

Superintendent's Report to DEC
November 7, 2018

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

We are hosting speaker John Westhaver this week – Rothesay High, COMPASS, Hampton High and Harbour View High. John is from St. Stephen and as a grade 12 student was in a tragic accident with three of his friends. John was the only survivor and his journey to recovery was a lengthy one as he had serious burns to most of his body. His message to students is about making good choices. John is well known to high schools in the St. Stephen Centre.

We had 15 attend the provincial Cannabis Forum last Friday hosted by the Chief Medical Health Officer, Dr. Jennifer Russell. Thank you Linda for representing the DEC. Our high school Principals heard Dr. Russell speak on the topic last spring, when we invited her to a Principals' meeting at PORTAGE. We were all very proud of the SWAT team (Students Working Against Tobacco) of students from Fundy Middle and High School and their teacher advisor Sarah Morgan-Lee. The students spoke to us about their journey at Fundy – from the pre and post surveys, signage, school policy, visiting the local elementary school, messaging on school announcements, a parent letter, and informing stakeholders. The students mentioned smoking and vaping on yellow buses and Manager Jamie Tait, and staff from Transportation will join me in a meeting with the SWAT team. They are excited to help other schools.

Public Health staff are working through our 33 schools with grades 7 and 9 students with their annual immunization clinics. There are six remaining. Information about the immunizations and the parent permission forms are on the ASD-S website.

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.

The seven schools in Saint John are very appreciative of the additional teachers to support K-2 made possible by Living Saint John, BICAPI (Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative), EECDC and our District. We have added 20 additional teachers focused on K-2 at Seaside Park, Princess Elizabeth, Centennial, Hazen-White/St. Francis, Prince Charles, St. John the Baptist/King Edward and Glen Falls. There is a research component to this initiative and that is being led by Dr. Cindy Hatt, a retired elementary educator from the Hampton Education Centre. The schools have used these teachers to reduce the student teacher ratio at the primary grades. Following the Teacher's Collective Agreement the maximum class size at K-2 is 21 students and in these schools it is very challenging for a teacher to meet the learning needs of all students. These teachers have allowed us in many cases to reduce the ratio to 1-10. At a couple of schools space to create an additional class is a challenge so we have two teachers team teaching in one classroom with more time for individual and small group support. Yesterday we were invited to update BICAPI on our progress to date and members were pleased to hear from Principals Lori Doyle and Megan Donovan.

Several workshops are taking place for FSL teachers – grades 3-5 FI numeracy, running records instruction for new grades 1-2 FI teachers, supporting middle school mathematics teachers, grade 6 FI intervention project, and funding release time for FI teachers to visit other FI classes to observe Guided Math sessions.

Two sessions will be held for high school French SPRs, one on the new French Immersion Language Arts Curriculum and another on numeracy and science. We have over forty teachers participating in French courses through on-line learning and evening courses. Human Resources and FSL Subject Coordinators continue to add FSL supply teachers to our list.

All high school Principals and between one and three teachers per school attended the provincial Assessment Conference in Fredericton on October 24, facilitated by Myron Dueck, author of “Grading Smarter, Not Harder.” Subject Coordinators have developed a self-assessment tool for “assessing evaluating and reporting” and Principals will work with their Leadership teams to complete and determine next steps for their schools. Student assessment will be a focus of the half day of PD on Friday, November 9.

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.

We have launched the Innovation in Education Grants and so far have awarded 23 grants totaling \$23K – the maximum grant offered to an individual teacher is \$600 - \$1000. A team of teachers can apply for their PLC (Professional Learning Community) for \$2,000 to \$5,000. The applications are scored using a rubric and must have an evaluation component. The project must also illustrate a connection to the global competencies. Teachers from Fairvale, Centennial, Macdonald Consolidated, Princess Elizabeth, Forest Hills, River Valley, Barnhill, Hampton High, Rothesay High and St. Malachy’s have received grants. A few examples of projects – starting a school garden, exploring Acadian and Indigenous culture through music, creating STEAM bins (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math), purposeful play at primary, circuit boards and coding programs, a mobile STEM cart, developing a high school readiness program, student run bakery, a cultural market, research, design and build a compost bin for the school green house, participating in the OceanWise national writers workshop, and participating in the Tables des Chefs program to have a class paired with a professional chef. For now we have set aside \$50K to support the teacher grants using self-sustaining funds.

We were approached by the Hilton to host a Hospitality and Tourism Career Fair on November 15 from 10 a.m. – noon and 142 of our students from five high schools will attend this event. Schools offering the Hospitality and Tourism course this term will participate. We will provide the bussing.

Two Pitch Fest events have been held (Nov 2 and 9) for those high schools offering Entrepreneurship this semester. This one day workshop focuses on public speaking, sales persuasion, business and entrepreneurship skills. Support is received from the business community, and students enter in to some friendly competition.

Subject Coordinator Mark Perry has been presenting at schools by invitation, a two-part PD on global competencies – Part A is an introduction and Part B is embedding the competencies. He has visited twelve schools so far and will continue this offer through the year for staff meetings or scheduled PD days. These sessions have also been offered for lead/coach teachers. We also have a cohort of teachers in each of the three Education Centres who are working through a three-stage process of progressive professional learning on this topic. They will be coming together to explore the competencies through their subject areas.

UNESCO Schools Program – there are three more schools working through the application process. Saint John High School, St. Malachy's, Hampton High and St. Stephen Middle have already been designated. The four pillars of this program are learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together.

Considerable work is happening by way of professional learning in First Nations education – most schools have identified a point person to be part of a distribution list and receive ideas and resources to share with colleagues. This has been effective in communicating about First Nations initiatives. Several teachers attended a Saturday workshop at UNB-F to hear Indigenous Scholar Dr. Marie Battiste deliver an address on the theme of Treaties, Histories and Cognitive Justice. Wolastoqiyik artist Natalie Sappier conducted a workshop for art and music teachers on October 17. Elders David and Imelda Perley will deliver a workshop on Wolastoqey language on November 19 and participating teachers are required to complete language modules before and after the session. Many schools also participated in Orange Shirt Day in October.

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.

On November 22 we will host a Mental Health Youth Forum for high school students and teachers. A similar forum was held last year.

Last year Pam Miller made an application to the Department for funding to bring Dr. Stan Kutcher from NS, who has written a curriculum around teen mental health. Through this training we had several teachers, counsellors and lead teachers trained to deliver the “Go-To Educator” work which educates teachers around mental health illnesses, recognizing changes in students and getting them connected to resources for help within their own school. The second part of the 3-day professional learning was to review the Mental Health and High School Curriculum which is a recommended resource in the 2016 NB Personal Development and Career Planning curriculum. There are six modules that address stigma around mental illness to connecting students with community resources. The plan is now to share this with other schools.

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

We were very well represented at the Pride in Education Forum on the weekend in Fredericton – we had 125 of the 250 students attend this provincial event. A special thank you to the staff who give of their weekend to accompany the students and to Christina Barrington (VP St. Malachys Memorial High) and Joyce Walker Haley (St. Stephen Education Centre Healthy Learners Nurse) for being part of the organizing committee. I spent some time on Saturday at the Forum.

Plans are taking shape for a middle school GSA Conference at the District office for 22 teacher leaders and some students. A similar event was held last year for middle school leaders, a chance for them to share ideas and resources. Some schools would have high functioning GSA student groups, while others will be looking for some help.

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

Our Communications Director has had opportunities to network with several groups over the last month. I was able to arrange for the Director from the Halifax Regional District to meet with Jessica and her colleagues last month. The four also met at the DEC Symposium and in the future will meet with the Communications staff person from NBTA. Jessica has been attending many meetings and District activities including the Nutrition Committee meeting, the Student Leadership session in Fredericton, and a Policy 409 meeting. Southern Exposure now rests with Jessica and we are both attempting to tweet the good news stories and events. Jessica is going to promote school twitter accounts. We have also been exploring the use of social media and having an ASD-S Facebook page consistent with the guidelines in place. We would see this for outward communication of our positive stories and a way to share them as many parents do use Facebook. Jessica continues to explore the webpage possibilities with the Department staff.

OTHER:

Death of Saint John High School student, Wael Maatouk

Flu shots being offered to ASD-S staff

Friday, November 9 is high school parent teacher with the exception of Grand Manan, Campobello and Sir James Dunn Academy and at K-8 it is a half day for report card preparation and half day of PD.

Provincial Principals meetings were held on October 25-26

Superintendents' Meeting – October 31

Student Leadership Forum on November 1 and the notes will be compiled and shared.

NB School Superintendents Association meeting for Superintendents and Directors was held on November 6 and I am now the President of this group and Derek O'Brien is the President-elect.

Annual invitation has gone out to elementary schools to submit Christmas Card designs.