger began his presentation with an overall picture of the Anglophone South School District Human Resources & Payroll departments.

He followed this with a discussion of the challenges that the Human Resources department are dealing with. The key ones being lack of effective systems, the volume and complexity of issues they are being asked to address and demands from external sources – which can be very time consuming.

Mr. Stanger advised that ASD-S has 3,411 permanent staff and 981 casuals and provided a breakdown by Education Centre.

Mr. Stanger spent some time explaining the nature and number of grievances and complaints which originate from NBTF, CUPE, etc.; as well as Harassment, Policy 701 and RTIPPA (Right to Information) requests which are received in his department. He advised that there is also a significant amount of time and effort spent on prevention of these issues.

The number of current vacancies, teaching and non-teaching, and retirements were provided. As well, a number of job postings that would be posted in the next weeks was also reviewed.

In reviewing the Supply Teacher Breakdown across ASD-S, Mr. Stanger noted that this list is long, and that we are now only taking on Certified Supply Teachers (except in St. Stephen) or for specific specialty areas.

Employee absences were reviewed, and the one area of concern was with the high rate of sick time, with pay.

Questions and feedback followed the presentation after which Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Stanger for his time and informative presentation.

5. New Business

5.1 Attendance at Graduation Exercises & Other Special Events

Mrs. Watson advised that this is a very busy time of year, with invitations coming in daily. Choosing which ones to attend can be challenging. Mrs. Watson mentioned the Turn Around Achievement Awards for the Hampton Education Centre were coming up and all Council Members were welcome to attend. This is an event we would like to see grow!

Mrs. Watson advised that attendance at the upcoming 15 graduation exercises has been divided up between herself, and members of the Management Team. She advised Council Members that if they would like to attend any, to please let her know.

5.2 New Quispamsis School - Adjacency Drawings

Mrs. Watson advised that meetings had been held with Department of Transportation & Infrastructure (DTI) and the Department of Education Facilities staff in March to look at the layouts and again on April 16th. Feedback was provided to DTI & the Department.

The next step will see these layouts go to an architect. There is a Request for Proposals out for tenders. Construction is scheduled for 2014.

5.3 Surplus Land

Mrs. Watson explained that the Province is asking the District Education Council to declare a parcel of land (PID 00368431) across from Harbour View High School on Douglas Avenue, as surplus land.

Mr. Jeff Hanson, Director Finance & Administration attended via conference call for this portion of the meeting to address any questions or concerns raised by Council.

Discussion arose regarding this land, and whether or not the school could possibly have use for it in the future. Following this discussion, a motion to declare his parcel of land surplus was put forward by Mr. Spires, and seconded by Mr. Crossman. Motion carried.

5.4 District Education Plan

Mrs. Watson updated Council on the progress of the 4 areas of priority identified earlier this year by Council. She advised that working groups have been set up to look at each one of these. The mental fitness/wellness group has met and has reached out to outside partners to help us further develop these goals.

Mrs. Watson advised that the plan is to have our strategies to administration and staff in all schools by early fall.

5.5 School Supplies/Fees

Mrs. Watson advised Council that last summer the student supply lists for families caught the attention of the media and she had agreed to review these costs prior to the start of 2013/14 school year. In light of this, focus groups are being held by level (elementary, middle and high school). We are also collecting data on fees that each school charges and how that money is spent.

There are 10 PSSC Chairs/members and a number of administrators participating in these focus groups. Jenny MacDougall, Senior Education Officer for the St. Stephen education Centre will be heading the elementary group. Sheila Murray, Acting Director of Curriculum & Instruction and Jenny MacDougall will be heading up the middle school group; and Debbie Thomas, Senior Education Officer for Saint John Education Centre and Paul Smith, Senior Education Officer for the Hampton Education Centre will be leading the High School group.

These focus groups will look at best practice guidelines to follow on school supplies and fees and compare what is happening in ASD-S schools. Mrs. Watson advised that she reviewed a number of these school lists and they did seem long.

Mrs. Watson advised that if any Council member wanted to sit in on these focus groups, to please let her know. Mrs. Watson will update Council at the June meeting.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report & Updates

Mrs. Watson advised Council members of the death of Mona Kyle, a Sussex Regional High School custodian. Mona worked in our schools for many years. Her daughter Heather Kyle is a teacher at Sussex Regional High, her sister Janet Fowler is a Sussex bus driver, and her sister-in-law, Donna Mason, an administrative assistant at Hampton High School. Mrs. Watson advised that she went to the visitation at the funeral home, and that Facilities staff attended her funeral.

Mrs. Watson advised that last Friday five of our teachers received Teacher Recognition Awards at Council Day. Elementary sessions were held in the Miramichi, middle school sessions were held in Moncton and high school sessions in Fredericton.

