



Forest Hill Elementary School

548 Forest Hill Road, Fredericton, NB E3B 4K6

Parent School Support Committee Minutes

22nd February 2021, 6.30pm - 7:25pm (virtual meeting via Teams)

<p>PSSC Members present: David Greenfield, Chair Wendy Monk, Secretary Rob Langmaid, Member Maiya Alismaili, Member</p>	<p>School Representation present: Tracy Stewart, Principal Frances Beaudin, Teacher</p> <p>Guests present: Kimberley Douglass (ASD-W, DEC) David McTimoney (ASD-W) David Coon (local MLA)</p>
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1. Meeting introduction

(a) *Minutes from the January PSSC meeting*

The minutes were approved.

2. New business

(a) *Special meeting topic: Ventilation discussion*

David Greenfield gave a short introduction to the topic and noted that David McTimoney presented information about ventilation at ASDW schools (inc. FHES) at the DEC meeting. David McTimoney gave a short overview: the ventilation discussion for FHES stemmed from PSSC letter submitted to the DEC and covered three core items.

1. **Is there additional funding for ventilation due to COVID?** There is some additional government funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic e.g. for staffing, cleaning supplies and transportation. However, there is no clear increased funding relating to air circulation projects that fall under capital improvements.
2. **What role could the PSSC play in requesting the capital improvement?** Submitting the letter was an excellent first step. Capital improvements are for big projects for buildings that fall outside the regular District budget. ~\$2.9M - \$3M+ is available annually for these capital

improvements within ASDW. ASDW keeps a database for all the projects that are needed within the District. However, across the 69 schools there are currently ~\$75M needed improvements so clearly a need to prioritise projects.

For the integral ventilation system (central system that would circulate throughout the building) – 59 schools throughout NB that do not have this system – within ASDW there are 24 and 8 in Fredericton (with FHES being one of those). For some schools there are small pockets of ventilation, e.g., exhaust fan, including FHES.

For the wider province there is going to be widespread air quality testing with a focus on schools with no ventilation system. This will provide formal feedback within the District schools – including FHES.

- 3. Reports on air exchange rates and air quality.** District policy invites stakeholders at the schools to have the air quality checked if they feel that it's necessary e.g. allergies or asthma triggers and they make reference to District policy to fill in a simple request to have it reviewed. The District then conducts testing. In the case of FHES, this will happen on Wednesday 24th February and RPC will complete this testing. The test will focus on CO₂ levels (as a proxy for air quality) when the kids are present in the school during a typical day (will include a spot test in every room, including the nine homerooms, and check for mould levels in the basement). Results will be compared with guidelines.

At FHES there are five separate exhaust fans: two that serve an upstairs classroom wing that pulls air from three classrooms; two serving back playground side of the school serving two classrooms each; and one brand-new fan that serves all washrooms and recently replaced an older system. All ventilation systems are currently functioning and running 23 hours a day for maximal use. However, FHES qualifies as a school requiring further attention from the District as it does not have an integral ventilation system.

Short summary of discussion during Q&A

DG: Spot testing – is this just initial testing? Or will there be more extensive testing?

DMcT: Call will be put out to the 24 principals that asks specific questions to get the information needed to complete the full testing, if needed. Has the full attention of the District and the DEC. Do we need to do this in every school? Will be guided by test results. If there are concerns, then immediate action will be taken. Department may take more of a lead on this (current action being led by the District) from the wider perspective.

TS: CO₂ testing has been completed before. Results will be measured against the normal range but will there be a comparison with the previous results? How do they compare with the new fans?

DMcT: Tests completed in 2018. Comparisons will be made – and you can request comparisons as needed. We could also look at historical data to look at trends. Results interpretation is guided by experts and known comparisons, for example mould comparison inside compared with mould reading outside.

Results can be provided to parents and caregivers but would also need to explanation in data interpretation.

KD: What triggered the concerns in school air quality?

DG: Media attention and focus on COVID-19. Also, seeing other provinces investing in adequate ventilation.

WM: Air quality was raised previously, and COVID-19 has compounded these concerns.

TS: Further, it also links to the wider school sustainability studies, especially if a new school is not going to be built in the next 15-20 years (note that the project has moved down the list again)

KD: School replacement is #2 on the DEC list but moved to #11 on the province list.

DMcT: DEC will submit major capital construction requests in May. Major capital (e.g. new school, mid-life upgrade). New combined LSES and FHES school fell from #3 to #11 on the provincial list while the District holds it at #2. Provincial list governed by provincial QBL (quadruple bottom line) matrix, which identifies the priorities by taking a multi-category approach and weighting available information. Note that all seven school Districts submit their major projects to this list and it's a fully public and transparent process.

There have been three recent capital improvement projects at FHES: 2012-13 flooring project (\$9400), 2016-17: New doors (\$20k) and windows (\$80k).

DC: Met with Dominic Cardy a couple of weeks ago. Also approached T. Weber (Director Educational Facilities and Pupil Transportation at EECD) for more information.

Note that province will be putting forward \$200k to study of ventilation in the schools in the ones without ventilation systems to identify priority schools for ventilation improvements. The study will prioritise 59 schools across the province with an integral system. CO₂ acts as a stand-in for the other quality measures. More comprehensive measures might be needed to get a full handle on the ventilation issues. T. Weber indicated that ideally there are six full air changes/hour for good ventilation – entire air in the room changes over for classrooms.

FHES is on the list of schools without an integral ventilation system, and there have been \$400k identified needs for ventilation and heating upgrades but will depend on results of ventilation system for where it is in priority.

How does this relate to COVID-19? More attention given during the pandemic and growing scientific literature supporting ventilation needs. Rising concerns around COVID-19 variants and potential increased risk to younger children.

Note that ventilation in a building can be highly variable – FHES is a smaller building – may not have too many dead spots for ventilation. Classroom ventilation systems used to individual units that are mounted on the wall (e.g. in Ontario). Different options available that might be appropriate for target response.

DMcT: Confirmed all classrooms will be tested for the upcoming testing.

DC: Happy that all classrooms will be tested.

TS: More accurate picture.

DMcT: Small class sizes – will be interesting to see if the smaller classes and room sizes are different.

DC: Going to follow up on why the school has dropped so far in the provincial priority list.

DG and TS: Thanked DMcT, DC and KD for their time and contributions

DMcT, DC and KD left after this discussion.

Principal's report

- Update – presentations for PSSC night – pre-recorded sessions to maximise parent/caregiver session. Short 3-4 videos on key topics. Part 1: If we go to official home learning, what will it look like? Learning from home. Support guidance e.g. what is a learning packet, what is your role as a parent. Part 2: How can you support your child at any time? E.g. literacy – top sites and resources, things to keep in mind. Part 3: Similar but for numeracy. Part 4: Social-emotional learning and growth – 5-10 minutes in length. Provide information and resources but not be too much detail. Spoken with numeracy district coordinator – provided resources. Same with literacy. Keep the message simple and the pointers. Good feedback from PSSC. Videos will be added to school YouTube channel. Has longevity with info – helps with support from teachers via their newsletters.

Date of next meeting: 22nd March 2021

PSSC Chair

9th March 2021

PSSC Secretary