

**ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)**  
**DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Meeting – February 12, 2014**

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, February 12, 2014 at Saint John Education Centre, 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John. The following council members and staff were in attendance:

**Council Members:**

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

**Regrets:** Roger Nesbitt

**ASD-S Staff:**

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Debbie Thomas, Senior Education Officer Saint John; Kate McLellan, Director of Education Support Services, John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration, and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

Media was in attendance.

**1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets**

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Mr. Fowler advised that Mr. Nesbitt will be unable to attend this meeting.

**2. Approvals**

**2.1 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes**

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Agenda with Council and then suggested that if there were no objections, he would like to move Item 4.1 Me to We presentation to follow Public Comments. No objections were raised. He then asked if there were no concerns or questions regarding the revised Agenda, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Spires moved that the revised Agenda be approved and Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the January 8th meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Boudreau asked for clarification with regard to arena signage which Mrs.

Watson provided. There being no further questions or concerns, Mr. Crossman moved that the Minutes be approved and Mr. Spires seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## **2.2 Public Comment**

None

### **4.1 “Me to We” Student Presentation**

Teacher Shelley Thorne and students from River Valley Middle School (RVMS) were in attendance to share the growth of the Me to We movement within their school and the many great experiences they have shared as a result.

The Me to We group at RVMS started last fall as part of their after school activities program. They started with a small but passionate group of students who wanted to make a change. The first large scale activity the group undertook was called “We Scare Hunger”. The concept was to have students trick or treat for canned goods for the local food bank. They also held a school based food drive to supplement the trick or treating and altogether collected close to 250 lbs. of food. During this time, they also developed a long term goal - to build River Valley School in Nicaragua (students selected something relatively nearby as they are hoping to be able to travel with a few students within the next 3 years to help build their school).

Next was the “We Create Change” campaign where RVMS was part of Canada’s largest penny drive, sponsored by the Royal Bank. Students would bring in their pennies and Penny Bags were filled and returned to the Royal Bank who in turn donated \$25.00 to Free The Children World Water Fund. 1 bag/\$25 guaranteed a child in Africa clean drinking water for life. RVMS proudly brought water to 27 children. During this campaign, Ms.Thorne was contacted by a young lady with Free the Children - Megan. She invited RVMS to be part of a lecture series called H2O4U. This series, paid for by the generous donations of the Royal Bank, saw all grade 7 students at RVMS participate in a 1 hour presentation on the World Water crisis. Then, 20 selected students took part in a 3 hour workshop on how to make a difference with Me to We. The next week RVMS Me to We club more than doubled in size! Since this time, one member collected \$212 from friends and family for her birthday (instead of gifts) so that she could live Me to We.

This year Me to We has provided RVMS students with another speaking series on the importance and the right of education in the world. The global challenge this year is to build 200 schools. RVMS has now collected about 1/3 of the cost towards this goal. Although they will not raise enough to build a school on their own, they will contribute to the fund and help bring the universal right of education to children who otherwise would never get it.

Over the last 2 years students helped out at the school pancake Breakfast, the Big Read challenge and the Big Feed at Romero House. The club also held a clothing drive for Romero House. This past fall they held a mini We Day, another We Scare Hunger, and their newest fundraiser, Dancing with the Teacher. The group has been working hard to fundraise for a trip to Halifax and to support Me to We and Free the Children initiatives.

WE Day Atlantic – was quite an experience! This was a day of celebration of our youth who are truly living the concept from “Me” to “We”. You cannot buy a ticket to We Day, you must earn it. This day of celebration was to thank the youth who are members of the world’s largest youth movement, a movement that encourages students to “Be The Change” they want to see in the World (Ghandi). This group has given a voice to children all over the world, including RVMS. Everyone wants to do good - this group makes it that much easier for today’s youth to participate and do acts of kindness and good within our society. Due to their hard work, RVMS was a feature school at We Day Atlantic.

RVMS’s goal is to see Me to We groups expand across ASD-S as it allows students to develop wonderful leadership skills as well as see the real difference they can make in this world. RVMS grade 8 students are planning to bring it with them to all 3 high schools and other middle schools are now following up on the concept.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mrs. Thorne and the students for their informative presentation and congratulated them on their impressive contribution to community services.

### **3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

#### **3.1 Pennfield School – K-5 Request**

Mrs. Watson reminded Council of a letter that was received at the December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 District Education Council Meeting from the PSSC requesting that this school become a grades K-5 school (currently a K-4). Grade 5 students now attend either Blacks Harbour or St. George Elementary. She also spoke about the declining enrolment data that had been previously shared with Council. The PSSC have indicated they polled the current grade 4 parents and with few exceptions, parents would support this change.

