

Superintendent Report to DEC March 2018

ENDS #1: To provide positive, safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments for children, youth, and staff

On Thursday March 15, Dr. Chorney from Halifax will meet with a large group of Guidance staff, Child and Youth Team members and invited guests from other districts. The topic is: Anxiety and School Avoidance from a Therapeutic Approach. Dr. Chorney will be offering a session for parents on Wednesday evening, March 14 as part of the “It Takes A Village to Raise a Teen” initiative in SJEC.

On February 14, three schools participated in a workshop on Restorative Practices – Harry Miller Middle School, Fundy Middle and High School and Belleisle Regional High School. Each school sent four representatives and the focus was on teaching restorative practices within the classroom.

On February 22, five schools had the opportunity to meet again as part of the PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Supports). The participating schools were Sir James Dunn Academy, Barnhill, Kennebecasis Valley High School, Harry Miller and Bayside Middle school. The day focused on using the PBIS binder, effective use of data to inform practices, creation of a school matrix and building the school PBIS framework.

This year in celebration of Nutrition Month (March), Anglophone South School District will be promoting the importance of water consumption to improve overall health for all students & staff, ***Go with the Flow...DRINK H2O!*** The focus is on **World Water Day, Thursday, March 22**. The theme for this day is ‘Nature for Water’ – exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges we face in the 21st century. Bringing attention to this day is twofold: promoting the use of tap water and utilizing refillable bottles, as opposed to bottled water, are great examples of environmentally friendly initiatives. As well, the consumption of water is directly linked to improving concentration, preventing headaches and fatigue, just to name a few. Resources for the initiative include: refillable water bottles nutrition labels (that list the benefits of water), posters, PSAs for school announcements, newsletters, activities linked to curriculum, and flavoured (fruit, vegetable and herbs) water recipes.

ENDS #2: To demonstrate continuous improvement toward meeting provincial targets in literacy, numeracy, science (English and French Immersion) and to improve learning in and application of the arts, trades and technology.

The High School Assessment group of 22 teachers is meeting on March 19 for their fifth and final day this year. We got data from the group on the number of students impacted by the work of the group members as a result of this program. Each subject area represented (ELA, FSL, Science & Math) chose a different area of focus under the umbrella of assessment; growth mindset, co-constructing criteria, student self-assessment (I Can statements), use of portfolios, global competencies and goal setting. Fourteen of the twenty two teachers have responded totaling 1,950 ASD-S high school students impacted by the work of our assessment group.

The Department has a provincial high school working group on assessment and we are represented by Brad Stevens from St. Malachy's, Krista Amos from St. Stephen High, and JoEllen Jensen from Kennebecasis Valley High School. Our Coordinators will be meeting with this group next Thursday, along with three other ASD-S high school Principals - Lori Wall from Saint John High School, Pat McDade from Fundy Middle and High and one other to be named. They will discuss the work of the provincial group, share some of our work in ASD-S and talk about next steps with assessment in ASD-S high schools.

The Grade 6 District Mathematics benchmarks will be written from March 19 - 28. Grade 7 and 8 benchmark assessments are also available and optional.

"Talk With Our Kids About Money" (TWOKAM) events are being held at various schools throughout ASD-S on national TWOKAM day April 18. This is an innovative program through Canadian Foundation for Economic Education. Forest Hill's Vice Principal Paul Hickey will receive an award of recognition from this organization.

The Grade 6 intervention project work with resources Dreambox and Leaps and Bounds continues across ASD-S. Teacher feedback has been collected via an email survey and the response was exceptionally positive regarding student improvement, support from Middle level numeracy leads and the PLC (Professional Learning Community) work surrounding assessment and intervention work.

We have received funding from PALS (Partners Assisting Local Schools) to provide additional literacy support for students in grade 2 in seven inner city schools. \$100,000.00 has been sent by the provincial government for the third year to support PALS priorities. We are grateful for once again receiving this generous donation; seven teachers have been hired and prior to the March Break had a couple of days for planning and preparation to begin their work this week and continue until the end of May, 2018. In these schools we find a significant number of students with literacy deficits and this additional intervention is very helpful.

The Grade 3 and Grade 9 First Nations curriculum orientation for Social Studies has been provided by the Department. Revisions to the curriculum are being made and the roll-out is pending re-printing. In addition, provincial professional learning was provided in February for the new Grade 9-12 First Nations Art Plans as well.

ENDS #3: To increase the engagement of children & youth by embedding competencies such as, critical thinking, citizenship, entrepreneurship, innovation, personalized learning and leadership in teaching and learning.

ASD-S will host two Innovation Days, "Let's Get Inspired," April 13 for 20 high school teachers and April 26 for 20 middle school teachers. The events will be held in Saint John in the Donaldson Room and DEC members are welcome to drop by. We held a one day event for our high schools last year and it was very successful. This day will provide hands on learning experiences to inspire teachers to innovate and be creative. We will also celebrate those teachers who are engaging our students through meaningful learning activities that promote critical thinking skills, problem solving abilities and relevance to lifelong learning.

ENDS #4: To provide opportunities for staff to learn about mental health issues in children and youth and to promote school and District wide initiatives that promote mental fitness.

ASD-S will be hosting four sets of supertime/evening sessions on Mental Health First Aid in March and April across the District. The sessions will be three hours in length and approximately 100 participants are expected to participate from the three education centres. This opportunity was advertised to all staff and we received great interest with representatives from all employee groups. There will also be a Mental Health First Aid session for guidance staff and Child & Youth (ISD), April 5 and 6. If any DEC members are interested in dropping by the sessions, please let me know.

ENDS # 5: To expect all members of the school community to be welcomed, respected, accepted and supported and to address heterosexism and discrimination.

A GSA Workshop was held on February 28 with 20 middle schools represented, 22 adult advisors and 33 students in attendance (some were high school students). Topics included: divided sessions on Being Somebody's Superhero; Being Your Own Superhero; Cyberbullying; How to promote the GSA in your school; Circle Time with adults and students divided, with leading questions, and the development of a school action plan.

ENDS #7: To promote the value of education through effective partnerships and positive pro-active communication.

We have been using our twitter feed to again promote student attendance, for sending messages about March being nutrition month, special parent evenings, and the Saint John Education Centre Policy 409 meetings.

Other:

The March Break began on a very sad note with the tragic death of grade 12 student Marcus Finch from Simonds High School. Marcus was killed in a single vehicle car accident on the Thursday prior to the Break. Supports were in place for Mr. Keating, his staff and students, Simonds High School was open for students on the day of the funeral service.

Principals will be meeting by Education Centre on March 20 and March 21 – topics on the agenda include Education Support Services (right to refuse, service dog guidelines, partial day guidelines, complex case process and common plan meetings), there will be an opportunity to discuss the half day PD format being used provincially this year, a continuation of our professional learning on student engagement, and an opportunity to give feedback on the strategies of our District Improvement Plan before they are presented to DEC in April.

We have sent an e-mail to PSSC Chairs to collect feedback on the half day PD model being used in NB schools this year. We are also collecting some student feedback, and will spend time at our Principals' meeting next week to collect their feedback. We know this has been a change to how PD has been offered with schools dismissing at noon for students. We are also monitoring student attendance on these days. This model of half days has been used in Francophone schools and in areas of ASD-West (Fredericton and Oromocto).