

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – May 9, 2018

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at the Saint John Education Centre, 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Chair; Roger Nesbitt, Vice Chair; Wayne Spires, Bernie Regenbogen, Dan O'Connor, Linda Sherbo, Heather Gillis, Larry Boudreau, Gerry Mabey, Rob Alexander

Regrets: Richard Malone, Justin Tinker

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Paul Smith, Director of Schools, Hampton Education Centre; John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration, Peter Smith, Director of Education Support Services, Derek O'Brien, Director of Schools, St. Stephen Education Centre and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fowler asked if there were no questions or concerns with the Agenda that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the Agenda be approved. Mr. Alexander seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the April 11, 2018 meeting and asked that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Boudreau moved that the Minutes be approved. Seconded by Mr. Mabey. Motion carried.

2.3 Public Comment

None

3. Member's Notebook

Mr. O'Connor noted that he was happy to see students so engaged in all of the school musicals, art galas, and other events. Simonds High School "Back to the 80's" musical and the Forest Hills musical "Alice in Wonderland" were both wonderful productions. He noted that the Loch Lomond Elementary fine arts gala was also very successful. PSSC have commented that they are happy to have an opportunity to provide the Superintendent feedback on the work with their Principal through the Principal feedback process.

Ms. Sherbo was impressed with the schools in her subdistrict who are using the District Improvement Plan "placemat" to help shape their School Improvement Plans. She commented that some good points were brought forward at Principals' meetings with regard to the Teacher Perception Survey – some questions and responses can skew the score - in this survey, and in a number of other surveys. She noted that Principals/PSSCs are deciding which ENDS policies to focus on and to possibly implement, but may not be able to due to space or other greater needs faced by students in their schools.

Mr. Spires commented that a St. Stephen Elementary School FI student won at the recent science fair and that this speaks well of our French Immersion program.

Ms. Gillis noted that the Principal and Vice Principal at Bayside Middle School lost a fundraising bet with the students and ended up playing a part in the school play. The students loved it! She also noted that they were heading to the play offs with girls volleyball.

Mr. Mabey enquired if Council members had heard the new song for Seaside Park Elementary. It was very well done. Mrs. Watson will forward the link to all. He also asked if it was possible for the District to assist in the delivery of a Hammond organ which he has donated to Seaside Park. Mrs. Watson will speak with Facilities to assist.

Mr. Alexander advised that he had accompanied the Sussex Middle and Sussex High School band students to Halifax for a Festival of Music. The concert band won a silver medal and the jazz band won a bronze. Approximately 38 students attended.

Mr. Fowler advised that he recently attended a fundraiser at St. John the Baptist/King Edward. It was a spaghetti dinner and dance. The PSSC put an amazing effort into the event and it was a full house!

4. Presentation

Mrs. Watson advised Council that the final District Improvement Plan had been posted on the website last week for their review. Although the document will always be a work in

progress, and will be tweaked annually, it is now ready for Council to formally approve. She commented that feedback has been very positive and schools are asking for the software program used to create the document so that they can set up their School Improvement Plans in the same format.

She briefly reviewed the plan, which outlines the goals, strategies, indicators of success, the timelines and those responsible to implement. This document will form the basis of what will be reported on to Council next year. She also highlighted the last page of the document which lists “on going” strategies – they are not new, but support what we have been doing for a while now.

Mrs. Watson asked for a motion to accept the document which can then be posted on the ASD-S website.

Mr. O'Connor moved that the District Improvement Plan be accepted as presented. Seconded by Mr. Boudreau.

Question was raised about what might happen to this plan if the government were to change. It was suggested that the Chair might want to share this plan with other DEC Chairs as a document that provides measurable objectives for the purpose of Superintendent evaluations.

There being no further questions, motion carried. Mr. Fowler commented that Council spent one full day at the beginning of this process; however, staff have spent a tremendous amount of time, over many months, on the development of the final plan and he extended his thanks to all for their hard work.

5. Business Arising from Minutes

5.1 Policy Review Committee Status Update

Mr. Nesbitt advised that the committee meeting was cancelled due to snow in March, and there was no meeting in April. The next meeting is scheduled for May 16th. The committee hopes to bring policies forward at the June meeting.

6. New Business

6.1 Executive Limitations # 11 & 12

Mrs. Watson noted that her Monitoring Reports had been posted on the ASD-S website for Council's review since last week and advised that she outlined her interpretation and evidence for each.

She briefly reviewed EL #11, Property Management, and EL #12, Annual Reporting to the Public. She noted that EL #11 covers both finance and facilities departments.

Questions raised included whether or not the use of technology (Lync) had been successful in reducing travel expenses for staff, and if the District receives requests for information posted on the ASD-S website (due to not all families having access to computers). Mrs. Watson addressed both questions.

There being no further questions, motion was made by Mr. Spires to accept the Monitoring Report for EL #11 & EL #12 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Boudreau. Motion carried.

6.3 French Immersion Locations for 2018-19

Mrs. Watson felt that Council might wish to see the locations and number of classes for French Immersion next year. She explained that for the first time, ASD-S used on-line registration for this program. Parents can change their minds about registering students for French Immersion; however, they must go back on line to withdraw. This makes it more difficult for planning purposes. She then reviewed the locations and class sizes for grade 1 and 3 entry points next year. September 2018 will be the last year for the grade 3 entry point.

Question was asked what happens when the number of students drops (i.e. not enough students for 2 classes). Mrs. Watson advised that we have until October 15th to move teachers should numbers drop. She noted that very few drop out during the school year at the lower level entry point, most happen at the high school level.

6.4 Surplus Land Request – St. Stephen Education Centre

Mr. MacDonald reviewed for Council a request for a parcel of land located behind St. Stephen Elementary School to be declared surplus. He advised that he, the Principal, and Director of Schools, Derek O'Brien, met with Mr. Disher who is a contractor in St. Stephen and is making the request. Discussion followed.

Questions arose with regard to where the right of way would be; the need for fencing; and the acreage before and after. Comments included the fact that it is a fairly significant piece of land; positive aspects noted included that it would remove the water problem from the playground, keep animals away and provide housing that is desperately needed in the St. Stephen area.

Motion was then made by Mr. Boudreau that the District go back to Mr. Disher and get more detailed information before Council makes a final decision. Seconded by Ms. Sherbo. Motion carried.

6.4 Surplus Land Request – Saint John Education Centre

Mr. MacDonald reviewed for Council a request for a piece of land located directly behind Morna Heights School to be declared surplus. The request was made by Mr. Allan Marr

for a piece of land that would allow him to improve the drainage around his home. Discussion followed.

Questions included whether the water would come toward the school; what would happen in the case of a new school; and could Council see a design plan. Comment was made that if the land was ever to be sold, it might be more difficult to sell (minus a piece); that we would be setting a precedent for others; and that the request is for land that would be the same size as his current property.

Motion was then made by Mr. Boudreau that the District go back to Mr. Marr and get more detailed information before Council makes a final decision. Seconded by Ms. Gillis. Motion carried.

6.5 Functional Capacity Report

Mr. MacDonald advised that some members of Council could not open the excel document that was posted for Council's review. He provided printed copies of the report for all and suggested that we could delay until the June meeting so that all would have time to review it.

Question was asked about trigger schools for the 2018-19 school year. Mr. Fowler advised that we have not yet heard from the Department. He advised Council that there is a common misunderstanding in the public that once a school has been reviewed, it cannot be reviewed again for 4 years. This is not the case. DEC can choose to conduct a Policy 409 review at any school at any time.

7. Information Items

7.1 Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Watson updated Council on the on-going flood situation within the District, including school closures at Morna Heights, Belleisle Elementary, Belleisle Regional High, Hampton Elementary, Hampton Middle, Hampton High, Dr. A. T. Leatherbarrow and Kennebecasis Park. She advised that closures were not due to flooded schools, but the safety of roadways and sewer/sanitation concerns. Parents received talk mails with information on bus routes and closures, and were advised that it was up to them if they felt it was safe for their children to attend. There will be no penalty for non-attendance.

Schools were closed on Friday of last week for Subject Council days and on Monday of this week for NBTA AGM meetings.

Mrs. Watson advised that Morna Heights and Belleisle schools would be re-opening on Thursday and the four Hampton schools would remain closed for the day. A decision will be made whether or not to open them on Friday in consultation with the Town of Hampton.

She noted this is a busy time in the District with a lot going on – Drama Fests, and the launch of the Sweet Caroline video at Rothesay High School. Mrs. Watson, Ms. Thomas, Mr. Smith and Ms. Moffatt (Acting Director of Human Resources) all attended the CAPSLE conference in Halifax which focused on legal challenges in education. She advised that one of the sessions was on the legalization of cannabis and the need to educate students. There are still many questions to be answered. Dr. Russell, who spoke to high school Principals at Portage last month, provided a good link to documents for parents and students.

Question was asked whether or not the District sets a policy with regard to the use of cannabis in schools, or if each school set their own. Mrs. Watson advised that ASD-S has a Positive Learning Environment Plan which would cover this, noting it includes drugs and alcohol now. It will likely be updated to spell this out more specifically when the new law comes into effect. Consequences are identified within the plan.

Ms. Sherbo suggested that Council should send a letter to the editor with regard to the students and teachers who were not in school, but reached out to help many of their neighbours and communities sandbag properties to protect from high flood waters.

Mr. O'Connor suggested that Council also send (email) a letter to all of our bus drivers in appreciation of their efforts for transporting students safely to and from school under very difficult road conditions.

7.2 Chair's Report and Update

Mr. Fowler noted that the DEC symposium, scheduled for May 4 – 6 in Fredericton, had to be cancelled due to the severe flooding situation across the city. He advised that it will be rescheduled in October, noting that this is also the time for PSSC orientation sessions across the District.

Mr. Fowler noted that Council received a letter from the Minister with regard to our request to build a new school for St. John the Baptist/King Edward and Prince Charles. The Minister approved the recommendation and was satisfied that procedural fairness was respected and proper consultation and consideration of the eight criteria was demonstrated. The request for a new school is now dependent upon on the project being approved and funded as part of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development capital budget.

Mr. Fowler reminded Council that the Annual Meeting of the Canadian School Board Association will be held in Nova Scotia in July and anyone who wants to attend should register soon.

Mr. Fowler reminded Council that with regard to the Capital Improvement Projects for Summer 2018, the District has been advised that both the Champlain Heights Washroom and Bayside Middle Washroom projects came in over budget. Therefore, one will need to be removed from the list for this year. He noted that Bayside Middle School is the more critical of the two. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the Champlain Heights Washroom project be

moved to the 2019 Summer Projects list. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau opposed the motion.

7.3 Correspondence

None; all correspondence was posted on the portal for Council's information.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and reminded Council the next meeting will be held at 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John on Wednesday, June 13, 2018 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary