

**ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)**  
**DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Meeting – September 10, 2014**

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, September 10, 2014 at 490 Woodward Avenue Saint John, NB. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

**Council Members:**

Rob Fowler, Roger Nesbitt, Wayne Spires, Joanne Gunter, Don Cullinan, Stephen Campbell, Larry Boudreau, Bob McDevitt and Gerry Mabey.

**Regrets:** Gary Crossman, Charlotte McGill-Pierce, Sherman Ross

**ASD-S Staff:**

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Debbie Thomas, Senior Education Officer Saint John; Paul Smith, Senior Education Officer Hampton; John MacDonald, Director Finance & Administration, and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

Media was in attendance. PSSC Chairs Gail Evans Brown (Kennebecasis Valley High School) and Jason Gaudet (St. George Elementary) were 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. Crossman, Mrs. McGill Pierce & Mr. Ross.

**2. Approvals**

**2.1 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes**

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Agenda with Council and suggested that we move the PISA presentation up to item 2.3 in order to get presenter Sandra MacKinnon (EECD) on the road back to Fredericton earlier. There being no concerns or questions regarding the revised Agenda, a motion was put forward to approve by Mr. Cullinan. Mr. Spires seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the August 20, 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. Spires moved that the Minutes be approved and Mr. Nesbitt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. McDevitt made a motion that with regard to the Budget, all discussions going forward should be addressed in public session. Seconded by Mr. Boudreau. Motion carried.

Mr. McDevitt enquired if we had heard back from the Minister's Office on our budget submission. Mr. Fowler read the response he received back to Council which indicates someone will be in touch. Question arose on what happens if March 31<sup>st</sup> arrives and we are \$4.4 million dollars short? Mr. Fowler explained that it was his understanding, that if the shortage was a result of "unforeseen" (i.e. beyond our control) circumstances, then the Department of Education and Early Childhood will cover the shortfall. He also explained that we will know well before March 31<sup>st</sup> if we are going to be in that situation.

Mrs. Watson advised that we clearly outlined these areas of concern in our letter; specifically a deficit of \$3.2 million dollars for absenteeism and \$1.2 million in facilities.

## **2.2 Public Comment**

None

## **2.3 Presentation (moved from 4.1)**

Mrs. Watson welcomed Sandra MacKinnon (EECD) to the meeting.

Ms. MacKinnon began her presentation with a brief overview of what PISA stands for (Programme for International Student Assessment) and what assessments had been carried out. In 2012, the major domain was Mathematics; Reading and Science were minor domains. She went on to explain technical terms such as "sampling error" and "confidence intervals" and how they should be taken into consideration when looking at results.

She reviewed Canada's standing in the 2012 international rankings and some of the reasons why other countries excel over us (i.e. extensive study habits) and the results between provinces.

Some interesting facts became evident: in Canada, boys outperformed girls by a statistically significant difference in four provinces; in New Brunswick, however, there was no significant difference between boys and girls.

She did point out that they were seeing a trend since 2003 whereby Math is declining across Canada; however, it is declining less so in New Brunswick than in other provinces. When looking at the results though, we are not necessarily doing a lot better in this area, everyone else did a lot worse.

Ms. MacKinnon reviewed reading results by language sector and PISA 2012 score, and noted that the Anglophone areas of New Brunswick were doing fairly well; however, in the francophone areas they were struggling and this was due to minority language issues. She noted that this trend is consistent over all OECD countries. As well, she

stated that we are trailing a bit in Science in the Anglophone areas, but more so in the francophone areas again due to a bit of cross over due to language.

Ms. MacKinnon then reviewed a number of questions from the survey, for example: did you attend pre-school; did you repeat any grades between 1-6; were you truant and how often. These questions clearly showed that those who attended preschool, did not repeat any grades and were in school regularly, fared better than other students outside of these parameters.

These assessments were completed by high school students with a sample size of 30%. She noted that New Brunswick actually over-samples (up to 60%). There was also a 10% exemption rate which is up to the school.

A question was raised as to whether or not these assessments affect our curriculum. Ms. MacKinnon advised that they absolutely do; however, change can be painfully slow. She also advised that assessments need to be more skills based, critical thinking and problem solving based. Also, we should be looking for things that work in other countries (with higher rankings than ours) and see if there is anything they are doing that will work in our areas – with international students coming to New Brunswick to study, they are bringing with them their habits, and this can have a good influence on other students. Canada is still a world leader in education – we always rank in the top 10 – and New Brunswick is in that category.

Mr. Fowler thanked Ms. MacKinnon for her informative presentation.

### **3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

#### **3.1 Revised Annual Planning Calendar**

Mrs. Watson reviewed the revised document, outlining the changes that had been suggested at the last meeting. Mr. Fowler asked if we could add the PSSC Chair training to the PSSC Symposium on October 18. No other changes were suggested at this time. An updated calendar will be posted to the portal.

#### **3.2 Functional Capacity Update/Projections**

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the capacity projections to 2016 for those schools who are currently under 60% utilized as requested by Council at the last meeting. The projections are based on historical trends.

It was noted that there were schools on the list that were actually over 60% utilized. Mr. MacDonald will revisit the list and email an updated version to Council.

#### **3.3 PSSC Symposium – October 18 2014**

Mr. Fowler advised that Mrs. McGill-Pierce is the lead on this sub-committee and that he, Joanne Gunter and Wayne Spires had agreed to assist in the planning. Mr. Fowler

advised that he had secured Mr. Charlie MacDonald as the guest speaker, but his presentation would have to be first thing in the morning (9:30 am).

Mr. Spires had materials from previous symposiums that he will send on to Mrs. McGill-Pierce. Mr. Fowler also advised that he would check with Stacey Brown, DEC Manager, to see if she had any updated materials to provide for our sessions.

#### **4. Presentation**

See item 2.3 above.

#### **5. New Business**

##### **5.1 PSSC/DEC Budget**

Mrs. Watson spoke to the budget documents that had been posted with tonight's meeting materials. She advised that the PSSC budgets were very similar to the first two years, and that we use the last official enrolment (Sept 30, 2013) of 23,758 to determine each school's budget allotment. Again, it is similar to last year, at \$2.40 per student. Smaller schools will get a minimum base amount of \$500.00

Motion to accept the School Budget/PSSC Funding was made by Mr. Spires and seconded by Mr. Campbell. Mr. Fowler asked if Council could see a breakdown on how schools spend this PSSC budget. Mr. MacDonald agreed to provide this information.

Mrs. Watson then reviewed the DEC budget and advised that it was in good shape.

#### **6. Information Items**

##### **6.1 Superintendent's Report and Updates**

Mrs. Watson advised that the last few weeks in August were a very busy time getting 74 schools up and running. Days 1 and 2 were challenging within the Transportation Department. There had been a lot of work done over the summer; however, things were not perfect, but better than in previous years. The call volume settled within a couple of days.

Mrs. Watson advised Council that there was a 1 day delay with the beginning of school for St. Patrick's students. This was as a result of the enormous amount of work required to get classrooms ready for students, and the fact that teachers lost one day of set up time due to a Professional Development day. All is going well at this point in time.

Mrs. Watson advised that ASD-S is projecting a drop in enrolment for the 2014-15 school year – unofficially estimated to be (-400)+ students. She also advised that new International Student numbers are up, especially in the Saint John Education Centre where

they are expecting 98 (plus another 8); Hampton Education Centre 14; and St. Stephen Education Centre 26 (expecting another 2).

Mrs. Watson reminded Council that PSSC/Open Houses have already begun and the dates have been posted on the portal for Council's convenience. She mentioned that Fairvale Elementary had tried something new whereby they developed a poster board listing the PSSC roles, and PSSC members wore name badges to help create interest in serving on the PSSC.

Mrs. Watson advised members that she did a one hour telephone conference call with all new Principals to bring them up to date on the role of the PSSC, their budget, meetings, open houses, elections, etc. She also provided Department of Education and Early Childhood documents to assist in moving forward.

Mrs. Watson updated Council on two staff deaths since the beginning of school. The death of one teacher, Carole Arseneau Basque from Millidgeville North was unexpected, while Cindy Fleming, from Centennial, had been suffering from cancer. There was also the death of the son of one of our Bus Drivers from the Hampton Education Centre. The Crisis Response Team along with Debbie Thomas, Pam Miller, our school psychologists and the NBTA all provided assistance to our school staff and students during this difficult time. We borrowed teachers from nearby schools to allow staff to attend funeral services for the teachers.

Mrs. Watson also spoke about the need to raise allergy awareness across the District as there are more students each year with life threatening allergies. She noted that we lost two students over the past year due to severe allergies.

The Purple Ribbon Campaign began as a result of the death of one of our students and was introduced in the schools in the Kennebecasis Valley this fall with the goal of raising awareness. Our Healthy Learner Nurses are going to look at what we do across Centres to have more consistency and are developing a Kit for all schools containing training information, epi-pen dummies, links to YouTube videos, Allerject devices and other critical details in dealing with severe allergies in schools. Letters will be sent home at the start of the school year re allergies and our policies and signage. There will also be a person assigned to do staff training.

Mrs. Watson talked about the planning that is now happening for the two Professional Development Days that are scheduled for October 9 & 10. October 9 will be a provincial focus and October 10 will be district focused. These days will also include training for the 2 day ASSIST program, Violent Threat Assessment and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention. Custodians will welcome a visit from motivational speaker, Charlie MacDonald.

Mrs. Watson reminded members that following Thanksgiving, Kindergarten registrations will begin for next year.

One Council member commented that the changing of Bus Numbers caused some confusion during the first days of school. Mrs. Watson advised that they will all be changing.

Question was raised about whether or not “all” schools in ASD-S were peanut free? Mrs. Watson advised that all schools will eventually be peanut/nut and scent free, but this takes time and she realizes it hasn’t been the same in all Centres. Mrs. Watson also mentioned that sometimes a classroom will have to ban a certain product, due to a severe allergy. She said that an emergency plan is worked out between the school and parents who have children with severe allergies each year. As WinSchool data is updated at the end of the month, we can see how common serious allergies are in each school.

Mrs. Watson advised that staff take these situations very seriously, with schools having pictures and information on students with such allergies posted on the staff room bulletin boards so everyone is aware.

Question was asked about the possibility of epi-pens being available at the school? Mrs. Watson advised that some schools may choose to buy some; however, the Department Policy 704 states that it is the parents’ responsibility to provide them. More work is needed on this topic.

## **6.2 Chairperson’s Report & Updates**

Mr. Fowler announced that the Teachers Excellence Awards would be held on November 15<sup>th</sup> in Fredericton, but that the names of the winners were not yet public. He mentioned that there would also be a Minister’s Forum that weekend as well.

Mr. Fowler advised that the DEC Chairs had asked the Deputy Minister for a meeting as soon as possible after the election.

Mr. Fowler reminded Council that DEC Chairs would soon meet with EECD to review the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy 322. In preparation for this, the Chairs will be sending out a survey (through Stacey Brown) to gather feedback on what’s working, what is not, and how the policy is being implemented. The survey should be ready to go within the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Fowler asked Council if they had any questions or concerns over the Code of Conduct document that was provided at the last meeting and posted on the portal for their review. Discussion arose on a few points that were clarified by Mr. Fowler. Mr. Fowler then discussed a few changes that would be required to the document and noted that he would provide the exact wording to the Recording Secretary. Following this discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Boudreau that the Code of Conduct document be adopted with the changes discussed. It was seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

## **6.3 Correspondence**

None

## **6.4 Members Notebook**

Mr. Boudreau mentioned that the construction work going on in Blacks Harbour and Back Bay is really behind. He wondered if anything could be done to address the issue

so that there would be less interference during the school day. Mr. MacDonald advised that he did not believe there was, without significant cost changes, as contracts had been signed.

Mr. McDevitt asked if DTI monitored projects once they got underway. Mr. MacDonald advised that contractor meetings are held and that DTI are looking at tendering earlier. Mrs. Watson reminded Council that we now must have our projects in by May (vs September) so that tendering and work can be done earlier.

Mr. Boudreau asked whose responsibility it is for bus information to be updated on Twitter. Mrs. Watson advised that the Assistant Transportation Managers in each Centre are responsible for this and she will follow up.

Mr. Nesbitt updated Council on the work of the New School Naming Committee. He expects that by the end of this week, there will be an invitation for folks to submit their suggestions via the ASD-S website until October 15<sup>th</sup>. Principals have been asked to promote the opportunity to suggest a new name for the school to parents, and Mr. Nesbitt is hoping information can be posted in the Southern Exposure newsletter. He indicated that by November/December, they will have narrowed the suggestions down to three names which will then be brought forward to Council and then to the Minister.

Mrs. Gunter enquired about a co-op busing concern in the Saint John Education Centre which had been brought to her attention. Mrs. Watson clarified the changes in co-op busing for this school year and the reason for it. Mrs. Gunter asked that this be monitored going forward.

## **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, October 8, 2014 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Rob Fowler, Chair

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Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary