

Superintendent's Report for DEC

March 22, 2023

ENDS #1: Provide a safe, healthy, and welcoming educational environment for learners, staff, families, and partners.

- A group of administrators, school counsellors, and guidance teachers completed ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) on Feb 21 & 22. ASD-S is grateful to Jennifer Grant, Learning Specialist at EECD, and Pam Miller, a private ASIST trainer, for training our staff. ASD-S runs a minimum of three ASIST courses annually to meet the goal of ensuring all counsellors, guidance teachers, behaviour intervention mentors, and Education CYT staff are ASIST trained. Todd Cormier, School Counselling Coordinator, oversees this training.
- Peter Smith, Director of Education Support Services, and Todd Cormier, School Counselling coordinator, completed a day of virtual training (Feb 27) in trauma-informed Violent Threat Risk Assessment with the Center from Trauma Informed Practices (previously North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response) and will undergo additional training on March 14 in Fredericton from Kevin Cameron, executive director of CTIP. Peter and Todd consult schools on Violent Risk Threat Assessments in the district.

ENDS #2: Improve student engagement and achievement by embedding research based best practices in a variety of learning environments.

- The When Children Succeed (WCS) project is continuing this year in our seven inner city Saint John area elementary schools. The project focuses on K-2 student achievement in literacy and numeracy. Teachers collect and report on student data monthly, and use the data to follow the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle. This allows teachers to respond strategically to individual student needs. End of February data indicates that schools are on track to meet most and exceed some of the academic targets. A data report will be shared with DEC at the May DEC meeting.
- To support the project, WCS teachers received personalized professional learning to support reading instruction during the month of February. This was completed over two days with two cohorts of teachers. Similar professional learning is planned for numeracy instruction before the end of March.
- ASD-S Take Me Outside Winter Challenge took place from Feb. 13-24. Teachers were encouraged to teach outdoors and sample activities were provided. For each different activity, teachers could register to win a prize. There were 52 entries by 45 teachers. 10 classes were awarded winter prize packs.
- Five curriculum coaches were provided with training to embed outdoor learning initiatives into their curricular area with the intention that these lessons can be shared when coaches provide teachers with coaching support. This same approach is being used with other coaches in the area of First Nations' education, anti-racism, technology, and social emotional learning.

ENDS #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.

- School counsellors spent a day with district Education Support Services staff, supported by the Health Learners Nurses and the Child Youth Teams, to learn about building resilience in students, understanding trauma-informed practices, learning to respond to incidents of racism in schools, and how to access mental health support for their students. Todd Cormier, School Counselling Coordinator, oversees this training. This was Feb 23 for K-5 and March 2 for 6-12.
- Beginning teachers also spent a day with district ESS staff, HL Nurses, and CYT staff. They learned about trauma-informed practice, including the research on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experience), learned more about their duty to report suspected child abuse and the processes in place for that reporting, learned about building resilience in students, and mental health services available to students through the Child & Youth Teams as well as their own mental health (courtesy of the EECD/NBTA counsellors, Ronna Gauthier and Carmen Meehan). Todd Cormier, School Counselling Coordinator, oversees this training. This took place February 14th and March 1st.
- Grades 6-12 are participating in the EECD Youth Check-In Survey (formerly called the Pulse Survey), a brief survey of mental well-being that will be administered several times a year. At this time, schools are collecting baseline data to be used for comparison purposes with future surveys. Because this survey is short and can be done several times a year, it is intended to “take the pulse” of the school in terms of mental health and allow quicker data on the impact of mental health initiatives within the school, rather than always rely on larger surveys that are done annually or even less frequently.

ENDS #4: Ensure all members of the school and district community are welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported.

- Mi'kmaw Knowledge Keeper Greg Mansfield has been visiting the classes of every PLC member in our K-5 and 6-12 FN PLC to enhance the teachings they have been doing with their students. Greg shares Mi'kmaq culture, sings, drums and dances with the students. Students also participate in the drumming. We will be hosting a PL day in March for each PLC to further explore Wabanaki Culture and worldviews.
- In February all K-5 resource teachers completed a day of professional learning in which they focused on learning about available resources for EAL learners (courtesy of EAL coaches Melissa Gavin & Margo Cochrane), a review of A Level assessments that can be used in schools (courtesy of Dr Beth Keyes, resource teacher), trauma-informed practice for resource teachers (courtesy of school counselling leads Jessica Bellis and Rob Mather), and Functional Behavioural Assessments (from the Behaviour & Autism leads). The 6-12 resource teachers will be doing the same professional learning in March—most will be done before the March meeting. The ESS Coordinators—Ethel McGrath, Megan MacDonald, and Alison England-Blanchard, oversee this training.
- The Black Lives Matter NB Youth Outreach Program paired with ASD-S to offer a Black History field trip on February 21 for many of the students of colour who Youth Outreach work with at Simonds, SJHS, STM, RHS, and RPS (The list of schools continues to grow). BLM Youth Coordinator, Ita Nhinda, organized the schools and the tour given by NB Black History Project Coordinator, Ralph Thomas and PRUDE's Diversity Coordinator, Gary Flannagan. Close to 30 participants toured uptown SJ, the North End, all the way to the Black Settlement Burial Grounds in Willow Grove. The tour ended with a visit to the NB Black History Society facility and

lunch. It was a great way for these students to connect and learn about the positive impact local black activists and entrepreneurs have made in the Saint John area. ASD-S looks forward to collaborating on more enrichment and learning opportunities with BLM NB who do so much wonderful work with our students and staff.

- The ASD-S Antiracism Committee met on March 1st. While students are invited to most meetings, this meeting was specifically for the adults to discuss options for moving forward with antiracism in ASD-S. Participants in the meeting included district staff, school staff, and representatives from Black Lives Matter New Brunswick and PRUDE (Pride in Race, Unity, and Dignity through Education).