Further consultation took place when all parents of Pennfield Elementary School students were invited by the Superintendent to attend a meeting on Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss the request to reconfigure the grades at the school. Parents raised concerns with regard to the need for a grade 4/5 combined class and the one year transition to grade 6 before attending Fundy High School for grade 7, and wondered if the District would explore the possibility of grade 6 becoming part of Fundy High School (currently 7-12). It was felt that this would lessen the number of moves for students. Mrs. Watson advised the parents that the District would explore this possibility and advised that more consultation would be required with the impacted schools (Blacks Harbour, St. George Elementary and Fundy High. In response to a question with regard to the closure of Pennfield, she confirmed that despite declining enrolment, no closure consultations are currently taking place.

Mrs. Watson recommends Pennfield become a K-5 school as per the PSSC request and follow up with the other schools about grade 6 being part of Fundy High School.

Mr. Boudreau suggested that we seriously reconsider putting the request to separate the middle school from the high school (at Fundy High) back on the capital project list. Mr. Fowler reminded Council that they had already decided that the approximate \$7M

price tag to separate the middle and high school for what amounted to social issues at the school was not feasible and so had voted to take that project off the list. Mr. Spires advised that the general public feels their priorities were jettisoned. Mr. Fowler and Mrs. Watson reviewed with Council how we arrived at the priorities that were eventually submitted. Mr. Fowler noted that rationalization of schools is coming due to declining enrolments over the next few years.

#### **4. Presentations**

##### **4.2 Child Protection Presentation**

Mr. Spires began his presentation by expressing his frustration over the difficulties encountered when trying to protect our children. He went on to say that we do as much as we legally can to protect them, but the only time we can act is when something happens.

He emphasized the need to reinforce in our children that they must ‘tell us’ if they feel something is not right – tell someone they trust – and most importantly, we must believe them when they tell us.

Mr. Spires suggested that we should be following the “Commit to Kids” program and asked that all read it to ensure we are doing all that can be done to keep children safe.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce advised Council of a community meeting she attended that was very informative and well attended by 50-60 volunteers. Information was provided for all to take back to their organizations to use as a template to see if they were doing all they could to protect children.

Mr. Fowler expressed the concern that it is very difficult to catch anyone who is unknown to the system. Mr. Mabey suggested that PSSC may consider sponsoring the Internet Safety program in their schools for parents.

Discussion arose on what programs within government were available to help organizations work together on the sharing of information. Ms. McLellan advised that with Integrated Service Delivery, we are moving toward more communication and collaboration between departments (Public Safety, Education, Social Development, etc.) and that ASD-S is opening doors and seeing benefits even now.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Spires for his informative presentation.

#### **5. New Business**

##### **5.1 DEC Policies for Annual Review (Ends Policy #2)**

Mrs. Watson reminded Council that ASD-S Ends Policies were identified during our District Education Council Retreat in January 2013 and have been developed over time

by ASD-S staff. Ends Policy #2 focuses on providing positive and safe learning and working environments. Pam Miller and Bronwyn Tanner are both Positive Learning Environment Coordinators for ASD-S and were in attendance to review current strategies that support this policy.

Ends Policy #2: “to provide positive and safe learning and working environments for children, youth and staff).

The two main strategies under this policy include:

- Provide positive and safe environments, and
- To ensure schools have inviting environments that respect diversity and inclusive practices.

Ms. Miller & Ms. Tanner outlined a number of strategies being used to ensure a positive and safe environment including: the development of a District Positive Learning Environment Plan; development of an ASD-S working group to create a pamphlet outlining the key features of Policy 703; and a Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports pilot project that has seen 4 high schools develop core leadership teams to develop a school framework to support all students.

Another important strategy will be to analyze behavior data to review trends. Reports will be created and provided to schools so they can identify growth areas and develop ways to deal with issues that are identified.

The TurnAround Achievement Awards is an opportunity to CELEBRATE our youth who have worked hard to successfully turn their lives around. Each Education Centre has a committee planning a May event. Each middle and high school will nominate a deserving candidate(s), depending upon the size of the school. Sponsorships are being sought in both Saint John and St. Stephen and are expected to be finalized soon.

Internet Safety Week focused on grades 3-8 where Internet safety lessons were highlighted. Grades 9-12 focused on ‘creating your digital footprint’. There were resources for the schools, websites, parent brochures, Synervoice messages and a multitude of resources available on the ASD-S website to help get this message out.

PREPaRE is a crisis preparedness planning and response protocol which was introduced to all Principals in September, 2013. April of 2014 will see follow up to this introduction with a one day training event. Work is still being done on combining the former three districts processes for crisis response.

WITS is an elementary level program that focuses on four strategies on what to do when faced with conflict and Beyond the Hurt is a middle to high school level program that focuses on healthy relationships and bullying prevention programs.

In working to ensure that schools have an inviting environment that respects diversity and inclusive practices, Ms. Miller and Ms. Tanner talked about Tell Them From Me on-line student survey; their on-going work with the Gay Straight Alliance; the effort to increase staff knowledge and skills in promoting respect for human rights and

supporting diversity and the year 2 actions of the Inclusion Policy which all represent positive steps towards reaching this goal.

The complete power point presentation is attached and forms part of these Minutes. The current District Improvement Plan is posted on the ASD-S website for more detailed information.

## **5.2 Executive Limitations Policies #1-3 for Review**

Mrs. Watson advised that she had completed Monitoring Reports on policies EL-1, EL-2 & EL-3 and had posted the documents to the portal for Council to review. She was confident that she was in compliance with all. Mrs. Watson did a quick review of each policy and asked if there were any questions or concerns. Mr. Fowler reviewed for Council what constitutes 'compliance'. Mr. Spires moved that the Monitoring Reports for EL-1, EL-2 & EL-3 be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. McDevitt. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau abstained from the vote.

## **5.3 Budget Update**

Mr. MacDonald provided an overview of the status of the ASD-S budget to date. He advised that most areas we will break even or possibly finish with a small surplus. The two challenging areas are Plant & Transportation as dollars were pulled back by Fredericton for casual replacements. Mr. MacDonald noted that most PSSC budgets had been spent, and that there were some funds remaining in the DEC budget.

Overall he does not expect to finish the year with a surplus, but hopes to be close to balanced.

Mr. Boudreau asked about combining services (for example Synervoice) to enhance savings. Mrs. Watson advised that we are working toward consistency across the District and that the Province is also looking at shared services, but it is a slow process that will take time.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. MacDonald for his financial update.

## **6. Information Items**

### **6.1 Superintendent's Report & Update**

Mrs. Watson advised Council that ASD-S had two teachers who recently won awards. Jennifer Goad Casey, a grade 5 Intensive French Teacher from Champlain Heights School will be recognized later this month with a National Inclusive Education Award at a special ceremony at Old Government House in Fredericton. Michael Wilson, Principal of St. Patrick's Elementary School in West Saint John was named one of Canada's 40 Outstanding Principals by The Learning Partnership. Michael was nominated by his school and at the end of February will be in Toronto for one week attending leadership professional learning at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

Mrs. Watson wanted Council to be aware that this week is Staff Appreciation Week when we CELEBRATE all staff – custodians, maintenance staff, education assistants, teachers, administrators, administrative assistants, Centre and Office of the Superintendent staff, bus drivers, student attendants, library assistants, school intervention workers. She stated that it takes our 3,000 regular staff plus many casual staff to keep our 74 schools running smoothly and to provide the best possible educational opportunities for 23,700 students from White Head Island to Sussex Corner. This year ASD-S ordered blue logoed recycle bags for each staff member as a small token of appreciation for all that they do.

This week is also Internet Safety Week across ASD-S. Mrs. Watson advised that information has been sent to schools and resources for distribution to upper elementary and middle school families. There is a link to great information on our ASD-S website. Teachers were asked to take a few minutes to support this initiative from our District Education Plan. Students need constant reminders about proper use of the internet and social media.

Mrs. Watson confirmed that Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> would be the official grand opening of Kennebecasis Park Elementary School. The Minister and other dignitaries will be in attendance. All DEC members are welcome and asked to let Ms. Murphy know if they plan to attend.

Program information nights for grade 2 and 5 parents continue across ASD-S. As well, February 17 will be a school based Professional Development day. Schools may focus on items from their SIP, share the inclusion module information, examine assessment results, TTFM results, teacher perception data, Student Wellness Survey data, and information from the school review process. There will also be 2 days of mental health first aid training taking place at District Office on the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Watson passed around our new ASD-S Mission Statement plaque. There will be one posted in each school and Education Centre.

## **6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates**

Mr. Fowler advised Council that he had received an invitation to the National Inclusive Education Award Ceremonies in Fredericton on Feb 19<sup>th</sup>. He is unable to attend so if any Council member would like to go, please let him know.

Mr. Fowler advised Council that the Minister's Forum would be taking place on February 21/22.

## **6.3 Correspondence**

None

## **6.4 Members Notebook**

Mr. Boudreau commended Mrs. Watson on her recent dealing with storm days and wanted to publically express his disappointment with the Telegraph Journal for a recent article that he felt showed poor journalism in trying to make the Superintendent look bad for school closure decisions which are always made with student safety as the priority.

Mr. Mabey wanted to express his congratulations to Principal Mike Wilson of St. Patrick's school on his recent award.

Mr. Spires showed Council a pocket sized information card with numerous telephone numbers and resources available to the general public. He felt that all ASD-S should be provided with these cards. Mrs. Watson advised that ASD-S has a similar Link program.

## **7. Adjournment**

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening's Council meeting and advised that the next meeting will be held at 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John on Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Rob Fowler, Chair

---

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary