

**Superintendent's Report to DEC
October 7, 2020**

ENDS #1: To provide positive, safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments for children, youth, and staff. We have had a very successful first month and our team has made it a priority to have several virtual check-in meetings with “clusters” of Principals and to visit schools as well. Our Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator and the three Healthy Learners Nurses continue to drop in on schools and give feedback on their operations based on their walk-thru of the building. They have visited 40 schools to date. We continue to hear positive feedback on compliance with wearing masks at middle and high school. The District continues to provide schools with additional masks, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and other items they need. It is very important to have on-going communication and collaboration with our school leaders and we appreciate all they are doing. Changes to school based “operational plans” are updated and posted on the school website.

It is a very busy time for school custodians with the enhanced cleaning protocols – the addition of 40 custodial FTE was positive however it did deplete our casual list and more interviews have been held to generate more casual names. It is key to have these staff replaced so the cleaning can continue. Schools expressed concerns about evening/weekend rentals and the additional cleaning that would need to be done to be prepared for the following day. There have been on-going discussions with EECDC about this and rentals will not be taking place until after Christmas.

This fall Public Health are having their annual immunization clinics for students in grades 7 and 9 – these started at the end of September and will continue until early November. Thanks to teachers for all they do to collect the consent forms from students – the information is on our website and parents can print the consent form if it doesn't come home. This month our schools and offices are also having clinics for free employee flu shots – we are being intentional about messaging the importance of the student clinics and the staff flu shots.

ASD-S has seen a higher than usual absence rate with students and staff given the focus on COVID symptoms and both groups staying home if they are exhibiting two or more symptoms. Media asked for a comparison of student absences due to illness for September 2019 as compared to 2020 and we have a 132% increase. This is not surprising given that back to school is often a time of colds and allergies and many of those symptoms would be those listed on the COVID-19 screening poster. HR is monitoring closely our ability to replace absent staff – our challenges to date have been with custodians, and to a lesser extent, bus drivers. We have a group working their way through the steps to be added to the casual driver list and another group participating in the 5-day classroom training late October.

Drivers continue to be very concerned about motorists passing through their red lights – driver Lisa MacFarlane was interviewed by CBC on this issue and ASD-S continues to message the reminders.

ASD-S has identified approximately 100 students with medical documentation preventing them from attending school at this time – 46 at elementary, 25 at middle school and 30 at high school – and we will be providing support to them virtually and where appropriate in the home. We have a team of 7 teachers who are unable to be at school due to their own medical situations and they will be supporting students on a “Home Learning Plan.” We have also hired a small group of local permit teachers as tutors who will

be doing the in-home support as appropriate. This initiative is being led by Coordinators Amy Marshall and Monique Hughes and will be ready to begin next week. The Home Learning teachers have been connecting with the classroom teachers of these 100 students and developing the plan for each student. They have also connected with the parents/guardians of each of these students to discuss the learning plan. It is very important for the regular classroom teacher to be involved in the discussion as some of the students may return to us through the year depending on the recommendation of their doctors.

ENDS #2: To demonstrate continuous improvement toward meeting provincial targets in literacy, numeracy, science (English and French Immersion) and to improve learning in and application of the arts, trades and technology. Subject Coordinators led by Marc Godin, and Gary Hall have put together a share point site of teacher resources arranged by subject area, they also have collaborative sites where teachers can post questions or ideas they want to share. The “request for service” for support from a Coordinator or teacher coach can be accessed for a PLC (Professional Learning Community) as well. It is important to remember we have about half of the coach/lead teachers that we had last year so we had to re-vamp our process. The number of Technology Coaches increased from 2 to 5; however, in all other areas with the exception of the team of ten autism and behavior lead teachers, the numbers have been significantly reduced. The behavior and autism leads assist in programming for students, and this often includes classroom observations. Curriculum coaches are supporting virtually where possible.

Curriculum Coordinators and Coaches are supporting teachers with the prioritized curriculum and essential outcomes as identified over the summer by EECD. Technology coaches have developed resources and “quick start guides” for teachers around BYOD, TEAMS and Office 365. We continue to work with teachers to support them to more fully utilize the Office 365 platform as their classroom learning management system. Coordinators also have virtual “office hours” where teachers can join to discuss curriculum and ask questions. Lots of opportunities for teacher support and collaboration. Face to face PD opportunities have been very limited – virtual and Saturday opportunities are being explored. Gary Hall is working with the new year one cohort for Leadership Development virtually on Tuesday evenings.

Information has been distributed on the Grade 12 Oral Proficiency Interview and the grade 9 English Language Proficiency Assessment. French courses for teachers are starting next week in the evenings

Since March 1, 2020 ASD-S has registered 170 newcomer students – there are currently 629 students receiving EAL support. Over the last six weeks considerable work is happening on language assessments. This year a new Language Learning Centre model has been implemented at Prince Charles School for grades 3-8 students in Saint John who are considered pre-beginner/beginner English Language Learners. Currently 9 students are attending daily and they are mainly refugee children who have had limited education opportunities prior to arriving in Saint John. Students will be integrated into their home schools when they can navigate the school setting. We are expecting 1-2 refugee families to arrive monthly from now until spring 2021. We have identified approximately 60 high school students who would be considered vulnerable and recommended to attend school every day. St. Malachys and SJ High School would have most of those students and we have identified a process whereby they can attend high school daily and be supported by an experienced EAL teacher to support their learning.

The District used self-sustaining funds to purchase 80 webcams for high school teachers to use to support synchronous learning for students who are learning from home every other day. Half of these have been

distributed and teachers continue to receive support in engaging students on their day of learning from home. Hampton High School has certainly been a leader in this area, Principals and teachers from other high schools have joined classes at HHS to observe how this is working. High school Principals meet regularly to discuss their successes and challenges as we navigate this new learning environment. We often heard from teachers last spring that they required equipment such as cameras, headsets, tablets etc. to support learning from home and we were pleased to receive \$100 per teacher for schools (K-12) to use to purchase equipment to support on-line learning. We know if students in a class or a school must self isolate through this year we have to be prepared for on-line learning from grades 3-12.

ENDS #7: To promote the value of education through effective partnerships and positive pro-active communication. ASD-S has many valuable community partnerships, and this fall it has been necessary to re-examine how their support is provided safely. The Inner-City Youth Ministry has supported a number of Saint John schools with nutrition programs over the years. We have enlisted their help to coordinate these efforts into one program for four schools. It is now a brown bag lunch program for Centennial, St. John the Baptist/King Edward, Glen Falls and Hazen White/St. Francis with hopes to expand in the future. Principals recommended looking at options other than sandwiches so the bag has slices of fruit, vegetables, yogurt, cheese, crackers etc. The lunches are prepared in an off-site location in East Saint John, and the model allows volunteers to follow safety protocols and provide food three days a week for approximately 600 students a day. Another example would be the Kraft Dinner offered by St. David's United Church to students at Rothesay High School – the volunteers are now making lunches and delivering them to local schools.

In the Saint John Education Centre close to 200 students have the opportunity to participate in SISTEMA housed at Millidgeville North. We have been in regular communication with Director Rachel Kidd and are ready to open the program later week. There is an operational plan, reviewed by our Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator and nurses. We are able to provide bussing home at the end of the day, and transportation of grades 1-2 students to Millidgeville North after school; however, given the additional runs our buses must make we are not able to transport grades 3-8 students after school and the Director is looking at other options. Fortunately, some families can help by transporting their own children.

We will continue to monitor the community and volunteer programs in our schools – as per the Return to School plan we are to minimize the number of people inside the schools. Some volunteers can offer their programs virtually which is good for this fall. Hazen White/St. Francis had a 10-year anniversary celebration planned last spring to mark their ten year partnership with Emera NB and the UNBSJ Promise Partnership. The partners were hosted at the school last week, a tree planted, speeches made and pictures taken! We are very grateful to our partners for their understanding at this time.

Communication with families continues – one letter was sent to high school families on September 23 as we needed to clarify expectations around the blended learning model and the use of technology. A lengthy Q and A document was sent to all families on September 9 as schools were receiving many calls from parents. These are also posted on the website. Additional District communications have been sent to families of the three schools in St. Stephen and Milltown about the outbreak at the Woodland Mill in Baileyville, Maine.

Through social media and twitter we have been promoting the immunization clinics, kindergarten registration, logging on to TEAMS, and congratulating our recipients of the Prime Minister's Excellence Awards.

Other:

Wonderful news to share – ASD-S celebrates THREE recipients of a Prime Ministers Award of Excellence – Stacey Stairs from Sussex Regional High School, Michelle Lang Standring from Rothesay High School and Lisa Brown from Lisa’s Playhouse Inc. in Roachville, NB. These awards began in 1994 and 1,600 educators have been honored to date. The recipients are selected “for their remarkable achievements in education and for all they have done to remarkably prepare students for a diverse and innovation based economy.” Michelle’s award is for Excellence in STEM to honor those who excel in science, technology, energy and mathematics – she worked as a Coach last year in the District. Stacey runs a childcare centre at her school, prepares meals for students and her community and last year secured a large Brewer Foundation grant to support breakfast and lunch programs. Lisa began with just two children at her facility and as her community's needs grew, she added rooms and hired staff so children could have the best education she could give them. Lisa also opened the first forest school in Atlantic Canada, which now has three locations, and started an afterschool program in a nearby community.

Kindergarten Registration for fall 2021 begins next week at our elementary and K-8/K-12 schools. There is a virtual site to register; however, a few forms still have to be signed in person and appointments will be taken by the elementary Administrative Assistants – we predict this process will take two weeks in larger schools as we must have parents make appointments to come in. The next step is the “Kick Off to Kindergarten” session which will be offered virtually for families this year. We will be in contact with Principals about the administration of EYE-DA and how we work through that process given current restrictions!