Mrs. Watson spoke to 800 teachers assembled at Saint John High School during the NBTA/AEFNB AGM on May 2nd. At St. Stephen High, Mrs. Watson and Jenny MacDougall brought greetings to the St. Stephen NBTA AGM. As well, in May, there was a group professional development/team building day for all custodians with Tracy Friars facilitating and first aid training for drivers.

Mrs. Watson had the opportunity to attend a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students session in Fredericton. There was good discussion with representatives from the Department, school principals, students, teachers, parents and community organizations attending. ASD-S had two teachers and a student from the St. Stephen Education Centre participate.

"The Write Stuff" was an opportunity for 100 high school students to interact with local writers who reviewed student writings and also shared their own work. A magazine was produced in conjunction with this event. As well, grade 1 students at St. George Elementary hosted the official Arbour Day celebrations on May 26th with the planting of seedlings – an event sponsored by JD Irving. Seeds were also sent to all grade 1 children across ASD-S.

There was a Pay It Forward event at Marco Polo on April 25th and the District covered bussing for students to attend from all three Centres.

Mrs. Watson also attended a meeting on April 24th in Fredericton to review the Bachelor of Education Program and discuss areas that may be lacking in the current program.

Two weeks ago was National Volunteer Week and Mrs. Watson wrote a Letter to the Editor expressing our gratitude to all of our volunteers. This was sent to the Saint John Telegraph Journal and the St. Croix Courier.

There have been three Heritage Fairs; one at the NB Museum, one at Kings Valley Wesleyan and another at Black's Harbour School.

"Retro Bill" was a guest speaker at all of our high schools. This program was sponsored by DARE and ASD-S. Officer Cory Jamieson, Saint John Police, was instrumental in making this happen and Erica Lane, our Community Engagement Coordinator provided support.

Mrs. Watson advised that Alex Dingwall has been working with the Management Team to amalgamate all policies from former Districts 6, 8 & 10 into ones that will cover all ASD-S. He is meeting with each department to review, compare and revise each policy. This will be a long and involved process, but the plan is to have all policies converted by fall.

Mrs. Watson advised that the deadline for the Minister's Excellence in Teaching Awards nominations was fast approaching – May 31st. Once nominations are in, the District Education Council will choose three names to send forward.

6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates

Mr. Fowler reported on the session that he attended in Fredericton on Performance Excellence. It was geared toward finding efficiencies to help meet fiscal targets. The process focuses on people, processes and purpose.

Mr. Fowler also advised that the NB2026 Steering Committee – Learning for Life would be holding their first meeting on Friday, May 10th. Also, next Thursday, May 16th Minister Carr and the DEC Chairs are scheduled to have a conference call.

On the 21st of May, the Minister's Committee on Policy Governance – for DEC Chairs will take place. On May 23 the Turnaround Achievement Awards are being held at the Kings Valley Wesleyan Church and on May 24-26th is the DEC Spring Symposium being held in Fredericton. On June 6th is the Retiring Teachers' Dinner in Saint John Centre.

6.3 Correspondence

Mr. Fowler advised Council of an invitation the DEC received to attend an Open House on June 6th at Quispamsis Elementary to celebrate a number of their retiring teachers.

6.4 Members Notebook

Mr. Spires reported on the Attendance Forum that he and others from ASD-S attended in Fredericton. He advised that there was a lot of good information provided from this session and he wondered how ASD-S was doing with the information that was received.

Mrs. Watson advised that she has already begun working on it. The information from the Attendance Forum will be made available to DEC Members on the portal.

Mr. Mabey advised that he was very excited to hear what the kids are doing through attending PSSC meetings. He advised that Island View was in first place for the \$20,000 Outdoor Classroom when the voting closed; however, he was awaiting official word about the win.

Mr. Mabey advised Council that Morna Heights had committed to composting and there was a recognition ad posted in the paper. Morna Heights applied for a \$2,700 grant through Fundy Regional Solid Waste and got it!

Mrs. McGill-Pierce enquired about the Committees List that members had volunteered for. Mr. Fowler advised that he will follow up with John McLaughlin.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce also enquired about split classes and how it was determined if they were successful.

With regard to the Kennebecasis Park renovation project, Mrs. McGill-Pierce questioned who was responsible for removing the old fence by the tennis court.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce asked Council if schools were permitted to determine their own 'wind chill' factor. Mrs. Watson advised that principals should be aware that there is no 'absolute' temperature ... it should be based on your school's location and what the District provides as the guideline as some play areas are very open while others have trees and shelter.

Mr. Mabey asked if provincial survey results from the Tell Them From Me were available. Mrs. Watson advised that she will check on access to these results.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's council meeting. The next meeting will be held at the Saint John Education Centre, 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John on June 12, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary