






## 2020-21 Communication Plan

Date	Object	Key Message	Vehicle	Channel
				
January 03, 2021	Post-holiday reminder	Cross-border and mask-up	Email	School messenger, social media
January 11, 2021	Update to travel requirements	Self-isolation and testing	Email, website	School messenger, social media
January 14, 2021	Confirmed case at KVHS		Email to KVHS families	School messenger
January 15, 2021	Confirmed case at MNS		Email to MNS families	School messenger
January 16, 2021	Confirmed case at BES		Email to BES families	School messenger
January 17, 2021	Confirmed case a QMS		Email to QMS	School messenger
January 17, 2021	District COVID update	Family letter re: cases	Email, website	School messenger, social media
January 18, 2021	Confirmed case at PES		Email to PES families	School messenger
January 19, 2021	Reminder- keep contact information up to date		Graphics	Social media
January 19, 2021	Move to Red Level	Message to families	Email, website	School messenger, social media
January 20, 2021	New Screening info	Message to Families	Email, website	School messenger, social media
January 21, 2021	EECD Curriculum updates- high school	Message to High School families	Email	School messenger
January 26, 2021	Return to Orange	Message to Families	Email, website	School messenger, social media
January 26, 2021	Info – Symptoms and Attendance			Social media
January 26, 2021	Info- Symptoms and Attendance II		Graphic	Social media
January 27, 2021	Clarification – outbreak communication	PES Families	Email	School messenger
January 27, 2021	Kick to K video		Website update	Website, social media

January 28, 2021	Dates change reminder	Message to Families	Email	School messenger, social media
January 28, 2021	French Language program	Info /Video	Website update	Website, social media
January 29, 2021	French Language program meeting invite/letter	Message to Gr K & 5 families, by Ed Centre		School messenger, social media
TBD	High School virtual expectations			

## Planned Media

<i>Jan. 25</i>	<i>Information Morning - Saint John -: ASD-S responds to parents concerns</i>	CBC Info Morning		<a href="https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-28/clip/15820559">https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-28/clip/15820559</a>
<i>Jan 27</i>	<i>Bus Driver Awarded</i>	Brunswick News	Dwain Lyttle	
<i>Jan 28</i>	<i>Excellence awards winners</i>	Brunswick News		
<i>Feb 02</i>	<i>Mental Health Resources</i>	CBC Info Morning	Peter Smith	<a href="https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-28/clip/15822220">https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-28/clip/15822220</a>
<i>TBD</i>	<i>Belleisle Rink</i>	Brunswick News		

## Blended Learning A 'Difficult' Challenge For Students, Teachers

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

Tamara Steele

Dec 30, 2020 5:15 PM

"A lot of change happening fast."

That is Anglophone South School District Superintendent Zoe Watson's take on education in a pandemic.

In a year-end interview, Watson said the added challenge this year has been figuring out how to do things safely.

Blended learning at high school was brand new for New Brunswick and she thinks it has evolved and will keep doing so.

"That has been difficult. And it's been difficult to stay connected with students on their 'learning at home day' and how they do that. I know teachers are posting videos," Watson said.

Watson says it's been challenging for students who miss being in school every day

"Students are missing clubs and sports and choirs and drama productions. Those activities really help students stay connected to school," Watson said.

Watson said time for social and emotional learning were built into the curriculum this year.

She said Anglophone South consulted with experts on how to get through the pandemic with their students and staff.

"That professional would tell us this year it's about connections and it's about relationships," Watson said.

Watson said the expert jokingly said, "the three Rs this year are relationships, relationships, relationships".



Zoe Watson is the superintendent for Anglophone South school district. (Staff Photo)

EDUCATION

## Enrolment down, home schooled students triple in pandemic year



Anglophone South School District superintendent Zoë Watson said the number of students homeschooling in the district has tripled this year.

Photo: Caitlin Dutt/Telegraph-Journal

Published an hour ago



Caitlin Dutt, Local Journalism Initiative reporter | Telegraph-Journal

Enrolment in the Anglophone South School District is down 2.8 per cent for the 2020 to 2021 academic school year, according to numbers released by its District Education Council.

Superintendent Zoë Watson said the blame mostly falls on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council documents show department numbers from 2016 through 2020. The numbers typically range in the high 22,000s to low 23,000s, but none of the five years have gone so low as numbers for September 2020, at 22,519.

It's a decrease of 644 students from the previous year, throughout the district, which ranges from St. Stephen to Sussex.

Watson said there are fewer newcomers moving to the province because of worldwide travel restrictions and the district was not able to host many Atlantic Education International (AEI) international students in the first half of the year. In the second semester, 35 newcomer students will be attending schools in the district.

Watson said, compared to last year's September to Jan. 13, the number of newcomer students, including AEI students, has been cut in half.

From September 2019 to Jan. 13, 2020, the district welcomed 434 newcomers. This year, within the same timeframe, there were 223, she said.

"I think half is pretty good considering we're in the middle of a pandemic," said newcomer and international student co-ordinator, Lynn MacDonald at Wednesday's DEC meeting.

She said the government is still set to attract 10,000 newcomers to the province and 60 per cent of those are supposed to be school-age children.

In addition, Watson said 620 families opted to home school this year. The majority of those homeschooled were in elementary school. Typically, the number would average closer to 220 students, from K-12.

EDUCATION

## Cozy canines: Shelter dogs all bundled up thanks to students



Echo, a husky at the Saint John SPCA Animal Rescue, was happy with her new winter coat on, according to Joan Richardson, shelter manager. A group of students with Simonds High School donated coats to the SPCA as part of a class project.  
Photo: Submitted

SAINT JOHN • Dogs at the Saint John SPCA Animal Rescue will be a little more cozy this winter.

A group of Simonds High School students delivered Friday sweaters to 10 lucky dogs at the Saint John animal shelter. All of the sweaters were handmade by the students, who chose and bought the material, picked the pattern and sewed up each sweater.

"It's a colder season. Some of [the dogs] don't have as much hair as others do. So maybe it'll just keep them warm and stylish," said student Brooklyn Darentt.

All of the 14 students behind the sweater project are part of the Essential Skills Achievement Pathway, a different way to earn a high school diploma which doesn't use the traditional credit system. The program consists of three parts: the foundational learning binder, the post-secondary binder and the capstone project, which is specific to the specialty the student has chosen to go into after they receive their diploma, according to teacher Linda O'Blenis.

The program was launched in 2018.

The sweater project was part of the foundational learning part of the program, and the students have been working on it since the beginning of October.

"That's kind of what this whole program is about is for the kids to take the ownership and really be the driving force to what's going to happen," O'Blenis said.

She said typically the projects have to help out the school or larger community.

"I'm really proud of them for, you know, kind of starting this, coming up with the idea and really seeing them follow it through," she said.

The class is also working on a mural for the school, designing a quiet room and helping to build a stage for the school.

On Friday, Saint John SPCA shelter greeter Nicole Tarcon accepted the sweaters. Students and teachers couldn't go into the shelter to deliver them personally to the dogs because of COVID-19 restrictions, but Tarcon said the shelter was happy to receive the welcome donation.

"We're really happy to see the younger generation supporting us," she said.

"Every time a dog is outside, whether it be for a walk or playing in the yard, they wear coats in the wintertime. Just like us they can get cold, so it's important to keep them protected from the elements."

*The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.  
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## Red Phase Brings Spike In Student Absences

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

Brad Perry

Jan 22, 2021 6:15 AM

The Anglophone South School District has seen a spike in student absences since Zone 2 moved to the Red phase this week.

Numbers provided by the school district show around 15 per cent of students were absent Monday and Tuesday.

That figure jumped to 23 per cent on Wednesday – the first day in the Red phase – and 27 per cent on Thursday.

Zoë Watson, the superintendent of the school district, said she was not surprised by the increase.

"We had noted that same jump in absenteeism back in November when our area went to the Orange phase for the first time," Watson said in an interview Thursday.

"It did go to about 28 per cent early that week that we were first in the Orange phase. When we went to the second phase of Orange shortly after the Christmas break, we didn't see absenteeism change that much."

Watson said they have seen a higher degree of absenteeism this week in schools from Saint John to Sussex, which she attributed to outbreaks at a number of schools in that area.

Five schools in the district have reported COVID-19 cases in the past two weeks: Millidgeville North School and Princess Elizabeth School in Saint John, Quispamsis Middle School, Kennebecasis Valley High School in Quispamsis, and Belleisle Elementary School in Springfield.

Both Belleisle Elementary and Princess Elizabeth saw absentee rates above 50 per cent this week.

Watson would not say how many cases have been confirmed at the schools but noted it is a "very small number."

"I think it's important to note that in our schools, we're not seeing any evidence of student-to-student transmission of the virus," she said.

The Higgs government has faced backlash from parents **and teachers** for allowing schools to remain open during the Red phase, despite earlier promising a move to virtual learning in that phase.

Watson said parents should feel comfortable knowing that schools have strict health and safety protocols in place, particularly in the Red phase.

In addition to masks and physical distancing, students and staff must stay home if they have even one symptom of COVID-19.

Any school which confirms a positive case will be closed for at least three days to allow for contact tracing and on-site testing for school staff.

"We know it's an ever-evolving situation but we do feel that our schools are very safe," said Watson.



Zoë Watson, the superintendent of the Anglophone South School District. (Image: Tamara Steele)

EDUCATION

**KV teachers innovate to keep students active**



Grade 8 students Anna Titus, Averyanna Dorcas, Rothesay Park School teacher Julie Cyr and Grade 8 student Liam Higgins made bird seed ornaments this week at Rothesay Park School. Cyr was able to purchase the materials with an Innovation Grant.  
Photo: Submitted



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**Caitlin Dutt, Local Journalism Initiative reporter | Telegraph-Journal**

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Two teachers at Rothesay Park School will be able to get their students outside and moving with the help of new grants.

Julie Cyr, who teaches art, wellness and French, was awarded a \$1,250 Innovation and Engagement Grant from the Anglophone South School District. With that, she bought outdoor classroom equipment, including clipboards, tarps and rope.

"The planet is in great need of some change. And research is showing that students or kids who spend time outside in nature, form bonds with nature," Cyr said.

She also received a First Nations Education Grant from ASD-S for \$3,000 to purchase drums kits. Once the region returns to the yellow phase of COVID recovery, Cyr said she'll bring in an elder to teach the kids how to make the instruments and how to play them, as well as teach lessons about sharing circles and First Nations culture.

Meanwhile, her colleague Jeanette Fisher, who teaches music and physical education, has received four grants for a project to overcome the obstacles of gym classes during the pandemic.

With the school district encouraging teachers to stay away from team sports during the pandemic, Fisher found she couldn't use many of the regular equipment she would use for her gym classes.

"I was thinking, 'What can I do? What kind of sports can I do that will engage the kids and keep them active during this time?'" she said.

So Fisher decided to give the kids sticks and get them to try drumming with them. So far the kids love it.

"It helps the body, the brain, and for the students, it helps strengthen the heart and the lungs, and increases muscular strength and endurance," Fisher said. "It builds brain connections, promotes social emotional learning, improves coordination. And with the student, it builds confidence and self-expression."

Fisher received a \$500 Education Improvement Grant for online training for cardio drumming, a \$1,800 Innovation and Improvement Grant, and a \$1,500 Teacher-Designed Professional Learning Grant. Those grants will go toward a training course, equipment and the continued development of integrating the drumming into courses.

Fisher also received a \$1,000 grant to purchase an iPad, which allows students to use GarageBand on the iPad to compose music.

Fisher said drumming also gives an opportunity for kids who aren't getting regular exercise or participating in team sports like usual. Less exercise, she said, is affecting their social, emotional and mental well-being.

Cyr said she's nice to be able to get outside during the pandemic, which has kept many people inside. She hopes to secure grant funding in the future to create an outdoor classroom as well.

In the meantime, she plans to lay some groundwork for teachers through her new programming to get their kids outside, and she's open to letting other teachers use her equipment for their classes.

"It's maybe a stress reliever to be outside. But [for teachers] it can also be just an extra thing to plan and prepare for," she said.

"And I think it's what I'm hoping to do with this is to create an easier way for teachers to be able to go outside"

EDUCATION

**'Every teacher this year deserves a medal': Teachers recognized for efforts**



St. Stephen teacher Scott Legge is being recognized for his efforts in and out of the classroom. He has been in charge of school station Bobcat TV, as well as ran several soccer teams at once and a drama and travel club.  
Photo: Submitted

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**Caitlin Dutt, Local Journalism Initiative reporter | Telegraph-Journal**

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Before March 2020, Emily Somers did it all: She taught English and theatre, as well as participated in the drama club for 20 years. She was the teacher liaison for the environmental club where she guided students to get water bottle fountains in the Garcelon Civic Centre.

But with the pandemic, everything changed, she said. The red phase of recovery bars any after-school clubs and extracurricular activities, and even in orange and yellow phases, only half the students attend in-person classes at a time.

It's been a difficult year for teachers and students, Somers said, and most days teachers are just trying to keep it together for the kids.

"I feel like every teacher this year deserves a medal," she said. "Every teacher should be getting an award."

Somers, along with Scott Legge and Bridget Miller, have been recognized with this year's Minister's Excellence in Education Awards in the Anglophone South School District. Somers and Legge are teachers at St. Stephen High School, while Miller is a teacher at Quispamsis Middle School.

Legge has had just as much school and extracurricular involvement as Somers. He was in charge of the school's Bobcat TV station, several soccer teams at once, and a drama and travel club.

"For me, teaching isn't just about hitting outcomes. It's understanding what you're learning, but more importantly, why or how something's important," Legge said.

"And just as important is understanding the students you're teaching."

He said he originally wanted to be a soccer coach, but it wasn't only until his university professors suggested he do a project on the similarities between teaching and coaching that he realized they were very similar.

"I think it's preparing kids for the next steps," he said. "What I tell the kids is, 'Don't bring me problems, bring me solutions. Do not be someone who just speaks about what's wrong, look at it and try to fix this.' And so [it's about] having kids understand their potential."

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Somers said she had to transition to virtual choreography sessions and adjust her in-class activities, so they could be done online and in-person.

"It's like starting over."

Miller said she's always tried to bring interactive teaching into her classroom at Quispamsis Middle School. That has meant mock elections and entrepreneurship endeavours.

She said lately, as a personal wellness teacher, she's started to do mental health check-ins with her students every Monday.

"Students need opportunities to talk about how they're feeling."

In the past, she's coached basketball teams, as well as helped with student council, the core leadership team and the Remembrance Day assembly, but it's all come to a halt because of the pandemic.

This year, Miller said she believes it's important not to sugarcoat the pandemic or the situation teachers are in but to speak factually and not hide the truth. It helps to alleviate the stress of some students.

"I think we teachers have a role to play in how we model how we handle stresses and how we're dealing and how we're coping."

*The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada. L'initiative de journalisme local est financée par le gouvernement du Canada.*

## 12-year-old paints a message of care to nursing home



Residents were delighted to receive a painting of the Kings Way Care Centre from 12-year-old Neel Pische.  
Photo: Kings Way Care Centre

**Sean Mott | Telegraph-Journal**

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A painting hangs in the lobby of the Kings Way Care Centre, visible to the residents and staff who have been under COVID-19 restrictions and limitations for close to a year.

The painting features the outside of the care facility with trees and a red sky in the background. A collection of white hearts hang over the centre, a reminder to the people inside that the outside world has not forgotten about them.

"It's the meaning behind (the painting) that really affected everybody," said Katie Frank, director of care at the Kings Way Care Centre. "It made everyone feel good."

Twelve-year-old Neel Pishe is the artist behind the painting, deciding to pick up his brush as a way to connect with people who are more isolated than ever during the pandemic.

"I thought about how I would feel to not see my family and not be able to leave my home," he said. "It made me sad."

Pishe is a student at Rothesay Park School, which runs the Order of the Maple Leaf, a program that encourages students to get involved in community service. Due to the pandemic, in-person involvement with the community is limited, so the school asked students to write cards to people in nursing homes.

Pishe decided to take this idea one step further.

"I really like art, so I thought I could communicate how I feel about what the residents and staff are going through during the pandemic," he said.

Pishe spent a week working on the painting, one of the biggest projects he's undertaken. The hearts above the building capture the message of what he wanted to convey to the people in the centre.

"I painted the hearts to show the residents their families love and miss them and also show the nursing home workers how thankful the community is that they are keeping the residents safe," he said.

Frank said the centre received the painting earlier last week along with a letter Pishe wrote. She said the pandemic has been a difficult time for staff and residents at the centre, and the painting gave them a positive boost.

"We were blown away by the details and the size (of the painting)," Frank said. "It made our staff and residents feel seen."

She said the painting will stay in the lobby until the home hangs it in a new spot where everyone will be able to see it.

Pishe plans to keep painting, especially after the reception for his latest work.

"My mom showed me a picture of the residents smiling and holding up my painting," he said. "It made me feel happy."

EDUCATION

**Grand Bay-Westfield bus driver receives provincial award**



**Marlo Glass | Telegraph-Journal**

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SAINT JOHN • Dwain Lyttle starts his work day at Inglewood School, where his school bus is parked overnight. Each morning, he performs a 15-minute pre-trip check before starting his run, taking students to and from schools throughout Grand Bay-Westfield.

Lyttle has worked in schools since 1997, delivering students to school every day since 2009. He's recently been recognized for his work, and received the Bus Driver of the Year award from the New Brunswick Home and School Federation.

As a child, he had an "awesome" bus driver that he says was deserving of an award herself. She sparked his interest in driving busses for a living.

"When I got into it, I really loved it," he said. He especially loves getting to know the students and getting them home safely.

Lyttle said it's a prestigious award that is only given to one bus driver in New Brunswick per year. He estimates there are about 1,000 bus drivers in the province.

"To be nominated and get this award, it's quite an honour," he said.

Louise Johnson, principal of Westfield Elementary, said Lyttle was an "easy nomination" for the award. Lyttle drives the school's kindergarten to grade two students home at around 2 p.m., taking the time to learn every child's name and personality. Lyttle said that's a "key part" of being a bus driver.

"If you learn their names and personalities, that makes everything easier."

Lyttle also trains new bus drivers, imparting his wisdom from years on the job. One Westfield elementary parent, Diane Arsenault, became a driver under Lyttle's guidance, and said she wouldn't have been successful without his help.

"He really is the best coach anyone could ask for," she said in Lyttle's nomination letter.

Johnson said the school is "lucky to have him" as he cares deeply about their students.

The nomination letter included testimonials from students, describing his fun-loving nature and enthusiasm for holidays. Students also mentioned his superior driving skills and dedication to safety.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, bus drivers have taken on additional responsibilities in order to keep students safe during the pandemic. They must enforce mask wearing and make sure their passengers stay in their assigned seats.

Lyttle said that wearing a mask is difficult for some kids, because they like to take them down. But he's explained they need to wear it, and since he knows his students so well, they listen to him.

"I've talked to them," he said. "We're trying to get COVID-19 to stop."

Johnson echoed that Lyttle makes sure his passengers are "safe and well-behaved."

"He's thorough in his teaching, he wants everyone to know the rules."