

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – June 10, 2015

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, June 10, 2015 at 490 Woodward Avenue Saint John, NB. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

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

Regrets: Sherman Ross, Kerry Olinskie.

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Debbie Thomas, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; John MacDonald, Director Finance and Administration; Stewart Stanger, Director Human Resources; and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Mr. Fowler passed on regrets for Mr. Ross and Mr. Olinskie.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes

Mr. Fowler asked if there were any questions or revisions required to the Agenda. There being no questions or concerns regarding the Agenda, he asked that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the Agenda be approved. Mr. Cullinan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the May 13, 2015 meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Spires moved that the Minutes be approved. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Public Comment

None

3. Presentations

3.1 Human Resources Report

Mr. Stanger started with a review of the staffing of the Human Resources Department noting that this year saw the addition of one Human Resources Officer (temporary) to assist the Department while he is away in Fredericton working on the staff attendance initiative.

He reviewed the challenges faced by the Department, including: the lack of an effective payroll system (the current one is 30 years old); the implementation of AESOP for the casual/supply booking has taken place with mixed results due to growing pains with the new system (benefit is the reduction in paperwork); the volume and complexity of staff and union issues and the demand from external sources for information and committee work.

Mr. Stanger then briefly outlined the number and nature of grievances by Education Centre (66 across the District). He pointed out that grievances were challenging mainly for the amount of time that is required. He also noted that Harassment in the Workplace and Policy 701 complaints are on the rise as well as the number of requests being received under Right to Information.

He reviewed the breakdown of permanent (3,157) and casual (1215) positions within the District. He noted that the number of Supply Teachers stood at 631. He advised that there were a total of 251 Worksafe NB claims submitted and 193 of those were accepted.

Mr. Stanger advised that the attendance data coming from AESOP provides more accurate data than we had available in the past. He spoke of the provincial attendance project that he was now involved in which has a goal of reducing the amount of sick leave days by 20%. Sick time is extremely costly to the District with approximately 22,311 days being missed in 2014-15 (to April 30, 2015).

He reviewed the teaching and non-teaching vacancies and the leadership postings in all three Education Centres. He noted that there were not a lot of vacancies and this would be a difficult year for our D teachers.

Mr. Stanger also noted the new employee assistance program "InConfidence" had been implemented.

Questions from Council were addressed by Mr. Stanger and mainly centered on the cost of absenteeism to the District.

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

4. Business Arising from Minutes

4.1 Spring Symposium Update

Mr. Fowler advised that attendance for this year's symposium was down from last year – there were less PSSC attending and there were a number of cancellations. He advised that the official summary was not yet back from Stacey Brown; however, it seemed all enjoyed the event. He wanted to thank Stacey for her hard work putting together relevant material for this event each year.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce felt that Stacey did a good job at sharing information and felt that the event needed more “professional development” for DEC and PSSC. She expressed disappointment with the 10 Year Plan session – she expected to see more content.

Mr. Spires commented that the speakers were knowledgeable and he agreed that Stacey had done a good job organizing the event.

Mr. Spires reminded Council of the upcoming DEC elections – he advised that forms would be available January 1st. He encouraged all to get their papers in as soon as possible.

4.2 Minister's Excellence in Teaching Awards Update

Mr. Fowler advised that the subcommittee met to review the applications prior to the DEC meeting tonight. There were eleven nominations and all were excellent candidates. Three finalists were chosen and the names will be sent to the Minister. The names will remain secret until announced by the Minister.

4.3 Superintendent's Evaluation Sub Committee Report

Mr. Nesbitt reviewed the Superintendent Evaluation Summary Report which clearly outlined the process followed to complete the yearly evaluation of the Superintendent's performance in a number of areas. The review process included the following motions:

Mr. Nesbitt moved that the District Education Council of Anglophone South School District express sincere thanks and appreciation and strongly commend Zoë Watson for her efforts during this third year of amalgamation on behalf of the District, all employees, students and parents. Seconded by Don Cullinan. Motion carried.

Mr. Nesbitt moved that as a result of her successful administration of Anglophone South School District this year, Zoë Watson's performance is rated as Exceeds All Expectations. Seconded by Charlotte McGill-Pierce. Motion carried.

Mr. Nesbitt moved that as a result of the performance of Zoë Watson being rated as Exceeds All Expectations, she would be eligible for a four step re-earnable increment if salaries were not frozen at present levels. Seconded by Stephen Campbell. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler thanked Mr. Nesbitt and his committee for their work on the Superintendent's annual review.

4.4 Brown's Flat School

Mr. Fowler advised Council that he had received a letter from Minister Rousselle confirming the closure of Brown's Flat School effective June 30, 2015. He read the letter into the record for Council. (Letter attached and forms part of these Minutes).

He then read into the record a letter from the Minister acknowledging Council's recommendation not to close Norton Elementary and maintain the status quo. (Letter attached and forms part of these Minutes).

Mrs. Watson advised that letters will go home with students to the families in Brown's Flat tomorrow. Staff at the school were informed this afternoon as well as the PSSC. Debbie Thomas will work with the Principals to arrange transition activities between the two schools.

4.5 Surplus Declaration – Lorne Middle and Pennfield Elementary Schools

John MacDonald reviewed the briefing note that had been prepared with tonight's meeting materials for Council. He advised that a motion is required to declare these lands surplus so that ownership could be transferred to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) at an agreed upon date. DTI will; however, start the process to repurpose or sell the property as early as July 1st contingent upon the property being declared surplus by Council.

Motion was moved by Don Cullinan that Council declares the property of Lorne Middle School and Pennfield Elementary School, including all buildings and lands located on the properties, surplus to the needs of the school district. The Council recommends that the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure involve community partners in the discussion of the repurposing or disposal of the properties. Motion seconded by Mr. Spires.

Mr. Fowler then asked for an amendment to include Brown's Flat School. Moved as amended by Mr. Cullinan and seconded by Mr. Spires. Amended motion carried. Mr. Boudreau opposed the motion. Final motion will now read as follows:

That Council declares the property of Lorne Middle School, Pennfield Elementary School and Brown's Flat School, including all buildings and lands located on the properties, surplus to the needs of the school district. The Council recommends that the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure involve community partners in the discussion of the repurposing or disposal of the properties.

Council members commented that they would not want to see the buildings boarded up and DTI should do something with them within a year so that they do not become an eye

sore. One question was raised about groups renting the facilities until next year, and Mr. Fowler advised that would not be an option.

Discussion then arose on the need to amalgamate the PSSC of each school; Penfield with Blacks Harbour; Brown's Flat with Westfield; and Lorne with Princess Elizabeth. It was decided that a letter from the DEC Chair would be sent to PSSCs informing them of need to form one PSSC going forward. Motion was made by Mr. Spires that we inform the PSSCs of the schools noted above of the need to merge. Seconded by Mr. Mabey. Motion carried.

5. New Business

5.1 Final Budget Update (2014-15)

John MacDonald reviewed the budget update document that had been posted with Council's meeting materials. He advised that we are showing a break even budget as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development covered the approximate \$3 million deficit that was due to casual replacement salaries and increases in January in natural gas costs of approximately \$690,000.

Motion was made by Mrs. McGill-Pierce to accept the final budget as presented. Seconded by Mr. McDevitt. Motion carried.

5.2 PSSC Training/Chair Orientation

Mr. Fowler expressed the need to get our PSSC up to speed faster and the need to help them with developing agendas and running their meetings. He suggested possibly setting up a meeting in each of the three Education Centres this year. He emphasized that no Principal should Chair a PSSC meeting.

It was mentioned that Chairs struggle with the ability to communicate with parents. Mr. Fowler suggested that they ask the Principal to communicate the information, in a newsletter or on the website. The question arose what the Chair might do if they were not happy with something within the school – both Mrs. Watson and Mr. Fowler stated that there are ways to address these types of concerns with the Principal. They stated that communication with parents is something that could be addressed at orientation meetings this fall.

Mrs. Watson asked for written feedback on all Principals from their PSSC. We have received about 60 to date. This feedback is based on the Principal's role with the PSSC as outlined in the Education Act. If she notes any red flags, she will loop back to the Principal regarding the issue.

Mr. Fowler then asked for volunteers to help with sessions in October. Mr. Mabey, Mr. Spires and Mrs. McGill-Pierce agreed to assist.

5.3 Surplus Declaration Request – Bayside Middle School

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the request for surplus declaration for property located at Bayside Middle School and advised that no concerns were raised by the Principal regarding the request.

Question arose on who will get any funds from the sale and Mr. MacDonald advised that any funds received would go to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Motion was made by Mrs. McGill-Pierce that Council declare the parcel of land located at the far left of Bayside Middle near the dead end street and adjacent to the property of 24 Westmorland, as per the attached document, surplus to the needs of the school district. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried.

5.4 School Sustainability Summary – 2015-16

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the report that had been posted with Council's meeting materials for tonight's meeting. Key points included the fact that 61% of schools in the district are 45 years or older and that there has been a 20% drop in enrolment since 2002. He explained the average operating costs per square foot and per student (salaries not included) for each education centre. He advised that this information will be on line in the future.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Watson advised Council that this had been another tough week at ASD-S with the death of Tim Ingram a long time custodian at Milltown Elementary. Protocols are in place to assist students and staff through these difficult times. Mrs. Watson then asked for a moment of silence in memory of Mr. Ingram.

Mrs. Watson thanked the Directors of Schools and Human Resources staff for their work during the staffing process. She advised that we have very good candidates interested in available positions. There are 55 retirements and 65 teacher reductions. There have been some administrator appointments made and Council is advised via email when these are determined. She advised that all B teachers will be placed with some moving to another school. All leads/mentors positions have been filled. There were reductions within this group and some went back to schools. She acknowledged that this is a very anxious time for staff across the District.

Mrs. Watson advised that best practices for School Supplies were developed for September 2014 by PSSC representatives and all schools are encouraged to follow what has been set out.

Transition visits and meetings for Kindergarten will see students spending one half day in their school. Grade 5 will visit their middle school and grade 8 will visit their high school. There will be a transition day in the fall.

Graduations begin tomorrow and the list of schools, times and dates have been posted.

This time of year is also busy with special events including; Marigolds; track meets; retirement events; Art Smarts events; the Simonds High partnership with Ducks Unlimited and Turning Points to name only a few. She advised Council that Erica Lane, Community Engagement Coordinator for ASD-S and Debbie Fisher, PALS, were awarded "Women of Distinction" awards for Education, Training and Development. They received their award at a June 4th YMCA dinner held in Saint John. Mrs. Watson went on to say that when we see students/teams have won awards, bursaries, etc., we do a congratulatory letter to them on behalf of Council and the District.

The 2015-16 school calendar has been finalized and it will be posted on the ASD-S website. She noted that school starts and ends later next year due to Labour Day falling on September 7. She advised that there are two PD days yet to be determined noted at the bottom of the calendar.

Summer Learning Week is set for the week of July 13-17 with many opportunities for professional development.

Mrs. Watson updated Council on the activities of the Attendance Committee. She advised that the public relations roll out will happen this fall to focus on the importance of good student attendance. She will bring an update on these plans to the August meeting.

6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates

Mr. Fowler advised Council that that he attended a PSSC meeting at Deer Island to review/clarify Policy 409 and reconfiguration. He said it was a very good meeting and advised that the PSSC are not excited about any reconfiguration. He suggested they provide a list of questions for Mrs. Watson to address.

Mr. Fowler attended the Retiring Teachers dinner in Saint John (Branch 08-20) and spoke at the event. It was a very pleasant evening although we are losing a significant amount of experience from the District.

Mr. Fowler also attended the Turnaround events in both Saint John and Hampton Education Centres and felt that the students were amazing – what they have done, the challenges they have faced and their resilience.

Mr. Fowler addressed the Trigger Schools document with PSSC from Inglewood. They had many questions regarding the study in Grand Bay/Westfield.

ASD-S Principal Jennifer Carhart and Chair Rob Fowler attended recent Strategic Program Review meetings in Fredericton.

Mr. Fowler advised that he will be meeting on Friday of this week with Stacey Brown regarding the next Minister's Forum.

6.3 Correspondence

None

6.4 Members Notebook

Council members felt that the District should encourage “Safe Grad”. Mrs. Watson advised that we have Safe grad events in the District and we cover the cost of busing for these events in all centres.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce noted that some PSSC hold their monthly meetings on the same night as the DEC meetings, so, it would be impossible for DEC members to attend. Mrs. Watson will convey this concern to PSSC Chairs.

Mr. Fowler reminded Council that there would be no meeting in July and the next meeting would be held on August 19th.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Fowler thanked all who attended this evening’s Council meeting and advised that the next meeting will be held at the Saint John Education Centre, 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John on Wednesday, August 19, 2015 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary