

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – February 11, 2015

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, February 11, 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 and Kerry Olinskie.

Regrets: Roger Nesbitt, Joanne Gunter, Gerry Mabey and Sherman Ross.

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Debbie Thomas, Director of Schools (Saint John Education Centre) Kate McLellan, Director of Education Support Services; and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

PSSC Chair Jason Gaudet (St. George Elementary), PSSC Chair (Pennfield) Marie-Claude Folmer; Heather Chase, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of Blacks Harbour and several parents and students from the Eastern Charlotte County area.

Media was also in attendance.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Fowler passed on regrets for Mr. Mabey, Mr. Nesbitt and Mrs. Gunter.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes

Mr. Fowler asked if there were any questions or revisions required to the Agenda. There being no questions or concerns regarding the Agenda, he asked that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Spires moved that the Agenda be approved. Mr. Cullinan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the January 14, 2015 meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put

forward to approve. There being no questions or concerns, Mr. Boudreau moved that the Minutes be approved and Mr. Olinskie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Public Comment

Heather Chase, Village of Blacks Harbor – Ms. Chase addressed Council and reminded members that they were elected to represent their interests. She stated that in order for the reconfiguration of Fundy High to get support to include grade six students, a number of things would need to happen prior to any change. Changes required would include a middle school identity, separate entrances, separate milling areas, time to play, play structures and instructional support that is age appropriate for students.

Andrea Anderson Mason – parent of 10 year old child. Addressed Council to identify reasons that the reconfiguration should not take place. Reasons include grade 6 students would be in daily contact with grades 10, 11 and 12s, use the same washrooms, they would not have adequate physical education and no recess break. She advised that Fundy High has had more calls to the RCMP than any other high school (35) and two suicides. She advised that this change is not wanted.

Jason Gaudet (PSSC Chair, St. George Elementary) spoke to Council regarding Policy 409 and reminded Council they were elected to serve the public good and to represent the best interests of the students. He advised that this change would be of no value to students educationally. He presented a petition against this change. He suggested that Council need to guide the District in this decision.

3. Presentation

3.1 ENDS Policy #2 – (Positive and Safe Learning and Working Environment)

Mrs. Watson introduced Kate McLellan, Director of Education Support Services and her team which included Pam Miller, Guidance/Positive Learning Environment Coordinator and Jodie Fischer, Positive Learning Environment/Behaviour Coordinator. Ms. McLellan explained that they would review the strategies used and being developed to work toward providing positive and safe learning and working environments for children, youth and staff.

Ms. Miller explained that significant work has taken place on combining all three education Centre plans into one District Positive Learning Environment Plan (PLEP). It is important to ensure the wording is correct and that it aligns with the District Education Council goals. The District PLEP will feed into the Education Support Services plan, which in turn feeds into the school plans. Jodie Fischer spoke to Council about the pyramid of interventions and explained that that different levels of intervention are required for different needs. Each school is being asked to create a pyramid of interventions for their school. A District Behaviour Policy is currently being formulated and this will assist schools in developing their plans.

New this year is a Positive Behaviour Intervention Support (PBIS) facilitator in each Centre. These facilitators are working with (8) pilot schools to help them implement positive behaviour interventions.

On February 13th Professional Development day, there will be a full day PD session for all middle and high schools who are not part of the pilot on PBIS (approx. 100 people) in both Saint John and Hampton Education Centres. It is important to teach behaviour like an academic subject – some students don't know how to behave.

In working to provide positive and safe environments, there is a need to develop a strategy to ensure that internet safety and digital citizenship is embedded in grade 3-12 curriculum and delivered by a designated person. We need to identify resources that schools can use. Digital citizenship explores how to be responsible citizens in the use of technology and devices. Internet Safety Week (Feb 9-13) will focus on education and promoting safer and more responsible use of on-line technology by students. Appropriate activities and resources will be used to deliver this message to all grade levels.

Ms. McLellan spoke about recent PREPaRE training (prevent, reaffirm, evaluate, provide and respond, examine (Crisis Prevention and Preparedness – Comprehensive School Safety Planning Model). One trainer from each education centre received five days of training and then returned to their centre to then train others. The goal is to bring consistency to the way we respond to a crisis. Checklists and processes are being shared with school teams to assist them in dealing with a crisis.

In an effort to raise awareness of severe allergies and the impact on students and staff, an allergy kit has been provided to all schools. All staff have had face to face training on how to use the epi pen and allerject devices that are included within it. Bus drivers have also been trained during their first aid training sessions. Healthy Learners Nurses have been the lead on this project. As well, the Sweet Caroline Foundation has been speaking to students and providing training in the use of epi pens and allerject devices.

