

## **Superintendent's Report for DEC February 3, 2021**

**ENDS #1: Provide positive, safe, healthy, and inclusive learning and working environments for children, youth, and staff.** From Thursday, January 14, 2021 to Monday evening January 18, 2021, there were outbreaks in 5 of our schools – Kennebecasis Valley High School, Belleisle Elementary, Millidgeville North, Quispamsis Middle, and Princess Elizabeth Schools. Three of these situations happened on the weekend. Thank you to Public Health for being very prepared to focus on the contact tracing and to the Principals of these schools (JoEllen Jensen, Nila Perry, Matt Bedard, Jeff Nelson and Jennifer Carhart) for being so quick to collect the necessary information required for Public Health and contact tracing. In only one situation was a day of school lost, given that the information was shared with us very early in the morning, with no opportunity for Public Health to work through the contact tracing process. The student attendance at these schools did see a decline, as much as 50%. The following day, January 19, 2021, Public Health announced our Health Region moved to the more restrictive red phase of recovery – with this came restrictions on use of workrooms and lunchrooms and the requirement for the active screening of all staff entering a school/office. This took a day to operationalize, and with few exceptions, schools were ready by Thursday, February 21. A big thank you to our Supervisor of Data and Accountability, Nick Munn, who that weekend designed an app so all staff could complete the screening questions on their phone/device prior to arriving at the workplace. Nick shared this with other Anglophone Districts. If we move back to a more restrictive phase ASD-S will be prepared. When the recovery phases change there is always a flurry of questions to be answered, and we appreciate these changes make it very confusing.

We have been introduced to a staff resource called the “Positive Workplace Framework,” championed by Dr. Bill Morrison from NB. The Department has invested in these materials for use in schools and Districts. Monique Hughes, an ESS Coordinator, is a trainer and did two optional sessions for our school leaders to learn more about the possibilities with these materials. We also had one informative session with Dr. Morrison. Our management team will look at next steps in engaging interested schools. The instrument and resources look at the observed practices in the workplace focusing on mental fitness and resiliency. We know that this school year has been like no other for our school staff as we continue to work so hard to keep schools open and safe and make quick changes and adjustments when the phases of recovery change so quickly or we have an outbreak.

**ENDS #2: Demonstrate continuous improvement by increasing engagement through innovative teaching and assessment practices, promoting mental fitness through social-emotional learning.** High school assessment week took place the week of January 25, 2021 – some schools used that week for final assessments, while other teachers needed to begin prior to the last week. There were other means of measuring student learning embraced by many teachers and this fits so well with ENDS #2 and our on-going focus on student assessment.

**ENDS #3: Ensure all members of the school community to be welcomed, respected, accepted and supported and to address heterosexism and discrimination.** ASD-S will be forming an Advisory Committee to inform our district anti-racism plans. This group will be chaired by Peter Smith with Subject Coordinator Amy Marshall and Newcomer Coordinator Lynn MacDonald participating as well as

representatives from early childhood to high school, school voices including a student, as well as community.






Subject Coordinator Amy Marshall is facilitating a book study on, “Cultivating Genius.” The group meets twice a month and will now move into applying what they have been learning into their teaching. Ms. Marshall is participating in the Courageous Conversations Academy training focusing on conversations about race. On February 5 Amy will facilitate a PL session with all ASD-S Coach teachers to start their journey into anti-racist education. Ms. Marshall has also tentatively booked Matthew Kay (author of Not Light, But Fire) to speak to the teacher Coaches on March 12, 2021. She has had a couple of meetings with Tina-Marie Lohela from Panorama Education. They provide a survey on SEL and Equity, which the district and schools can use to measure their efforts. The use of the survey itself is free; the cost comes with analyzing the data and a ‘playbook’ of strategies that schools and teachers can use to address areas of concern. A “living book list” has also been developed to help teachers find more diversity for their classroom libraries and sets of books have been given to the book study participants.

Peter Smith, Lynn MacDonald and I met at the request of PRUDE Saint John (Pride of Race, Unity and Dignity Through Education) as they would like to apply for funding to offer PL for teachers in the District next year. Conversations are on-going.

February is Black History Month and PRUDE is offering virtual sessions at schools, instead of their tours by bus around the city as field trips are not permitted at this time.

**ENDS #4: Maximize the engagement of families and the community through effective communication and outreach.** With outbreaks in January in five schools, as well as the move to orange, to red, and back to orange phase of recovery, there have been several communications to families as well as media inquiries. In addition, messaging to families of grades K and grade 5 families about the virtual Program Information Nights by Education Centre, the launch of the “Kick Off to Kindergarten” video for families with children coming to school in fall 2021, as well as a change to the school calendar for K-8 were communicated through many means to families.

