

Superintendent's Report
September 12, 2018

The school year began with three days of meetings with Principals/Vice Principals – the first on Tuesday, August 21 for new school administrators with nine present. On Wednesday, August 22 all school administrators, management team and subject coordinators met at Kings Church in Quispamsis. There was a three hour professional development session led by Sally Wells focusing on when to engage, when to disengage and when to stand your ground; dealing with conflict; and the ability to know how and when to react, and when to strategically plan ahead.

In the morning, Chair Rob Fowler welcomed the group and thanked them for their leadership. Through the morning Policy 711 was presented, updates were given on the new Education Support Services software (School Connects) being implemented in January, budget updates etc. On Thursday, August 23 the administrators met by Education Centre with topics ranging from the 10 Year Education Plan to the Administrators new 5-year renewal process. The school administrative assistants also had a half day meeting by Education Centre receiving updates on Power School, transportation, and the talk mail system.

Teachers began on Monday, August 27, 2018 with each school having a staff meeting; the following two days were NBTA designated days for professional learning. St. Stephen Education Centre hosted Dr. Daniel Chorney for one day on dealing with student anxiety. Last Thursday, August 30, was a provincial PD day and the Department provided on-line resources for schools – topics ranged from global competencies to social emotional learning.

On Labor Day weekend we learned of the death of 2018 Harbour View High School graduate Robbie Lowe as a result of a single vehicle car accident. Staff from Harbour View High School will be attending the service on Friday morning. Support was provided to the school this week.

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

Alternative Education – Coordinator Pam Miller has met with over seventy students (new and returning) and their families in preparation for the new school year at the Compass Education Support Program. An open house was held last week with a good turn-out of families and students. On September 4 there were two orientation sessions to talk about expectations of the program and to complete paperwork. Programming started on September 5. Staff were hired in June and had an opportunity to meet as a team to discuss philosophy, goals (that were set out by the six principals in Saint John, Rothesay High and Kennebecasis Valley High), Project Based Learning, PBIS, Restorative Practices, the CAR Model (Competency, Autonomy and Relatedness) and were given a library of resources to support all the discussion points. Meetings were held with the six Principals in June as well. The facility was painted inside, extra space was made available with the Community Autism Centre moving to Beaconsfield, a student lounge/staff room area was created with a wall construction with windows, eight windows installed in lower level corridor to create an open concept between the Shop/tech area and the multi-purpose centre, landscaping and garden work. Picnic tables have been purchased for the green spaces. On August 27 there was a welcome breakfast for the staff, and then a day of purging materials and supplies and the preparation of the building to receive students. Ms. Miller facilitated a PD session later in the week for staff from each of the alternative sites – PALS, First Steps and PORTAGE.

Several meetings and conversations have taken place with the Sweet Caroline Foundation to complete the roll-out of our fall allergy awareness initiative for middle and high schools. This was piloted last May at Harry Miller, Rothesay Park, Rothesay High, Kennebecasis Valley High and Belleisle Regional High. The plan is for each school to hold an assembly in September-October using a power-point provided by the Foundation, the video will be shared, "Caroline's Story" and this will be followed up with students having the opportunity to use an epi-pen tester. We have boxes of testers that will be signed out by schools for this assembly. Last May the schools that participated in the pilot had student surveys to administer and the results were compiled by summer students and very positive. The assembly and eleven minute video had an impact on our students. Foundation Chair Jonathan Berry and I had an opportunity on September 4 to be interviewed on Information Morning and share the good work done by our schools. I will be joining the Chair at a meeting with the Department later this month as they would like to have other Districts involved in the awareness program.

Our voice mail system has been upgraded to a product called "School Messenger" and ASD-S will be covering the full cost for schools; in the past we covered half and asked schools to cover the remainder through their budget or in some cases PSSC budgets covered. The product has a "Safe Arrival" component and for 2018-2019 this will be implemented at all K-5 and K-8 schools plus Belleisle Regional High School. We will also have some middle schools using Safe Arrival, with others joining next year. If a child is going to be absent parents can call a toll free number, visit a web address or use a mobile app to notify the school the night before. The system will also make automated calls to families if the child is not at school after attendance is taken.

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

A small committee of our Healthy Learners Nurses, District staff and I have been working with Director of Communications Jessica Hanlon and Dan Vallis, Health & Physical Education Subject Coordinator, on the development of communication tools and messages for the updated Policy 711 (Healthy Eating). We know that the proper implementation of this policy means communication with our staff (teaching and support staff), families, businesses that provide food to our schools, vending companies, and community partners.

Jessica has also been working with us on the communication of the "Cashless Schools" initiative, as we want to see more parents signing up for this new program, and ordering/paying for items on-line to minimize the time staff are collecting and counting monies. Through the 2017-2018 school year the staff in Budget and Accounting have been working to get the software running in each school. Manager, Carolann Spear will make a presentation at the September DEC meeting.

Other

On Sunday, September 16, 2018 I have been asked to attend the annual Recognition Ceremony for the students at PORTAGE in Cassidy Lake and to address the students being recognized. I have been associated with PORTAGE since 2006 when the teaching staff joined the Rothesay district and have been attending their ceremonies since that time.

A busy time with Open House events across ASD-S, many held the week before school began for students.

Zoë Watson