In order to ensure that schools have inviting environments that respect diversity and inclusive practices, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning/queer) training has been held, with 34 middle and high schools taking part in the training (approx. 90 people). The province has provided a substantial resource guide on this topic and all schools will get a copy. It will also be available on line.

In an effort to examine student attendance, the District has been working to ensure all schools are reporting absences in the same manner. This will enable the District to provide accurate analysis and develop strategies to deal with what the data reveals. A high school Principals' meeting in late February will focus on this topic.

Mr. Fowler thanked Ms. McLellan and her team for their informative presentation.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

4.1 New West Side School

Mrs. Watson advised that the New West Side Planning Committee has been developed and has met to begin discussions on the education specifications. It is a nine member committee, which includes District and Department of EECD staff, PSSC members from each of the three west side schools, a DEC member and a Principal representing the three schools. The group will tour a similar sized school in the Moncton area in the next few weeks. The new school will be built to accommodate 470 students. This is up from the original 450 and was increased due to concerns raised by Council.

4.2 Policy 409 & Grade Reconfiguration Meeting Updates

Mrs. Watson advised that all community meetings were now complete, with the last one at Fundy High taking place on February 4th due to a storm cancellation of the January 27th meeting. The next step will be for District staff to review all notes and information gathered from the public sessions. From that, a final recommendation will be made on the reconfiguration of Fundy High at the March DEC meeting.

Mr. Boudreau advised that many parents did not know about the tour at Fundy High. Mrs. Watson advised that communications were to be sent out, but that she would follow up.

4.3 Policy 409 Sustainability Reviews – Lorne Middle and Pennfield Elementary

Mr. Fowler advised that the process is now complete and that all documents related to the two school reviews have been posted on the DEC portal for Council to review. Next step will be a meeting to review concerns raised during public consultations and determine the final outcome.

4.4 Chris Saunders Memorial Elementary School

Mrs. Watson advised Council that on January 30th at Quispamsis Middle School there was a celebration to unveil the name of the new Quispamsis K-5 school. The Minister of Education, Serge Rousselle, Minister Ed Doherty and MLA Gary Crossman joined members of the family of the late Chris Saunders, staff and students and Council members to announce the new school which will be called Chris Saunders Memorial Elementary School. The family, including the late Chris Saunders' widow and two young sons were extremely touched by the tribute. The District will arrange for small laminated copies of the poster to be provided to the family.

4.5 Celebrate Update

Mrs. Watson advised that the Committee which oversees this initiative has a new Chair, Lynn MacDonald. The committee is working on a brochure for parents (how they can celebrate their school – as suggested by Charlotte McGill Pierce). It will be posted on line and some hard copies will also be available.

Using self-sustaining funds, the Committee purchased some post-it notes, pens and post cards which are Celebrate logoed. The post it notes and pens were used as staff appreciation gifts for all staff and will also be provided to school Celebrate Champions.

Mrs. Watson encouraged Council to check out the Celebrate photostory on the ASD-S website.

5. New Business

5.1 Review of Executive Limitations Policies/Monitoring Reports #1-3

Mr. Fowler asked if there were any questions or concerns with regard to the policies and monitoring reports #1-3 which had been posted with tonight's meeting materials for Council to review. There being no questions or concerns, Mr. Fowler asked for a motion to approve policies #1-3. Motion was made by Mr. Cullinan and seconded by Mrs. McGill-Pierce. Motion carried.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Watson pointed out that the Mental Fitness calendars that all members received with their meeting materials had also been provided to all schools in ASD-S.

She advised that this week is Safer Schools Week with a focus on internet safety. Moira Sherwood and her team of technology mentors have distributed information to schools for use this week. There is also information on the ASD-S website under Parent resources. This topic is of huge concern to the District, and it is important to educate our students and their families.

It is also Staff Appreciation Week - a time to pause and say "thank you" to the 3,250 employees who help to keep our 74 schools running smoothly - from our educators and administrators to drivers, custodians, EA's, student attendants, library assistants, psychologists, rehab assistants, leads and mentors, administrative assistants, social workers, early childhood staff, speech language pathologists, district and centre staff, maintenance staff and community school coordinators.

Mrs. Watson advised that the Request For Transfer for all Contract B teachers has now been posted and will remain open until Friday, February 27 at 4:30 pm. This will assist District staff with the staffing process.

This Friday will be Professional Learning Day across the District and there will be no school for students. Also on Friday some staff will be attending the annual National Inclusive Education Award Ceremony sponsored by NBACL at Old Government House. ASD-S has Kellan Lewis, a student from Rothesay Park and Sara Creighton, a Resource Teacher at Dr. A.T. Leatherbarrow both receiving a National Recognition

certificate for Inclusive Education. As well, our three inclusion facilitators; Beth Horgan, Helen Johnston, and Michael Wilson will be honored along with the Project Manager, Inclusive Education, Lori Wall.

Mrs. Watson mentioned that some of the Program Information Nights for parents of Grades 2 and 5 students have been cancelled due to inclement weather. The FSL Coordinators are keeping the schedule posted on our ASD-S website updated.

Mrs. Watson advised that again this year we have a Principal being awarded the Canada's Outstanding Principals Award in Toronto on February 24th. This award recognizes the unique and crucial contributions of principals across Canada. Louise Johnson, Principal at Loch Lomond School will be honoured at the event. She will also spend 5 days at the executive leadership training program at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.

6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates

Mr. Fowler advised Council that the Minister's Forum the weekend of February 20th in Bathurst has been cancelled. No re-schedule date has been set.

DECs are keenly aware of the fiscal realities facing the Province of New Brunswick and the need to find more cost-effective ways of delivering Educational services for our students. DECs have always expressed a willingness to work with EECD to discuss strategies and are ready to take action to find real savings and efficiencies within the Districts.

We have expressed our wish to be involved in the budget development process and the Department has respected that. As a result, the Council of DEC Chairs for the Anglophone District Education Councils have held several meetings with Department officials over the past few months as we anticipate and prepare for the upcoming budget for fiscal year 2015 and also looking ahead to 2016.

In Anglophone South, we are very cognizant of the Government's financial situation and the stated plan to find savings of 600 million dollars. We understand that the final report of the task force looking at potential areas of savings will release its report by the end of 2015 and it is our hope to have ourselves in a position where the impact on Education will be mitigated as much as possible before cuts are mandated.

To that end, and in keeping with the government's position that school facilities need to be optimized, we will be taking a very hard look at all of our schools for low enrolments, aging and expensive infrastructure, and opportunities to combine student populations and close buildings where it makes sense to do so. Only by positioning ourselves in this way can we hope to limit the impact on programs and services. The Council believes discussions on school closures and Policy 409 reviews are critical to finding efficiencies in the system and we are committed to rationalizing our aging infrastructure.

Under the *Education Act*, DECs are responsible for identifying schools that may be considered for sustainability reviews. EECD policy requires a comprehensive review

process involving public consultation with the school communities and stakeholders. The DEC completes the review process and makes a recommendation to the Minister. It should be understood that as a DEC we are most familiar with our infrastructure and the needs of our school communities and as such are prepared to make difficult choices in order to ensure that we provide the best educational experience for all students.

To that end, there will be more sustainability reviews that we will be looking at in the future.

Mrs. Watson then made a recommendation that DEC study the sustainability of Norton Elementary and Brown's Flat schools. Norton Elementary students (82) could be housed between Apohaqui, Belleisle Elementary, Hammond River Elementary or Dr. AT Leatherbarrow, depending upon their location. Brown's Flat has a student population in the low 40's, and FI students are already bused to Westfield so this infrastructure is already in place.

Mr. Fowler asked if there were no questions, that a motion be made. Mr. McDevitt moved that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that we intend to study School Sustainability for Brown's Flat School and Norton Elementary School. This will allow us under the Department's Policy 409 - *Multi Year School Infrastructure Planning* - to begin the public consultation process to gather community and stakeholder input to the recommendation. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau was opposed to the motion.

Question arose regarding the timeline for these reviews. Mr. Fowler advised that the Minister would be advised, the first public meetings would be scheduled at each school, for early March, followed by a second in early April. Review of the feedback would then be done by Council. A final recommendation would be sent to the Minister, who will have 30 days to review.

6.3 Correspondence

None

6.4 Members Notebook

Mr. Boudreau commended the Superintendent on her 'snow day' decisions. He said that it is a terrible decision to make, as there will always be someone who disagrees with the decision made.

Mr. Boudreau also advised that he felt the PSSCs in Eastern Charlotte would like to be part of a working group with the District to make a solution possible with regard to the reconfiguration of Fundy High.

Mr. Cullinan asked about Dress Code policies, in light of the recent events in Fredericton around school dress code. Mrs. Watson explained that those policies are school based, and not District. He asked that this be a topic of discussion and sharing at a later time.

Mr. Spires asked if Council could revisit/discuss the difference between operational/governance roles and responsibilities. He felt that we should advise the general public on the roles of Council – i.e. Council is not involved in operational issues.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and advised that the next meeting will be held at the Saint John Education Centre, 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John on Wednesday, March 18, 2015 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary