

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – April 29, 2015

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met for a special session on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 490 Woodward Avenue Saint John, NB. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Wayne Spires, Don Cullinan, Bob McDevitt, Charlotte McGill-Pierce, Stephen Campbell, Larry Boudreau, Kerry Olinskie, Gerry Mabey, Roger Nesbitt and Sherman Ross (via technology).

Regrets: Joanne Gunter

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Debbie Thomas, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; Paul Smith, Director of Schools, Hampton Education Centre; Suzanne LeBlanc Healey, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Kate McLellan, Director Education Support Services, 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 passed on regrets for Mrs. Gunter.

2. New Business

2.1 Update on Policy 409 – Pennfield Elementary

Mr. Fowler read a letter received from Minister Serge Rousselle where he approved the DEC's recommendation to close Pennfield Elementary School, effective June 30, 2015.

2.2 Update on Policy 409 – Lorne Middle School

Mr. Fowler read a letter received from Minister Serge Rousselle where he approved the DEC's recommendation to close Lorne Middle School, effective June 30, 2015.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Policy 409 Sustainability Review – Brown’s Flat

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Summary of Policy 409 Consultations for Brown’s Flat Elementary School document that was posted with Council’s meeting materials for tonight. The review highlighted the public consultation meeting dates at the school, the numbers/groups who attended and comments/questions raised during these meetings.

Following this review, Mr. Fowler opened the floor for comments from Council. None were expressed. Mr. Fowler then asked for a motion that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that we recommend the closure of Brown’s Flat Elementary School, effective June 30, 2015. The motion was moved by Mr. Nesbitt and seconded by Mr. Cullinan. Comments on the motion are summarized in point form below:

- transportation – it is unfair to have students travel that distance; we have a problem with a shortage of casual bus drivers and students are loaded on another bus (causing overcrowding) or must wait for another bus. Brown’s Flat is a great school.
- this is an extremely difficult process for all – but education matters. We are in a situation of declining enrolment. It is especially difficult for rural schools. We have looked at everything and thought very hard about it all. We must support the staff recommendation to close the school.
- the education of a child – is not just book learning – but developing the child as a ‘citizen’. All things aside, the road the students must travel is a problem.
- very pleased with both communities and the work they have done for their schools and would like to commend them for it.

There being no further comments, Mr. Fowler asked for a vote by show of hands on the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau, Mr. Ross, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Spires voted against the motion. Mr. Fowler advised that the Minister must now review the Council’s recommendation and make a final decision.

3.2 Policy 409 Sustainability Review – Norton Elementary School

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Summary of Policy 409 Consultations for Norton Elementary School document that was posted with Council’s meeting materials for tonight. The review highlighted the public consultation meeting dates at the school, the numbers/groups who attended and comments/questions raised during these meetings.

Following this review, Mr. Fowler opened the floor for comments from Council. None were expressed. Mr. Fowler then asked for a motion that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that we recommend the closure of Norton Elementary School, effective June 30, 2015. The motion was moved by Mr. Nesbitt and seconded by Mrs. McGill-Pierce. Comments on the motion are summarized in point form below:

- Policy 409 – the eight criteria are very difficult to give weight to – we are comparing one school to another. The problem with the policy is that it is not scientific – gut

- feeling – makes it difficult to make a decision. If we keep Norton open, then move to close Apohaqui – the two buildings are not the same – one will need some repairs – fiscal responsibility.
- Transportation – the students will travel long distances – buses arrive after school starts so students will miss school or teachers will wait for the buses – missing curriculum time.
- Mr. Boudreau commented that the community is involved in both schools – rural schools are raising money – it is not handed to them like in the city.
- Mrs. McGill-Pierce took exception to this comment and responded that all schools work very hard to raise funds and no city school is handed anything.

Mr. Fowler called for a vote by show of hands with regard to the motion that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that we recommend the closure of Norton Elementary School, effective June 30, 2015. The motion was defeated. Mr. Boudreau, Mr. Spires, Mr. Ross, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Cullinan voted against the motion. Mr. Mabey abstained.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary