

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – June 11, 2014

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, June 11, 2014 at Blacks Harbour School, Blacks Harbour, NB. The following council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

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

Regrets: Gary Crossman

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Jenny MacDougall, Senior Education Officer St. Stephen; John MacDonald, Director Finance & Administration and Stewart Stanger, Director Human Resources and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.

Mr. Fowler passed on regrets for Mr. Crossman who is unable to attend.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Agenda with Council and asked 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. Boudreau seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the May 14, 2014 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. Mabey moved that the Minutes be approved and Mr. Nesbitt seconded the motion.

2.2 Public Comment

None

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Spring Symposium

Mr. Fowler commented that he felt Stacey Brown, DEC Manager, did a good job with the Spring Symposium held May 23-25 in Miramichi. The guest speaker, Suanne Stein Day from the Lester B. Pearson School District in Montreal was very good, and we share some of the same issues. An interesting point was that they webcast their meetings.

He advised that Stacey Brown had purchased books for each District Education Council on Social Media and the Chair offered these to anyone who might be interested in the topic, or taking on a project to help raise our profile.

Mr. Fowler mentioned that the facilities at the Rodd were under construction and therefore, not the most convenient. He advised that they gave a \$1,700 discount for this reason.

Mr. Fowler hopes that in the future there will be more for PSSC at this event, as these are likely people who will eventually be a part of the DEC. Currently these events are geared for DEC members and for PSSC to observe.

3.2 Minister's Excellence in Teaching Awards Update

Mr. Fowler advised that the sub-committee met after the BCAPI meeting and consisted of himself, Larry Boudreau, Bob McDevitt and Charlotte McGill-Pierce. The sub-committee did come to an agreement on the three winners and the names will be announced later by the Minister.

3.3 Naming of the New Quispamsis School

Mr. Nesbitt advised that the 4 member committee has been confirmed as follows: Roger Nesbitt; Johanne Austin, Subject Coordinator at the Hampton Education Centre; Mike Cusack, IT (was the Minister's appointment) and Emil Olsen, a member of the Quispamsis Town Council and former Mayor. Mr. Nesbitt advised that meetings will begin in the fall.

3.4 BCAPI Meeting

Mr. Fowler reported on the meeting Council hosted with members of BCAPI; including: Tom Gribbons, Monica Chaperlin, Bryce Belyea and Roxanne Fairweather. He advised that Mr. Irving had attended the meeting as well. BCAPI spoke about their strengths within the group, the history of the group and the impetus to eradicate poverty. A key component to achieving their goal lies in education.

Council was asked to support their work specifically by obtaining funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to fund the 7 Community Schools Coordinator positions full time. Mrs. Watson and Mr. Irving did subsequently meet with the Department to ask for this assistance. The Department presented a positive attitude toward the request.

Mrs. Watson advised that these coordinators do amazing work and that there are a number of schools who want extra help. She will follow up with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

BCAPI spoke to the need to have more Early Learning Centres (like the one currently in place at St John the Baptist/King Edward). Mrs. Watson advised that we don't have the physical space to accomplish this. Mr. Fowler asked that we send a letter of support to the Minister for the work of BCAPI and their priorities.

Mr. Fowler advised that he will attend meetings with BCAPI and NB2026 as well as with Debbie Fisher from PALS next week.

4. Presentations

Mrs. Watson welcomed Stewart Stanger, Director of Human Resources to the meeting.

Mr. Stanger reviewed the Human Resources Department staffing and highlighted a new Human Resources Officer position for the Saint John and Hampton Education Centres as compared to last year. This position handles employee pensions, purchase of service, compensation claims and oversees Work Safe for all of ASD-S.

The challenges in the Human Resources Department remain consistent with last year; a lack of effective payroll and casual/supply booking systems; the volume of issues to be dealt with (oversee 5 collective agreements); the complexity of issues being dealt (Policy 701, and Harassment in the Workplace) as well as demands from external sources for information using antiquated systems.

Mr. Stanger reviewed the number and nature of grievances filed by Centre by each union as well as Harassment in the Workplace complaints, Policy 701 and Right to Information requests. He noted that some issues are resolved quickly but others require a lot of paperwork and are challenging to deal with.

Mr. Stanger outlined the breakdown of employees throughout the District. The District has 3,252 permanent and 872 casual staff this school year.

A question was asked about a shortage of bus drivers in St. Stephen. It was explained that there are different steps to be taken before being licensed to drive a school bus. The District must wait for the training courses so timing can be an issue in getting new drivers ready for the road. Mr. MacDonald did advise that we do add new casuals each year.

A breakdown of supply teachers by Centre was reviewed as well as a breakdown on employee absences. The highest number of days absent was noted under sick leave with pay. This is costly as supply personnel must also be paid.

Mr. Spires commented that the District needs a Wellness Program up and running. Mr. Mabey asked if after so many days a doctor note was required; Mr. Stanger advised that policy is still in place.

Mr. Stanger reviewed Worksafe NB claims by Centre; vacancies due to retirement and other leaves; and the leadership job postings (33) by Centre.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Stanger for his informative presentation.

5. New Business

5.1 Budget 2013-14 (Final)

Mr. MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration reviewed the final budget report for 2013-14. He was happy to report a break even budget. He advised that we were originally over budget by approximately \$20,000 but the Department owed the District funds for teachers' salaries, so this covered it off. He reviewed budget lines that experienced a deficit, including the Plant Operation and Maintenance budget line where there was a significant deficit. He explained that approximately \$100,000 was due to custodian replacement wages and about \$400,000 was a result of additional heating fuel and natural gas expenses.

Motion to approve the final budget was made by Mr. Nesbitt and seconded by Mr. Boudreau. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. MacDonald for his presentation.

5.2 Executive Limitations Policies #12 & 13 for Review

Mrs. Watson advised that she had completed Monitoring Reports on policies EL-12 and EL-13 and had posted the documents to the portal for Council to review.

Mrs. Watson noted that with regard to EL-12, Placement of Pupils, she feels the policy is no longer required. She went on to explain that with the technology we have today in WinSchool, you cannot register a student in two schools. If this happens, warning errors are sent to the District and if not acted upon, to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Mr. Nesbitt put forward a motion to repeal this policy. It was seconded by Mr. Boudreau. Motion carried.

With regard to EL-13, (which will now be re-numbered EL-12), Annual Reporting to the Public, question was raised as to why our financial information could not be posted. Mrs. Watson advised that since our financial statements are no longer audited, (stopped in 2011), they cannot be posted. The DEC Chairs have asked the Department to bring back the auditors, but in a different format. Motion was made by Mr. Nesbitt to amend newly numbered policy EL-12 by deleting the third point referring to the posting of financial documents. The motion was seconded by Mr. Campbell. Mr. Boudreau abstained. Motion carried.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report and Updates

Mrs. Watson brought Council up to date regarding a request that was identified during parent consultations in the reconfiguring of Pennfield School. Parents asked why grade 6 students were not part of Fundy High (7-12). Mrs. Watson explained at the time that this was outside of the scope of the changes for Pennfield, but that she would investigate the possibility.

As a follow up to that commitment, a meeting was held on Monday, June 9, 2014 at Fundy High to explore the middle school concept with PSSC members in the surrounding communities. Jenny MacDougall, Senior Education Officer for St. Stephen, Derek O'Brien, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Mrs. Watson attended the meeting. There were representatives from Back Bay, St. George, Fundy High, and Blacks Harbour School. Discussions centered around the middle school concept and next steps agreed upon were to wait until school re-opens in the fall, and invite the parent community to an open house to discuss the topic.

Mrs. Watson advised Council that as part of the revamping of our website, that the Southern Exposure Newsletter would move to a blog format on the site in the fall. This will help to get our good news events out to the public.

Mrs. Watson updated Council on the NBIAA signage for high school gyms. The template has been approved and now high schools can order custom banners that are portable for a reasonable price (approx. \$115). These banners will have the school colors and logo. Middle schools can also order.

Mrs. Watson advised Council of the "Summer Learning Opportunities" being offered across ASD-S in July and August. Many of the sessions are directly related to strategies in the District Education Plan – assessment for learning, mental health and inclusion.

Mrs. Watson highlighted the many retirement celebrations happening across the District. She explained retirees get a clock, pin and certificate signed by the Minister. This Thursday evening is the NBTA Branch dinner in St. George and on Saturday evening in Saint John CUPE 1253 (local 380's) dinner for drivers and custodians. The District currently has about 100 retiring staff.

As well, she mentioned that graduation events begin in the next few days – with the ceremonies beginning on Wednesday, June 18 at Grand Manan in the afternoon and both Belleisle Regional and St. Stephen High that evening. Woodlawn in Saint John Education Centre will celebrate their graduation this Thursday. A list of all high schools with graduation dates was posted with this month's meeting materials. Either Mrs. Watson or a Senior Education Officer/Director will attend each ceremony.

Mrs. Watson provided an update on the staffing process currently underway. She advised that the 30 B teachers declared surplus have now been placed in a school. Fine tuning is happening with the D teachers. The District is losing 31 teachers due to a declining enrolment (-600 students).

Mrs. Watson extended her thanks to all DEC members who were able to attend one or more of the Turnaround Achievement Awards ceremonies across the District. She was very pleased with the events and advised we recognized over 50 students who have turned their lives around.

June is MARIGOLD month in ASD-S and last week we had flowers planted in 50 sites by 48 of our schools. Teacher Barry Ogden provided a list of sites where 6000 students and 3000 volunteers across all of our Centres participated – at schools and within communities.

Mrs. Watson advised that this is a time for many teas, luncheons, art shows, track and field events and concerts as the school year comes to a close. There have also been public speaking events where ASD-S did very well. She also mentioned that the Vincent Massey Playground opening was held on Saturday May 31, 2014 and she was in attendance. As well, the Rothesay Community Park will officially open on Saturday, June 14, 2014.

Mrs. Watson reminded Council that school ends for students on Friday, June 20 (a half day for students), and staff will finish up on Tuesday, June 24.

Mrs. Watson wanted to publicly thank members of Council for their support over the past school year. Members are good cheer leaders for the District and devote a lot of time and energy in support of our education system.

6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates

Mr. Fowler reported that he attended a presentation by Bruce VanStone on cyber-bullying. He noted that 'sexting' is becoming a serious issue and that the statistics were scary. For example: 22% of teen girls, 18% of teen boys and 11% of young teen girls have sent nude photos of themselves electronically. Over one third of teen boys and 40% of young men have reported receiving or seeing 'private photos'. The document will be posted on the DEC portal for anyone who would like to review it.

Mr. Fowler advised that there will be an announcement coming in next few days regarding funding for mental health initiatives.

Mr. Fowler informed members that the Council of DEC Chairs will be joining the Canadian School Board Association as an 'observer' with no voting rights. There are no fees associated with this membership.

Mr. Fowler advised that the Education Plan was posted on the EECD website by the Minister last week. Concerns were raised on how this was done.

Mr. Fowler reported that he was concerned over the new wording of Policy 703 and would bring the issue up with the Council of DEC Chairs to see if the new wording is sufficient to cover their concerns.

6.3 Correspondence

Mr. Fowler noted that correspondence had been posted on the Portal for Council's information. He also distributed copies of a letter of complaint re Rothesay High School to members.

6.4 Members Notebook

Mr. Fowler called for a moment of silence in remembrance of the tragic events in Moncton. Mr. Mabey mentioned that he was very proud of all ASD-S schools who observed a minute of silence and wore red in support of the fallen Moncton RCMP officers.

Mr. Mabey informed Council that another New Brunswick school (Nashwaak Valley) received a \$20,000 grant to build an outdoor classroom. Island View won it last year. He also advised that he attended the 'Invention Convention' at Barnhill School as a judge and found it to be a great experience. He encouraged all schools to investigate this event for their school.

Mrs. Gunter raised a question with regard to kids with exceptionalities and the need for EAs. Mrs. Watson advised that Education Support Services determine these numbers based on needs that are identified.

A question was raised about the length of time it takes for students to see a psychologist. Mrs. MacDougall advised that there are now many more tests that can be administered at the school level to help diagnose & address challenges more quickly.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce noted that Derek O'Brien presented the report card changes to the PSSC at Rothesay Park School and parents really liked the changes but wanted to know when they would be implemented in ASD-S. Mrs. Watson explained that these changes are tied to the implementation of the new "Student Information System". ASD-W will be implementing first, followed by ASD-E.

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, August 20, 2014 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary