

**Superintendent Report
February 2019**

ENDS #1: To provide positive, safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments for children, youth, and staff.

This week there is a focus on Internet Safety – parents have been made aware of resources on our ASD-S website on this important topic. The two Technology Coaches have been visiting schools to support teachers. All grade 6 technology teachers have now just completed training in a grade 6 “Cyber Immunization Program,” that will now be introduced to students as part of their Middle School Technology Education classes – it includes digital safety, passwords, malware, phishing, on-line presence, and cyber threats. Students will be introduced to the graphic novel, “Timeout,” a story that reinforces the learning goals of the Cyber Immunization Program. The two Technology Coaches offer in-school training on topics such as Office 365, free online tools such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, One Note, and Microsoft Teams.

ESS Connect is a new Education Support Services system that will securely house “Personalized Learning Plans,” (PLP’s) and other related documents. The functionality and capability of ESS Connect far exceeds the current system and will greatly improve planning, communication and services for all children. All resource teachers and principals are being trained and the feedback to date has been very positive. The remaining school staff will receive ESS Connect training on the March 22 Professional Development Day and District based staff by the end of April. All schools will be using ESS Connect by September of 2019 when the transition is complete. We have a lead teacher heading the implementation process, Wendy Romeo, a resource teacher from Fairvale Elementary School.

ENDS #2: To demonstrate continuous improvement toward meeting provincial targets in literacy, numeracy, science (English and French Immersion) and to improve learning in and application of the arts, trades and technology.

Forty staff have signed up for our latest round of French language course offerings. We have teachers hired last year who have plans in place to improve their language proficiency. We have been a presence at Job Fairs at UNB, St. Thomas, Université de Moncton and now McGill and Ottawa University to hire FSL teachers for 2019-2020. Our goal is to have superior speakers teaching FI as per the Department Policy 309. All Program Information meetings have been held and we have asked families to indicate for grades 1 and 6 if they wish the FI program or English Program. This allows us to begin looking at teacher needs for next year.

A reading support program is being piloted at Sussex Corner Elementary and Sussex Middle School and in Saint John at Loch Lomond, Seaside, Barnhill and Princess Elizabeth schools. The program is offered 2-3 times a week for 6 weeks to help French Immersion students who are struggling.

A workshop for grade 6 FI teachers was held last week. As we examine data we find that grade 6 is a time when we have students whose families request that they switch from FI to the English program.

In numeracy grade 6 “benchmarks” will be administered in March – there are grade 7 and 8 benchmarks available for those schools wishing to do those as well.

The “Middle Level Math League” has thirteen schools participating – ASD-S is partnering with UNB-SJ, UNB-Fredericton, and Memorial University in this program. We will host the Math League competition in SJEC on April 9 at 4:30 – 7:00 p.m.

ENDS #3: To increase the engagement of children & youth by embedding competencies such as, critical thinking, citizenship, entrepreneurship, innovation, personalized learning and leadership in teaching and learning.

ASD-S hosted an ‘All Nations’ First Nation blanket exercise on Saturday, February 2, 1:00-4:00 pm at Forest Hills School. There were 70 ASD-S educators and members of the Saint John Police Force, including Chief Connell, who participated. The blanket exercise was led by Peskotomuhkati Knowledge-Keeper Kate Akagi, Mi’kmaq Elder Constance Sewell, and Mi’kmaq elder Donna Augustine. The Neqotkuk Drummers and Chanters opened and closed the day with drumming, chants, and songs including the ‘Honour Song’. The Blanket Exercise opened with an introduction to First Nation culture and smudging by elders and proceeded to a simulation that walked participants through history, touching upon the pre-contact period, Indigenous contact with Europeans and implications, the Indian Act and implications, the reserve system, residential schools and other contemporary issues. The exercise was followed by a talking circle during which time participants shared their observations and reflections.

Two groups of 35 teachers met in January to learn more about NB global competencies. The session was designed to provide teachers with opportunities to learn more about global competencies education, explore exemplars for implementation, learn about social and emotional learning and personalized learning. They left with a professional learning activity to share with their school staffs.

IDEA Centre held a celebration of learning for families, teachers, and partners in mid-January. This is a program designed to develop student-led businesses. Students identify, research and solve community problems through the vehicle of social enterprise and entrepreneurship. The curriculum is delivered at a community space called Connexion Works and is a very positive experience for students. Brilliant Labe and Enterprise SJ are our partners in this unique offering for students. This term five students from Rothesay High will participate as the program moves outside of SJEC.

ENDS #4: To provide opportunities for staff to learn about mental health issues in children and youth and to promote school and District wide initiatives that promote mental fitness.

The Guidance lead teachers completed a one day clinical supervision training in Halifax last week. The course was “Clinical Supervision – Skills for Developing Counsellors,” and put on by the Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute.

The leads have completed the first phase of a review of nationally recognized mental health programs and will be providing a summary to the ESS team.

Three more schools completed workshops on “Positive Education” in January, bringing the total to 14 schools.

ENDS #5: To expect all members of the school community to be welcomed, respected, accepted and supported and to address heterosexism and discrimination.

The Hampton Centre drivers had a PD Day and as per our District Plan an information session was delivered on LGBTQ+ and this information was very well received.

There will be a professional learning day for guidance counsellors in March – the focus will be on LGBTQ+ education.

ENDS #6: To coordinate and maximize access to resources to support children, youth & families.

A working committee came together to begin work on this policy – and a decision made to replace the Parent Resources section on the ASD-S website. We need a user-friendly location on our website to identify resources for families, including curriculum, (report cards, graduation requirements, FSL, kindergarten, literacy, numeracy etc.), early childhood, Education Support Services, (guidance, resource, mental health, Integrated Services Delivery, exceptionalities, Complex Case etc.), health (concussions, allergies, cannabis, vaping etc.), internet safety, and the LINK Program. We also need to include community partner agencies that support children, youth and families. The committee will meet again late February.

ENDS #7: To promote the value of education through effective partnerships and positive pro-active communication.

A letter to the editor was sent to the Telegraph Journal, the Kings County Record and the St. Croix Courier to celebrate our schools and the great work done in December to help families, charities and those less fortunate. We had sent it as an editorial, however the size was reduced and it appeared as a letter, minus several of the examples we had given of particular schools.

Jessica Hanlon used the information from the December DEC report to put together a “SWAY” which highlighted pictures and stories from about 45 of our schools, it was shared electronically with MLAs, MPs, DEC members and it was added to the website, Facebook, and to our twitter account. We are seeing more schools having twitter accounts, a quick and easy way to share.

Jessica and her provincial counterparts met recently and had time with EECD Communications staff to determine how everyone could work together in sharing positive education stories. We had a positive article in the Telegraph Journal and King’s County Record on Hampton High and their new welding facility, and also on the Idea Centre, housed at Connexion Works in Saint John.

Other:

We had some very sad news on the weekend about a young St. Malachy’s math teacher, Jared Holder. Jared was transported to hospital Friday morning after becoming unconscious at home. We know that Jared has lost all brain functions and arrangements are being made for the donation of his organs. The Holder family are very well known in ASD-S; his dad Paul, a retired teacher from St. Malachy’s/Saint John High School, his mom Laurene, from Rothesay High/Harry Miller and his wife Ashley, a teacher at Fairvale Elementary. Our thoughts are with the family and the students and staff at St. Malachy’s; thank you to those who continue to support St. Malachy’s this week, our NBTA Counsellors, members of the Child and Youth Team and other schools.

A huge thank you to our facilities staff – they have had many challenges in the last month with ice and keeping walkways and entrances clear and safe. We also acknowledge our bus drivers and the challenges they can face covering rural roads during the winter months.