

Superintendent's Report for DEC

August 18, 2021

This week we learned of the unexpected death of St. Stephen High School student Katrina Norton. News of her death was communicated by the Principal to staff and the school community. The school was open on Wednesday afternoon with support from members of the Child and Youth Team and District/school staff for any students who wished to drop by. School Districts have protocols that are followed in times of tragedy.

Summer is always a very, very busy time for our facilities department with custodians, our trades staff, the Manager of Facilities Jim Connors and his Assistant Managers in each Education Centre. Most staff leave for the summer and our custodians begin their deep cleaning of our 69 schools, along with changing around any classroom furniture etc.

We have close to \$4M in Capital Improvement Projects as approved by the DEC in Spring 2020 – there are several roof projects (Forest Hills, Centennial, Fundy Middle and High, Harry Miller Middle, Kennebecasis Valley High, Prince Charles, Rothesay High, Simonds High, St. Stephen High). Roofing projects are typically done in phases and prioritized by the Department of Education. Saint John High School has a new elevator being installed and were to have the first phase of window replacements complete. The windows will be late arriving, so the project has been delayed until December/January. A major site improvement project is happening at Inglewood School with a bus loop and the widening of the driveway. Washroom upgrades are happening at both Loch Lomond Elementary and Grand Bay Primary. Another phase of window replacement is happening at St. Stephen Middle School. Belleisle Regional High School will have paving completed.

Each summer the Facilities Manager and his Assistants identify additional smaller projects they would like to do that would extend beyond our regular budget and we use self-sustaining funds for these. Examples of work done or in progress this summer include: staff washroom at Inglewood and Grand Bay Primary Schools, ventilation in the culinary tech lab at Harbourview High School, removal of the fence at Rothesay High School, gym floors sanded and recoated at St. Stephen Middle School and Grand Manan Community School, paving at St. Stephen Elementary, St. Stephen Middle School, Millidgeville North School/District Office and Fundy Middle and High School. Wheelchair ramp, upgrade at Fundy Middle and High, as well as

walkways at Millidgeville North. Some schools also had flooring repairs completed as well as painting projects. A busy summer with these important projects. Every effort is made to have them completed for the return of staff, but sometimes this is out of our control with materials and contractor availability.

The Leadership Development Program continued over the summer – this is a two-year program with modules offered by our staff to those teachers participating. This program is a requirement to obtain a NB Principals Certificate – the School Improvement Planning module was offered to 42 participants in a series of on-line sessions through Microsoft TEAMS, and the Communications Module was offered face to face to those in the year one cohort. Legal Aspects in Education will also be offered in August/September. Each module is approximately 12-15 hours of contact time.

The Subject Coordinators also offer Professional Development through the summer – the decision was made to limit our offerings this summer as it was the feeling that after last school year staff of schools needed to have their summer. We offered anti-racism book studies using three titles, “So You Want to Talk About Race,” “Not Light But Fire” by Matthew Kaye from Philadelphia who had a virtual session with us last year, and “We Got This”. Sessions were also offered in elementary Literacy (classroom set-up, foundational reading skills), Numeracy (instruction and assessment) and French Second Language, Science (Teaching Inquiry Through Smarter Science with 80 plus participants and Science Inquiry in Bring Your Own Device Classrooms), EAL (Every Teacher is a Language Teacher with 25 teachers), First Nations Education (“Five Little Indians” book study with 26 teachers and “First Nations: Ensouling Our Schools” Book Study with 10 teachers), Assessment (“Giving Students a Say” book study). The 2-day Mental Health First Aid course was offered as well as the suicide prevention program called ASIST. Thank you to the Directors, Subject Coordinators and Coaches who organized and facilitated this PD and to the teachers and school leaders who participated.

Summer School was also offered during the month of July, organized by Josh Eastwood a teacher at Saint John High School. We had many spring discussions with high school Principals and Mr. Eastwood about offering Summer School and the decision was made to offer the program with ASD-S subsidizing the program to keep the cost lower for families. We also made the decision to offer three programs – St. Stephen High, Sussex Regional High and Saint John High. A grade 9 essential program was offered with literacy, science, and numeracy as well as a variety of courses at grades 10-12. Mr. Eastwood had a total of 15 staff (11 in Saint John and two in each of Sussex

and St. Stephen), and 256 students participated which is a 55% increase from the 165 students we had in 2019. No Summer School was offered last summer. Students were very successful with only 5 students not completing the program due to attendance and other concerns. The district subsidized the program this year for \$40K. We thank Mr. Eastwood for his leadership with Summer School 2021. Many students were able to upgrade their marks for post-secondary, and some students who were not able to graduate in June completed their program.

In March 2021 we were funded for a team of 13 Behavior Intervention Mentors focused on our larger middle school; we asked to have these positions as 12-month roles so summer programming could be offered for students. This has been evolving and the mentors have been able to offer support for students. Thank you to Subject Coordinators Kate Zed and Jennifer Grant for their work with this new initiative.

The Behaviour Intervention Mentors have received training on Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills, and aspects of Social/Emotional Learning. During the school year they focused primarily on “Tier 2” interventions, focusing on small group support rather than whole-class programming or working one-on-one with students, and supported school counsellors, administrators, and resource teachers in working with students with behavioural needs. During the summer, the Mentors have run programming at Sussex Middle, Hampton Middle, Quispamsis Middle, Harry Miller Middle, Millidgeville North, Princess Elizabeth, Bayside, Beaconsfield Middle, Barnhill Memorial, Fundy Middle, as well at the St Stephen Education Centre and St Stephen Elementary for the St Stephen Middle students. The types of programs vary depending on community and school need, but in all cases the goal is to build strong relationships with students and keep the students engaged at the school level in a positive. The numbers range from just a handful of students to fifteen or sixteen. Activities include visits to parks, tie-dying, sports, cooking—anything that keeps students connected to the school in a positive way and develops healthy relationships among the students and between the students and the school.

The teacher staffing process continued over the summer with many rounds of opportunities open to temporary D contract teachers. We will have one new Director on our team with the June retirement of long-time Director Gary Hall – we welcome Ryan Price to our management team. We also had the retirement of 4 of our Subject Coordinators and we welcome Kari Parsons (Health and Physical Education), Brad MacDonald (Alternate Education), Kelly Adams (FSL), Nick Munn (School Improvement Planning) and Kyle Peters (Fine Arts/Social Studies). ASD-S will also see

some changes in school administration and a separate list has been attached to this report. We welcomed several PSSC Chairs or their designates who participated on our interview panels for 5-year contract Principal and VP positions. Thank you to the Directors of Schools in each Education Centre who take a lead role with staffing.

We are now preparing for the opening meetings with our Principals and Vice Principals on Wednesday, August 25 - 26, 2021. One day will see all meeting together to review the return to school plan in depth and August 26 will be meetings by Education Centre. Teachers return to work on Monday, August 30 with two administration days, two NBT/AFNB Subject Council Days and one day of PD organized by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The school calendar can be found on our ASD-S website and as information on return to school is finalized and available, we will be communicating with our parent community.