

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – October 9, 2013

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, October 9, 2013 at St. Stephen High School, 282 King Street, St. Stephen. The following council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Roger Nesbitt, Rob Fowler, Bob McDevitt, Charlotte McGill-Pierce, Wayne Spires, Gary Crossman, Don Cullinan, Joanne Gunter, Sherman Ross, Gerry Mabey and Larry Boudreau.

Regrets: Stephen Campbell

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Jenny MacDougall, Senior Education Officer; Derek O'Brien, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Fowler welcomed back Mr. O'Brien, Director of Curriculum and Instruction who had been on leave since March.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Agenda with Council and advised that he would like to add an item - 4.2 – Internet & Child Exploitation Workshop Update (Wayne Spires) and that if there were no other concerns or questions regarding the Agenda, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the Agenda be approved and Mr. Crossman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the September 11th 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 and Mr. Cullinan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Public Comment

None

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Sprinklers- Fire Marshall Feedback

Mrs. Watson reported that Mr. Jeff Hanson, Director of Finance & Administration sought additional information from the Department regarding upgrades to sprinkler systems in certain schools. The Fire Inspector and DTI strongly recommended these upgrades. They noted, specifically, that KVHS was built in 1975 and that any major renovation would include the need to bring the sprinkler system up to code, the same as with a new build. It was also noted that this is a large school with nearly 1,100 students and a busy community who makes use of the school facilities.

Mr. Boudreau remarked that all schools need sprinklers, and wanted to know if we could ask for a weighting system to determine those most in need. He also felt that some projects may not be as expensive or complicated to fix as what is recommended. Mrs. Watson advised that the Department is looking at developing a matrix to evaluate projects; however, there is not one in use at this time.

Mr. Boudreau also commented on the estimated costs to address concerns with the Fundy High School parking lot and traffic flow, and explained that he understood there was a much less costly fix available. Mrs. Watson explained that a company will be hired to survey the traffic flow, busiest times, etc., and they would then provide their recommendations to address the concerns identified, along with the price tag.

Mr. Cullinan remarked that as a tax payer, he would like to know where the numbers/costs for projects come from, and why are they so high. He suggested we might want to bring someone in from DTI to present to the DEC.

3.2 Grades 6 & 9 Transition Day Survey Results

Jenny MacDougall, Senior Education Officer for the St. Stephen Education Centre reviewed the results of the surveys. She informed Council that each question on the survey received favourable responses and all indications are that the transition days were very positive. However, the response to the final question on the survey, did not back up those responses – and there is no explanation of why. It was suggested that the wording of the final question may have been misleading, and it will be reviewed for clarity next year.

Mr. Fowler advised that the incidents of rookying were down again this year in Saint John with very few reports. It seems that this type of behavior tends to arise when students leave the school grounds.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce commended Mrs. Watson and Council for their decision to move ahead with the transition days. She initially was not in favour of this change, but is happy to see the positive results.

Mrs. Watson advised that she was unaware of any parental complaints with regard to the transition day process and that ASD-S would be seeking permission of the Minister to approve the same process again for 2014-2015.

Mr. Crossman asked if Mrs. Watson could have individual school survey results posted for DEC to review. Mrs. Watson confirmed that we would post these documents to the DEC portal.

3.3 PSSC Forum/Student Forum October 5, 2013

Charlotte McGill-Pierce reported that from all feedback received, the forum was a success; a great turnout, both from PSSC members and students. She advised that attendees liked the variety of sessions, the interesting and informative guest speakers, good food, everything was well organized and the day flowed very well. Charlie MacDonald was a 'hit' with the students as well as with the PSSC. The student break-out sessions were well attended and great feedback was gained on a number of topics that had been previously identified by the student groups who presented to the DEC earlier in the year.

On behalf of the DEC, Mrs. McGill-Pierce thanked Mrs. Watson and Ms. Murphy for all of their time and effort that went into ensuring the success of this event.

Mr. Fowler agreed that all was very well done. Mr. Crossman reiterated that he had received very positive feedback from parents who attended but suggested that numbers might have been higher if it were not held on a Saturday, as that is a very busy day in most households.

Mrs. Watson advised that we had low numbers attending from St. Stephen due to the distance. Mrs. Watson questioned whether or not Council wanted to have an evening event for this area. Mrs. Watson also advised that the power point presentations used during the sessions would be posted on the ASD-S website along with the notes from the student sessions.

Feedback forms were completed by attendees and these will be summarized for next meeting.

4. Presentations

4.1 District Education Plan (ENDS Policies)

Mrs. Watson presented the draft District Education Plan to Council for their review and advised that she would be asking for a motion to approve the document in order to have it implemented across ASD-S.

She noted that in January, 2013 the DEC developed four broad goals which formed the framework of the plan. Since that time, the goals have been communicated across the District, and expanded upon over the spring and summer months. Sub-goals, strategies, indicators of success, timelines and responsibilities were all identified and developed to shape the final plan.

Mrs. Watson reviewed in detail each of the four broad goals and how they were further broken down into specific components that would help achieve the objectives of each goal. The four broad goals are as follows:

1. To demonstrate continuous progress toward provincial targets in literacy, numeracy and science.
2. To provide positive, safe and inclusive learning and working environments for children, youth and staff.
3. To strengthen engagement of families and foster community partnerships.
4. To provide opportunities for staff to learn about mental health issues in children and youth and to promote school and District wide initiatives that promote mental fitness.

Following the presentation, discussion centered on how goals would be measured and what would be used to evaluate success. Mrs. Watson cited Perception Surveys (completed by students), provincial assessment data and Student Wellness Surveys as a few examples of measuring tools that would be used.

Mr. Fowler then asked for a motion to adopt the District Education Plan as presented. Motion was made by Mr. Crossman, and seconded by Mrs. McGill-Pierce. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mrs. Watson for her presentation.

4.2 Internet & Child Exploitation Workshop Update

Mr. Spires reported on a workshop he had attended with regard to Internet & Child Exploitation. He began by saying that these sessions were 'an eye opener'. The seriousness of the situations that children all across Canada find themselves in is very disturbing. He suggested that there were a number of very good speakers who addressed the conference, and that efforts were being made to address the broad range of challenges in this regard.

The issue of Criminal Background/Vulnerable Sector checks was addressed and he felt that these checks were simply not sufficient to keep our children safe. He felt the most important message was that if a child comes to you regarding inappropriate behavior by others, **you must believe the child and act on it.**

Mr. Spires displayed for Council a number of reference materials that are available to schools on this topic. He suggested that the “Commit to Kids” program was excellent and would like Mrs. Watson to get copies for every school.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Spires for attending the conference, and reporting back to Council on this very serious topic.

5. New Business

5.1 DEC Policies for Review

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Policy Binders that had been created for each Council member. He asked if members might like to have time to review these policies in greater detail and that we look to approve them at our November meeting. Members were in agreement.

Mr. Fowler advised that there is a template for reporting by the Superintendent on the Executive Limitations policies. He suggested that we might find a sample document in previous District 8 Minutes to follow. He advised that the Governance Policies would be approved by Council, with no monitoring required. He advised that policies could be approved by consensus, all at once, rather than one at a time.

Mr. Fowler asked that any recommended changes/revisions to policies be directed to him prior to the November meeting.

5.2 Draft Council-Staff Relationship Policies

As per 5.1 above, Council will review these policies and advise Mr. Fowler of any recommended revisions/changes prior to the November meeting, at which time the policies will be reviewed/adopted.

5.3 Volunteer Policy & Brochure

Mrs. Watson invited feedback from Council on the Volunteer Policy and Brochure that were posted on the DEC portal for their review. The brochure and policy will be distributed to all schools in ASD-S.

She advised that the criminal record check seems to be standard for five years before requiring a renewal. In some elementary schools, the initial check is good for as long as you are there and another check not required until you move on. The Province of NB is looking at this issue as well and is seeking legal advice.

The issue of rental groups was discussed and if we might ask rental groups with youth programs if their leaders and volunteers have criminal checks. Mrs. Watson said the rental process would be reviewed this year and this could be discussed.

Discussion arose on the topic of staff background checks. Mrs. Watson advised that all new hires would have to complete one; after that, you don't need another one. Mr.

Spires reiterated his earlier comment that these criminal background/vulnerable sector checks are not sufficient. Staff needs to check out volunteers as well; asking students and others.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report & Update

Mrs. Watson advised that ASD-S covered the costs for Charlie MacDonald to speak to the health representatives at the Wellness Meeting while he was in Saint John for the PSSC/Student Forum.

Mrs. Watson reported that next week is Kindergarten registration in ASD-S.

She noted that there would no school for students on Thursday, October 10th & Friday, October 11th with teachers attending various professional development sessions on these two days. Thursday is by school for Universal Design for Learning. This is a province wide initiative and the program has been planned by the Department to be part two to the day held last spring. On Friday, the focus is school based professional learning with a few exceptions:

- The annual "REMEMBER WHEN" Physical Education Conference is being hosted in Saint John. A huge thank you to the lead of the organizing committee Heather Feicht-Wade from Champlain Heights;
- The four schools involved in Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (Fundy, Belleisle Regional, Simonds and St. Malachy's) have a day with a guest facilitator, Dr. Howard Muscott at Kings Valley Wesleyan in Quispamsis;
- Grade 12 math teachers meet by Centre; and
- Librarians are meeting at the Saint John Public Library.

Mrs. Watson advised Council that she has asked all schools to report when they raise money for charity so that we can CELEBRATE this 'good news' and pass it on whenever the opportunity presents itself. This past month, St. Malachy's raised \$10,000 for Run for the Cure and Bayside Middle School has a goal of \$24,000 for this year's fundraising efforts on behalf of the Children's Wish Foundation. Kennebecasis Valley High School has also been busying raising \$1,100 Run for the Cure. And, Lawrence Station, a school of only 50 students, raised \$166 for the Stan Cassidy Centre.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce asked if Council might have a presentation on Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates

Mr. Fowler advised Council that there will be no retreat during the month of November due to other commitments by all. He suggested that early January might be a better

time frame. Mr. Fowler will circulate possible dates and everyone is asked to respond with their availability.

Mr. Fowler advised Council that the DEC Chairs were going to review the current Nutrition Policy, and possibly separate K-8 from the high schools and recommend possible changes.

Mr. Fowler reminded Council that he and Mrs. Watson would be attending the Minister's Forum next Friday and Saturday. These meetings would include a round table where each Chair will have an opportunity to report on their challenges and there would also be a meeting with the Minister.

Mr. Fowler advised that the NB2026 committee met in late September and are working on an education and learning trade show in mid-November.

Mr. Fowler advised that he has been invited to attend a meeting on Policy 703/E-9. There may be an opportunity for us to adopt their recommendations upon completion.

Mr. Fowler suggested that planning for the PSSC orientation session should begin in April/May for the following year.

DEC will look to hear from Student Council representatives again next year.

Mr. Fowler advised all Council members that they need to be involved in the community and that if any member belongs to a group as a DEC representative, please feel free to expense your membership fees. He suggested any group with an education component would be acceptable.

6.3 Correspondence

None

6.4 Members Notebook

Mr. McDevitt asked if we could invite someone to attend a DEC meeting and do a presentation on Inclusion.

Mr. Boudreau asked for clarification on whether or not PSSC 'must' pay for Synrevoice. Mrs. Watson advised that PSSC do not have to pay this. It is their choice if they want to cover this, but essentially it is the school's cost to cover. Mrs. Watson also advised that the cost of Synrevoice should be less than in the past, as we are now covered under one provincial license.

Mrs. Gunter asked if the DEC could be provided with information on Educational Assistants – how many we have, how many special needs students we have, absenteeism, etc.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce followed up on a question raised by Mrs. Watson earlier in the meeting, about whether or not Council wanted to do an evening event for PSSC in St. Stephen area in the near future. Mr. Fowler suggested that we put out feelers to see if they have members who would attend. Mrs. MacDougall responded that she felt more would attend the Forum next year as they have all heard such positive comments about the day. She will bring the question regarding an evening event forward at the next Principals' meeting and advise.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce raised a question about the need for a meeting with MLAs, suggesting connections need to be made. She will investigate possible meeting dates with MLAs and report back to the Chair.

Mr. Mabey advised that the Outdoor Classroom is now complete at Island View and invited all to stop by and check it out. He also suggested that it would be good to start something positive with groups on the lower West side. He noted that St. Patrick's had 9 people at Saturday's PSSC event.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's council meeting. Members were advised the next meeting will be held at the Saint John Education Centre, 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John on Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary