

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – January 9, 2013

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, January 9, 2013 at the Saint John Education Centre, 490 Woodward Avenue. The following council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Gerry Mabey, Roger Nesbitt, Stephen Campbell, Gary Crossman, Don Cullinan, Rob Fowler, Bob McDevitt, Charlotte McGill-Pierce, Wayne Spires, Larry Boudreau, Joanne Gunter and Sherman Ross.

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Kate McLellan, Director of Educational Support Services; Debbie Thomas, Senior Education Officer; Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

The media was present.

1. Call to Order / Welcome /Regrets

Rob Fowler, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Fowler introduced Clare Murphy, newly hired Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, and welcomed her to the meeting. She will serve as the Recording Secretary to the Council.

2.1 Approval of the Agenda/Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fowler reviewed the agenda with council and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the agenda, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Spires moved that the agenda be approved as presented. Mr. Mabey seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the minutes of the December 12th meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve.

Mr. McDevitt noted a change was required under 5.3 – the word “policy” needs to be replaced with the word “committee”. Also, Mr. Nesbitt noted that Stacey Brown’s title was incorrect, and needed to be amended to “Stacey Brown, District Education Council Manager, Anglophone Sector.” Mr. Nesbitt then moved that the minutes be approved with the changes as noted. Mr. Crossman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Public Comment

None

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Student Input to DEC

Mr. Fowler explained that the Education Act requires that a student be a member on the District Education Council. The Department has not yet decided on the process and has asked each DEC to have a plan on how to involve students.

Ms. Watson reviewed past processes for Districts 6, 8 & 10 and council members discussed what they felt worked best based on previous years. Decision was made to ask Student Councils in each Centre to present to the DEC during three Wednesday night meetings in Feb/March at the Education Centres. Student Councils can have as many reps as they would like attend the meeting, and invite other students (non-Student Council members) to attend to ensure a broad range of students participating. Questions would be provided in advance by the Superintendent to the Student Council. Focus areas will be what is going well at their school, what could be improved and their ideas for improving public education. Principals will be polled to choose the most appropriate dates in Feb/March.

4. Presentations

4.1 Anti-Bullying Initiatives

Ms. Pam Miller, Subject Co-ordinator for ASD-S, gave an informative presentation which provided an overview of all efforts currently underway (or in the works) to provide students with information and resources on bullying.

Some initiatives included participating in Anti-Bullying week activities, Sept 24-28th; utilizing PREVNET, an evidenced based program promoting relationships and eliminating violence; using outside sources such as the Red Cross to promote peer support; using "Beyond the Hurt" where students are trained to train others; using literacy based programs in the K-3 levels (WITS) and (LEADS) in Grades 4-6. There is also a BullySmart program & 7 Habits of Happy Kids program being utilized at the elementary school level.

Some schools have taken the initiative to implement specific programs such as Forest Hills, who are using OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program whereby bullying can be reported anonymously on line and information is tracked. As well, in the Kennebecasis Valley schools are working in conjunction with the Rothesay Police and "The 'B' Factor program". Anyone is welcome to attend these public meetings and guest speakers are often on hand to provide information and education.

There are also provincially supported programs such as the (LINK) program which is currently available in the Sussex middle and high schools, in the St. Stephen Education Centre schools, and is scheduled to be rolled out in the Saint John, Kennebecasis Valley and Hampton areas within the next few weeks.

As well, the Kids Help Phone and the Chimo Helpline are also resources available to our students.

Feedback from members was positive and a number of questions were raised and discussed on the particulars of individual programs. Bob McDevitt wondered what was being done with regard to 'cyber bullying'. Discussion followed. It was clear that parents needed to buy into this, and be part of the solution. Pam Miller advised that this is a societal challenge, not just a school challenge.

Mr. Fowler thanked Ms. Miller for her presentation.

4.1 Structure of Education Support Services & Strengthening Inclusion

Ms. Kate McLellan, Director, Education Support Services provided a detailed presentation of the Education Support Services Department, identifying the staff positions within the department and their areas of focus. An integral part of their focus is inclusion, ensuring the wide range of practices now being used are narrowed to the best, most effective and inclusive practices.

Ms. McLellan discussed the Year One Action Plan from the provincial report "Strengthening Inclusion: Strengthening Schools" that is in place and its components which are geared to achieve more consistency. She touched on specific challenges that need to be addressed including instruction, teacher responsibility, balancing of social and academic goals and alternate education policies and strategies. She ended the presentation with a summary of actions taken to date, and an outline of next steps.

Feedback from Council was extremely positive and Ms. McLellan and her team were praised for their accomplishments. A number of questions were raised and discussed within the group. Mr. Mabey asked if teachers are being trained appropriately prior to arriving in the classroom. Ms. Watson advised that there are provincial agreements in place with St. Thomas, UNB Fredericton and Saint John, and Crandall. The Department visits these institutions every year to discuss what training is needed for our teachers.

Mr. Fowler thanked Ms. McLellan for her informative presentation.

5. New Business

5.1 DEC Retreat – January 18 & 19, 2013

Confirmation was provided that the retreat will be held in St. Andrews, January 18 & 19. There will be a tour of Vincent Massey and Sir James Dunn Academy, beginning on

Friday evening at 5 p.m. Hotel rooms will be booked at the St. Andrews Motor Inn and meals and meeting sessions will take place at the Kennedy House Inn. A detailed schedule, including directions, will be sent out to the Council next week. The facilitator will be Alex Dingwall.

5.2 'Pay It Forward' Initiative

Ms. Watson gave a brief overview of this initiative and how it got started, based on a movie and novel of the same name. In essence, it promotes 'acts of kindness'. There is a plan to have a 'Pay It Forward' Day in Saint John, on April 25th. Ms. Watson would like to see all 74 schools involved and it be more regional in nature. She and others, including Erica Lane, will be working toward making this happen. This is similar to the "Celebrate" campaign that has been done in the past. Suggestion was made that perhaps Tracy Friars might be invited to present to the Council on this initiative which was very widespread from Sussex to Saint John.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report & Updates

Ms. Watson gave an overview of the Professional Learning Days that were held on January 7 & 8. On Monday there was school specific training, as well as district training including First Aid and "Stepping Out" for high schools. On Tuesday, there were gatherings of teachers of the same discipline (ie. Math, Music, Art, Phys Ed., etc.) There was also a meeting of all custodians at Bayside on January 7th, and Ms. Watson addressed this group. They were very pleased to be able to meet together, at the same time.

Today, January 9th, there will be a virtual meeting of local NBTA Presidents and Directors for the three education centres. They will be working through the teacher staffing process draft document for Anglophone South. The District's hope is to develop one common way of working through staffing.

Ms. Watson mentioned that 30 new staff will be coming on Friday, January 11th from Health and Social Development. The goal is to get them housed in schools. Ms. Watson then reviewed some administrative changes happening in the Saint John Education Centre.

Ms. Watson also provided some great news to the Council. She had just received a telephone call from Heather Bell Williams, advising that Milltown Elementary school has received a donation from the Poverty Coalition in the amount of \$11,000! This will cover three separate programs, including a Job Fair, Free After School Program and Families & Schools Together. There is also another \$1,500 coming from the Town of St. Stephen.

6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates

Mr. Fowler acknowledged the tragedy in Newtown Connecticut, stating that we are hopefully in a safer environment, but noted that this could happen anywhere. In light of this, Mr. Campbell questioned if our policies are being reviewed. Ms. Watson responded that lock down procedures are being done in all schools and that we do review our policies as required. She advised that there are sign – in procedures at all schools, and that visitor tags are being used. She reiterated that every employee is responsible, when seeing someone in the school who doesn't have a visitor's tag, to question them, and ensure that they have checked in at the office.

Ms. Watson also advised that 14 schools in Saint John have an intercom/buzz-in system at the front door. The cost has been priced at \$2,500. She and Debbie Thomas are gathering information from these 14 schools to see if this process is working, and whether or not it should be instituted across all schools as resources allow.

Mr. Fowler advised that planning for the Spring Symposium (April/May time frame) is underway and that Stacey Brown, District Education Council Manager, Anglophone Sector would provide more information moving forward.

Mr. Fowler mentioned that the next Minister's Forum was scheduled for mid-February.

6.3 Correspondence

None

6.4 Members Notebook

Mr. Maybe asked if staff are trained in programs to deal with sexual abuse in children? Kate advised that yes, it is covered in the Health curriculum (good touch/bad touch) and also our Guidance counselors are trained.

Mr. Mabey also advised the Council that he attended 5 Christmas school programs in December and that they were 'delightful!'

7. New Business

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's council meeting. The next meeting will be held at the Saint John, Education Centre, 490 Woodward Avenue, on

February 13, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. Since there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chairperson

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary