

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – October 13, 2021

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, October 13, 2021. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Roger Nesbitt, Chair; Heather Gillis, Vice-Chair; Jane Logan, Wayne Spires, Jonathan Barry, David Connell, Amanda Hamm, Amanda Henderson-Matthews (attended virtually), Beth McQuinn Nixon, Richard Malone

Regrets:

Shelly Merrill-MacKillop, Kristen Murphy

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Jessica Hanlon, Director of Communications; John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration and Tanya Bannister, Recording Secretary. The following staff attended virtually: Ryan Price, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Nick Munn, Subject Coordinator; Melissa Savoie, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; Lissa McNaughton-Dickie, Director of Early Childhood Services and Susan Moffatt, Director of Human Resources.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Nesbitt, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

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

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Nesbitt referred to the Minutes of the September 8, 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, Ms. Hamm moved that the Minutes be approved as presented. Seconded by Ms. Gillis. Motion carried.

2.3 Public Comment

Brittany Merrifield, Mayor of Grand-Bay Westfield and Suzanne Hohmann, Chair Grand Bay-Westfield School Facilities Improvement Task Force were present to address council regarding concerns for quality school infrastructure in Grand-Bay Westfield. Ms. Merrifield voiced that investment in good school infrastructure translates to better academic results from students. She advised that Grand-Bay Westfield schools do not have the same quality infrastructure as do their counterparts. She also advised that accessibility is a major concern for the town's schools. The schools do not have libraries, proper gyms, ventilation systems, stages or music rooms and that intervention spaces are a concern. Ms. Merrifield spoke of statistics reflecting lack of space within the schools, and that population growth within the town is expected to continue. Ms. Merrifield wants to plan for this growth now in a forward-thinking manner. She spoke that a new facility would no doubt be a benefit to the community. She quoted MLA member Bill Oliver regarding his support for the need of a more modern facility in the town to improve the educational experience of the children, and that this request be given a high priority amongst other needs in the district. Mr. Nesbitt thanked Ms. Merrifield for her presentation.

Ms. Suzanne Hohmann, Chair of Westfield School Facilities Improvement Task Force also spoke along with a presentation regarding the scope of the Task Force. She advised that the growth of Grand Bay depends on the school infrastructure. She stated that there have been talks of a new school for years, and parents are still left wondering when a new school is going to be built. She is appreciative that recent changes at Inglewood School

have been made such as a widened roadway and the addition of two portables. There also has been the addition of a music room at the school. She presented to Council slides to compare what would be contained in a new school should one be built. She highlighted that accessibility is an area of concern for both schools. Although the Task Force realizes that a new school may not be feasible, more improvements to the existing schools would be a good solution. Mr. Nesbitt also thanked Ms. Hohmann for her time and presentation.

3. Member's Notebook

Ms. Gillis advised that Champlain Heights School had a virtual PSSC meeting, are working on an outdoor classroom – phase 1 is finished, plans for phase 2 and phase 3 are in place. She attended the PSSC meeting at Simonds High School, and they have had many parents volunteer to be on the PSSC.

Ms. Logan advised that at Harbourview High School, this year they have added an advanced placement (AP) computer science principles class that is full, and that enrollment in AP programs has risen by over 400% in the past five years.

Ms. Hamm indicated that she had the opportunity to attend two PSSC meetings, at River Valley Middle School and Westfield Elementary School. She commented on the leadership of the two schools and how they have been able to pivot based on changing Covid protocols.

4. Presentations

4.1 District Improvement Plan Update

Ms. Watson invited Nick Munn, Subject Coordinator for School Improvement Planning to walk Council through information on the provincial School Improvement Planning Framework to begin her presentation. There was a document posted for Council outlining the information Mr. Munn referenced. Mr. Munn advised that this is the third year in a three-year plan to on board all schools within the province to the Framework. Because of Covid complications, the final 28 out of 69 schools are starting the Framework this year. The other remaining schools that were on their first or second year are continuing with the implementation of the Framework. Mr. Munn advised that on January 7, 2022, there will be a School Improvement Planning day for all schools within the district. Each school must identify a School Improvement Planning Team who will do the groundwork on behalf of the school. The Team will create a "data-lead sheet" to be used on the January 7th school-based SIP day, during which the whole school is involved in deciding what areas they think the school should target for improvement. Ms. Watson pointed out that only two schools were initially involved with the pilot of this process. She also pointed out that in the past, the DEC used to set what the needs of the district were, but now that the SIP is in place, the schools themselves are the ones identifying their needs and are in turn supported by DEC – who will report their needs to the province. Questions arose from Council which were answered by Mr. Munn and Mr. Price.

A question arose from Council regarding perception surveys. Mrs. Watson explained that the province does a teacher and student perception survey (grades 4 and onward). Each school names a coordinator who leads on this, which happens early in November so that data can be available on January 7th for the SIP day. Schools collect their own data.

Mrs. Watson advised that the first step to developing the DIP was the Principals and Vice-Principals meeting held in August where the school improvement priorities were shared. She advised that the Superintendents have spoken to the Assistant Deputy Minister regarding keeping a one-year plan for the DIP given the uncertainties of this year.

Mrs. Watson reviewed the District Improvement Plan goals and strategies. The documents were posted with Council's meeting materials and are attached to and form part of these Minutes.

ENDS Policy #1: Provide a safe, healthy and welcoming educational environment for learners, staff, families and partners. Mrs. Watson indicated that the district is looking at ways to engage families and partners as the pandemic continues. Responding to changing health and safety protocols is also included.

ENDS Policy #2: Improve student engagement and achievement by embedding research based best practices in a variety of learning environments. Mrs. Watson spoke of how last year there was a huge learning curve for use of virtual technology and its implementation. Some K-8 schools are now interested in Bring your Own Device. Our focus is leveraging technology to enhance teaching and learning. She highlighted that outdoor learning has been encouraged and really embraced by schools. She stated the district is very interested in continuing to integrate early childhood.

ENDS Policy #3: Engage system's leaders in improving mental health and resiliency for both learners and staff through proactive strategies such as Positive Education and Social Emotional learning. The focus is on mental health and resiliency and integrating social-emotional learning in curriculum delivery. Several Principals have received their training in the "Positive Workplace Framework" program geared to staff. Through this pandemic the wellness of students and staff is a priority.

ENDS Policy #4: Ensure all members of the school and district community are welcomed, respected, accepted and supported. A welcoming schools initiative has been added in addition to past initiatives in the areas of racism, First Nations and LGBTQ+.

Following the presentation, Ms. Gillis moved that Council accept the District Improvement Plan as presented. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

5. Business Arising from Minutes

5.1 PSSC Budget Guidelines

Mr. Nesbitt reminded Council that at the last meeting they were given a draft document by the DEC Manager regarding PSSC Budgets. He advised that he, Mrs. Watson, and Ms. Gillis have since met to develop guidelines so that schools, principals and PSSC Chairs can be made aware of requirements when making expenditures with PSSC budget funds.

There was a discussion regarding expenses related to gifts and honorariums for speakers being added. Two changes were made to the document and Council then agreed it could be sent on to schools.

5.2 Student Representative update

Ms. Hamm spoke on behalf of the sub-committee and advised Council that the goal of the sub-committee is to have a policy in place to have a Student Representative on DEC by January 12, 2022. A slide presentation from Ms. Hamm was part of the posted documents and forms part of these Minutes. Ms. Hamm highlighted the slides containing information on role definition and indicated that it would be very similar to that of an existing DEC member, but with slight variations. Ms. Hamm indicated that the sub-committee has been working with Melissa Wright, representing the NB Student Leadership group, who has agreed to facilitate the process of securing nominees.

Ms. Gillis moved that that any student, not just a student from the SRC, can be a Student Representative on DEC. She also moved that the dates on the draft policy for term of office be changed to July 1st to June 30th. Seconded by Mr. Barry.

Following a request from Mr. Nesbitt, Mr. Spires moved that the policy be adopted, with the changes discussed. Seconded by Mr. Malone. Motion carried.

5.3 PSSC Training

Mrs. Watson advised that several PSSC resource documents have been sent to school principals and that they had been reminded that DEC members are willing to help with any questions PSSC members may have. She advised that once the PSSCs have identified a Chair, she will create a group distribution list for District communication. Mrs. Watson spoke of the importance of finding PSSC members to sit on district appeals. A discussion was held regarding difficulties in obtaining PSSC members for certain areas, and what could be done to obtain more interest, such as targeted messaging.

6. New Business

6.1 Quarterly Update

Mr. MacDonald presented the 2nd quarter update document, representing the district's year-to-date expenses up until the end of September. He noted that we are forecasting a surplus in funding for regular instruction, a shortfall in Education Support Services (funded for 775 EAs and currently employ 806), and that the deficit is expected to grow. He noted that although there is currently a surplus in Operation & Maintenance, it is expected that the surplus will decrease with the additional replacement costs for custodians this year as well as additional cleaning time required on buses. He advised that there is an additional \$3,000,000 in Covid funding which is being tracked. At the end of his review, he reported that the District is forecasting a break even for year end. Following a question from Council, Mrs. Watson spoke of the funding for EAs as a financial pressure point. She noted that the District has been seeing a lot of requests come in from schools for EAs and that they look at every request they receive.

There being no additional questions or concerns, Mr. Malone moved that the Quarterly Update be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

7. Information Items

7.1 Superintendent's Report & Update

Mrs. Watson reviewed her report which was posted with Council's meeting materials for their review.

She indicated that the first few pages of her report pertain to the pandemic and highlighted a few key points such as a change to the process of contact tracing with Public Health and the change in voluntary rapid testing for unvaccinated direct contacts and the implementation of the point of care (POC) testing within schools. Mrs. Watson shared the details of the POC process with Council. She also highlighted that "pop up vaccination clinics" were recently offered at high schools, that the funds for "Heathy Minds" have been disbursed and listed the Professional Development that has been happening within the District. She gave a shoutout to District staff member Tony Cooke - he is working with a Charlotte County committee on mental health and suicide awareness who have created a banner that gives contact information for local support. Mr. Cooke plans to visit other municipalities for interest in purchasing personalized banners. She pointed out statistical data related to the number of newcomer students and the number of students receiving English as an Additional Language support within the District. She advised that there is a new anti-racism and equity teacher coach, which aligns with the District Improvement Plan. She spoke of posters that have been ordered by UNB featuring prominent black citizens of NB and their accomplishments, and that these have been delivered to schools for display. Mrs. Watson advised that the PALS program is the recipient of the YMCA Red Triangle Award this year, and that she and Mr. Irving will receive the award at Prince Charles School, as the event in November is virtual. She spoke of the virtual panel discussion she recently took part in with other educational leaders.

7.2 Chair's Report and Update

Mr. Nesbitt advised that he and Ms. Gillis have been involved in a number of virtual meetings with other DEC Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as well as the Assistant Deputy Minister, and that it's been a busy month.

7.3 Correspondence

None. All was posted.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Nesbitt thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and reminded Council the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Following adjournment, it was mentioned that Council has agreed to follow the proof of vaccination protocol and Mr. Nesbitt asked that members show him their proof of vaccination.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Nesbitt, Chair

Tanya Bannister, Recording Secretary