

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – December 8, 2021

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, December 8, 2021. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Roger Nesbitt, Chair; Heather Gillis, Vice-Chair; Jane Logan, Wayne Spires, David Connell, Amanda Hamm, Beth McQuinn Nixon, Richard Malone, and Shelly Merrill-MacKillop. Kristen Murphy and Jonathan Barry attended virtually.

Regrets:

Amanda Henderson-Matthews

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Jessica Hanlon, Director of Communications; Ryan Price, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Derek O'Brien, Director of Schools, St. Stephen Education Centre; Allan Davis, Director of Schools, Hampton Education Centre; Melissa Savoie, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; Peter Smith, Director of Education and Support Services, and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Nesbitt, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mr. Nesbitt began the meeting respectfully acknowledging the territory in which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Wolastoqey, Mi'gmaq and Peskotomuhkati peoples. We strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Nesbitt 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. Spires moved that the Agenda be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Malone. Motion carried.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Nesbitt referred to the Minutes of the November 10, 2021 meeting and asked if there were no questions or concerns that a motion be put forward to approve. Ms. Hamm asked that an amendment be made to indicate "Inglewood School" was selected for the Love of Reading Program on page 3. There being no further questions or concerns, Mr. Spires moved that the Minutes be approved as amended. Seconded by Ms. Hamm. Motion carried.

2.3 Public Comment

None

3. Superintendent's Report & Update

Mrs. Watson advised that her report had been posted last week for Council to review.

She noted the death of long-time employee Tony Hartlen. Tony spent 33 years working at ASD-S as a bus driver and the last 6 years in facilities in the Hampton Education Centre. He was sick for a few weeks and passed away on Sunday. She asked for a moment of silence in his memory.

She provided details on the most recent COVID outbreaks over the weekend at 11 schools, 9 of them having cases identified for the first time; information was also provided on the outbreak on Monday of the first cases

at Sir James Dunn Academy, and additional cases at Centennial. She reviewed “operational/learn from home” days and the system in place to get POC/rapid tests out to schools for students and staff as required. She thanked the District Office team who assist when cases are identified, and also Healthy Learner Nurse Ann Hogan who helps sort through many complications. Mrs. Watson reported that local pharmacies are now offering immunization clinics in the evening in many of our Saint John schools.

She provided the following highlights from her report: 9 high schools attended an assessment focused professional learning session led by Sandra Herbst on December 3; Mental Health First Aid training that was planned for this week has been cancelled due to COVID and the struggles with availability of casual staff; the Mental Health Youth Forum on December 2; and a professional learning session for principals with Kevin Cameron (North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response).

Mrs. Watson addressed questions from Council with regard to COVID response capabilities, innovation grants and a model to support pandemic operations. Ryan Price, Director of Curriculum & Instruction responded to questions with regard to the new Science curriculum. Mrs. Watson also confirmed that rental groups can go ahead and book for after Christmas.

Business Arising from Minutes

4.1 PSSC Recruitment/Chairs

Mrs. Watson advised that Jessica Hanlon, Director of Communications sent out information to those schools struggling to get a Parent School Support Committee together, or to identify a Chair. This included a poster, letter for principals to send out via school messenger, and information that could be tweeted.

4.2 Policy Committee Update

Mr. Malone reported to Council on the first meeting of the Policy Committee. His report is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. The committee will review the existing draft EL policies for discussion at their next meeting and report back to Council with recommended changes when the process is completed. Mr. Nesbitt thanked Mr. Malone and the committee for their work.

5. New Business

5.1 Policy Review – 4.4 & 4.5

Mr. Nesbitt advised that policies 4.4 – Council Committee Principles and Structure and 4.5 – Annual Council Planning Cycle were to be reviewed by Council for tonight’s meeting. Mr. Nesbitt recommended that if there were no questions or concerns, that a motion be put forward to approve the two policies as presented. Ms. Gillis moved that the policies be approved as presented. Seconded by Ms. Merrill-MacKillop. Motion carried.

5.2 Language Learning Opportunities

Mrs. Watson spoke about the initiative to improve French language learning in rural schools. It focuses on developing creative ways to engage students in French as a second language. Campobello Island Consolidated, Sir James Dunn Academy and Vincent Massey Elementary have all been selected to participate in the pilot project. Derek O’Brien, Director of Schools for the St. Stephen Education Centre commented that the schools and communities are very excited as these are schools that would not have the population required to offer French immersion. He noted that a childcare centre in one of the schools is also now part of this pilot project.

5. Information Items

5.1 Member’s Notebook

Mr. Spires advised that he has attended two PSSC meetings, one at Vincent Massey and St. Stephen Elementary School. He attended both, virtually, on the same night! St. Stephen Elementary Home & School auction raised \$84,000 which will be used to provide needed items for students – i.e. tablets, instructional materials, etc. At Milltown Elementary staff are working to provide warm pajamas for every child in their school. He wanted to congratulate staff at these schools for their dedication to their students.

Ms. Merrill-MacKillops advised that both Blacks Harbour and St. George Elementary were struggling to attract members for the Parent School Support Committee; donated playground equipment at St. George Elementary School will be installed next year; a concern about unvaccinated students being unable to attend graduation celebrations next year; Fundy Shores grade 4 English reading results showed the school at 81.8% (province at 68.6%).

Ms. Merrill-MacKillop also updated Council on the first Provincial Curriculum Education Advisory Committee (PCEAC) which she attended. It included a review of 2020-21 assessment results, curriculum report – what has been accomplished, and a presentation of modernized curriculum plans for the future. The role of PCEAC was also discussed at the first meeting.

Ms. Logan commented on the Art Based Intergeneration Learning Project at Centennial School in conjunction with seniors from Stephenson Towers, and with the assistance of PALS. The goal is to learn what is “similar vs unique” in each generation and is heartwarming for both students and seniors.

Ms. Gillis commented on Saint John High School’s EAL program which focuses on the needs of newcomer families and helping them succeed in school and to feel part of their community; also at Saint John High School a PALS/Irving project (Enroute to Success) where students in grade 9 learn employment skills and Irving provides them with a summer job; at St. John the Baptist/King Edward’s Rise & Shine project and PALS/Irving provided funds to re-do a sensory room in the school – it is a spectacular space with many areas to self-regulate and be comfortable; virtual parent teacher was again a success with parents; concerns that elementary schools are having difficulty accessing ISD and that provincial sporting bodies are hosting events on school days which is leading to students missing too much time from school. Mr. Nesbitt suggested that due to the shortage of time at this meeting, we will place this item on the January agenda.

Ms. Hamm commented that she attended PSSC meetings at both Harbour View High School and River Valley Middle School and that all are impacted with COVID and appreciate the POC testing; at River Valley Middle they reviewed assessment practices used in the school which was well received by PSSC; at Harbour View High School they completed an absentee gap analysis to help define measures that could increase attendance, a concern about overcoming COVID barriers with the in-class music program and the need to support them to do this safely.

5.2 Chair’s Report and Update

Mr. Nesbitt advised Council that it has been a busy month for meetings. He attended the Minister’s Forum on November 20 and the Chair/DEC Chairs met virtually 3-4 days. At the Minister’s Forum discussions focused on aging infrastructure and budget spent on schools (capital); funding for EAs as it is an issue across the province; and the DEC code of conduct. He noted that the wording in the Education Act was not changed and it still says that the “Minister would prescribe” a code of conduct and this is not what DEC’s want as each DEC currently has their own version. A new school for the south end peninsula will be moving forward next year as funds have been allocated for land acquisition and some design work. He noted that he will be on InfoAM tomorrow morning to speak about this project. Mr. Nesbitt also noted that he sent Council information on the government review that explored strengths and opportunities related to the governance and operating model of the anglophone education system for their review and that more would be forthcoming on this in the New Year.

5.3 Correspondence

None. All was posted.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Nesbitt thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and reminded Council the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 12, 2022.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Nesbitt, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary