

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – June 9, 2021

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met virtually on Wednesday, June 9, 2021. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Chair; Roger Nesbitt, Vice Chair; Shelly Merrill-MacKillop, Jonathan Barry, Dan O'Connor, Wayne Spires, Justin Tinker, Heather Gillis, Bernie Regenbogen, Kristen Murphy

Regrets: Lory-Ann MacAskill, Richard Malone

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Jessica Hanlon, Director of Communication; Peter Smith, Director of Education Support Services; Gary Hall, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; 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; Erica Lane, Community Engagement Coordinator and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He advised that Lory-Ann MacAskill and Richard Malone were unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Mr. Fowler began the meeting by acknowledging that we are on the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoquiyik First Nations. This recognition is of significant importance following the discovery the 215 children buried at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. He asked for a moment of silence to remember these children.

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. Spires. Motion carried.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the May 12, 2021 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. Nesbitt moved that the Minutes be approved as presented. Seconded by Ms. Murphy. Motion carried.

2.3 Public Comment

None

3. Member's Notebook

Ms. Merrill-MacKillop provided an update on the activities at Back Bay Elementary, St. George Elementary and Fundy Middle & High School. She highlighted that at Back Bay safety protocols were posted on the website, there were also class team sites for parents and children to visit; and the school received \$350 from the Heart & Stroke Foundation to support Heart Healthy school initiatives. At St. George Elementary she highlighted the PSSC decided to continue with communal supplies for next school year; there would be field trips to New River Beach; a grade 5 celebration during the school day; and students have been enjoying "explorer" presentations where they are learning about the home countries of students in their school. At Fundy Middle & High School she highlighted that Cook Aquaculture are generously donating graduation banners to be placed on poles around

town; the school is fundraising to purchase a play structure area for the middle level; and they are looking forward to having Leads from the District come in to teach computer software and TEAMS for all grade levels.

Mr. O'Connor commented that he had learned a lot over the past 5 years. He wanted to thank Paul Bennett for highlighting to the public the issues faced with the current system. He also wanted to thank Minister Cardy for his work to look at the existing governance model with the hopes of creating a more effective model in the future.

Ms. Gills commented on how hard this past school year has been on our students. She felt that Student Appreciation Days were a great way to acknowledge the many challenges students faced.

Mr. Spires noted that Vincent Massey Elementary is working to develop more French opportunities within the school and are putting a lot of effort into their School Improvement Plan. At St. Stephen Elementary the students and school administration worked to accumulate 400 boxes of cereal to donate to the food bank; they are creating a climate of "wanting to be in school" and emphasizing "Attendance Matters"; the school is looking forward to a staggered entry start again this fall as it worked very well last year.

Mr. Tinker commented that he had the opportunity to be a virtual judge for the Canadian Science Fair and that several participants were from New Brunswick, and a couple were from ASD-S. He was very impressed with the quality of the work and level of engagement the students invested in their projects.

4. Presentations

4.1 District Improvement Plan Highlights

Mrs. Watson thanked Council for allowing the District to develop a one year transitional plan last fall due to COVID-19. She thanked Marc Godin, Alignment Champion, for his work keeping the District on track with the goals of the revised plan.

She commented that the transitional plan contains a lot of good information; some things had to happen (i.e. Ends #1, Strategy 1.1.1. – to support schools to ensure that current health and safety practices limit the potential spread of COVID-19). She noted that the assistance of the Occupational Health & Safety Coordinator, Clare Tooley and our Healthy Learners Nurses, have been invaluable during this time. Ms. Tooley has visited all 69 schools to conduct inspections, sometimes with the assistance of a Healthy Learners Nurse, and recently reviewed operational plans for all school year end events and graduations.

The District saw many students with health concerns choose not to attend school during COVID (90-140) and Home Learning was provided; we saw blended learning at the high school level, (Newcomers with little English struggled with this), staggered entry was introduced at the start of the school year and Principals want to keep that practice next year as it went very smoothly.

Ends #2 emphasized the value of having students outside and Physical Education Coach Kari Parsons was very involved in providing opportunities for this to happen. In Ends #2, Coaches worked to embed social emotional learning in their instruction plans and Ends #4 focused on maximizing the engagement of families and the community through effective communication and outreach. She noted that the detailed plan, including goals, strategies and actions, was posted with Council's meeting materials for their review

Mrs. Watson commented that looking ahead to next year, there were some good things that emerged from the transitional plan and the use of technology in the classroom will remain a priority. As well, virtual parent teacher and open house events were also well received. The Department of Education and Early Childhood has discussed creating a second one year transitional plan as we know that we will have students with learning gaps – i.e. homeschoolers returning and high school students who found blended learning very difficult. She advised that summer school will again be offered, with a reduced price, and the District will use self sustaining funds to cover any deficit.

5. New Business

5.1 Final Expenditure Plan 2020-2021

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the final expenditure plan which was posted with Council's meeting materials for review and highlighted some of the challenges including funding for EAs and employee benefits.

He noted that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development were very supportive and provided additional funding for 62+ FTE teachers, 40+ custodians, and 12 new buses and drivers. They also bulk ordered all cleaning and PPE supplies at the beginning of the pandemic to ensure the District would have an adequate supply on hand at the beginning of school.

Overall, the District has a surplus of approximately \$1.275 M which will go back to the Province to cover the additional funding provided. Part of this amount was due to savings (i.e. casual salaries, busing, etc. of approximately \$5M).

There being no questions or concerns, Mr. Nesbitt moved that the final expenditure plan be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

5.2 Self Sustaining Funds

Mr. MacDonald advised that the District reports to Council each year on the status of self sustaining funds. He reviewed the report which includes spending from pre-amalgamation funds of each education centre and also from the foreign student tuition funds.

Mr. MacDonald explained for new Council members that self sustaining funds are not part of the provincial operating budget, but are funds carried forward from year to year. Rental income (50%) is also included in these funds.

There being no further questions Mr. Nesbitt moved that the self sustaining funds report be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion carried.

5.3 Expenditure Plan 2021-2022

Mr. MacDonald presented the proposed expenditure plan for 2021-2022 that had been posted with Council's meeting materials for review and noted that the District is projecting a break even position. He commented that the District feels that number of EAs projected for September will be adequate; however, the need will increase over the year and the hope is to make up the shortfall elsewhere.

Mr. Fowler commented that in the past, Council has not accepted expenditure plans as presented. He asked if Mr. MacDonald was confident with this plan. Mr. MacDonald confirmed that he was, given the information we have at this time.

Mr. Spires enquired about funds for technology. Mr. MacDonald noted that we did get some during COVID-19, for smart boards and infrastructure in schools, plus 4 technicians, and that the District does spend self sustaining funds for technology. Mr. Nesbitt noted that the Department provided a subsidy to parents for lap tops and for any student who did not purchase one, loaners were provided and they will be collected back.

Discussion arose on past budgets that Council rejected that were projecting shortfalls and comment was made that there will not be enough funds in September to cover what's coming (with regard to the need for additional EAs). Mrs. Watson noted that funding is based on 2019 enrollment (and not 2020) due to the drop in students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. O'Connor then moved to approve the expenditure plan as presented. Seconded by Mr. Nesbitt. Motion carried. Ms. Murphy and Mr. Spires opposed the motion.

Mr. Fowler suggested that Council send a letter to the Minister with regard to the underfunding of certain line items. Ms. Gillis moved to send a letter to the Minister regarding underfunding concerns. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report & Update

Mrs. Watson advised that her report had been posted with Council's meeting materials for their review. She thanked the Directors who were attending in person and on line tonight.

She highlighted the following from her report: 2021 Food Allergy Canada award presented to ASD-S; purchase of AED (Automated External Defibrillator) units for schools/Education Centres who did not have one; an Indigo Love of Reading grant of \$24,000 for the K-2 project; information on SOGI 1,2,3 (program focusing on policies, resources and environments with a mission to build awareness, respect and capacity through education for our LGBTQ+ students); virtual Turnaround Achievement Awards; and the many ASD-S award recipients and recognitions of staff and students.

She advised that Ryan Price, Subject Coordinator, will be replacing Gary Hall as Director of Curriculum and Instruction when he retires at the end of the school year.

She noted that this is the last meeting of the current Council and thanked them for their support over the past 5 years. She commented that last summer a custodian found boxes of pictures stashed in storage. They were of former Superintendents, school board trustees and District Education Council Chairs. They have all now been framed and are displayed on the wall outside the Donaldson Room. She presented Mr. Fowler with his framed portrait which will also be added to the wall.

She reviewed some of the highlights from Council over the past five years including: the challenging and time consuming Policy 409 reviews; the construction and opening of Seaside Park Elementary School; the change up of the PSSC Orientation training session; two DEC retreats to work on the District Improvement Plan and their focus on LGBTQ, Mental Health & Mental Fitness and Allergy Awareness; NB Student Leadership Conferences; Early Childhood/EAL; District Appeals too numerous to count and the death of long time Council member Gerry Mabey in 2018, to name a few.

She thanked Mr. Fowler for his time and tireless efforts on behalf of the District as he retires from Council. She wanted to acknowledge the leadership of both Mr. Fowler, Chair, and Roger Nesbitt, Vice Chair, which has been invaluable and sincerely appreciated. She thanked other members leaving Council for their dedication to the District including: Justin Tinker, Bernie Regenbogen; Lory Ann MacAskill and Dan O'Connor.

She then provided each Council member with a token of appreciation for their service on behalf of the District.

6.2 Chair's Report & Update

Mr. Fowler extended his thanks and appreciation to Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary, for her many years working with Council, and wished her well in her upcoming retirement at the end of June.

He welcomed incoming Council members: Amanda Hamm, Subdistrict 3; Jane Logan, Subdistrict 6; David Connell, Subdistrict 7; Beth McQuinn Nixon, Subdistrict 11 and Amanda Henderson-Matthews, Subdistrict 12.

He thanked Council members who will be returning and wished them well. He noted that it is a valuable role and to not lose sight of this. He also commented that Council should take pride in the District Improvement Plan even though results are not seen quickly.

Mr. Spires thanked Mr. Fowler for his guidance during his many years of service, from the combining of districts 6, 8 & 10 to ASD-S, the best district in the Province of NB!

This being Mr. Fowler's final Council meeting after sixteen years at the table, he wanted to reflect on his time and thank the many people he has encountered over the years. His comments are attached to and form part of these Minutes.

6.3 Correspondence

None. All was posted.

Mr. Fowler thanked all staff who attended tonight's meeting in person and on line for their time.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and reminded Council the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 18, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary