

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – May 10, 2017

The District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) met on Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 490 Woodward Avenue, Saint John. The following Council members and staff were in attendance:

Council Members:

Rob Fowler, Chair; Roger Nesbitt, Vice Chair; Wayne Spires, Bernie Regenbogen, Dan O'Connor, Linda Sherbo, Justin Tinker (via telephone), Gerry Mabey, Rob Alexander, Richard Malone, Larry Boudreau, Heather Gillis

Regrets: None

ASD-S Staff:

Zoë Watson, Superintendent; Debbie Thomas, Director of Schools, Saint John Education Centre; Paul Smith, Director of Schools, Hampton Education Centre; Jenny MacDougall, Director of Schools, St. Stephen Education Centre; John MacDonald, Director of Finance & Administration, Stewart Stanger, Director of Human Resources and Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order/Welcome/Regrets

Mr. Fowler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

2. Approvals

2.1 Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fowler asked that if there were no questions or concerns with the Agenda, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Spires moved that the Agenda be approved. Mr. Regenbogen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fowler referred to the Minutes of the April 12, 2017 meeting and advised that if there were no concerns or questions regarding the Minutes, that a motion be put forward to approve. Mr. Boudreau advised that he would like his request for a meeting of the subcommittee that will review Ends #2 & 5 recorded in the Minutes. Mr. Nesbitt moved that the Minutes be approved with this addition. Mr. Spires seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2.3 Public Comment

Theresa Rogers, PSSC Chair at St. John the Baptist/King Edward addressed Council. She advised that she and four other PSSC members attended the recent DEC Symposium at the Delta and found it to be an eye opener. She noted that the 409 process that was undertaken for the central city schools had galvanized their community – which has been positive. She went on to say that they love their neighbourhood and that the school is the heartbeat of the community. Ms. Rogers thanked Council for their work and noted that it was a big commitment.

Mr. Fowler thanked Ms. Rogers for her comments.

2.4 Policy 409 – Saint John City Schools

Mr. Fowler spoke about the sustainability review process and how difficult it has been for members of Council. There were 14 evening meetings in addition to many meetings with public groups such as BICAPI, Living SJ, Play SJ, and the City of Saint John to name a few. He also noted that it was a tough process for the community – although a necessary evil. It is part of the DEC's role to make the best decisions possible for all ASD-S students.

He advised that many around the table are first time DEC members and have taken the process to heart – and lost sleep! All are concerned about our priority neighbourhoods.

As DEC went through this process, they listened carefully and heard the positions within the community, some which were contrary to what was outlined in the Ernst & Young report, and gathered good feedback. Council then held private sessions where they reviewed options/feedback received. As a result, it is the decision of Council that we are not prepared to proceed with recommendations from the Ernst & Young report at this time. Council will review feedback over the next few months and hope to come back in the fall with a more specific proposal. At this time, there has been no decision to close, amalgamate or ask for a new school for the City of Saint John.

Mr. O'Connor thanked all of the stakeholders for the time they invested into the process and wanted to note a few points he found particularly enlightening:

At Millidgeville North, the parents took the time to walk their preschoolers from one end to the other. While he was less concerned about the actual minutes, it pointed out that this school seems too big to be an elementary school. He noted that the Department's official Planning Guide also supports this position. Quoting directly from that document, regarding Design Approach for an Elementary School: *"The design approach for an elementary school is significantly different from that of middle or high school because of the sensitivity required to recognize the transition of the young child from the home, daycare or preschool environments to the larger public school setting."*

At M. Gerald Teed, Mr. O'Connor wanted to thank the parents who pointed out that the K-2 population was not declining, that 24 acres seemed crazy, and that the gym was added on to the existing round building, so adding to a round building was, in fact, possible. The recent Canadian census also supports their position that it is a growing area, as does the

City of Saint John's PlanSJ as an area for growth. Again, he noted, the Department's official school planning document provided some advice. From the same section that states the large land requirement, is the following: *"In urban areas site size may be reduced when land availability is limited and/or existing community field or other facilities are used offsite."*

Commenting on the south central peninsula, Mr. O'Connor noted that City Councillor Reardon reminded us that Prince Charles is in the middle of a commercial zone, on a very busy street, likely to get busier with the new Irving parking garage. Mr. O'Connor also wanted to thank the parents who walked to the building one snowy morning, also highlighting the building's less than desirable location. Again, he added, the Department's official school planning document provides some direction: "Accessibility to public transportation and ease and safety of pedestrian and vehicular travel is paramount when choosing a site. Safe bicycle routes are an asset. The following are some safety risks to be avoided when selecting a site: a) heavy vehicular traffic; arterial highways; heavily travelled streets, or congested intersections."

Mr. O'Connor felt that the parents also did a great job of highlighting the unique challenges of the priority neighbourhoods. The survey finding over 80% of school parents without a vehicle was eye opening.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he agrees that something needs to be done in the area to address the aging infrastructure, declining populations and very small middle schools; but he felt that this proposal isn't it.

Ms. Sherbo expressed her thanks to all who participated and provided feedback. She found it very helpful to learn more about Saint John.

Mr. Regenbogen added that when the Ernst & Young report was reviewed in September, it seemed (from a high level perspective) to do what was needed. However, looking from ground level and the effect it would have on people, he feels differently. He thanked the public for their input, the PSSCs for organizing and creating a catalyst for all PSSCs to work together as a larger group to develop a solution. Mr. Regenbogen is confident that Council can put something together for the fall – an acceptable compromise.

Ms. Gillis also extended her thanks to the public for their input in the process.

Following this discussion, Mr. Regenbogen moved that Council continue further study and work to provide a more acceptable proposal in the fall. Mr. Mabey seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Spires abstained from the vote.

Mr. Fowler thanked Council and reiterated that this was a difficult process but that something has to happen. He also thanked the public and noted that the process works – Council did listen - and will continue to work in the spirit of cooperation.

3. Presentation – ENDS Policy #4 – Mental Health/Mental Fitness

Mrs. Watson introduced Education Support Services staff Pam Miller, Positive Learning/Guidance; Monique Hughes, Positive Learning/Behaviour; and Dan Vallis, Subject Coordinator Fine Arts & Music, Health and Physical Education who would be presenting to Council tonight on ENDS policy #4 Mental Health/Mental Fitness. This goal was set by the previous Council. This DEC has not yet had an opportunity to meet to determine their goals going forward.

Ms. Miller began by explaining the goal of Ends #4, which is to provide opportunities for staff to learn about mental health issues in children and youth and to promote school and District wide initiatives that support mental fitness. Some of this would be school based education, and some would be district education.

She spoke about numerous opportunities provided to staff (school, early childhood, FACE and District educational staff) to learn about mental health issues in children and youth. This included the delivery of Changing Minds and/or summer training on Mental Health First Aid and ASIST (applied suicide intervention skills training). She noted that Mental Health First Aid training funding was generated from the Bell Aliant Charity Golf Tournament in June 2016. Staff from St. Stephen Elementary attended the Atlantic Summer Institute on Mental Health and three district staff attended the Canadian Conference on Promoting Health Relationships for Youth.

Mr. Boudreau suggested that training for programs such as ASIST should happen from the bottom up. Ms. Miller noted Guidance staff were trained in October and the Child and Youth Teams in November and that we try to offer this type of training over the summer for anyone who would like to take advantage of it (i.e. EAs, SIWs, bus drivers, custodians) - but it is voluntary. Mrs. Watson noted that during the year, staff who attend need to be backfilled and that can be very expensive.

The LINK program is being continued in all middle and high schools and grade 5 students will receive an orientation to the program during middle school transition activities at the beginning of the year. Suicide awareness training opportunities are provided including “safeTALK” (a half day or evening is also available for parents). The Healthy Planner and Mental Health Toolkit continue to be implemented as this links with the provincial Wellness Grant. Schools have access to the Healthy School Planner and are encouraged to use this resource during school team meetings and school based professional learning.

Mr. Vallis spoke about the District Health Advisory Committee and how they partner with various community groups to promote mental fitness, including partnering with non-profit wellness networks. They work with the YMCA to share “Mental Fitness in the Workplace” and Competency, Autonomy and Relatedness (CAR) model information. He also addressed the need to provide schools with information on mental fitness to share with families. The Fun Friends program will be enhanced and monitored and provided to primary grades, preschools and other community partners.

Ms. Miller reminded Council that ASD-S continues to work hard to promote the philosophy of “Celebrate What’s Right With the World” and that we continue to participate in initiatives that

help increase student mental fitness through the District Committee and the school champions.

Mr. Vallis described the continued use of a Sharepoint site (ONE) for schools which is an on-line platform for teachers to share their work with staff and students on mental fitness. He advised that the Healthy Learners and Sexual Health Nurses continue to populate the site with current mental health and fitness information for teachers and their students. He also advised that ASD-S continues to implement "On the Right Track" within our schools.

Participation in the NB Student Wellness survey continues. Schools will review results with staff and PSSC. Schools may create school-based, grades 4-12 student focus groups to discuss student needs with respect to mental fitness or other aspects of the survey. He noted that we now have statistics back to 2007 to compare.

Mr. Fowler thanked staff for their informative presentation.

4. Business Arising from Minutes

4.1 Executive Limitations #7 - 9

Mr. Fowler asked Council if they would combine a motion to approve the Monitoring Reports for Executive Limitations #7 (Financial Administration), #8 (Staff Compensation) and #9 (Treatment of Media, Public, Stakeholders and Staff) with #10 (Maintaining Viable High Schools - Saint John Education Centre), #11 (Property Management) and #12 (Annual Reporting to the Public) and if there were any questions or concerns with the Monitoring Reports that were posted for review at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Boudreau asked if a subcommittee should review EL #10 Maintaining Viability of High Schools. He noted that each year there is a cap for grade 9s which keeps a steady balance of students in the four high schools but wondered if this was affecting course subjects. Mr. Fowler noted that the four high schools in Saint John are now more equal in population. Mr. O'Connor suggested we might be doing a disservice in programming for our students by packing them in. Mr. Fowler added that he felt that this should never have been a DEC policy and suggested this Council should repeal it and let staff place pupils as appropriate. Mr. Spires asked if this would affect course options at high schools. Mr. Fowler advised that it would not – and that it is staff's job to balance programs. He also noted that this will not cancel IB.

Mrs. Watson advised that she does not hear concerns about overcrowding and agreed that operationally it is her responsibility to place pupils.

Mr. Boudreau then moved that Council remove Executive Limitations policy #10 - Maintaining Viability of High Schools - from any motion and repeal it. Seconded by Mr. Alexander. Motion carried.

Question was asked about who signs the Superintendent's Expense Reports under Executive Limitations #12. Mr. Fowler explained that he does not sign them. He also noted

that Stacey Brown, DEC Manager, is working on consistency across the district and suggested that we wait for policy planning and a legal decision on this point.

John MacDonald explained that the DEC has no signing authority and that he signs the Superintendent's expense reports. He explained that he would talk to Kevin Tutt at the Department to get his feedback.

Mr. O'Connor stated that in the Monitoring Reports he was hoping to see more numbers to compare (i.e. grievances) with other districts – or how we relate to some other standard – for example, how we treat staff – what is the measurement? Mrs. Watson explained that Mr. Stanger, Director of Human Resources, will speak to some of these questions in his Human Resources presentation next month. Mr. Fowler advised Council that Monitoring Reports simply need to show whether the Superintendent is in compliance or not.

Mr. Spires reminded Council that the Department can come in at any point to do an audit (which they have done in the past in District #10) and suggested that Council should stick to policy governance and not cross boundaries into operations.

Mr. Regenbogen suggested that with regard to Executive Limitations policy #9, point #8, teachers are in a quandary when it comes to Policy 409. They are afraid to voice their opinion. Mr. Fowler advised that our teachers have avenues to communicate. They have been made aware by the NBTA that they are not to voice their opinions about a Policy 409 sustainability review in a public forum, but are free to communicate it privately (e.g. by letter or through the site used for 409).

There being no further questions or comments, a motion was then made by Mr. Spires that the Monitoring Reports for Executive Limitations policies #7, 8 9, 11 and 12 be accepted as presented. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion carried.

4.2 DEC Remuneration – tabled from the April meeting

Mr. Fowler asked Council for any comments on the request from the Francophone District who have asked for ASD-S to support their request for remuneration changes. He advised that the DEC Chairs have discussed it and said they were fine with it, but not for implementation at this time. It would have to be following the next election.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Regenbogen to support the Francophone District's request for remuneration changes for implementation following the next election. Seconded by Mr. Spires. Motion carried. Mr. Boudreau voted against the motion.

5. New Business

5.1 Executive Limitations Policies #10 - 12

Covered in 4.1 above.

5.2 Functional Capacity Report

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the Functional Capacity Report that was posted on the portal for Council to review and explained how it was developed. He highlighted the number of schools, current enrolment, population decline, average age of schools and the average functional capacity range for schools within each education centre.

5.3 Trigger Schools

Mr. Fowler advised that we had received a letter from the Department highlighting the trigger schools for 2017-18, and it had been posted on the portal for Council's review. The trigger schools that would require either a sustainability study or a request for exemption are as follows:

Apohaqui Elementary	Norton Elementary
Fundy Shores School	St. Martins School
Back Bay Elementary	Deer Island Community School
White Head Elementary	Lawrence Station Elementary

Following discussion, motion was made by Mr. Alexander to request an exemption for all trigger schools for one year due to the Policy 409 work still to be done on the Saint John central city schools over the next year. Seconded by Mr. Nesbitt. Motion carried.

6. Information Items

6.1 Superintendent's Report and Update

Mrs. Watson advised that the name for the new school is now official – Seaside Park Elementary School. The District received very short notice, only finding out the day before the announcement on April 28, 2017. A special ceremony was held at Havelock School with the Premier, students, staff, parents, DEC, PSSC partners and special guests attending.

Ms. Sherbo commented that she was disappointed that neither Mr. Mabey nor Mr. Fowler were invited to the front of the room during the ceremony. She felt they should have been included for all of the work that they dedicated to this process. Mrs. Watson advised that it was the Premier's call. Ms. Sherbo moved that the DEC send a letter to the Premier to voice their disappointment. Seconded by Mr. Boudreau. Motion carried.

Mrs. Watson noted that the Principal, Michelle Deschenes and Vice Principal, Jocelyn Myatt both attended the event. They have been working hard ordering materials, bringing the three PSSCs together, engaging students on design of a logo and mascot. She also noted that there have been conversations regarding busing and the 1.5 km guideline.

Mrs. Watson advised that at the May 17th Principals' meeting, there would be an opportunity for Principals' to reflect on the implementation of ISD in both Saint John and Hampton centres and provide their feedback.

This year's Summer Learning program will be spread out over the summer and will not be focused all in one specific week. This change was made as a result of feedback received. All employee groups are welcome to participate.

Innovation Awards were held on May 9th and several of our schools were honored, including: Shannon Hodder, Loch Lomond Elementary School, Marlise Widdershoven, Belleisle Elementary School, and Jocelyn Wells from St. Malachy's High School who were all awarded an "Inspirational STEM Teacher Award" from the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists. Peter Woytiuk from Simonds High School and Greg Norton the Principal at Loch Lomond Elementary also received awards for their contributions to innovation. ASD-S also saw Seth Richardson from Sir James Dunn Academy with "The Greenhouse Project" and Harry Miller Middle School students with their project "Radio Frequency Class Register" receiving special recognition.

There are many CELEBRATE initiatives happening this time of year including upcoming Turn Around Achievement events in all three centres. She noted that she and Jenny MacDougall had attended the St. Stephen Education Centre Heritage Fair at Fundy Middle and High School last week and the Saint John Heritage Fair is scheduled for May 11th. There are also Public Speaking events, (provincial FI & English), Pitchfest, The Write Stuff and drama and musical productions. Mrs. Watson encouraged Council to attend what they could as these events are always very well done. Mr. O'Connor asked if he could get a copy of The Write Stuff publication.

Mrs. Watson also noted that she would be attending upcoming NBTA Branch AGMs and this provides her with an opportunity to bring updates to these groups, share successes and acknowledge challenges. She also had an opportunity to speak to all Administrative Assistants last week while they were at the District office for professional learning.

Mr. Boudreau suggested that since we are one DEC, it would be nice if all DEC members were invited to Turn Around Achievement events in each education centre. Mrs. Watson advised we can do that and will poll DEC to see which events Council members want to attend. Next year all can be invited to the three events.

6.2 Chair Report and Updates

Mr. Fowler asked Council for a motion that will formally name the Learning Centre at our new Seaside Park Elementary School in honour of long-serving Council member, Gerry Mabey. Motion was made by Mr. Spires to officially approve the naming of the Gerald W. Mabey Learning Centre. Seconded by Mr. Boudreau. Motion carried.

6.3 Correspondence

None; all correspondence posted on the portal for Council's information.

6.4 Members' Notebook

Mr. Mabey advised Council that Island View is in the process of raising money to improve their playground and that he was honoured to say that \$25,000 had been donated anonymously, in his name, to this cause.

Mr. O'Connor advised that the "It Takes a Village" event with Dr. Chorney was attended by over 250 people, including one attendee from Fredericton. It was noted that the high attendance is a strong indicator of how important the topic is and unfortunately, (or fortunately, depending on how you look at it), is something that is bringing communities together. The organizing committee wanted to extend thanks to the DEC and the District for their support and for the Celebrate Mugs.

Mr. O'Connor advised that we have an opportunity to meet with the president of the Engineering Association who would like to work with the District on encouraging youth to take pre-requisites (Math and Science) to they keep their options open. They have money to support this initiative.

Mr. O'Connor noted that he reviewed our new communications policy with 3 PSSCs; all were very appreciative of the opportunity to get the information online and all admitted to not doing a great job with providing copies of their monthly minutes. They committed to try to do better next year.

Mr. Nesbitt reminded Council that the deadline to complete the on-line Superintendent survey was Friday, May 12th. He noted that there were still three Council members who had not yet completed it.

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, June 14, 2017 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Fowler, Chair

Clare Murphy, Recording Secretary