**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 16, 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

|         |   |                  |              |   |
|---------|---|------------------|--------------|---|
| Jan. 25 | <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> |
| Jan 27  | <i>Bus Driver Awarded</i>   | Brunswick News   | Dwain Lyttle |   |
| Jan 28  | <i>Excellence awards winners</i>  | Brunswick News   |              |   |
| Feb 02  | <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> |

|     |                |                |  |  |
|-----|----------------|----------------|--|--|
| TBD | Belleisle Rink | Brunswick News |  |  |
|-----|----------------|----------------|--|--|

Despite the pandemic, volunteers, the PALS Program, and community partners remain very supportive, and the team of Community School Coordinators and their District leader Erica Lane have been very busy. A few examples are shared below:

#### **St. Stephen Centre**

- At Milltown Elementary the Sylvan Learning afterschool program continues to operate in person during yellow phase and on-line during orange.
- The preschool at Milltown Elementary closed due to Covid; however, the classroom used for this has been converted into a second afterschool program space and both these rooms are full to capacity with afterschool programming.
- Milltown has a Family Coordinator position funded by the United Way. This person has been instrumental in encouraging school attendance and works directly with families to overcome any barriers keeping them from getting their child to school. Throughout Covid the Family Coordinator has made extensive contact with at risk families and continues to work with them as they struggle with addiction and mental health issues which directly impact their children's attendance.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring has been adapted for Covid. Instead of meeting one on one at the school, the mentor and mentee now write letters back and forth.
- The Community School Coordinator has taken on many tasks that were once done by volunteers including clothing room and snack bins in each class.

#### **Hampton Education Centre**

- At Hampton Middle School the Community School Coordinator has taken over for the volunteers that provide a hot lunch program. The help for this program now comes from students in the form of teaching life skills; however, the Community School Coordinator purchases the food, stocks the kitchen and works with the students to provide a healthy hot lunch program.
- The Community School Coordinator has become the liaison for at risk families who have been especially vulnerable during the pandemic.
- At Rothesay Elementary mentoring through Big Brothers Big Sisters is now virtual. Each week students meet one on one with their mentee on line and the Community School Coordinator facilitates this interaction.
- The Community School Coordinators office at Rothesay Elementary has been transformed into a space for Grab & Go snacks and fruit which are in bins and delivered to individual classrooms. The food for this is purchased and the space is stocked by the Coordinator.

#### **Saint John Education Centre**

- At Glen Falls School a virtual literacy night was held in which families could connect to a link to hear books being read, activities were provided and partners donated prizes for this event.
- In the fall an Outdoor Learning Day was held at Glen Falls using the Earth Ed Site . The following partners and individuals were involved; Conservation Council of NB, ACAP Saint John, Ducks Unlimited and Kari Parsons from our District.
- Celebrate assemblies and recognitions are done virtually in each classroom and are recorded so parents can watch at home.

- First Banks Canada has partnered with Glen Falls School and offers free books to the school. Every student once a month receives a book to take home and keep throughout the school year.
- In east Saint John the Hub Kitchen continues to operate. With the grant received from the Brewer Foundation, interviews are being conducted to hire a second staff person for Inner City Youth Ministry to help with the daily workings of the lunch program. During the Red phase volunteers could not be involved at the kitchen so 5 of our Community School Coordinators as well as Community Engagement Coordinator, Erica Lane, prepared the lunches and delivered them to the schools involved. In Yellow and Orange phase volunteers work at the Kitchen with all Covid protocols in place.

Community School Coordinators have been working diligently to maintain contact with community partners and business partners that support their schools. Some of these efforts have included monthly phone calls to check in with partners, sending monthly school newsletters, inviting partners to be part of virtual events, weekly contact with PALS Coordinator Debbie Fisher, sending notes/cards to the partners to keep in touch and meeting monthly on Teams with District Community Engagement Coordinator Erica Lane.

The Community school Coordinators have been instrumental in keeping programs running that are typically staffed by volunteers particularly our school nutrition programs. These Coordinators have filled many gaps in schools with volunteers being so limited.

The front windows in the lobby of the Saint John Office have been decorated as a celebration of partners within our Community Schools across the District.

**OTHER:**

St. Malachys Memorial High School learned in late January of the death of Omar Alqasab, a student at their school. Omar was in hospital prior to Christmas. Our thoughts are with Omar's family, the staff at St. Malachy's and the resource teachers and EAs he worked with over the years.

Program Information Nights were conducted virtually this year by Education Centre – all materials have been posted on the website along with an FAQ. On Monday evening approximately 130 joined the virtual TEAMS meeting in the Saint John Education Centre, and on Wednesday evening about 85 in Hampton. The session in St. Stephen Centre is Thursday evening. Thank you to the FSL Subject Coordinators and the Directors of Schools for taking a leadership role.

Congratulations to Grand Bay-Westfield bus driver Dwain Lyttle on receiving the NB Home and School Association Bus Driver of the Year Award! Dwayne was nominated by Westfield Elementary School.

Finally, next week is the annual Staff Appreciation Week – a time to be intentional with positive feedback and thanks to all employee groups for all they do to support students, families and each other.