

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – January 13, 2021

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met virtually on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Chair; Roger Nesbitt, Vice Chair; Jonathan Barry, Wayne Spires, Justin Tinker, Dan O'Connor, Bernie Regenbogen, Heather Gillis, Kristen Murphy, Richard Malone, Lory-Ann MacAskill

Regrets: None

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Gary Hall, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Jessica Hanlon, Director of Communication, Peter Smith, Director of Education Support Services, John MacDonald, Director Finance & Administration, Susan Moffatt, Director of Human Resources, Allan Davis, Director of Schools, Hampton Education Centre, Melissa Savoie, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre, Derek O'Brien, Director of Schools, St. Stephen Education Centre, Lissa McNaughton-Dickie, Director of Early Childhood, Marc Godin, Alignment Champion; and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fowler referred to the Agenda for the meeting and asked that if there were no questions or concerns that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the Agenda be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Barry. Motion carried.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the December 9, 2020 meeting and asked if there were no questions or concerns that a motion be put forward to approve. There being no questions or concerns, Mr. Spires moved that the Minutes be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Nesbitt. Motion carried.

3. Member's Notebook

Mr. O'Connor advised that he heard from a few parents concerned about busing; partly with the snow and partly due to the Tim Street discussion. He asked if transportation staff would be able to look at a couple of schools to determine an estimate of cost if the District were to reduce the busing distance for K-5 students to 750 meters (assuming non Covid restrictions) from the current 1.5 km to improve safety for students. Mr. O'Connor advised that the District should ask the Minister for funds to cover this additional cost as it is a safety concern.

Mr. Fowler commented that Council could not make a policy change to reduce distances as this falls under District operations and is not Council's role. He added that in light of the fact that the City of Saint John has cut back on sidewalk clearing, it wouldn't hurt to ask for more money; however, Council would not be making a policy change.

Mrs. Watson advised that our Transportation Manager could pick out a few K-5 schools (mix of urban and rural) to determine an estimate for the next meeting.

Ms. Murphy commented that this would be a useful exercise to ensure safety in our District but suggested it would be too late if Council waits until next month for an answer from the District. She suggested that the information be circulated earlier and via call or email, Council could vote.

4. Presentations

4.1 ENDS #1 – Provide positive, safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments

Mrs. Watson introduced other staff, attending virtually, who all work on the goals and strategies in ENDS #1 including Gary Hall, Director of Curriculum, Jamie Tait, Transportation Manager, Lynn MacDonald, International Student/Newcomers Coordinator, Amy Marshall, Subject Coordinator Literacy, and Kari Parsons, Physical Education Coach.

District staff were in attendance to update Council on the goals and strategies under ENDS #1 – To provide positive, safe, healthy, and inclusive learning and working environments for children, youth, and staff. The monitoring report and additional supporting documents were posted with Council's meeting materials for their review and form part of these Minutes.

Staff then provided Council with an overview of the main strategies which focus on supporting schools to ensure current health and safety practices limit the potential spread of COVID-19; ensuring equity of instruction for vulnerable, culturally, and/or linguistically diverse students; and supporting schools to develop cross curricular and exploratory learning experiences that encourage outdoor physical activity.

Topics covered included school operational plans and school visits; transportation protocols during COVID; newcomer and international student numbers; the language learning centre established at Prince Charles School; newcomer support transition plans (to support very low-level language learners); additional support at Saint John High School and St. Malachy's, two high schools with a high number of newcomers; home learning for students with a medical certificate and unable to attend school during the pandemic, including roles of the home learning teachers and tutors and home learning student numbers; resources and PL for subject coordinators and teachers focusing on outdoor activities to support learning.

Following the presentation, Mr. Nesbitt moved that the monitoring report for ENDS #1 be accepted as presented. Seconded by Ms. Gillis. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler thanked the District staff for their informative presentation.

5. Business Arising from Minutes

5.1 City of Saint John Snow Removal Update

Mr. MacDonald reported the City sent a link for their sidewalk plowing maps today, which has been forwarded onto Jamie Tait, Transportation Manager, to see if we can overlay their maps onto our Bus Planner maps.

He noted that we have only had one snowstorm so far this year, Saturday January 2, during the Christmas break. Schools were open again on Monday, January 4. The only complaint we had in the Saint John area was for Centennial School, the sidewalk from Visart to Natalie up to Millidgeville Ave., was not properly cleared; the City was contacted and sent equipment over later in that day to re-clear the sidewalks in question. They did explain that the sidewalks were originally plowed on the day of the storm but must have been plowed back in when the roads were re-done later that day.

Mr. MacDonald mentioned that on January 9, on Grand Manan, we had to delay some bus runs up to an hour due to lack of sanding/salting on some of the Grand Manan roads. In the past, we have seen similar concerns in some of the more remote areas of our District, like outside of the Town of Sussex for example.

5.2 Superintendent Evaluation (2019-2020)

Mr. O'Connor recused himself from the discussion on this agenda item.

Mr. Tinker reviewed the Superintendent Evaluation Summary Report which clearly outlined the process followed to complete the yearly evaluation of the Superintendent's performance in a number of areas. The review process included the following motions, to be approved/defeated as one motion:

Mr. Tinker moved that Anglophone South School District Superintendent Zoë Watson has exceeded expectations of reasonable performance.

Mr. Tinker moved that the District Education Council of Anglophone South School District express sincere thanks and appreciation and strongly commend Zoë Watson for her very dedicated work this past year on behalf of all employees, students and parents.

Mr. Tinker moved that as a result of her administration of the District this year, Zoë Watson's performance is rated as Exceeds Most Expectations with respect to policy compliance.

Mr. Tinker moved that as a result of her successful administration of Anglophone South District this year, Zoë Watson would be eligible for a four step re-earnable increment if salaries were not frozen at present levels.

All motions were seconded by Mr. Nesbitt. Motions carried.

Ms. Gillis commended Mrs. Watson for doing a great job over the past year. Mr. Fowler added his thanks to the Superintendent for the dedication and hard work during the exceptional challenges faced over the past year.

5.3 Innovation Projects

Mrs. Watson noted that at the last meeting Mr. O'Connor requested a list of the innovation grants that had been awarded and funded through the District's self sustaining funds. The document was posted for Council with their meeting materials for tonight.

Mrs. Savoie explained that 70 applications were received and 64 were approved. Approximately \$60,000 came from self sustaining funds and subject area coordinators supported with another \$12,000.

Mr. O'Connor thanked staff for the information and found it encouraging to see the wide range of projects aimed at helping our schools. He planned to share it with his PSSC.

5.4 Parent Teacher Survey Results

Mrs. Watson shared with Council the results of a survey that was developed by Jessica Hanlon, Director of Communications, and completed after the virtual parent-teacher sessions that were held in the fall. The document was posted for Council with their meeting materials for tonight.

She highlighted a few findings including: of the 2767 respondents, 69% attended virtually, 11% attended by telephone, and 20% did not attend; the majority who attended were at grades K-5 and 57% of respondents said they would prefer the virtual option again, with 35% preferring an in-person option. All feedback obtained through the survey will be considered as plans are developed for the spring parent-teacher sessions.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent Report and Update

Mrs. Watson advised that her report had been posted with Council's meeting materials for their review.

She reported that just prior to Christmas we learned of the very tragic death of a Princess Elizabeth kindergarten student, Clybria Grant, after an accident at her home. She thanked Principal Jennifer Carhart, kindergarten teacher Holly Doucet and school staff, Craig James and Lori Lofstrom from Child and Youth and NBTA Counsellor Ronna Gauthier for their work during this very challenging week. She asked for a moment of silence in memory of Clybria.

She highlighted the following from her report: the work and communication required as we went back into orange phase of the recovery; an update on high school assessments that will happen in January and what that might look like; the 8th annual Physical Activity Challenge for all employees; funding received for 13 Behaviour Intervention Mentors for middle schools and their role; communications since our last meeting to families and an update on the generosity of our community partnerships over the holidays; winners of the Minister's Excellence in Education including Bridget Miller, Quispamsis Middle School, Emily Somers, St. Stephen High School and Scott Legge, St. Stephen High School; retirement of long time employee Pam Miller, ASD-S Subject Coordinator for Alternate Education and her replacement Shayne Buchanan; she reviewed the enrolment numbers for the District as of September 30, 2020 and noted we have a decrease of 644 students. She noted that our home schooling numbers have increased to approximately 620 when we normally would average 230.

7.2 Chair's Report and Update

Mr. Fowler advised Council that he had received an invitation to attend the pre-budget discussion on January 21st.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Tinker and the subcommittee for their work on the Superintendent's Evaluation.

Question was raised about the vacancy for Subdistrict 2 and Mr. Fowler advised that correspondence has been sent to the Minister.

7.3 Correspondence

None, all had been posted.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and reminded Council the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m. Council may choose to attend in person or virtually.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary