

Superintendent's Report
September 4, 2019

The new school year has officially started – on Tuesday, September 3 the grade 6 and grade 9 students had a transition day. This day included orientation activities such as tours, scavenger hunts, meeting staff, receiving their lockers, hearing about sports and other clubs within their school, and getting important information on expectations and rules of the school. Principals had an opportunity to discuss the expectations around scent free/peanut and nut free, as well as vaping and the importance of good attendance.

Many schools had their Open House events last week and this week, with only a few to be held later this month. We will ask Principals to assist in making PSSC members aware of the Orientation sessions to be held September 24, 25 and October 1, 2019.

The Directors are working this week to confirm actual student numbers, our enrolment does not become official until later in the fall; however, we must ensure that each class is not exceeding the maximum class size as outlined in the NBTF Collective Agreement. If some school enrolments are under what was projected, it could mean a teacher must move to support a school that is growing. Director Peter Smith is receiving school requests for additional EAs, and he is working through this process with his Coordinators.

Two initiatives have been launched with the start of the school year – one is our efforts to build awareness of the importance of stopping when the yellow bus lights are flashing red. This concern has been growing over the last couple of years and in January 2019 when our management team met with local police detachments we shared our challenges. Manager Jamie Tait obtained permission from Alberta to use an image they use to print “red light post cards.” The police have agreed to distribute these when they do roadside checks, and to partner with us on this initiative. The Saint John police issued a media statement about back to school and cautioned drivers about the increase in traffic with school start up and the importance of watching for our 229 buses on the roads. Our buses transport approximately 18,000 students twice a day and cover about 33,000 km daily. ASD-S is part of a provincial EECD pilot which will see external cameras installed on some of our buses – it is challenging for the drivers to get license information and to identify vehicles and drivers. This has been further exacerbated by vehicles not being required to have a front license plate. We are appreciative of the Telegraph Journal, CBC Radio and CHSJ picking up on this important story.

We have also launched a campaign to have buses and schools free from vaping. This was identified last year by high school administrators as a big challenge – both outside schools and in washrooms. The members of the Fundy Middle and High School SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) team met with transportation staff, our SSEC Healthy Learners Nurse and I to discuss their concerns and to share some research they had done at St. George Elementary about students vaping on buses with mixed loads of students. ASD-S has had a small and active committee working on this initiative – thank you to Jamie Tait and Karen McCully from Transportation, our Healthy Learners Nurses, Jessica Hanlon and VP of St. Malachy's, Christina Barrington, for working with me on this initiative. We now have a very comprehensive plan including signage for outside of each school, high school washrooms and all buses, as well as a parent letter for middle and one for high schools, a tool kit of resources for each school, consistent consequences for all high schools to use, information on twitter and our website, a presentation to be used in each high

school homeroom/advisory period. This was picked up by CBC Information Morning, CBC Maritime Noon in Halifax, and the King's County Record in Sussex. We have had requests from other jurisdictions to share our resources. Jessica Hanlon and I will share more about this initiative at our September meeting.

Next week Public Health Nurses will begin visiting all schools to review any immunization records not stamped "complete" or "exempted" by Public Health. We sent a late June letter to elementary parents to let them know this step would be happening in September and to ask families to forward any documents they have at home, or to make arrangements to get immunizations up to date over the summer months. At the middle and high school levels, the nurses will review the records, and make contact with families to let them know what is missing. We expect this process will take a couple of weeks with all available Public Health Nurses focused on the project. We are appreciative of our partnership with Public Health.

I have been asked to serve on the Board of the NB Children's Foundation – this involves attending evening meetings five times a year and reviewing proposals for funding on a regular basis.

ASD-S will be hosting the September meeting of the Education Group – District Superintendents and Directors, as well as EECD Directors and the Assistant Deputy Minister on September 18-19. Half of our meeting is a PD component and we will welcome Robyn Tingley from the KV area, a recent recipient of the Order of NB and author of "10 Essentials for the Motivated Millennial".