

**Superintendent Report
November 12, 2020**

ENDS #1: Provide positive, safe, healthy, and inclusive learning and working environments for children, youth, and staff.

Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator Claire Tooley and our three Healthy Learners Nurses have now completed their school visits with the exception of Whitehead Island. Feedback is given to the school following the walk-through and any areas in need of improvement identified. Ms. Tooley put together more pictures (posted with your meeting materials) to demonstrate the safety measures schools have put in place as part of their operational plans. Schools have been doing a remarkable job – we do discuss with Principals the increased supervision duty at K-8 as the class “bubbles” must be kept apart. We are fortunate to have EAs assisting with morning and after school supervision, through an agreement with CUPE 2745 and the Department, as the extra staff support is required. We encourage Principals of similar sized schools to share their plan for duty coverage.

The Nurses and Ms. Tooley are working with a small group of middle school physical education teachers and Coordinator Dan Vallis to develop operational plans for a small number of middle school sports, beginning with basketball and badminton. This is voluntary for schools who wish to participate and we will start slowly.

As requested, cleaning supplies, additional masks, signs, plexi-glass etc. are supplied to the schools – a few schools were requiring a high number of masks for students who forgot theirs so our communication to families increased around this. Transportation Manager Jamie Tait reports more students are coming back onto the buses but so far we have been able to accommodate the guidelines of one child per seat at K-5 and two per seat with a mask at grades 6-12.

Custodians continue their important role of cleaning surfaces in our buildings – in Anglophone Districts there will be no rentals of the schools to outside groups for November-December. This will be reviewed at Christmas – the priority now is keeping up on the necessary cleaning so schools are safe for students and staff. Our list of casual custodians has increased and as a result the rate of replacement for absences has improved. A second week of training for bus drivers was held in late October and those participants will now continue with the steps to becoming eligible to be a casual driver.

“Learning From Home” initiative continues for approximately one hundred students who have medical exemptions from school. Again, this is all new for us, and Coordinators Monique Hughes and Amy Marshall have done a great job working with the six teachers and a small team of tutors to support the students and their families. The goal is to have the work the students are doing at home aligned with the work being done in their classroom which means considerable collaboration with the teachers at the school. We continue to work through everyone’s role in providing the best program possible for these students.

Providing information to teachers on how to incorporate outdoor learning is a strategy in our District Improvement Plan (DIP). Teacher Coaches and Subject Coordinators met last week and had a workshop by Physical Education Coach Kari Parsons – our Coordinators/Coaches are increasing their awareness of the outdoors and what is possible in their areas of curriculum expertise. We have identified some webinars to support this new learning.

Epi-Pen training – On October 1 all middle and high school principals/vice principals received an email with all the instructions for 2020-2021 Allergy and Anaphylaxis training for grade 6 and 9 students. Each school received several EpiPen and Allerject trainers to use this year, and in future years. The deadline for completion is November 30. To date we have heard from several schools that they have completed the training. Schools were also reminded about the annual training requirement for staff.

The NBTA Wellness Facilitators from each Centre recently met at our office with NBTA Counselor Ronna Gauthier to discuss how they can support school staffs this year – the school based wellness representatives will be meeting in smaller groups in person at the end of November and early December. My plan is to participate in these sessions – we know this is a very different school year for everyone so it is important as the employer to hear their ideas and concerns.

ENDS #2: Demonstrate continuous improvement by increasing engagement through innovative teaching and assessment practices, promoting mental fitness through social-emotional learning.

Parent Teacher Day will be on Friday, November 20 for all high schools and December 4 for K-8, and these conferences will be offered virtually using Microsoft TEAMS. If a family does not have access to technology, the option for a telephone conference is possible. There is a program within TEAMS that allows parents/guardians to book their time on-line for the Thursday evening or Friday morning, and are sent reminders as the time gets closer. Virtual meetings with Principals were held to walk through this new process and we thank Nick Munn for his leadership with our schools to move toward this platform. Another example of how things we have traditionally done one way has had to change. A short video clip will be sent to families about the virtual interview. Gary Hall and his team of Subject Coordinators have reviewed with all Principals changes to the fall provincial report card in light of the prioritized curriculum. Gary is hosting virtual sessions for K-8 teachers this week to answer their questions.

Professional Learning continues to happen but on a smaller scale – in Education Support Services five people completed Violent Threat Risk Assessment Level 2, five also completed Traumatic Events System Training with Kevin Cameron from Lethbridge, Alberta. Our management team also had a follow-up one hour virtual session with Mr. Cameron about how we can be more effective working with schools during the pandemic. This week high school counsellors will have a session on “Solution Focused Grief Counselling,” and elementary and middle school resource teacher have had a half day of professional learning on the role of the resource teacher during the pandemic. Part of the elementary afternoon was spent virtually with Dr. Dan Chorney from NS, well known in ASD-S. High school resource teachers will benefit from Dr. Chorney’s message on November 18.

A very successful Professional Development Day on Friday, October 30. The focus of the day was on technology and using TEAMS to support learning. Virtual sessions were offered by the five Technology Coaches under the leadership of Coordinator Darren White – there were 600 teachers who participated in the basic overview session, and another 400 in each of the intermediate and advanced sessions. Three teachers shared their expertise across the District – Stacey Duncan at Sussex Middle, Josh Eastwood at Saint John High School and Michelle Standring at Rothesay High School. Several Hampton High teachers invited colleagues virtually into their classrooms to share how they use technology to connect with students on the days they are learning from home. In other schools, lead teachers presented to their colleagues and entertained questions. The day was very well received by teachers K-12; they appreciated that the learning could be differentiated to suit their needs and comfort with the tools available.

Directors and I have had at least three virtual meetings with high school Principals to discuss the late January “Assessment Week,” and how we can make some changes given the pandemic and more intentionally embed strategies which have been part of our DIP and aligned with the latest practices of

experts whose work we have embraced. Many schools are looking to incorporate more authentic means of assessment such as interviews, conversations, a final product, unit tests, a piece of writing, a demonstration etc. We recognize that some courses will still have final exams and some of these may be in two blocks of one hour. On the afternoon of the November 20 Parent Teacher Day several high school teachers will attend a virtual session led by BC Vice Principal, author, and teacher Myron Dueck. We have done book studies on Mr. Dueck's resources and have connected with him many times virtually over the last few years.

ENDS #3: Ensure all members of the school community to be welcomed, respected, accepted and supported and to address heterosexism and discrimination.

Middle School GSA advisors will have a session in November – this fall we will not be holding our annual event with the students.

ENDS #4: Maximize the engagement of families and the community through effective communication and outreach.

This month we had a number of family communications to share and clarify the evolving requirements put forth by EECD and Public Health related to staff and student travel to Orange Zones and cross-border communities. Through social media we have continued to share information about BYOD support, clean mask reminders, the rescheduled PD Day, employment opportunities, kindergarten registration, and Public Health guidelines. (The communication plan has been posted with your meeting materials along with news stories from the past month). All of our Microsoft Teams resource videos for families and students have been relocated to YouTube to provide our newcomer and international families access to the translation closed captioning function.

Website: Schools administrators have been made aware of the website redesign project and asked for their input. Many have volunteered to be pilot schools. Jessica Hanlon has been working with IT specialist Ray Simpson, and SNB, to develop website templates by school level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12, combined). The next step is to share these with school administrators for further feedback.

Community School Coordinators, Principals and Erica Lane our Community Engagement Coordinator continue to find new and creative ways of keeping partners engaged. Much of the partner interaction continues to be virtual as we minimize the people inside our schools. In Saint John the "Hub Kitchen" is keeping many volunteer groups very active. Schools are putting even more effort into communicating with partners as to what is going on at the schools in an effort to keep them engaged. As we near December, partners are asking about the traditional food hampers and other initiatives they support annually.

Our offices will continue to support the United Way annual fundraising campaign this fall and the Saint John office will be using "Casual Friday" funds to support PORTAGE at Christmas.

Other

Sad news to share of the death last week of Harbour View High School EA Frances Gallery Moss after a two year illness. Frances joined ASD-S as a casual EA in 2016 and became permanent in the fall of 2017 at Harbour View High – she loved her work; as her obituary said, becoming an EA was a "life changing decision for her." Frances' daughter Tiffany Munn teaches at Beaconsfield. Our thoughts are with Frances' five daughters and the staff at Harbour View High.

Congratulations to our schools on the virtual Remembrance Day ceremonies which were held on Tuesday – a couple of examples were shared with members of DEC. This is another illustration of the work our schools are doing to keep these important assemblies happening safely. Chris Saunders Memorial Elementary School hosted a CBC interview with Debbie Sullivan, mother of Navy Lt. Chris Saunders, and former ASD-S employee. Mrs. Sullivan was named this year's National Silver Cross mother.

Our management team met virtually with the NBTA/AEFNB Liaison Committee on Monday to discuss the re-opening of schools and where we are after ten weeks – so many things are being done differently this year and the pace of these changes has been rapid. It is very important that we continue to communicate and problem solve together as we move through the year. We have a lot to be very proud of and we are appreciative of the work of all employee groups.

Directors and Subject Coordinators will be meeting with each Principal/VP Team through mid-November until Christmas to discuss what is going well at their schools and what has been a challenge during the pandemic. We want to know if there are common themes and what we as District leaders can do to better support our leaders and their schools. This was an idea presented to us by Kevin Cameron – many of us are out in schools communicating with school leaders, but this is a more focused and purposeful conversation.

Very exciting news! The Talk With Me-Parle Moi Team has been chosen as the winner of the 2020 Dr. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell Literacy Award in the category of Early Childhood Literacy Program. Congratulations on all your hard work and dedication.

Our team will be participating in a face to face provincial meeting next Wednesday and Thursday in Fredericton – this is the first meeting of Education Group since last February.