

## **Superintendent's Report to DEC December 6, 2017**

### **Professional Development**

On November 20, 2017 a PD session was held in Saint John for early career Principals and all Vice Principals. Our facilitator was Elaine LeClerc from Fredericton and she worked with the group on dealing with challenging situations, and "The Leadership Shift." This year Principals have been divided into "clusters," and in November each cluster had an opportunity to meet. Groups of 5-6 Principals from schools of similar size and grade levels make up each cluster. The meetings are held in schools, with a focus for the day determined in advance of the meeting.

The K-2 Literacy and Numeracy Leads working as part of the 10 Year Education Plan "Priority Unit" had a day together on November 24, 2017. We have close to 40 leads focused at K-2 across the District – their role is one of coaching and co-teaching with primary teachers, offering PD and providing interventions for students.

December 6, 2017 was a half day for students and school based PD was offered in the afternoon. We are monitoring student attendance on the half days, as some schools are seeing a higher rate of absenteeism on these days. Provincially, the Directors of Curriculum and Instruction will be putting together an on-line survey for teachers to gather feedback.

A group of approximately 36 administrators, staff and police participated in the two day Level 1 Violent Threat Risk Assessment in November, facilitated by Principal David O'Leary and Education Support Services Coordinator Helen Johnson. A two day training session for (NVCI) Non-Violent Crisis Intervention was held for 24 educators and EA's facilitated by Coordinator Monique Hughes.

The Directors and I had a supper/early evening meeting with representatives of the eight NBTA/AEFNB Branches across ASD-S. We meet as a joint group in the late fall and again in the spring.

### **Student Activities**

In November ASD-S hosted two PITCHFEST events – students from 8 high schools participated (4 at each day-long event). Students involved were taking an Entrepreneurship course this term, so the day was directly related to their curriculum outcomes. Business partners supported us in teaching students skills in "pitching" an idea and in the afternoon students worked in groups to develop a pitch and be judged.

In November/early December three Chess Tournaments were held with 200 students in total participating – two of the tournaments are held on Saturdays and an evening in St. George. Winners will advance to the provincial level in the spring. Thank you to the SJ Chess Club for their support and Subject Coordinator Darren White for his efforts in organizing these popular tournaments.

We had approximately 15 schools participating in WE Day in Halifax on November 30. St. Stephen Middle School was recognized at this event, and two teachers, Shelley Petit from River Valley Middle School and Dan Foote from Hampton Middle School. Mr. Foote is working with the SJ Police and others from ASD-S to plan a WE BELIEVE Day at Harbour Station in mid-May for middle school students and elementary schools with WE student groups. The committee is seeking sponsorships and have met with the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

ASD-S hosted our first Mental Health Forum for high school students on Monday, November 27. Approximately fifty students from thirteen high schools gathered in Saint John along with their teachers, and our Guidance and Diversity and Respect Leads – there were student focus groups, a talk from child psychiatrist Dr. Yuzda and an opportunity for school teams to meet together and develop a small project to implement at their school. The lead teachers will be following up through the winter with each school. The group would like to come back together in the spring. Thanks to Director Peter Smith and Coordinator Pam Miller for organizing this day. I was invited to SJHS for the morning of the November half day to participate in the “Student Wellness” activities – guest speaker was John Westhaver ([www.johnwesthaver.com](http://www.johnwesthaver.com)) from BC who spoke on “Distracted Driving”, and then there were many wellness education sessions offered for the students.

Submissions were received from six high schools for the ASD-S holiday card – District Office staff voted for their favorite design at the annual staff breakfast and I will present the artist of the winning design with their entry framed and some cards for their use. The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate has also selected one of the designs for his Christmas card. Thank you to Fine Arts Lead Kyle Peters for organizing this annual initiative.

### **Parents/Community/School**

Seven program information nights have been offered for parents/families of students currently in kindergarten, grade 2 and grade 5 to give information about FSL programs and the grades 1, 3, and 6 FI entry points. Three sessions were offered in Hampton Centre (Sussex, Hampton, and KV), two in St. Stephen Centre (St. George and St. Stephen) and two in SJ Centre (at the office and West SJ). Thank you to the FSL Coordinators and the Directors of Schools for facilitating these seven evenings.

The offices have been busy with fundraisers for The United Way – through the staff newsletter we are encouraging staffs to consider The United Way for payroll deductions, one time donations or a staff fundraiser. To date the staff in the SJ office have raised \$500.

Debbie Thomas and I offered the parents of Prince Charles and SJ the Baptist King Edward a tour of Seaside Park Elementary School, and a school bus was provided for interested families.

Congratulations to Seaside Park Elementary School on being the recipient of \$50K through the AVIVA Community Fund National On-Line Competition. The school also received \$15K from the City of Saint John for their playground fund.

I had the pleasure of emceeing the annual SJ and Area Strings Program on December 4, at SJHS. Approximately 150 students from Saint John, Hampton, KV and St. Andrews participate in the program. Premier Brian Gallant attended the concert this year. A huge thank you to our two part-time strings teachers, Allison Leonard and Helen Gollings and to retired music educator Robert McCaustlin who volunteers his time for this program. The night of our December DEC meeting, SISTEMA will also have their Christmas Concert at SJHS.

Mr. Irving hosted his annual PALS dinner at the Delta, for the Principals and Community Schools Coordinators from PALS schools in the SJ Centre, and the PALS partners. I am invited to speak each year at this dinner and thank Mr. Irving and our partners for their on-going support of our schools.

The list of Christmas and holiday school events has been posted – our schools work very hard to prepare these special programs, to participate in Santa Claus Parades, The Empty Stocking Fund, Harbour Lights Campaign, supporting Food Banks etc.

### **Other**

Congratulations to Lissa McNaughton-Dickie who has been named Director of Early Childhood Education, replacing Gary Hall. Lissa has worked in Early Childhood for many years, most recently as one of our three Early Childhood Coordinators.

Over the last month I have attended one provincial meeting in Fredericton with the Deputy and Assistant Deputy, a half day provincial IT governance meeting in Fredericton, the Directors and I attended a one and a half day provincial Education Group meeting in Fredericton, Marc Godin and I attended a half day meeting of the K-2 Priority Unit in Fredericton, and three Principals and I attended an evening celebration event in Fredericton sponsored by AEI (Atlantic Education International).

I was also asked to speak at my church in Rothesay on “Diversity” as it relates to public education – I had the opportunity to share the work of our District in mental health, LGBTQ, the supports in place for families in need, and welcoming students from other countries.

The District Office will be closed to the public December 27, 28, and 29, re-opening on Tuesday, January 2, 2018.

Zoë Watson