

**ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)**  
**DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Meeting – January 14, 2016**

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

**Council Members:**

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

**Regrets:** Kerrie Olinskie

**ASD-S Staff:**

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Debbie Thomas, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration; Suzanne LeBlanc Healey, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

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

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Fowler passed on regrets for Mr. Olinskie and advised that Mr. Campbell was attending via telephone. Mr. Fowler welcomed members of the general public.

**2. Approvals**

**2.1 Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Fowler suggested that we combine Items 3.2 and 3.3 and review one, as well as switch the order of Items 4 and 6. Mr. Fowler then asked if there were no questions or concerns with the amended Agenda that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Spires moved that the amended Agenda be approved. Mr. Nesbitt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**2.2 Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the December 9, 2015 meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the Minutes be approved. Mr. Mabey seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## **2.3 Public Comment**

Donna Fairweather, a parent from Lawrence Station addressed Council. She spoke about the reasons that she was not in favour of the closing of Lawrence Station Elementary School including:

- Lack of involvement for volunteers at St. Stephen Elementary due to the distance
- Bus routes/inaccuracy of timing estimates presented
- Ages of the children and the amount of time on the bus
- Impact on children – uprooting them, causing anxiety and travel fatigue
- Attendance would suffer
- Changing their lifestyle

Mr. Fowler thanked Ms. Fairweather for her presentation.

## **3. Business Arising**

### **3.1 Policy 409 Sustainability Review Update: Lawrence Station Elementary School**

Mr. Fowler read into the record the summary document of the meetings that were held at Lawrence Station Elementary during the consultation process. The summary document is attached to and forms part of these Minutes.

After the summary document was read, Mr. Fowler asked for a motion on Lawrence Station Elementary School. Mr. Cullinan moved that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that we recommend the status quo be maintained at Lawrence Station Elementary School. Mr. Spires seconded the motion. Mr. Fowler then asked for any questions or comments on the motion.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce noted that Council spent a long time looking at all the “dots on the map” on the previous Saturday, knowing they were students.

There being no further questions or comments on the motion, Mr. Fowler asked for a show of hands of those in favour. Motion carried. Mr. Ross abstained.

### **3.2 Policy 409 Sustainability Review Update: Morna Heights, Grand Bay Primary and Inglewood School**

Mr. Fowler read into the record the summary documents of the meetings that were held at Morna Heights and Grand Bay Primary/Inglewood during the consultation process. The summary documents are attached to and form part of these Minutes.

After the summary documents were read, Mr. Fowler asked for a motion on Morna Heights, Grand Bay Primary and Inglewood School. Mr. Nesbitt moved that Council

direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that we recommend the closure of Morna Heights School, Grand Bay Primary and Inglewood School and the construction of a new 330 student elementary school, centrally located within the boundary. Mr. McDevitt seconded the motion. Mr. Fowler then asked for any questions or comments on the motion.

Mr. McDevitt stated he would be supporting the new school option and to close Morna, Grand Bay and Inglewood based on the idea that a new school will benefit some present students as well as future students of the three schools. Students deserve the best.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce stated she has toured the three schools, read the reports and listened to all concerns. She said she has had private conversations with some parents and community members and has also made her own personal observations as a mom and DEC member for the last 8 years.

She stated that she understands the connection that is made to one's school. Small schools provide a cozy, friendly learning environment. Large schools can also provide those things. She explained that her children attend and have attended Fairvale Elementary which at one point had 585 elementary aged students and was the largest in NB. It is cozy and friendly as well. It's all about the leadership in a school and the incredibly gifted and kind staff members who work within those walls. A school is about a physical vehicle to provide the environment in which to learn. We have some schools that are physically well equipped and some that are not.

Fairvale is located within the Town of Rothesay. Currently there are 410 students attending Fairvale; 80 are residents of Rothesay, the remaining 330 are residents of the Town of Quispamsis. Two municipalities. This has never been an issue and it shouldn't be here.

A new K-5 school in this region of the greater Saint John area would be a great addition. The gymnasium would be gorgeous, hardwood flooring, new basketball nets that go up 10 feet and down to 7.5 feet. A second smaller gym for groups like Judo or Karate or badminton fitness classes. A music room where choirs would practice, community rooms for Bearers, Girl Guides, etc.

We need to think about the entire region winning, not one group losing. It is important that the Home and School groups at all three schools start planning now for a playground and outdoor recreation areas.

Mr. Nesbitt stated that he supports the closure of Morna Heights, Grand Bay Primary and Inglewood School because all buildings are old and need repairs and none of the buildings are wheel chair accessible. He stated that the distance to transport students to a new school in the area would be minimal and that there is a lack of proper gym facilities for two thirds of students in the area. He felt that a new school would provide better educational opportunities for the children of the area.

Mr. Boudreau noted his concern is a “lack of planning” and expressed the need to look at all our plans as a whole.

Mr. Mabey stated that he can feel for some of the issues presented by parents but has to put them aside when considering a new school for the students of this whole area as what will be the best for the students comes first. Grand Bay and Inglewood is a simple solution in that it makes sense to combine the two elementary schools into a new school.

When considering Morna Heights there are several things to look at including: a new school creating a great atmosphere for all the students; an increase in size of gym facilities; a new cafetorium; all students being able to ride on school buses thus removing any dangers of students walking on the main highway which involves many twists and turns especially in the winter months; safe spaces for the students to exercise and play with big playing areas; wonderful spaces for both students and parents to work together with teaching staff. Everything is for the betterment of students, parents and staff.

There being no further questions or comments on the motion, Mr. Fowler asked for a show of hands of those in favour. Motion carried. Mr. Ross abstained. Mr. Boudreau and Mrs. Gunter voted against the motion.

### **3.4 Deer Island Community School Reconfiguration**

Mr. Fowler read into the record the summary document of the meeting that was held at Deer Island Community School during the consultation process. The summary document is attached to and forms part of these Minutes.

After the summary document was read, Mr. Fowler asked for any questions or comments.

Mrs. Watson addressed Council with regard to the proposed reconfiguration of Deer Island Community School from a K-8 school to a K-5 school, with the middle school grades moving to Fundy High School. She advised that to travel a distance on the bus is one thing; however, issues with the ferry are another consideration. She noted good points that were brought forward by the community. Education wise, she noted that it is a struggle to provide a full middle school experience with such a small group of students. She stated that it would be very difficult to reach curriculum outcomes with 3 grade levels for one teacher. She also noted that students would not be able to participate in extracurricular activities at Fundy High School due to the ferry/distance after school. It was for the above reasons she recommended to maintain the status quo at Deer Island Community School.

Mr. Fowler then called for a motion on Deer Island Community School. Mr. Mabey moved that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that Council accepts the recommendation of the Superintendent to maintain the status quo at Deer Island Community School. Mr. Spires seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Boudreau asked if the life jackets that used to be available on school buses that travelled the ferry, were still on our buses? If not, he wondered why it was changed as it is a safety concern. Mrs. Watson advised that Mr. MacDonald will look into this.

### **3.5 White Head Elementary School Reconfiguration**

Mr. Fowler read into the record the summary document for White Head Elementary School. The summary document is attached to and forms part of these Minutes.

After the summary document was read, Mr. Fowler asked for any questions or comments.

Mrs. Watson addressed Council with regard to the proposed reconfiguration of White Head Elementary School from a K-6 school to a K-4 school. She explained that we have never been able to offer grade 5 Intensive French at the school. There is only one teacher and one EA (for safety reasons). Mrs. MacDougall and she visited the school last year and both felt that educationally the students would be best served at Grand Manan Community School. Mrs. Watson has spoken to the Principal at Grand Manan Community School who often speaks to grade 6 students when they start grade 7 and she said they feel they are one year late to middle school!

Mrs. Gunter asked how long the ride on the ferry would be? Mrs. Watson advised it was 20-25 minutes.

Mr. Fowler then called for a motion on White Head Elementary School. Mr. Campbell moved that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that Council accepts the recommendation of the Superintendent to reconfigure White Head Elementary School from a K-6 school to a K-4 school, effective September, 2016. Mr. Spires seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## **4. Presentation**

Suzanne LeBlanc Healey, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, introduced Subject Coordinators presenting: Daren White, Science K-12; Brenda Logan, Numeracy; Ryan Price, High School Literacy and Greg Paterson, Middle School Literacy.

Mrs. LeBlanc Healey began the presentation by updating Council on French Second Language (FSL), French Immersion and Intensive French, where the goal is to train and support teachers in their delivery of Balanced Literacy in both FSL programs. She reviewed a number of strategies being used to achieve this, and emphasized that the focus is on supporting teachers in grades 3-5 immersion, grade 4 pre-intensive French and grade 5 intensive French by providing Education Support Teacher (mentor) support across ASD-S.

She spoke about the goal to improve French proficiency of students in the FSL program by 2% in attaining provincial targets at the end of Grade 12 with the introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) – teaches students

to self-assess their level in French. She noted the need to identify and train new teachers in both FSL programs. Mrs. Watson advised that we do receive fairly significant federal dollars through EECD for professional development in this area.

Ryan Price addressed Council to update them on the goals pertaining to high school literacy, social studies and Learning Commons. He stated that there is a shift to student centered instruction, valuing skills development and a focus on the learning journey versus evaluation at the end. He spoke about the need for all ELA and social studies teachers to improve instructional practice and planning through the routine use of curriculum, achievement standards and look fors. He also noted the need to modernize our libraries - usage has been dropping. The space needs to be bright, open and welcoming with educational components. He explained that a number of our high schools are at different stages in this transition process. He spoke about the goal to operationalize formative assessment and routinely use leading data to inform instructional practice.

Greg Paterson spoke to Council on middle level literacy and the use of formative assessment to ensure success. He identified that there are 26 schools in ASD-S with middle level grades (6-8) and a total of 4,913 students taking middle level language arts. He went on to say that the provincial target is that 85% of students will achieve or surpass the expected target in their program of study. In ASD-S, 20% of our middle level language arts students are in the low achievement bracket (796) students. He briefly reviewed a plan he developed to address this. The plan outlines strategies to help teachers help students who reach the grade 6, 7 or 8 level and cannot read at the appropriate level that is required.

Brenda Logan spoke to Council about the mathematics benchmarks 3 year trend. She advised that 3 years ago they started collecting data from grades 4 and 6 based on outcomes taught. She noted that in 2015, 74.6% of grade 4 were at appropriate level or above (76.1% in 2013 and 81.7% in 2014). In grade 6 in 2015, 61.5% were at appropriate level or above (61.1% in 2013 and 66.3% in 2014). She advised that the outcomes are not the same each year and have dropped, and that is a concern. They also looked at what is going on between grades 4 and 6 and will focus on grade 3 to see what is happening.

For those students who would have written both the grade 4 assessment (2013) and the grade 6 assessment (2015), there is a drop of 15% in those who are at appropriate level or above. This trend is not something ASD-S is happy with. They will now filter the data to get specific information and then work to meet the required outcomes and close the gap.

Darren White spoke about the focus on science “skills” – which could mean analysing, designing, predicting, researching, interpreting, evaluating, to name a few. It means different things to different people. He noted that it is easier at the elementary level, but can be a challenge at the middle and high school levels. He spoke about the goals (and strategies to help achieve them), including:

- Strengthening instructional comfort and best practices
- Enhancing critical thinking and problem solving based teaching

- Improving provincial, national and international science results
- Fostering partnerships with outside agencies

He provided examples of a project where students were encouraged to generate their own data and then work with it to reach a goal of reducing waste in their school (they conducted a waste audit to determine the types of waste in the garbage stream and then worked to develop ways to reduce it). There was also a fossil project where students worked to identify specific rock types. Students designed and built catapults and then developed ways to improve their design.

Mrs. Watson advised that our coordinators are working with fewer leads this year in numeracy and literacy. She introduced Jillian Ingalls Garey, a new FSL Coordinator who was leading the Program Information Session for Saint John Education Centre parents and Mary Ann Mackay, who has been working at the Department on the introduction of ISD in the Saint John and Hampton Education Centres.

Mr. Fowler thanked the team for their informative presentation.

## **5. New Business**

### **5.1 Council-Staff Relationship Policies #4 -6**

Deferred to February meeting.

## **6. Information Items**

### **6.1 Superintendent's Report and Updates**

Mrs. Watson advised that we had some very sad news just days before Christmas, with the unexpected death of St. Malachy's Memorial High School teacher Melody Steeves. Mrs. Steeves taught at the school for the last 16 years and will be missed by the students and staff of her school. She asked for a moment of silence in her memory.

Mrs. Watson updated Council on plans for the arrival of the refugee families. She acknowledged the work of Lynn MacDonald our International Student Coordinator, and Jeff Matheson our EAL Support Teacher. She noted that Jeff, as well as several ASD-S teachers, had been very involved over the holidays working on a welcome team with Newcomer Connections through the YMCA. We know that most of the families will be within the city of Saint John, and we have set up a "Language Learning Centre," using available space at Prince Charles School here in Saint John. The plan is to have students transition through the Centre to determine education and language needs, as well as emotional and mental health needs. Many have had gaps in their education and it is important that we take the time to learn what we can about the students before they are placed in our schools. Students that were expected yesterday, had their first 'storm day'!

PD Day on January 4<sup>th</sup> saw Principals and staff discussing their School Improvement Plan. Superintendents were advised by the Department that we can add back in the two days

for professional development that were noted on our school calendar as 'to be determined' between April and June. We will need to ensure that parents have adequate notice in order to make child care arrangements. Principals and the NBTA/AEFNB have been consulted on prospective dates.

On Tuesday of this week the K-8 Principals met and on January 20th there will be a meeting of high school Principals. The elementary administrators had updates on early childhood education, a presentation from the Department on LGBTQ and time was also spent discussing formative assessment and sharing samples the principals brought from their schools. Middle school administrators focused on the middle school philosophy.

High school teams have received their first day of training on the new student information system, "Power School." The new system will be implemented in 2016-2017 K-12 with the administrative functions – attendance, discipline, and student information. High schools now using EdLine will move to the "parent portal" feature of Power School next year, and K-8 will follow with the Report Card implementation in fall of 2017.

Program information sessions have started for parents of current kindergarten and grade 5 students – the full schedule is on the ASD-S website.

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

Mr. Fowler advised that DEC Chairs had met with the NBTA at the Minister's Forum in November regarding partnering on common initiatives. He noted that this year inclusion was on the list. This group committed to meeting again in the new year to share data on what's happening in the classroom. This meeting will be held in February – if you have any comments you would like to share please send them to Mr. Fowler. He will share the results of these meetings.

Next Tuesday DEC Chairs will have a call with the Minister and Deputy Minister. There will be one more Minister's Forum before civic elections in May.

Mr. Fowler advised Council that we would not be undertaking any more 409 consultations before the May elections. He noted that the 409 process is a difficult one and Council takes this responsibility very seriously. He thanked members of Council for their hard work over the past months.

Mr. Fowler advised that all should consider whether or not they will be re-offering for the next term on Council.

## **6.3 Correspondence**

None



#### **6.4 Members Notebook**

Mr. Cullinan enquired whether there had been any feedback regarding the “snow day” session that had been held. It was noted that there had been a report which was sent to Karen Branscombe Power for incorporation into the 10 year education plan.

Mrs. Watson will obtain a copy of the report.

#### **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 on Wednesday, February 10, 2016 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Rob Fowler, Chair

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Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary