

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – March 19, 2015

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Thursday, March 19, 2015 at 490 Woodward Avenue Saint John, NB. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Wayne Spires, Don Cullinan, Bob McDevitt, Charlotte McGill-Pierce, Stephen Campbell, Larry Boudreau, Kerry Olinskie, Gerry Mabey and Sherman Ross.

Regrets: Roger Nesbitt and Joanne Gunter.

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Paul Smith, Director of Schools, Hampton Education Centre; Jenny MacDougall, Director of Schools St. Stephen Education Centre; John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration; Suzanne LeBlanc Healey, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

Russell Hall, PSSC Chair for Norton Elementary and Mayor Juliana Booth, Mayor of Norton were in attendance along with members of the general public.

Media was also in attendance.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He advised that due to inclement weather and safety concerns, the March 18th meeting was cancelled.

Mr. Fowler passed on regrets for Mr. Nesbitt and Mrs. Gunter.

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. Spires moved that the Agenda be approved. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the February 11, 2015 meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve. There being no questions or concerns, Mr. Cullinan moved that the Minutes be approved and Mrs. McGill-Pierce seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Boudreau asked to clarify his statement under Members Notebook and to have it read as follows:

“Mr. Boudreau also advised that he felt the PSSCs in Eastern Charlotte would like to be part of a working group with the District to make a solution possible with regard to the reconfiguration of Fundy High.”

The February 11, 2015 Minutes will be revised to reflect this clarification.

2.2 Public Comment

Russell Hall, PSSC Chair for Norton addressed Council to point out that this process is too short to make a good decision with regard to the future of the school. He advised that this process is normally a 12 month process.

Juliana Booth, Mayor of Norton spoke to Council and reiterated that the timeline was too tight and not workable.

Mr. Fowler clarified that the process could take “up to 12 months”. He advised that time is critical and there has been time allowed between the first and second public meetings.

Mr. Campbell advised that the third and final meeting would be held on April 29th at a special District Education Council meeting here at 490 Woodward Avenue. Mrs. Watson noted that we would include this meeting date in the letter going home to families, in the print ads and on our website.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.1 New West Side School & Education Specifications

Mrs. Watson advised that ASD-S had received permission from the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to close Havelock, Seawood and St. Patrick’s schools and build a new one on the West Side.

The New West Side School Planning Committee have met to review the Education Specifications required for the new school. The nine member committee (which included District and Department of EECD staff, PSSC members from each of the three west side schools, a DEC member and a Principal representing the three schools) met with Josh Nowlan, Senior Project Manager from EECD three times over the last number of weeks. The group also toured a similar sized school in the Moncton area. The final Education

Specifications document (100 pages) has been posted with the meeting materials, along with a two page summary which Council would review tonight.

Mrs. Watson reviewed the summary document for Council and it was noted that the new school will be built to accommodate 470 students (up from 450). This was increased due to concerns raised by Council. She also noted that numerous factors were considered including, size, where it will be built, how many stories, spaces required, safety, security, traffic flow, etc. Mrs. Watson thanked the all the members of the Planning Committee for their time and effort on finalizing the specifications.

Mrs. Watson then advised Council she would need a motion to accept the Education Specifications. Mr. Fowler called for a motion to accept the Education Specifications for the New West Side School. Mr. Mabey moved that the Education Specifications be approved and Mr. Olinskie seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau opposed the motion.

3.2 Reconfiguration of Fundy High

Mrs. Watson reviewed for Council the process that was followed and outlined some of the comments and concerns raised during public consultations on the reconfiguration. One concern raised was that there was not enough time to get all the required changes in place by September 2015. The District agrees and acknowledges that there is more work required on the middle school identity, professional development for teachers, physical education schedule and also on items such as the name of the school, new lockers, a wall, and technology and this could require more time.

She also noted the concern over the speed of the process. Blacks Harbour and St. George have a lot of activities in place for grade 6 students ... if current grade 5's were to move, they would miss out.

Mrs. Watson advised that a very thorough consultation process was conducted and each school community (Back Bay Elementary, St. George Elementary, Pennfield Elementary, Blacks Harbor Elementary and Fundy High) had an opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns at a public session during the month of January, 2015. After this process, all information received was carefully reviewed. At this time, the consultation process is now complete and it is recommended that the reconfiguration of Fundy High to include grade 6 be implemented in September of 2016. This will delay the implementation for one year and allow the District time to prepare and address concerns raised.

Mrs. Watson advised that a committee will be formed, including PSSC, an Administration representative and Jenny MacDougall, Director of Schools for St. Stephen. The role of the committee will be the go-forward planning for the reconfiguration of Fundy High in 2016. They will begin work later this spring.

Mrs. Watson asked that in keeping with the spirit of Policy 409, Council approve a motion in support of this reconfiguration. Mr. Fowler asked for a motion to reconfigure Fundy High School to include grade 6 in September 2016. Mr. Spires moved that Fundy High

School be reconfigured to include grade 6 in September of 2016. Motion was seconded by Don Cullinan. Motion carried.

Mrs. McGill-Pierce applauded Mrs. Watson for the thorough plan and review process and expressed her faith that concerns expressed will be addressed by September 2016 and that the reconfiguration will be a positive experience for students. She hopes that all feel that their 'voices have been heard' in this process.

Mr. Ross questioned if some of the projects required would be ready for September 2015 and Mrs. Watson confirmed that some would be. Mr. Fowler commented that the projects required were internal and did not require tendering so that would help with regard to time.

Mr. Boudreau congratulated Mrs. Watson and her team for their hard work and time. He believes that a great compromise was reached, and is appreciated by all.

Mr. Spires suggested that students who will be moving as a result of the reconfiguration, be given an opportunity to suggest possible new names for the school.

3.3 Policy 409 Sustainability Reviews – Lorne Middle and Pennfield Elementary

Mr. Fowler reviewed the Summary of Policy 409 Consultations for Lorne Middle School document that was posted with Council's meeting materials for tonight. The review highlighted the public consultation meeting dates at the school, the numbers/groups who attended and comments/questions raised during these meetings.

After the review, Mr. Fowler opened the floor to comments from Council which are summarized in point form below:

- This is a big decision for the neighbourhood; goes back to the 2008 re-drawing of the boundaries which negatively affected Lorne; teachers/principal do a great job – this is not a reflection on them; there are advantages to attending a larger school – both schools would benefit.
- Concern over the Community School Coordinator – would it be .5 Lorne and .5 PES?
- It is a choice between programs, people and facilities. It is important to keep as many programs as possible.
- Students will move from Lorne to Princess Elizabeth – give them a choice to come to Millidgeville if they want. Student transfers should be clearly explained to parents if they want to go to another school. Waive the condition that they supply their own transportation and if the class fills, they move out (flexibility on these if possible). Mr. Fowler advised that this could be difficult, as there would not be an FTE to create another class for these students. Mrs. Watson advised that transportation could be looked at, but no guarantees.
- students will adapt – it is the adults who fear this change. Not in agreement with this closure – need to make the right decision for the community. It is a good facility and we should keep it. Something better can be done.
- There is a greater plan to be looked at. This is premature.

- This is a sad thing to do for the school and for Saint John. There are very passionate people in favour of keeping the school open. That area is not expanding. We are not doing a service to the kids keeping such a small group in a large facility.
- We need to be realistic. What is best for Anglophone South School District students? With the money that we have to run this District - people, programs, facilities – this is the lesser of three evils. It is the best decision based on experience for our students. Students are more important than buildings.
- We need to be strategic. Who else can make the best plan – not always do it the way it has been done.

There being no further comments, Mr. Fowler asked for a motion that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that we recommend the closure of Lorne Middle School effective June 30, 2015. The motion was moved by Mr. McDevitt and seconded by Mr. Olinskie. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau and Mrs. McGill-Pierce voted against the motion. Mr. Ross abstained as he had not been able to attend either meeting.

Mr. Fowler then reviewed the Summary of Policy 409 Consultations for Pennfield Elementary School document that was posted with Council's meeting materials for tonight. The review highlighted the public consultation meeting dates at the school, the numbers/groups who attended and comments/questions raised during these meetings.

After the review, Mr. Fowler opened the floor to comments from Council which are summarized in point form below:

- Money was raised in small schools for resources they needed. The community is involved (while other communities are not as involved) – why close them? We are penalizing them.
- We will lose teachers in this and we will lose programs – they are not going to just close buildings. The Chair advised that we are trying to mitigate the cutting of programs and people by closing under-utilized facilities.
- The community needs to go Fredericton to talk to the government – get involved.
- Give students an option on where to go.
- We are losing students every year (declining enrolment). Fredericton will make these decisions for us if we don't advocate for the students. They will get the same quality and care wherever they go in Eastern Charlotte.
- Educationally, students will adapt. It is harder for the communities when their school is the focus. This is not an easy decision.

There being no further comments, Mr. Fowler asked for a motion that Council direct the Superintendent to inform Minister Rousselle that we recommend the closure of Pennfield Elementary School effective June 30, 2015. The motion was moved by Mrs. McGill-Pierce and seconded by Mr. Cullinan. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau and Mr. Campbell voted against the motion. Mr. Spires abstained.

3.4 Policy Review Update – Norton Elementary & Brown’s Flat School

Mr. Fowler advised Council that the first meeting at each school had taken place and that they were well attended, with good points being brought out by the community. He thanked Mr. Hall and Mayor Booth from Norton for attending tonight’s meeting.

The second meetings are scheduled for April 7, 2015 at Brown’s Flat and April 14, 2015 at Norton Elementary. There will also be a special District Education Council Meeting on April 29, 2015 at 490 Woodward Avenue to make a final decision on the sustainability of these two schools. This information will be communicated in a parent letter, the local media and on our website.

One Council member suggested it seems that we are penalizing the rural schools over the urban schools. Mr. Fowler commented that we are not done – we are just getting started and city schools will also be considered for review.

4. Presentation

4.1 ENDS Policy #3 – (Strengthen Engagement of Families and Foster Community Partnerships)

Mrs. Watson introduced Erica Lane, Community Engagement Coordinator, Lynn MacDonald, International Student Coordinator and Moira Sherwood, Technology Coordinator from St. Stephen (on LYNC). She passed on regrets from Kyle Peters, Fine Arts/Social Studies Coordinator who was unable to make it due to the change in meeting nights.

Mrs. Sherwood began by updating Council of a new survey that is being undertaken with regard to how we communicate as a District, as a school, and as a teacher with our parents. This will be used to determine the best method to use for communications going forward.

Question was raised as to whether or not the survey contained anything specific to communication to PSSC? Mrs. Sherwood advised that she believed that there was one section and that she would confirm.

One Council member noted that he has been advised that only one email address can be used for parent communication from the school. Suzanne LeBlanc Healey will confirm.

Mrs. Lane spoke to Council about our streamlined Southern Exposure Newsletter; our new blog and our website. The blog was created to be able to share appropriate information with the general public where the newsletter is now geared to internal readers with information on professional development, curriculum updates and other initiatives that pertain to staff across the District.

Question was asked if our blog was connected to our Twitter account. Mrs. Watson advised that she tweets most major events for the District and that there would be some

overlap between the newsletter, blog and Twitter. She will investigate if we can actually connect our blog to our Twitter account.

Council was advised that work continues on enhancing school websites and having all three Centres using the same platform, with a common template. A basic checklist for school websites has been developed and shared with schools on essential communication components of a website and a key person has been identified at each school to maintain the website as well as an alternate person. There is also ongoing District mentor training and support for schools.

Sessions have also been provided to schools on developing a format for teacher pages for parental communication. Consistency is encouraged within the school (ie Weebly, Edline, Wiki, nbed blogs). This will be easier when PowerSchool is available.

Question was raised as to whether or not a Synervoice message could be sent to parents to alert them that something is there when the new PowerSchool platform is available. Mrs. Sherwood will look into this. There was also a question as to whether or not the platform would be mobile accessible? Mrs. Sherwood advised that yes, it would be multi-platform. Security of the platform was also questioned and Mrs. Sherwood advised that it will be on their own server, so is very secure. Also, would PowerSchool email parents automatically when they update the site? Mrs. Sherwood confirmed that parents will not receive an email when the site is updated.

The Digital Citizenship team are reviewing email protocols and other social media and are working to identify how to be smart and be safe while on line. Guidelines will be developed and implemented.

With regard to PSSC and student forums, Mrs. Watson advised that during her new Principals' meetings she specifically asked how it was going with the PSSC committee at their school. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to have professional development opportunities for the PSSC Chairs. Possibly an evening of training explaining how to run a meeting, speakers, taking notes, etc.

Mrs. Watson advised that the ASD-S Twitter account is used to get information out about school cancellations, late buses, information to parents and the community.

Mrs. Lane spoke about the Volunteer Policy/brochure which is now available on the website and at our schools. She also mentioned that she is available to all schools to speak on and assist with community engagement. She also mentioned that Celebrate initiatives are posted on our website.

World Citizenship is being led by our "Guiding Coalition" on Citizenship Education which consists of 8 members from across the three Centres. These are teachers with an expertise/interest in citizenship education. One important aspect of citizenship education is an educational component about charities the schools support – the realization that the charity itself is important – not just the money raised. This group is collecting information on charitable initiatives and data has been requested from schools regarding which

charities they supported throughout 2013-14, and whether or not they were local, national or international.

Council was advised that EECD has a Citizenship Education Portal where nine schools are featured – five of them are Anglophone South schools. These feature Best Practices examples of individual, class and whole school learning experiences designed to engage students as active citizens and/or engage students in learning about citizenship education concepts.

New initiatives for Citizenship Education included a teacher provincial professional learning session on citizenship education with international expert Dr. Alan Sears in 2014, and in 2014-15, classroom research on the question of whether incorporating philanthropy into student business models improves engagement and achievement with Entrepreneurship students (Research facilitated by CHAT to the future). Also, on April 27, 2015 there will be a one day workshop for Entrepreneurship students.

Mrs. MacDonald addressed Council on International Students within ASD-S. She provided updated numbers on international students and noted that domestic students are increasing in the Saint John Education Centre schools with 138 students this year (111 last year). In the Hampton Education Centre there are 32 domestic students and in the St. Stephen Education Centre there are 26 students this year.

There is also an increase in AEI recruited students in the Saint John Education Centre with 67 students this year (49 last year). Hampton Education Centre has 20 recruited students and the St. Stephen Education Centre has 47 this year.

Currently there is only one Home Stay Coordinator in the Saint John area for high school and AEI are looking at hiring additional people. There are 8 coordinators across ASD-S. AEI are continuing to work with Principals to build capacity to host students and marketing opportunities to teach abroad (to supply mid-career and retired teachers).

Mrs. MacDonald advised that ASD-S had recently hired Jeff Matheson as an EAL (English Additional Language) support teacher. Jeff will act as an EAL mentor teacher to support teachers for the remainder of the year. His initial focus will be on high schools, especially those in Saint John with a high number of students requiring English language support and his salary is paid for by international funds.

Mr. Fowler thanked the team for their informative presentation.

5. New Business

5.1 Review of Executive Limitations Policies/Monitoring Reports #4-6

Mr. Fowler asked if Council was in favour of carrying this item to next month's agenda in light of the late hour. All were in agreement.

5.2 Budget Update

Mr. MacDonald reviewed for Council the key points from the budget document that had been posted with their meeting materials for tonight. He spoke about the projected deficit and the reasons for it. He explained that there was a shortfall in replacement salaries which had been flagged early in the year.

Mr. Fowler asked for a motion to accept the budget as presented. Motion to accept the budget as presented was moved by Mr. Spires. Seconded by Mr. Campbell. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau voted against the motion.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Watson advised Council that Friday, March 27th would be the first ever ASD-S professional development day in Saint John for District staff from all three Centres. There will be sessions focusing on mental fitness, Celebrate and information technology. There is no school for students on the 27th as it is parent teacher conference day.

Mrs. Watson updated Council on on-going attendance discussions within the District. High school Principals met on February 20th as a group to look at the struggles with student attendance and what is working well. The Inclusion Facilitators, Director of Education Support Services, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Supervisor of Data and Accountability are also involved in these discussions. The group will meet again at the end of the month.

Mrs. Watson touched on storm closures for this school year and advised that to date, there had been between 10 - 12 days lost across the District. She emphasized that teachers will focus closely on curriculum and ensure that any speakers, assemblies or trips are tightly aligned with the curriculum for the remainder of the school year.

6.2 Chairperson's Report & Updates

Mr. Fowler asked if Council was in favour of carrying this item to next month's agenda in light of the late hour. All were in agreement.

6.3 Correspondence

Mr. Fowler advised Council that Mrs. Watson had been named as the Chair of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Teacher Certification.

6.4 Members Notebook

Mr. Mabey advised Council that Island View School, Hampton Elementary and Sussex Regional High School have been named finalists in the National Staples Ecovator Grant valued at \$25,000. This grant recognizes public schools in Canada who are

implementing innovative programs that support environmental sustainability. The winners will be announced next month.

Mr. Boudreau enquired about the review of subdistrict boundaries and whether or not any changes should be made. Mr. Fowler advised that this request for review is standard procedure prior to an election and asked if anyone had any concerns. He also advised that restructuring within the subdistrict boundaries could be done by Council. No further concerns were raised.

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, April 8, 2015 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary